'LIGHTING FOR GODOT'

It was just before the sticky summer of 1990 set in, that I was asked by the Strangeways Rooftop players to light their production of *Waiting for Godot* in the Edinburgh Festival.

We arrived in Edinburgh, made hastily for the theatre and got to work on the fit-up, a day ahead of the rest.

I had met with the set designer and director a few months before hand and we had 'finalised' a set plan and an overall concept for the show, which the lighting would have to enhance.

It is a very surreal play. However the lighting for the production had to look predominantly simple and naturalistic for the most part.

The play itself calls for a day and night lighting state. We were to add a dusk state and few very surreal states for various parts of the show. We had decided that the show should seemingly be seen through a picture frame, as if in places the audience were

(A bit 20th Century Foxish). The tabs then opened to reveal a small white screen in the set which was being strobed quickly, whilst the rest remained in darkness. This was to give a sort of cinema feel. On final and rousing note of the show's musical prelude, the strobing window disappeared to reveal two screens with projections of grey skies, recessed into an otherwise black set.

The stage was being top lit in 'Brilliant blue', and the solitary white tree (the only other scenic piece) being cross lit from a perch in Full CT Blue with a sort of slatty lined gobo. The crossfade into daytime proceeded. This comprised toplighting in pale oranges and straw tints, and a few Parcans to suggest rays of sun. There was also a fair bit of front-of-house light, in open whites for the most part, and a barrage of backlight with break-up gobos.

The cross into night was quick and quite blue — quite a lot of perch lighting in 202, 201 and other blues. Mean-

mortem revealed that the show had been fun but a great deal of unnecessary hard work. Still, the party wasn't bad.

Mike Robertson is a lighting designer at Merchiston Castle school, Edinburgh and a regular contributor to Lights!.

The intensive record keeping process common to major shows on Broadway or in the West End could now be a chore of the past, thanks too...

LP90 OFF-LINE EDITING

A new software package claimed to do for cue-tracking 'what word processing did for writing' is now on the market following a joint venture between Strand Lighting Inc. and New York lighting specialists Lucida.

Called 'Express-Track', the program provides off-line editing for Light Palette 90, using any Apple Macintosh computer. Already, the system has proved to be hugely successful. It means that cue data can be entered and edited away from the LP90 desk, so allowing savings in production costs and time.

Express-Track was devised by Lucida, working with a group of lighting designers, and developed with assistance from Strand Lighting.

It enables LP90 disks to be written and read via a Mac, and uses identical syntax to LP90. In effect, this allows a lighting designer to set up and program on disk all the lighting cues necessary for a major production before he has even set foot in the theatre or studio.

With exactly the same screen display as LP90, the software shows the designer at a glance the direction of moves, hidden commands and up to 800 channels, allowing any one to be tracked immediately.

Cue data is arranged, dis-

played and sorted automatically, as it is entered, with the date and time of every cue also recorded. Dynamic menus guide the operator to the data he needs within seconds.

The system has made the need for hand-written track sheets obsolete, for now any display can be printed out silently at the production desk, while work is in progress.

Express-Track is already being used by Richard Pilbrow, of Theatre Projects, and David Hersey, who is currently using it on the Broadway production of *Miss Saigon*

Samuel Beckett's image opened the play.

watching a movie. This we did by having a series of projected titles and credits onto the front of house tabs, as the house lights went down at the start of the show.

This started with a large cameo of Samuel Beckett and progressively moved through 'Directed by...', 'Lighting design by...' (funnily enough that slide seemed to stick in the projector for longest...) and so on. These 'tab' credits were in the middle whilst a few Parcans made sweeping beams up the side and corners

while my projectors had been doing overtime, changing their slides from grey skies to blue skies, and leafy trees to barren trees, this was to enforce the action on stage, and some of the surreal ideas in the text.

When the show opened, the lighting worked, but I had had reservations about the power of colour, and so on, in it. By the next day I had toned down some of the strong colours and had eliminated cues which were unnecessary, thus rendering the lighting more simple.

Our own technical post

Miss Saigon — now a hit on Broadway.

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