

# PRODUCT NEWS

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Unlikely as it may seem, the advertising agencies responsible for sending out press releases about theatre personalities and products seem to take a long break over the summer holiday season. Consequently the information passed on from the editorial office is a bit thin this time and this review of their output even more of a rag-bag than usual.

First, the only new product. This is an announcement from Scintilla Technology Ltd. that they have produced a unique low priced computer based foot-operated 4 way lighting control board. Maestros of the Grand Master and the theatre lighting application of the cinema organ of the '30s and '40s were justifiably proud of the uses that could be devised for the operators feet but more up to date controls have totally ignored the pedal possibilities. It is therefore only a slight disappointment to learn that 'Tootsy' is intended for the stand-up musician and is specifically geared to the flash, sound-to-light and chase effects without which no modern musical performance of this genre can be considered complete.



Nevertheless, theatre designers currently frustrated by the impossibility of current house boards to achieve the more inventive of their effects might see a use for the device as an add on. Contact Unit 42, City Industrial Park, Southern Road, Southampton.

The professional publicist may be on holiday but Graham Walne does his own publicity and announced in June that his book 'Sound for Theatres - A Basic Manual', now in use worldwide as a training manual, is to be extensively re-written for a second edition from the publishing house of Adam and Charles Black. In another handout he boasts of clocking up his fiftieth trip across the Atlantic, not merely to earn the free champagne presented by the airline, but as lighting designer for over 16 shows for Sarah Caldwell and her Opera Company. Back home Graham continues a 7 year association with the Vanessa Ford company and announces that from experiences gained while lighting 74 shows for her in 42 regional theatres he intends 'to do something about the lack of trained staff in

regional theatre'. A Walne Academy of Technical Theatre perhaps? Or a series of scholarships and bursaries? Watch this space for Graham's next announcement.

Philip L. Edwards also offers a home brewed press release. His hire service has benefitted from EEC cash to improve and expand the Glossop, Derbyshire premises and Phil's activities in lighting design and as supplier of the lighting rig for the Buxton Festival continue to flourish.

Next in the pile comes a series of announcements about the moves of personalities from company to company and, indeed, of moves of companies to new ownership.

News from Lee Colortran is that Joe Thornley, the greatly experienced designer of theatre and TV lanterns, first for Mole Richardson and then for Strand, has joined them at the Thetford factory once owned by Mole-Richardson to develop a new range aimed at professional theatre. Some day soon the Lee organisation must be planning a really impressive launch of their product into the theatre market.

Having lost Joe and, some while ago, Mike Lowe, Strand announced the appointment of Michael Jukes as Managing Director of their European operation. Michael comes from ITT Cannon and Amphenol. One of his first public appearances to the theatre trade was as host at a meeting of lighting designers at the Swan Theatre at Stratford where Mike and the Strand sales and technical team, supported by a guest appearance of Francis Reid (in a re-write of the role originally scripted for Joe Thornley) demonstrated a wide new range of products that will presumably be the subject of insider reviews elsewhere in Cue and future product reviews.

CCT, not to be outdone in this summer game of musical chairs, announced a new Export Sales Manager, Graham Bowen, filling the vacancy created when Mike Wooderson left to set up his own export agency in the spring. Graham was previously with Green Ginger Ltd. as Marketing Director and at Philips, though he trained originally at the Royal College of Music.

Now to the changes of ownership.

Back in April ADB announced that it had been taken over by the German electrical giant, Siemens. Owned until then by the founding De Backer family, ADB must be the last of the great European lighting firms to pass from private ownership. Siemens intend to keep and develop the ADB operation in theatre, television and airfield lighting which sells successfully in the world market. It will be interesting to see

what the future holds for Siemens own theatre lighting division at Erlangen.

Next, a new company, Lytemode Ltd. announces its formation as a joint venture between GTE Rotaflex and Glenlyte Inc. and has taken over the business of Concord Controls. This is of interest to theatre lighting people because Concord products include the Green Ginger range of stage lighting systems. Lytemode intend to offer highly innovative new products for architectural lighting control based on advanced microprocessor technology developed by Glenlyte in the USA.

Finally, back to people.

Did you know that Glyndebourne are considering rebuilding? Seeking to improve acoustics, increase revenue and provide for long term financial security and to satisfy the continuing increase in demand for tickets, George Christie has appointed John Bury as theatre consultant to carry out a feasibility study. As an eminently successful opera stage designer as well as his involvement as with the design of theatres at the Barbican and elsewhere John is uniquely qualified for this challenge. The feasibility study should be ready at the end of the year and if approved, appointment of the architect should follow in mid 1988.

## Strand Galaxy for National Theatre

Strand Lighting announce it has won an order from London's National Theatre for a 528 channel Galaxy memory lighting control system for the Lyttleton auditorium. This completes the replacement programme for the National's three switchboards.

Strand's lighting controls have also been specified and installed in the Cottesloe Theatre, where a 768 channel Galaxy system is in use and a 180 channel Strand Gemini control in the studio theatre.

