

Cover picture: Glyndebourne Festival Opera's 1984 production *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Director: Peter Hall. Design and Lighting: John Bury.

Inside we celebrate Glyndebourne's 50th Anniversary with contributions from Frederick Bentham whose association with Glyndebourne goes back to 1934, and Francis Reid describing the middle period 1959-68 during which he was Glyndebourne's Lighting Director.

Both provide in vivid recall the many technical and artistic achievements which have helped to make Glyndebourne performances a unique operatic experience for 50 years.

Photography by Guy Gravett.

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James Twynam (Managing)  
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#### Editorial,

Advertising and Subscription Office:  
Twynam Publishing Ltd.,  
Kitemore, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8HR  
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# CUE

## Technical Theatre Review 30

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### CARBUNCLE DAY (The Thirtieth of May)

There is a hoary old showbiz proverb which claims that any publicity is good publicity provided that your name is spelled correctly. On this basis the Royal Institute of British Architects may have derived some long term comfort from the utterances of their Royal Patron on the evening of their 150th anniversary. Although the Prince's speech may have taken the edge off the appetite of some of the diners, his contribution propelled the event to a front page prominence that it would not have otherwise gained. Despite the risks involved through delivering ammunition into the mouths of the philistines, this publicity must surely be regarded as desirable. In recent years, debate and popular concern have been curiously absent in a society which inhabits an urban environment largely created by the architectural profession.

On the evening when *carbuncle* was added to the critical vocabulary, there does not seem to have been reference to the state of new *theatre* building. Which gives CUE its cue to affirm that we think that the state of theatre architecture is looking healthy.

In the last thirty years, theatre has survived the attentions of proscenium abolitionists and black-box depressives. Stages have generally become more workable. Audience togetherness is decreasingly sacrificed for purity of sightline. The air castor has turned multipurpose from dream to reality. And some of the theatres even look inviting from the street.

Our architects (and theatre consultants?) still seem committed to polygonal geometry and the purity of functional structures. Shall we soon witness a rediscovery of the curve, perhaps even accompanied by a new awareness of the possible contribution of the decorative arts? Who knows, we may even see a judicious reassessment of the merits of fibrous plaster!