

provision of front-of-house lighting in the State Theatre is, both from ceiling and sides, excellent. Not just in angle and access, but in the generous equipment provision:

No 3 FOH Bridge (28.5m to stage)

- 20 × Cadenza 12/22
- 8 × 4-colour semaphores.

No 2 FOH Bridge (20m to stage)

- 30 × Cadenza 19/32
- 12 × 4-colour semaphores

No 1 FOH Bridge (15.5m to stage)

- 20 × Harmony 15/28
- 10 × Silhouette 30
- 6 × Cadenza 19/32

Balcony Front (27m to stage)

- 20 × Harmony 15/28

Circle Front (24.5m to stage)

No fixed allocation

PS & OP Box Booms

- 25 × Harmony 15/28
 - 5 × 5-colour wheels
- each side.

Available for stage use are:

- 104 × Harmony 15/28
- 60 × Prelude 16/30
- 20 × Prelude 28/40
- 23 × Harmony Fresnels
- 75 × Castor Fresnels
- 9 × Pollux Fresnels
- 75 × Coda 4 batten sections
- 10 × Coda 4 float sections
- 12 × Iris 4 cyc units
- 12 × Palas 4 groundrows
- 20 × 5-colour wheels
- 24 × 12-way bars (4.5m)
- 8 × 6-way trackable ladders
- 2 × 8m perch ladders
- 14 × 6m booms

Control is by a 240-way Galaxy with:

- 2 × playbacks
- 1 × channel controller
- 1 × power and mimic panel
- 1 × memory keypad panel
- 1 × preset master panel
- 1 × group master panel
- 1 × alpha keyboard
- 1 × printer
- 1 × disc drives

There is an identical Galaxy in the Playhouse Theatre (but with 180 ways) while that in the Studio (100 ways) omits only the group master panel and one of the printers. The operational benefits of standardising to the same system in all theatres within a complex are obvious. But it is particularly interesting to note that virtually all Australian theatres are standardising on Galaxy and I, for one, shall be very interested to hear of the extent of the gains that must be derived from a uniformity of control desk. And facilities to cross reference between channel numbers of different layouts presents an open door to simplified touring.

There is a basic sound system which looked to my unsophisticated eye like amply adequate for effects and for the reinforcement of shows that were written in the pre-acoustic area. Productions where electronic sound is an intrinsic component of composition will be served, as is proper, by a temporary touring installation that transcends a mere “main auditorium speaker system based on a central cluster above the proscenium covering all seating

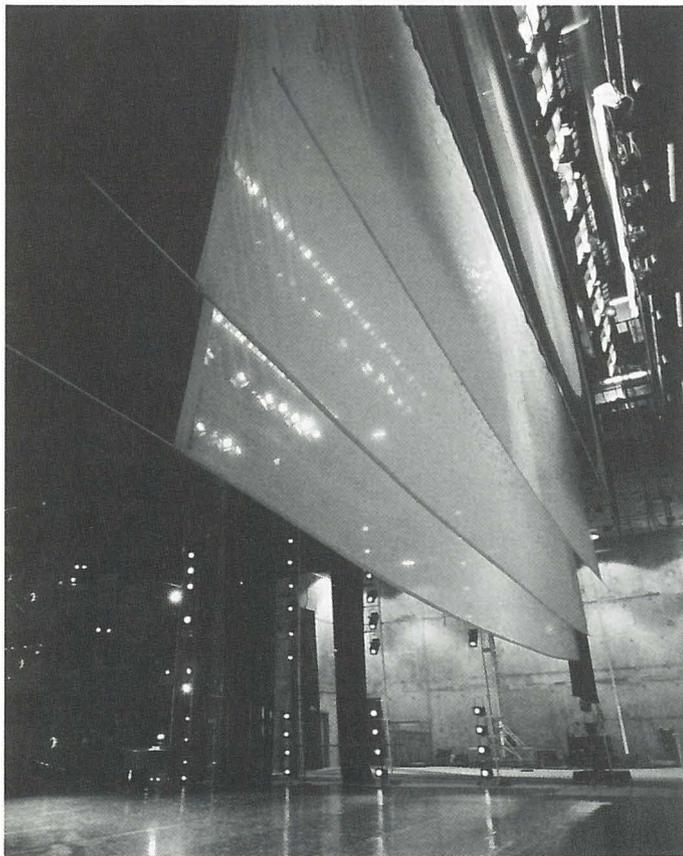
areas” and a “16 channel, 2 output mixer with a 2 post-fade auxilliary sends”.

The proscenium width is variable between 12 and 15.5m with a wall to wall of 45.88m (22.45m between fly floors). Proscenium height can vary from 6m to 9m and the depth of the main acting area is 17.5m or 31.95m to the back of the rear stage which is the parking area for the rear wagon of 16.44 × 13.21m (incorporating a revolve of 12.9m diameter). The side stages have wagons of half stage width (8.22m) and there are two of 6.6m depth at each side. All wagons are motorised with a speed range of 0-1m per sec, and they all can be equalised flush to the stage in both onstage and offstage positions. The flying system has 105 sets — up to 30 sets plus 5 spotlines can be patched to the control console at any one time to fly in up to six different modes of speed, direction etc.

In the face of all this space and flexibility, it seems churlish to question the practicality of the half-wagons from the side stages. Stage sets rarely split conveniently down the centre line. So will Melbourne see a lot of island sets, 8m wide, sitting within masking boxes?

Getting these sets in is by a hydraulic lift shared with the other stages in the complex. Capable of side or end loading, it is 15.37 × 4.10m and accepts a maximum height of 4.24m.

The form of the 850 seat **Playhouse** follows the same sightline philosophy as the State Theatre. Stalls and a single circle give each member of the audience a clear focus towards a proscenium stage with an elevator option for orchestra pit or apron stage. With a depth of 2.96m, this apron is rather token and represents the sort of restrained tinkering with the proscenium zone that produced a lot of head banging (especially at



Over the main stage are 111 power driven flylines.



The auditorium of the 850-seat Playhouse.