

# STRAND'S BRISTOL SPECTACTULAR

Lighting for Entertainment at the Theatre Royal

FRANCIS REID

**Strand Spectacular** played Bristol Old Vic's Theatre Royal in a performance lasting some eleven hours over three September days. This was not a Strand attempt to produce a lighting answer to Wagner's Ring. It was just that they had so many new product goodies to reveal and explain to their distributors.

Launching product in a real theatre gives a chance for some showbiz razzmatazz in the presentation. But, more importantly, a theatre allows the lights to be shown in their natural environment. Both manufacturer and user suffer from the traditional spotlight demo where the light is projected flat-on to a white wall at the wrong throw distance.

Strand invited me to demonstrate the new spotlights at Bristol. My brief was not to sell these lights but to put them in situations where they could speak for themselves. So I strutted the stage as a lighting designer, focussing them from the positions where they might be used in a theatre. I have also had an opportunity of visiting a theatre where prototypes of the new **Cantata** range were field tested as part of the rig for a couple of months: the condition of the shutters and focus mechanics was very encouraging, as was the response of the electricians crew.

The Bristol event also gave me an opportunity of checking through the new and revised filter ranges with the aid of a model (Nicola who appears on all the new swatch books, no less). Therefore in summarising the new product ranges, I can speak with the advantage of some hands-on experience of the spots and filters; and of closely observ-

ing the function of the control systems and performance of the remote-operated luminaires.

## Spotlights

Harmony is dead — long live **Cantata!**

The new Cantata range comprises three variable angle profiles, a PC and a Fresnel. The profiles are known by their beam angles:

Cantata 11/26

Cantata 18/32

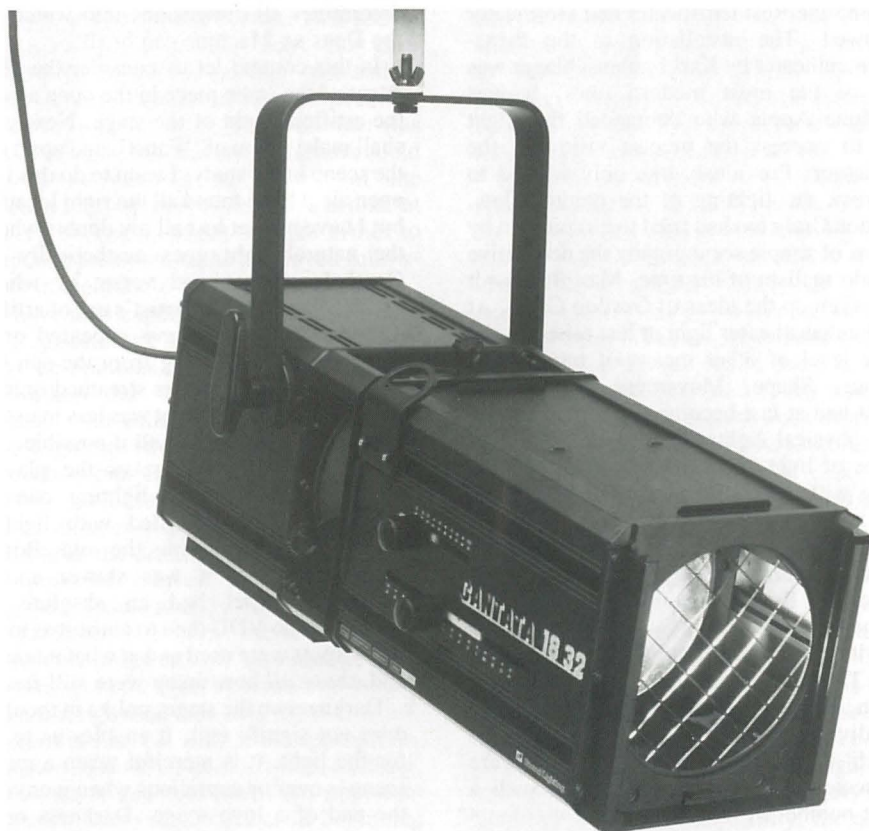
Cantata 26/44

I suspect that the Cantata 18/32 could become the average theatre's workhorse profile over the next decade. The series has a number of mechanical updates which will cheer those who meet them at the top of a ladder or on the maintenance bench, including a new robust fail-safe plug & socket connection and a versatile suspension fork. I particularly welcome the lamphouse/shutter assembly to which the lens front can

be quickly attached in alternative attitudes so that the focus controls are positioned at either side or at the top or bottom. These focus controls are well presented with the lower control knob track for beam angle and the upper for focus, used in conjunction with a best-yet rear knob for flat/peak field adjustment.

All this is the routine progress which, if we do not dare to expect, we certainly hope for! But the real excitement of Cantata comes from two features which Strand are entitled to propose as breakthroughs.

Firstly, all Cantatas use the new RSE 29 1200watt lamp. This means more light, yet a pair can still be controlled from one dimmer. All Strand dimmers (and most others) from the dawn of thyristors, even when labelled as 2kW, are 10amp dimmers and will not only handle the load in theory but have been soak tested in practice. Cantatas may, of course, also be used with 1kW lamps: the new lamp has a different light centre length from the RSE 19 lamp, but lamp height is quickly adjustable via a



CANTATA 18/32 Profile Spot

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