

Cover:
Temples of thespis is Francis Reid's description of Taiwan's National Theatre and Concert Hall. Our cover picture captures the willow pattern setting of the National Theatre in the Chang Kai-Shek Memorial park in Taipei.

CUE

Technical Theatre Review 51

Jan/Feb 1988

£1.75

CONTENTS

Stage Design <i>David Fingleton</i>	4
Pondering in the Playhouse <i>Frederick Bentham</i>	7
The Playhouse Restored <i>Francis Reid</i>	12
Book Reviews	13
Product News	14
British Council Theatre Lighting Course	15
Taiwan's Post-modern Triumph <i>Francis Reid</i>	16

STATES OR MOVES?

The world of lighting control seems to have become as divided about its computer philosophy as the linguistic academics are split over structuralism. At CUE we certainly don't understand the structuralist debate and we are not at all sure that we understand the tracking one. But let us try. Particularly since, although it is quite possible to enjoy a book without having heard of structuralism, it could be rather brave to set out to choose a board without considering whether it records states or moves when in default mode.

The divide started as a mid-atlantic one. When Britain added computer processing to lighting control, most theatres were using multipreset boards and so the new technology was used to memorise complete cue states in order to provide what were essentially infinite preset systems. In America the big impulse to memorise came later and because it became from Broadway (Chorus Line, 1975) the jump was straight from piano boards without an intermediate phase of electronic presetting (despite George Izenour's pioneering work in educational theatre) and so the computer processing was applied to the cue-to-cue moves rather than to the cue states.

We suspect that British users were more actively involved than the American users in the debate over how the new technologies were to be used. We also suspect that computer people like the move philosophy because it saves memory capacity and so appeals to their concept of engineering elegance. And no one who has faced one of those American domestic television sets where you have to hit 'enter' every time you key a new channel is ever surprised that it generally takes more button pushing (or key stroking if you must) to get action on an American lighting board than on a British one.

Should there be such a divide? Surely not? Surely each and every board (certainly those for use in professional theatre) should be capable of working in either mode. Perhaps because we are British, we think that 'state' should be the default mode with 'move' as a selectable option.

But our main concern remains that all boards should be reliable and operator friendly. Alas, few are both and many are neither.

Cue is an independent magazine
published bi-monthly by
Twynam Publishing Ltd.

Available on subscription
UK £10.50 per annum (6 issues)
Europe and Overseas £13.00 (\$25 U.S.)

Editorial Board

James Twynam (Managing)

Francis Reid

Jeremy Twynam

Editorial,

Advertising and Subscription Office:

Twynam Publishing Ltd.,

Kitemore, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8HR

Telephone 0367 21141