

**A DOUBLE BILL PRESENTED LIGHTING DESIGNER TREFOR ROBERTS WITH A PROBLEM IN THIS PRODUCTION AT HEMEL HEMPSTEAD SCHOOL. HERE HE EXPLAINS HIS SOLUTIONS TO LIGHTING...**

# 'DRACULA SPECTACULAR' AND 'PINEAPPLE POLL'

**T**wo very different productions were chosen for this double bill, one being a musical, the other a classical ballet. They both required very different lighting styles.

The ballet needed to be bright and airy, and modelling of the dancers was high on the list of priorities, whereas the musical had to be predominantly dark and gloomy throughout. Due to restricted hanging space (even after rigging three extra bars!) we were forced to use liberal amounts of, in Douglas Adams' words, 'the answer to everything', Surprise Pink.

For the ballet there were only two dancing areas, in front of the gauze, and behind the gauze. For Dracula there were three main areas. Behind the gauze, just in front of the gauze, and downstage. So the areas corresponded favourably between the two shows.

Three cross washes consisting of four 500W Fresnels, one for each area, made up the general dance illumination, which was used throughout both pieces. These were gelled with Surprise Pink. For 'Poll' these provided the dimensional modelling required, and in Dracular, gave us the spooky hollow eye socket effect that we were looking for. I must say that it was more effective than we originally imagined.

Colour was added by three 1kW Zoom profiles, in the wings on either side, with colour wheels to change between the pinks and ambers of the ballet, and the blues of the musical. Four more Zoom profiles were located

## ■ Pineapple Poll



■ *Dracula Spectacular*. Surprise Pink gave a spooky hollow eye socket effect.

FOH on saddle brackets right on the edge of the proscenium, also with colour wheels. These provided colour, and facial fill light, without being too flattening in the process.

We did what the text books decreed and I got 8 500W floods lighting it from an extremely steep angle. However, this only made the top half of the gauze go opaque. Those 1kW profiles that we had in the wings came to the rescue. I noticed, while setting, that the gauze went opaque when light from two of the profiles, just by the gauze, skimmed across it, so I deliberately set them to skim the gauze when it was in place and it just about worked, with the floods.

Four 1kW Fresnels were employed as actor 'bash'. These again were gelled with Surprise Pink and were set straight in, rather than crossed, because when they were in use they were there to provide as much light as possible, no matter how flattening it was.

These were very useful in the finales of both productions when over one hundred performers were on stage.

In addition to the cross washes, six Pattern 23's were used to provide top/back light for the ballet and were gelled up with rose.

I used six Pattern 23's from a bar light upstage, so that they backlit the dancers, arranged as two sets of three, one gelled in red, the other in green.

I then manually faded up to about half, for illumination, the four Zoom profiles FOH with blue/green gels selected, and this stayed 'constant' for the rest of the song until the end, when I soloed the red Pattern 23's as the dancers froze, the cue finally ending with a DBO. The red 23's provided a stark and effective effect which rounded the song off nicely.

**Footnote:** Originally Strand's No.36 Cinemoid, 'Surprise Pink' was officially described as 'Pale Lavender' and gained the 'Surprise' name from the apparent change from what appeared to be a lavender gel to produce flattering pink tones to performer's faces when used in front of a spotlight. The effect changes noticeably with variations in intensity.