

audience's line of sight. Under fluid lighting, this backing became limitless space: the cyclorama could be treated as a realistic sky or it could be a purely atmospheric environment.

Equipment was developed to project effects onto the cycloramas, and some of the very complex German cloud projectors were imported into England. Dean relates the impact of these on one dramatic author of that period: "The effects that could be got with it were so beautiful and, so far as storm, lightning, rain, etc., were concerned, so realistic that at the end of a private demonstration which we gave before an invited audience of authors and managers, Bernard Shaw turned to me and, instead of congratulating me, said 'I'll take good care that you don't use any of these contraptions in my plays, young man. The audience would be so busy staring at the clouds, they wouldn't listen to my words.' Of course, he was right."

This suggestion that lighting might be used against the drama, rather than its servant, runs through much of the technical literature of the period. Thus, in 1930 Ridge found it necessary to warn: "It is a favourite pastime with some critics to jibe at the scenic artist and electrician, and to maintain that their efforts detract from the acting. I would only say that good acting can only be enhanced by suitable scenery and beautiful lighting, but it is a crime to spend time and money on scenery lighting to the neglect of the acting." He found it necessary to go into italics for a warning (and Ridge used italics very sparingly) "*It is also a crime to stage a bad play simply because it lends itself to spectacular effects.*"

Perhaps the key to the lighting style of the cyclorama school lies in the following Ridge statement: "There is an idea prevalent that actors cannot perform in vividly coloured light. With the exception of one or two colours such as green, the acting-area can be lit with any colours suitable to the spirit of the scene." This idea of lighting for total effect is certainly alien to the view of drama held by most generations, including our own. Even in the most non-naturalistic production style, there is a degree of heightened realism in the acting that can only be projected if the actor's face is lit in a way approaching naturalism.

But these are experimental times and the boldness of colour was so revolutionary that the audience was able to respond enthusiastically. After all, they were used to actors lit from an unnatural low angle from the footlights. To have them lit, without shadows, in heavily coloured ambient light in a scene of limitless space must have been a revelation to an audience whose previous theatrical experience had been of roughly lit painted scenes with "realistic" painted tree borders plainly made from tattered canvas.

Prentice's production of *Twelfth Night* for the Sheffield Repertory Company in the late 1920s used a white set. There was flood-lighting for the set and overhead flood-lighting for the actors. There were no footlights and no spotlighting from the

auditorium. The actors must have projected with voice and movement alone: there could have been very little subtlety visible on their faces. Some indication of the application of a strong colour approach to the psychology of the drama is apparent from the following:

Scene	Spirit of Scene	Lighting
Duke's Palace	Love	Front-Pink Back-Blue
Olivia's Room	Melancholy	Front-amber Back-Green
Olivia's Room	Drunken Revelry	Front-Blue Back-Magenta
Olivia's Garden	Reconciliation	Front-Pink Back-Moonlight Green

This "total atmosphere" approach was used by Dean in his 1939 West End production of J. B. Priestley's *Johnson over Jordan*. Two cycloramas were devised, the inner one of fine blue silk. According to Dean, "We literally painted the curtains with lights. In the night-club scene they took on a deep ruby red against which the masks, beautifully made by Elizabeth Haffenden, created an eerie effect. In other scenes the curtains were coloured olive green or blue or straw according to the mood of the dream which Johnson, the principal character, was experiencing. There was very little direct spot-lighting except in the foreground.

"The play ends as Johnson (Ralph Richardson) in his dream — all the struggles and hopes and fears of his past life over — turns to say farewell to the porter. Taking from him his attache case, his rolled umbrella and his bowler hat, he mounts a steep ramp between the two cycloramas, the one in front being drifted apart a few feet to make this possible. As he does so to the inspiring music specially composed by Benjamin Britten, a 5,000 watt German projector beams his ascent. The light in front fades as the sun lamp picks him up between the cycloramas, the silk one being lighted an iridescent bluish-green and the rear one a deep blue. The effect was indescribably beautiful and was so referred to by the press. Indeed the author has made flattering reference to this effect in his book of reminiscences."

The selective use of lighting to locate scenes by defining space was also developing alongside the atmosphere experiments. Ridge here describes his lighting of *The Rumour* by C. K. Munro at Gray's Cambridge Festival Theatre in 1927: "There were no less than eighteen scenes in this production, and it was essential that scene should follow scene with the greatest rapidity. The producer, Norman Marshall, used hardly any scenery, and relied chiefly on lighting to suggest the various changes. For instance, the play opened with a scene in a smoking-room, for which three chairs and a small table were grouped together at the

front of the stage, and lit solely by a red spot concealed in a trap on the forestage, which gave the impression of firelight. This, combined with the fact that black curtains were drawn across the cyclorama, left the greater part of the stage so dark that it was possible to have the next scene set ready.

This, an office, was suggested merely by a desk and chair in a concentrated pool of light, which again left much of the stage in complete darkness, so that another office could be set on the other side of the stage, and similarly lit in its turn. Yet another office scene, this time a very brief one, was suggested simply by a baby spot on the face of a man speaking at the telephone, nothing else being visible. A rather similar method was used for the street scenes, a single spot from the spot-batten suggesting the light from a street-lamp, without anything else on stage."

Most of these staging and lighting experiments took place in what Marshall christened "The Other Theatre" in his book of that title (1952). It was in the little theatres and in the developing regional repertory houses that the theatre was developing between the wars. In the "other theatres" the technical difficulties of a fluid control of the lighting were not a big problem: the number of light sources was relatively small, and so the operators had enough hands (and knees and elbows) to operate simple dimmers. However, the bigger commercial theatres and the super cinemas — where the auditorium architecture was expected to perform complex colour music (an organ-type keyboard controlled the intensity, colour, and form of light in a flexible manner) between films — demanded centralized flexible control desks. During the 1930s, many fundamental developments took place in control desks, including methods of presetting intensity levels and grouping lights for operation under one person's fingers. Indeed the organ console became one of the most flexible lighting controls of the period immediately before World War II. Thus lighting control was poised for a rapid takeoff in the 1950s when the effects of war and postwar restrictions began to wear off.

Spotlights had been developing slowly throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but their impact was not immediate in the great majority of theatres, that is, the London West End and touring chains fed from London. Some spotlights were appearing in the