with an understanding and critical appreciation of all the arts, both visual and performing. Grace is also a brilliant stage manager, paying meticulous attention to the smallest details, anticipating where arrangements might just possibly go awry and taking action to ensure that difficulties just do not arise. Throughout my tour, whether with me or back in the office, Grace Krishnaswami made sure that I saw as much as possible in the easiest possible way.

At the Ravindra Bharati theatre, Calcutta Puppet Theatre play a morning Aladdin for a young audience. This theatre is a chunky 1500 seater with stalls and single circle, focussing with cinematic sightlines to a wide deep stage. I have the benefit of a seat in the front row (one of the comfortable recliners that are common in Indian theatres) but the response behind me indicates that the puppets are having no trouble in projecting to all parts of the house. These puppets have an incredible subtlety of movement. I think that this is the first time in my life that I have achieved a suspension of disbelief that I am watching manipulated puppets rather than human actors. Going backstage afterwards, Suresh Dutta and his puppeteers show me at close quarters just what can be done with a stick in the hands of a sympathetic operator. The curve of the carved hand coordinates with the curve of the face so that both appear to quiver with muscular life as they touch.

## OSMANIA UNIVERSITY

The Department of Theatre Arts is a postgraduate school where, to enable students to support their studies with employment, teaching is concentrated into evenings and weekends. The buildings are old, relaxed and shady. Portraits of former principals, all Cambridge men, hang from each of the many columns in the long hall used for productions. Temporary stages are used to explore various actor/audience relationships. Lighting positions are good but the spots need careful nurturing, particularly in lamp and reflector centering, to give optimum light. And patching twenty spots to six autotransformer dimmers brings my own past into sharp focus. When I remember . . . gosh, today we really do have an incredibly easy life with modern control systems! Exploring lighting situations as a group once again proves that it is not so much the equipment that you use but where you put it and point it that is important. We use the department's forthcoming production of an anti-war play in the Ravinda Bharati theatre as a vehicle for discussions on the total design process.

# SALAR JUNG

Take refreshment with the director of the Salar Jung Museum which houses the personal collection assembled by the Nawab Salar Jung III. Some 35,000 exhibits displayed in 35 rooms. Items from all over the world but one area of particular strength is English Paintings, many of which have only recently been identified. But I am, naturally at this point, much more hooked on the Indian art whose images are influencing me in a way that they have never been able to do previously. It is, I suppose, the immediacy of being with the people, their life, landscape and light.

# LIGHT MYSTICISM

Discussing the design process at an open lecture at the university, I talk of the nonlogical decisions that are central to any art. My suggestion that my soul is located in my gut leads to a debate on the extent to which mysticism is involved in the process of theatre design in general and lighting in particular. Much later tonight I hear that 'the

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proscenium arch was one of the more unfortunate imports from Victorian England'.

### AUTO RICKSHAWS

Transport in Hyderabad is by 'auto' rickshaws with three wheels to their chassis and two strokes to their engines. They weave, horns trumpeting, through a dense traffic that frequently includes herds of cattle who leisurely stroll along the main streets, particularly during the evening rush hour. There is a generally agreed declaration of intent to drive on the left but this does not preclude making a U-turn in one's own lane if that seems apt. I place my trust in my drivers and concentrate on absorbing the kaleidoscope of life that passes my eyes, screwed up against the glare since discarding sun glasses because they distort the delicate colours.

It is an auto that takes me to climb the famed 16th century **Charminar** and to the stage of the recently completed **Telegu Larita Kala Thorana** outdoor theatre for 4,000 audience. Essentially a cinema but with a potential for epic stagings and built in, yes, three months. I have two final images of Hyderabad. The sunset of the last evening high above the city from the new Hindu temple, gloriously carved from white marble. And the make-up seller squatting on the pavement behind his little mounds of richly coloured, finely ground cosmetic powders.

# AVRO TO BANGALORE

The advantage of unpressurised propeller aeroplanes is that they fly low enough to study the terrain while breakfasting on grapes, croissants and spicy fried balls with chutney. The drive through Bangalore from airport to hotel shows an immediate difference from Hyderabad. But then India is a union of states and I have moved from Andhra Pradesh to Karnataka. Morever Hyderabad was ruled by the Nizams, alone among the Indian Princes given the distinction of being called His Exalted Highness by the British, whereas Bangalore was a hill station of the Raj. It is still a major military centre and the roads are laid out wide, straight and tree lined. The West End Hotel is a series of verandahed buildings set amidst trees alive with birdsong. The beer, like the pool, is cool, the papaya delicious, and the service discreetly relaxed but impeccable. It would be easy to develop a taste for the highness of this life.

#### VIOLIN THEATRE

Grace Krishnaswami is very secretive about the **Chowdiah Memorial Hall**. I am driven to a bridge where I will get a sudden and complete view and, now, I understand why. Unique is an overused word but it certainly applies to this theatre built in the form of a violin as a dedication to the virtuoso who invented a seven stringed violin. The shape of the instrument lends itself rather well to the requirements of a theatre — indeed it does so rather more successfully than many of the geometric modules much favoured by the architectural profession. This theatre is reported to have been designed by an artist