

caused by the lighting department I hasten to add! Getting the cars in and out was sometimes a problem, in spite of the meticulous measurements taken on the site visits. At the Connaught, Worthing, both the dock doors and the bumpers had to be removed before it was possible. It always amazes me, how professionals can manoeuvre cars in the most confined spaces, without a scratch. Even so, it was not always possible to place cars as originally envisaged. Sometimes we ended up with a completely different arrangement from what was expected. At the Wakefield Theatre Club, we finally had a car on each of the two disco dance floors, at the rear of the auditorium!

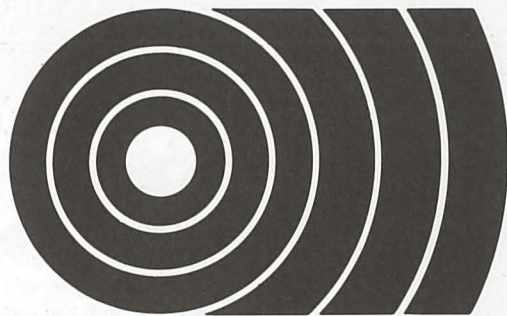
A source of infinite amusement to me, since I didn't have to worry about it, was the removal of the covers. Up to the point in the show when a car is presented, or 'revealed', it has a white cover on it. This has to be tastefully lit, so that the audience doesn't notice that there are cars all over the stage with white covers on them. I was once told by a producer, that a car with a sheet over it was supposed to be a rock. 'Couldn't I make it look more like one?'. Vauxhall were determined that the Astra cover should whisk away, as if by magic. At each venue therefore, yards of fishing line, stage weights, and eye hooks screwed to every conceivable corner of flatage were employed to achieve this. After hours of

experimentation, sometimes it worked!

Vauxhall were very enthusiastic about the idea of using theatres, and keenly took up suggestions of how to make the show a more theatrical experience. It developed a great deal from their original concept. They soon picked up the tricks of the trade. In no time they were calling Fresnels, *Frazzles*, and Mini Ellipses, *Eclipses!* Vauxhall certainly got more out of the theatres than they would have from conventional conference suites, and in doing so, saved £50,000 on venue hire alone. The theatres welcome the new business, and were generally very helpful and friendly.

Turning to fashion, experiences in Germany and France have proved to me the superiority of our equipment and expertise. When it was first mooted that we were to light a gala show, opening a fashion fair in Düsseldorf, we expected to meet the best in German technology and efficiency – and, of course, they would all speak English! Our site visit was quite a surprise. The Messekongresscenter is an international exhibition centre just five years old. We were to work in Room One, a hexagonal hall, with raked seating for 750. The lighting positions were three glass fronted slots in the ceiling. The first shock was that they contained ten year old Strand equipment – 243s, 223s and 264Fs. These had been specified and purchased when the original contracts for the building went out. All lamps were hard wired in – there was therefore no question of re-rigging – and were so close to the glass that it was impossible to put barn doors on. These remained in their boxes in the basement store!

The control was a custom built Siemens manual board, whose faders were 'upside down', and grouping/mastering facilities were of mindboggling complexity. Finally, neither lighting nor sound technicians spoke English, and our German was very basic. It took ten minutes to explain the concept of focussing! We resolved our problems by taking our own memory board and lanterns for all specific lighting, and only using the house rig for a three colour downstage wash. Our control was the Berkey Memory 2, 64 way suitcase board, with chase. This caused great interest among the resident staff, for its versatility



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