A Midsummer Nights Dream

Cliff Burnett – *Demetrius*
Eva Lohman – *Helena*
Steve Warbeck – *Thisbe*
Lewis Cowen – *Bottom*
Stuart Organ – *Peter Quince*

round-the-clock site and security assistants.

Every available inch of space is used inside the performance tent. New staging was constructed for the 1980 season. The main stage, 6m × 3.5m, is positioned centrally and is linked by a catwalk to a band-stage. Immediately behind the band-stage is the control tower upon which a lime operator, stage manager, board and sound operators are precariously perched amidst a mass of equipment. Flats for the various productions attach to the front of the zip-up scaffolding towers and it has a central entrance onto the stage. One stage designer, Claire Lyth, was commissioned to design all the season's shows and has made life considerably easier for the Bubble's stage management and technical team than in previous years. With up to ten shows being mounted in the tent each week the sets are changed over frequently, a factor which was borne in mind by the designer. The sets tend not to be over-elaborate as the GLC's most stringent technical regulations apply to the Bubble, which is subject to a rigorous inspection every time it is re-erected and fitted up. All settings are required to be inherently flame-proof which automatically restricts one's choice of materials, and the Bubble has responded sensibly to the GLC's officer's request that sets should be minimal as space is restricted and the stage is open.

Under the guidance of the company's Lighting Designer/Chief Electrician, Hugh Laver, lighting and sound potential is being realised to the full. The tent, with its fluctuating temperatures and unpredictable outside interferences, presents a sound operator with special problems. We felt that it was necessary to use a Graphic Equaliser to obtain maximum gain, setting the levels with the assistance of a spectrum analyser and the advice of the excellent Hardware House (Sound) Ltd. Four ATC speakers are hung from the centre of the lighting rig. We use 5 directional Sennheiser microphones suspended over the main stage, two floating radio microphones and five Beyer Dynamic hand-held microphones when and where they are needed. The sound operator is far from ideally positioned on the control tower, surrounded by the Graphic, two Revox A77 tape decks, two Quad 303 power amps, and a 12 into 2 MM mixer.

The Lighting Designer is severely restricted by the lack of height in the tent. Lanterns are hung off a truss which is supported by four Vermette lifts. The aluminium load-span truss consists of seven sections, the two longest of which are 36′. Up to fifty lanterns are attached to the truss each week, a large proportion of these being 308 microspots as the height from the bottom of the truss to ground level is only 11′ 3″. 9 × 123s, 7 × 23s, 3 × 23N, 5 × 223s, 4 × ADB 1kW Fresnels, 4 × CCT 1kW Silhouette 30s, 4 colour wheels and a strobe make up the balance. The control is a modest 18 way MINI 2. There are two follow-spots, one attached to the control tower and one positioned on a tower above the main entrance of the tent. Although stage managers tend to have to rely on muted voices to give cues, they are kept in touch with the down-stage lime-operator by a PB Theatre Systems inter-com.

The Company hires a 72 KVA and a 10 KVA generator to provide the power needed on site at the Bubble. The emergency lighting, bar electrics and sound system are run off the smaller generator and everything else off the large one. To set up effectively all the Bubble needs is a patch of grass, with a stand-pipe positioned close by being a pleasant luxury. The company is still extremely keen to procure the new custom-designed theatre, but it is also proud of its artistic and technical achievements in past and current structures.

Trailer/Dressing Room