

A UNIQUE TELEVISION THEATRE NEAR LONDON BRIDGE IS NOW 'HOME' TO A CHAT SHOW HOSTED BY THAT RISING STAR AMONGST PRESENTERS, JONATHAN ROSS (AND IF OVERSEAS READERS HAVE NOT YET HEARD OF THE PERSONABLE MR ROSS, THEY SOON WILL). HERE WE SEE HOW IN EVERY SENSE 'THE GREENWOOD' IS A FULLY...

OPERATING THEATRE

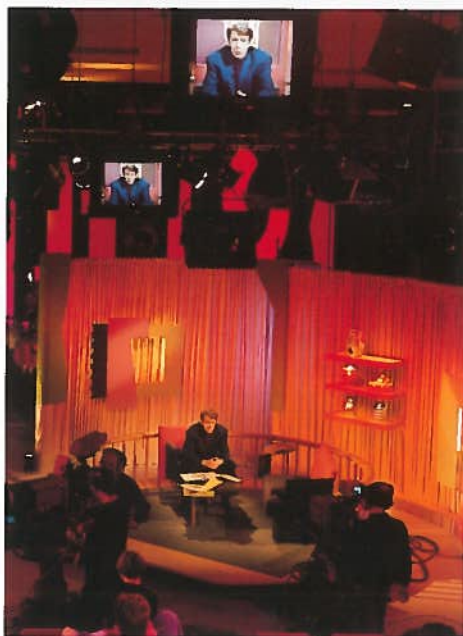
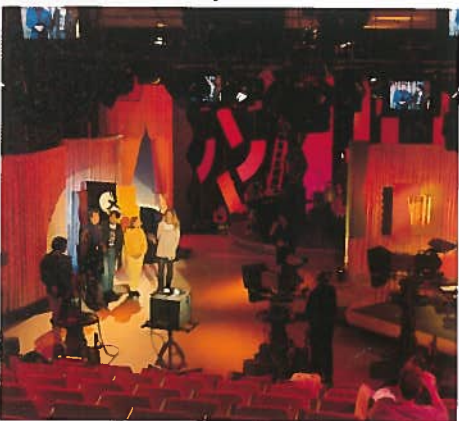
The story goes that when a wealthy benefactor of London's Guy's Hospital left money in his will for a new theatre, what he meant was a new operating theatre. What the hospital got, thanks to a liberal interpretation of his last request, was *The Greenwood*, one of Britain's most up-to-date television theatres.

That the late Sir James Mantle Greenwood, CBE, JP — a former Governor of Guy's — was also a theatre buff, suggests that the story is apocryphal but it makes a nice little tale, nonetheless. Sir James, who died in 1969, would no doubt be thrilled at the way *The Greenwood* has shaped up.

It is now a base for Jonathan Ross (he of the trademark speech impediment), whose live chat show *Tonight with Jonathan Ross* is broadcast three times a week on Channel 4. What Mr 'Woss' is no doubt untroubled by is the knowledge that, in TV circles, he is unique in having both a Galaxy and an MX24, working in unison to control his studio lights.

Although still within the limits of Guy's, and formerly used by medical students for their own amateur dramatic productions, *The Greenwood* was acquired by the BBC for *Question Time* and transformed into a TV theatre. It later served as a chat show home for the late Russell Harty. Now it is operated by Network One on behalf of the Guy's Trustees and forms an additional studio to Network One's other studio in Gillingham.

■ All set-up and ready to run.



■ Jonathan Ross on stage.

Technical Manager, Andrew Dixon, first came to *The Greenwood* in its BBC days, and has since returned. In the way that modern TV production works, Jonathan Ross's show is produced by an independent production company, Channel X. One of Channel X's stipulations for using *The Greenwood* was that studio facilities should be of sufficiently high standard for a 'flagship' production. As a result, new cameras were brought in and the sound system up-graded.

Andrew explained, 'I was very worried that with the sound and camera departments being up-graded, it would highlight the fact that the original lighting controls — not Strand — were clumsy to operate and did not have the facilities for producing rock shows when the company wanted them.'

The industry 'standard' for studios being the Galaxy 3, this was mentioned to Mike Sutcliffe, Channel X's lighting director. Mike felt that the Galaxy might limit his plans for rock lighting, and wanted to bring in a huge 'rock board' console — which again, would not be suitable for some of the other types of production under consideration.

The market was tried and tested for

the most suitable lighting control systems. Fortunately for *The Greenwood* and for Strand Lighting, a meeting between Andrew and Strand's Alan Luxford brought the new MX system into the conversation.

As a result, Andrew and Mike Sutcliffe compromised and now feel they have the best of both worlds from Strand Lighting — a Galaxy 3 system and an MX24. Both boards are used on their own merits for various phases of lighting design, but the MX is used additionally as a back-up for the Galaxy.

Andrew explained, 'MX was a gift at the right time. I went to the PLASA exhibition and saw what MX could do. It came in the nick of time.'

'I was concerned that MX might be limited. But at the PLASA exhibition I was shown how you can take in more channels on the board by means of a soft patch.'

'The fact that it was capable of doing chases and that you can flash channels individually was also very much in its favour.'

■ Galaxy and MX.



For Jonathan Ross's show, the Galaxy is used for interview lighting and the MX board for the show's music acts.

With professional operational staff at *The Greenwood* there has been no need to use a MIDI interface with the MX. Besides, the lighting team prefer to carry through the 'live' feel of the show by running chases manually when they can — when end credits are rolling, for example.