

76 panels of Hugh Oliveiro's mural 'The Seasons' reached up through three levels. This entry leads to the Box Office plaza with raspberry carpet, black glass ceiling and chrome finishes. From here every part of the building is accessible including the Centre's car park under the National Gallery, the rendezvous bar, the cloak room and the three theatres.

In John Truscott's view, the paintings are so strong a statement that people will know instantly where they are in the theatres. For example, the State Theatre circle foyer has 16 works commissioned from Arthur Boyd, the balcony foyer has 84 frames by Sydney Nolan and the stalls foyer nine operas inspired paintings by John Olsen (commissioned by John Truscott who motivated the painter with selected tapes, records and libretti). The Playhouse foyers include aboriginal paintings from the Northern Territories western desert, the Studio foyer has Noel Tunk's 'Gloria Swanson's Last Silent Movie' and Jeffrey Smart's 'Container Train in Landscape'. The Vic Restaurant is decorated with 222 original costume designs, mainly Edwardian, from productions staged in Melbourne and London between 1898 and 1920.

The Country Visitor's Lounge, is for visitors to Melbourne and is equipped with telephones, showers, comfortable seating and tea and coffee making facilities. (Now there is an ideal!) It is decorated with Anne Graham's triptych depicting 132 people at leisure in the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Of the mass of images which decorate, stimulate and perhaps even provoke, I mention but a few. I do believe, deeply, that such positive and hitherto rare co-existence of the visual and performing arts can only result in an enrichment of all forms and our perception of them.

The Victorian Arts Centre is a turning point in theatre architecture. It summarises the dominant form of our century and points the way forward to the decorative philosophy of the next.

Architects: Roy Grounds & Co Pty Ltd

Theatre Consultants: Tom Brown and

Associates

Interior Design Consultant: John Truscott

ABTT Trade Show Report

JAMES LAWS

Deadlines for Cue copy are to be respected, so I am writing this even as the last pieces of trussing are being loaded on the last lorry out of Hammersmith. There being no time for reflection, these notes on the best ABTT trade show ever, are doubtless sprinkled liberally with technical inanities but hopefully the main message - that this year Roger Fox, Ethel Langstroth and Ken Smalley got it right - will come across clearly. If anything was needed to persuade the powers that be that the ABTT's well being is vital to our industry, then this event was it.

The gamble in booking the entire Riverside Studios for the Trade show paid off handsomely and the resulting space between stands, more stands and larger stands gave exhibitors and visitors alike a chance to converse. The resultant blossoming of traders made one realise that we really do have a flourishing industry, not only is the rest of the world taking our products and consultants seriously but there are several foreign companies eager for our business.

A feature of the show was again the presentation of ABTT awards. Len Tucker was a popular, nay, unanimous choice as TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR. The marvellous job he made of taking over the lighting of Forty Second Street from Joe Davis in the saddest circumstances deserved a lasting tribute as did his many years at the Old Vic and the National. Len Tucker now joins the Board of Theatre Sound and Lighting (Services) Ltd where, as director in charge of lighting and design, his flare and experience will continue to serve the theatre.

The award for STAND OF THE YEAR went to Flint Hire, whose display of supplies for Carpentry and Paint shops was superb. The chippie standing amid sawdust at his bench was a nice touch - in fact this was one of the few stalls which had a feel of Theatre about it. Flint have been going since 1980 and now have their own range of powder paints and market their own stage braces and small scenery fittings.

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR was TBA Technology's Magic lantern range. This really is a new concept in spotlight design - a range with a distinctive shape (rounded), colour (blue) and the feeling that they are designed to a specification rather than down to a price. Optically for the Profile Spot, the 36 volt 400 watt Zenophot lamp's output is maximised by a twin-element condenser system. The conventional twin zoom lenses are anti-reflection coated and there are fresnel and pebble convex lensed versions. According to the excellent literature the useful light output is comparable with that from conventional 1000 watt units, which are much more expensive to run.

The traditional problems of low voltage-transformers and dimmers being non-compatible and the slow rise and decay time have been solved by two options, both

involving electronics in the rear of the spotlight. The "Dimmer Follow" is an electronic dimmer output converter with a dimmer knob built in for local use. This can be upgraded to the full magic of Networking where the control signal from the lighting board is fed to the dimmer on the Magic Lantern - will there come a time when theatres are built without dimmer rooms? Quite likely, quite soon is my guess.

TBA have also produced a 500/650 watt range of spots - the TBA 65 series, with the same quality of bodywork - easy access to lens cleaning, barndoors/colourframe retention and so on. Again the Zoom Profile's condenser optics give it a great increase in output compared with other 650 luminaires. Prudent did well to back TBA's manufacturing division - as Tom Burnham says "As a lighting designer I can't wait to get my hands on a rig of profiles." Production commences in the early autumn.



Len Tucker (right) winner of the 'Technician of the Year' award.

Last year in my Trade Show review I bemoaned the fact that "there was not one single British designed CSI or HMI followspot on show." This year Rank Stand repaired the omission with their Solist - available in 2KW or CSI version. Although not as smooth mechanically as others on view it is a robust unit with good mechanical dimming, three brightness settings on the ballast of the CSI, a curious optical sighting arrangement which some people will find quite useful and good variable beam optics. The Rank controls on view included the compact Act 6 which is a 6-way dimmer pack which has its own built in control faders or the facility to connect the rack to any output of a remote controller via Soft Patch. The Gemini memory control with its designer created effects system was also creating much interest. Again Strand laid emphasis on their dealer network and the now-familiar yellow jerseys were much in evidence.

CCT Theatre Lighting also had one new luminaire on display - the 1000 watt Starlette flood. This is the first asymmetric flood with removable lead but most users

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