Another chronology of a national lyric company is to be enjoyed in THE ROYAL BALLET, Katherine Sorley Walker and Sarah C. Woodcock's picture history, now in a second revised edition timed to gladden christmas for the new generation of balletomanes who have evolved since the book was first published in celebration of the Royal Ballet's fiftieth anniversary in 1981. The Company rightly dates itself from the first full evening of ballet at the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells theatres in 1931, and the book starts with 1920 images of the key figures, including Ninette de Valois, Frederick Ashton Constant Lambert and Billy Chappell, who were part of a surging gestation that almost made inevitable the emergence of a British ballet tradition.

Factually captioned photographs (over 300 of them) are linked chronologically by a spare text which records success and the people who generated it. If the Royal Ballet companies have known traumas and deficits, they are not mentioned here. But what comes through strongly, yet again, is that the only catalyst for creating performance companies is single minded determination on the part of dedicated individuals. Pictures and listings (productions, choreographers and dancers) combine to make an essential reference and an enjoyable browse.

While the movies do talk, as advertised, they haven't anything to say wrote an early critic of the talkers. That they were originally called talkers rather than talkies is the kind of detail revealed by Alexander Walker's **THE SHATTERED SILENTS** which chronicles the transitional years during which silence was tentatively then totally abandoned. "Quit while you've still got your looks and be thankful for the trust fund

that mother set up" is the sort of cable that Noel Coward might have sent-but it was advice to Norma Talmadge from her sister. A message whose generous wordage would not have met with approval from the studio who ordered the elimination of the word 'regards' from all telegrams as an economy measure as they grappled with budgeting for the new technology. Alexander Walker takes us chronologically through an intense three years, sifting the scattered evidence for a masterly reconstruction of a crazy period when the significant events overlapped in multiple layers due to the frenzied pace of development. Of the many strands in the tale, the most fascinating is perhaps the struggle for the art to absorb, yet overcome, the technology; particularly as film first succumbed to, and then freed itself from, the grips of "The Monitor Man"-a role of metaphorical significance for all technological developments in the arts!

Macmillan continue to provide expert help in getting to the core of dramatic texts. The contributors to the *Casebook* Series volume on **HAROLD PINTER** read like a roll call of the leading interpreters, commentators and critics of the post-war era. An essential contribution to the research programme of anyone concerned with preparing a staging of The Birthday Party, The Caretaker or The Homecoming.

The *Text & Performance* series analyses the text and considers interpretation on the basis of specific recent productions. Graham Nicholls considers **MEASURE FOR MEASURE** through the RSC of 1970 & 1975, Charles Marowitz's Open Space of 1975, and the BBC TV of 1979. He amply demonstrates the validity and practicality of this approach.

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My copy of Rosco's SUPERGEL GUIDE arrived on the day that I had scheduled myself to gel a pantomime plan. So I decided that for the first time in my life I would colour an entire show with supergel. I was weaned on Strand gelatine and educated on Cinemoid. With maturity I increasingly introduced Roscolene. The arrival of high temperature filters brought confusion and frustration: lovely stuff, but Rosco and Strand opted for wildly different numbers for a product that appears to come from the same source (neither have formally agreed this-but then they have never denied it). When Cinemoid shrank to the point of losing even 61 and 38 (and nowhere can I find a 38 lookalike) I decided to call it a day: a decision softened by the disappearance of the word Cinemoid in one of these marketing flurries which may invigorate the sales force but don't half alienate we grandpas among the customers.

So I set about converting the cool/warm/neutral and tint/saturated codes on my plan into specific supergel numbers. The well tried ones were easy but for the rest I looked at the light transmission through the samples in my swatch book. I chose a lot of filters for the first time (after all, I do tell my students to live dangerously and take risks—artistically of course, not with ladders!) And in doing so I let my response to the coloured light be tempered by the advice in the Supergel Guide.

Did it work? I don't know yet, so this book review will have to be completed in CUE 45. Meanwhile why not get your own copy of the Supergel Guide: its free from Rosco.

HOLLYWOOD: LEGEND AND REALITY. Edited by Michael Webb. Pavilion Books (Michael Joseph) £25 (UK).

**ZEFFIRELLI.** The Autobiography of Francos Zeffirelli. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. £14.95 (UK).

WELSH NATIONAL OPERA. Richard Fawkes. Julia MacRae Books. £14.95 (UK).

**THE ROYAL BALLET: A PICTURE HISTORY.** Kathrine Sorley Walker and Sarah C. Woodcock. Threshold Books (Harraps). £9.95 (paperback) (UK).

**THE SHATTERED SILENTS.** How the Talkies Came to Stay. Alexander Walker. New edition. Harrap. £5.95 (Paperback) (UK).

HAROLD PINTER: The Birthday Party, The Caretaker, The Homecoming. Edited by Michael Scott. Macmillan (Casebook Series) £20 (UK) £6.95 (paperback) (UK). MEASURE FOR MEASURE. Graham Nicholls. Macmillan Text & Performance Series. £4.95 (UK) (paperback).

**SUPERGEL GUIDE.** Suggestions on How to Use Supergel Colour Filters. Also available as a poster. Roscolab Ltd. Free.