

Lighting & Sound international

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entertainment, presentation, communication

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Lord of the Rings in Toronto

Middle Earth hits the stage in a *big way* . . .

Midas & Soundcraft go digital

L&SI catches up with two major product launches: the XL8 from Midas and the Vi6 from Soundcraft . . .

David Gilmour On Tour

Pink Floyd's front man tours solo again

Robe's ColorSpot 1200E AT

Another in-depth product analysis

Olympic Productions L&SI reports from Turin

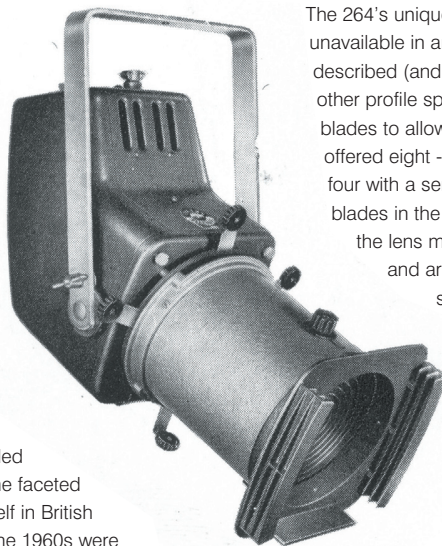
Classic Gear: The Strand Patt 264

Rob Halliday takes a nostalgic but instructive look back at the tools that have shaped the industry . . .

UK - Before the Source Four became the *de facto* standard fixed-angle profile spotlight, before Selecon discovered that spotlights looked more interesting with an angled back end, there was the Strand Patt 264.

Designed by Fred Bentham, introduced in 1962 and making its first appearance in Richard Pilbrow's lighting design for Lionel Bart's *Blitz!*, the Patt 264 was a 1kW profile spotlight with a 17° beam angle focused - exactly as with the Source Four - by loosening a focus knob and sliding the lens assembly backwards and forwards. The entire lens tube was mounted with a hinge to the lamphouse, so could be swung open for access to the reflector or lens.

From the outside, the 264's defining feature was the angled lamphouse that pre-tilted the lamp by 30° as it entered the faceted ellipsoidal reflector. Over time, the 264 so established itself in British theatre that the lighting bridges in some new venues of the 1960s were designed around its lamphouse, making it hard for those theatres to switch to more modern lanterns years later - they simply didn't fit. In later years, some theatres took to running their 264s upside down when using them with base-down rather than the specified base-up lamps - something that always looked just plain wrong; more recently, long-time technicians have been known to rig Selecon's Pacific lanterns - incorrectly - with their curved base 'up', based on their memories of the 264.



The 264's unique selling point, though, and one that is unavailable in any current product, is that it was described (and patented) as a "Bifocal Spot". Where other profile spotlights have one set of four shutter blades to allow the shaping of the beam, the 264 offered eight - four with the conventional straight edge, four with a serrated edge. The slight separation of the blades in the optical path and poor depth-of-focus of the lens meant that it was possible to focus the light and arrange the shutters with a mixture of sharp-edged and soft-edged shutter cuts perfect for keeping the light off scenery while gently blending units together.

For those who didn't need that functionality (or had lower budgets), there was also a Patt 263 - only four shutters plus a fresnel type lens - as well as 'W' wide-angle versions of both units. The 263 and 264 were eventually replaced by the Patt 763 and 764 and

then the T64, all more functional looking units that somehow lost the 264's unique character and started the trend towards boxy, rectangular lanterns that would continue for many years.

Visit the Strand Archive for more information:
 >>> www.strandarchive.co.uk

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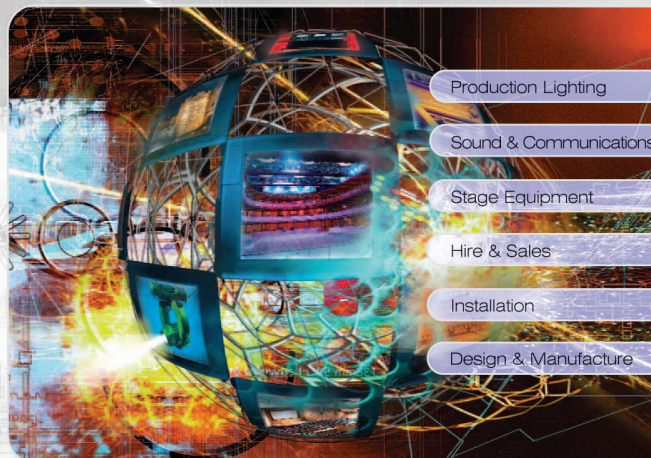
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