

auditorium but were mainly used as simple "projected floodlighting." Onstage use of spotlighting was restricted to special effects and to highlighting.

The spots tended to be focused on important parts of the acting area like chairs, doors, and telephones. Between these areas there was a soft general flooding wash of light. The concept of overlapping areas, all individually lit by spotlights from angles which would enhance the dimensional aspect of actor and scene – a concept developed and described in the United States in the late 1920s by Stanley McCandless – was not to become universal in Britain until after World War II.

The predominance of a general wash of light from flooding equipment tended to favour the top and sides of the setting rather than the actors. The frame was often brighter than the picture whereas most drama requires the actor to be stressed rather than the setting. However, the dominance of the footlights was decreasing, and the actor's makeup could consequently become more natural than the heavy mask-like use of greasepaint which had been necessary at the beginning of the century. In both mainstream theatre and the older theatre, lighting was a series of "lighting moments" rather than the continuous fluid selective atmospheric dimension of our definition.

In general 1900–1945 was a period of experiment: it indicated the shape of things to

come in the lighting explosion that was to hit theatre in the second half of the twentieth century when the lighting designer emerged as an essential member of the production team; and lighting was to become an essential servant of the dramatist and the drama's interpreters – not the other way around as is suggested in a phrase from Rollo Gillespie William's 1947 *Technique of Stage Lighting*: "the producer arranges matters so that artists are placed to get the desired illumination at appropriate parts of the play."

In the "other theatre" lighting excitements were brewing, but for the flavour of mainstream drama let us turn to the lighthearted cynicism of Philip Godfrey in his 1933 *Backstage* (subtitled *A survey of contemporary British Theatre from behind the scenes*). This approach to lighting was standard in many ordinary playhouses until designed lighting became the norm in the aftermath of World War II. Godfrey writes, "The Producer comes in front and begins to light the scene. The Stage Manager, with a notebook and pencil, remains on the stage as a connecting link with the unseen electrician.

'I want more light on the back', cries the producer.

'Two more floods upstage, Bill', says the stage manager.

'What mediums, sir – amber or pink?'

'Neither', says the producer. 'I want to try white.'

'How's that, sir?'

'No good. Check them down. That's too much. Bring them up again. What are they now?'

'Half-check, sir.'

'Not enough. Bring them up . . . slowly. *Slowly!* More yet.'

'They're full up, sir.'

'Oh, all right; put in a pink.'

'How's that, sir?'

'No good. Try an amber. *Hm . . .* I don't like it. Try the pink again. Now try a straw. Let me see the amber again. That's not rich enough. I want a number four.'

'Put in a number four, Bill . . . Eh? Oh! That is a number four, sir.'

'Then frost it. All right, that'll do.'

'Plot that, Bill', says the stage manager, making a note.

'Now your floats', cries the producer.

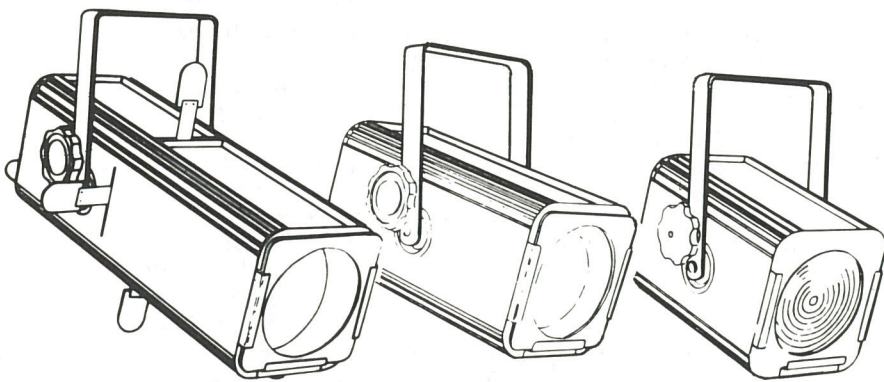
'Check up the whites . . . more yet. . . . *Stop!* Too much! Down again! That's better. Are the baby spots in?'

'Take them out. What's in your perches?'

'Ambers, sir.'

'Give me straws.' That kind of dialogue was quite authentic until well after 1945. Therefore, the definition by the 1940s had become something like a *fluid illumination which is becoming increasingly selective and atmospheric, especially in experimental theatres with an approach to production styles that favour a departure from realism.*

Quality in Performance



EQUIPMENT FOR:

- Theatres
- Leisure Centres
- T.V. Studios
- Public Halls
- Schools
- Churches
- Exhibitions

MANUFACTURE • SALE • HIRE • CONFERENCE • PRESENTATION • PRODUCT LAUNCH

PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINMENT LIGHTING FROM

CCT theatre lighting limited

WINDSOR HOUSE, 26 WILLOW LANE, MITCHAM, SURREY, CR4 4NA, ENGLAND. tel: 01-640 3366 telex: 946648