

Cover:

Nigel Osborne's new opera *The Electrification of the Soviet Union* at Glyndebourne, Conductor: Elgar Howarth, Director: Peter Sellars, Designer: George Tsypius, Costumes: Dana Ramicova, Lighting: James F Ingalls, Photo: Guy Gravitt.

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## AT THE 1987 PLASA SHOW

Less noise, less smoke, and perhaps even less flashing – well comparatively less – was our overriding impression of the 1987 PLASA *Light and Sound Show*. Was this a fact or was it just that one is becoming acclimatised? If there was anything really new, then we failed to discover it. There were doubtless lots of refinements in how you can choreograph a motorised truss or sequence its Pars. However our Plasa mission was not so much to examine the niceties of badge engineering, but to seek new interactions between the various fields of lighting for entertainment. Such interaction is now commonplace in the exploitation of new light sources and in the remoting of pan and tilt movements. But what next?

Perhaps it is just that we cuepersons are stuck in our theatrical ways, but we have to say that most of the carefully programmed disco sequences look rather random to us. Certainly they get ever more frenetic, although this year it did rather look as if the growth in frenzy had peaked. The growth curve may only have settled on the horizontal but is likely to be perceived as a fall by the punters. The disco bubble could well burst if more attention is not paid to the old theatrical craft of pacing.

So what could theatre learn from the show? Alas, not a lot. Rigging? Styling? Perhaps. But mostly let us just be thankful that the rock/disco market is big enough to sustain the level of competitive product development that leads to the JEM HF2000 Heavy Fog machine which really does simulate the effect of a dry ice carpet on the stage floor.

Perhaps we expect too much. After all, stage and disco lighting are for different environments: the one for passive observers, the other for active participants. Nevertheless we are all in Showbiz together and so have surely everything to gain from cross-fertilisation.