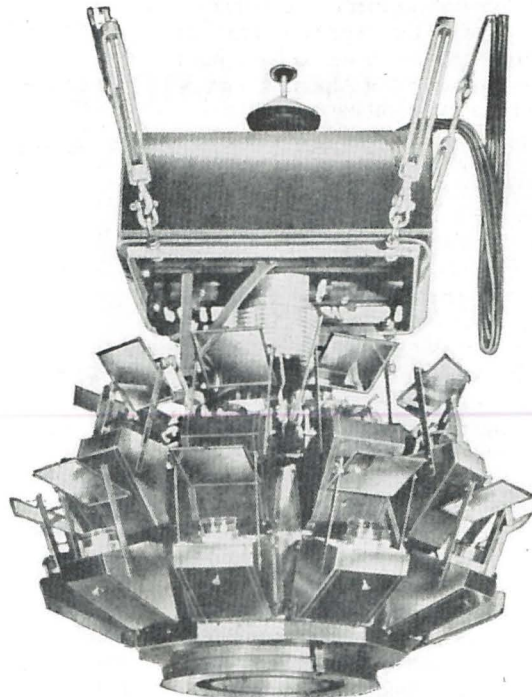


German multi-slider auto-transformer dimmer, c. 1934: resistances are to avoid dead shorts between taps



Schwabe 2-tier 3-kw cloud machine

widely, knew German opera houses including Bayreuth well; whereas Bentham was limited to what he had read of these plus Henry Wood's Monday Wagner Nights at the Queen's Hall Proms and the like, together with a few 12-inch gramophone records.

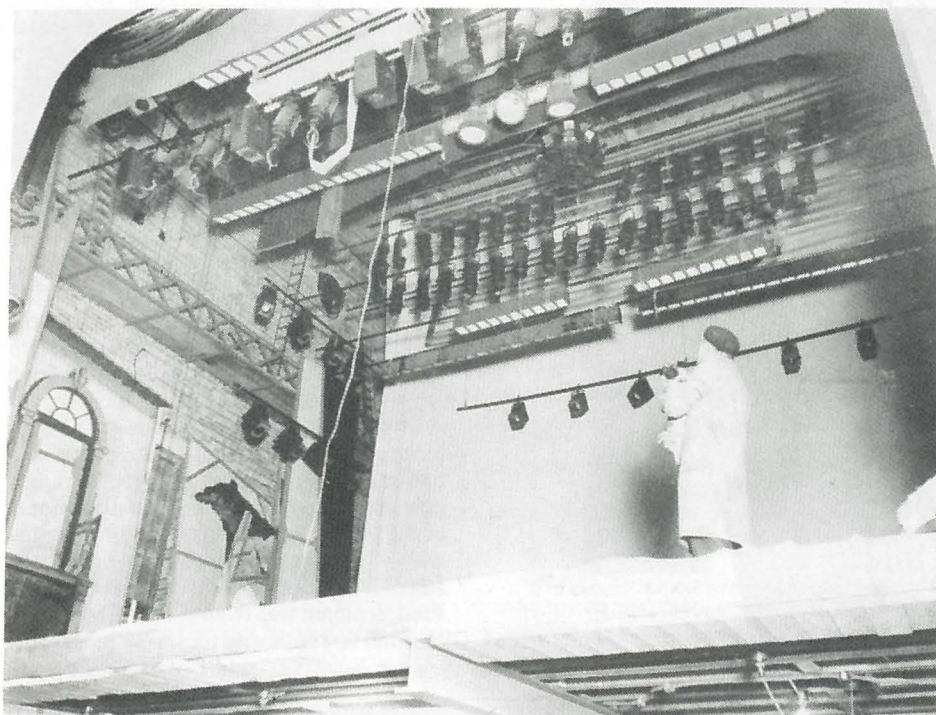
It is both necessary and easy for me in writing of *those* times to think of that Fred in the third person. Anyone who has attained over-mature years will know the feeling. Some things remain vivid and bits of paper turn up which prompt or set one musing; but there remain great gaps as to what that chap,

who was oneself, thought and did and why. I do know that young Bentham was obsessed with the idea of replacing the plump casts and the crude scenery and effects, he had learned about, by Appia inspired settings and lighting. The latter to change to express the mood of the music. Music Drama would become Colour Music. This is a convenient but rotten expression because variation of form and tempo of change were (are!) more important than colour: anyway there were to be no singers or actors to *clutter-up* the stage. The nearest I had got to this had been to improvise to the wireless broadcasts of

Good Friday Music and other chunks of *Parsifal* in my model theatre. After my Light Console was working in the Seecol theatre 'B' Bear enthusiastically set up a regular audience, the Light Console Society, to explore this art form and such things as Forest Murmurs, Dawn & Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine together with his Funeral March went into the repertoire. But, while it was a case of using that chromium-plated Grand Master, it was Albert Ketelby and Eric Coates — such stuff as cinema interludes were made on.

A cinema-exhibitor approach, also, seems to have coloured Christie's thoughts on the opera orchestra problem — a small orchestra could be enlarged by use of the organ. For a film, such as the Emil Jannings *Faust*, the organ used to be used solo for the second feature etc. but join the band to fill-in for the feature film. It seems to have been the technical side especially the lighting which fascinated him; but, unlike me, not as an inventor. All the requisite lighting equipment existed. Not here in England, the stuff made here was hopeless: it was the German Schwabe system complete with a great cyclorama and pros. bridge-perch array which held the key to everything. Backed up, of course, by the standard compact regulator with levers at 1 3/4-inch centres to operate dimmers remotely by long stretches of tracker-wire over pulleys. The dimmers could be tall-frame resistances tapped to a vertical linear commutator: or, much better, a large transformer with multi-slider commutation all around it. Post the second war these have been generally referred to as Bordoni transformers, reputedly after the Italian inventor. What is certain is that all that equipment was much more expensive than anything Strand Electric then could dare to make for the U.K. market.

Expense did not deter John Christie. The German system went into Glyndebourne



Glyndebourne stage lighting 1934 from orchestra pit