

# THROWING LIGHT ON THE 1950's

by Richard Humphries



Strand Sirio HMI's on location in Scotland. Photograph by courtesy of the BBC

One of British TV's most surprising hit series, launched in the spring of 1992, has proved to be the nostalgic Scottish 1950's drama "Strathblair".

But there was nothing old-fashioned about the location lighting rig, featuring Strand Sirio

HMI 'daylight' luminaires. Lighting designer Alex Scott recreated such an authentic period atmosphere that the village of Blair Atholl in Perthshire, where the series is filmed, has since become a top tourist attraction.

Strathblair centres on the fortunes of Alec and Jennifer

Ritchie and their struggle to run the Corriebeg farm on the Strathblair estate despite having an antagonistic landlord, a 'wily devil' of a neighbour - and a workshy sheepdog.

The authentic-looking grocer's shop in the picture was specially built in Blair Atholl by a

construction team from BBC Scotland. Jars and packets on the shelves of the shop were either hired or copied from museum or private collections.

Alex Scott explained, 'Our main problem with the location lighting was that the weather was not terribly kind. In Scotland, if it is not raining, it tends to be cloudy-bright conditions.

'For this reason we always diffused the HMI's because the light would have been far too strong. If the light was not diffused, it was 'bounced' to tone it down.

'The other main problem was the contrast between the actors faces and the sky itself, so we also used a black 'Promus' filter in front of the camera. This allowed us to lose some of the sharpness you would otherwise get with video and spread the highlights. It gave it more of a filmic look.

'The studio lighting was very straightforward, using items such as Strand Quartzcolor Mizars. The design was for four-wall sets with ceiling pieces to allow low-angle shots. This gave more of an authentic feel when the scene was supposed to be inside a building.

'We tended to use one light coming through the window,' - a 2.5kW Sirio HMI with diffusers. 'We tried to use it as one light source. Generally, this worked very well.'

*Sometimes it's just surprising how much Strand equipment features in permanent display situations. The new format TCI magazine's launch issue listed equipment used at EuroDisney from which Lights! quotes here*

## GALAXY AT THE MAGIC KINGDOM

“What equipment is being used at the performance venues at EuroDisney? Take a look below.

### LE THEATRE DE CHATEAU, (CASTLE STAGE), STAGE LIGHTING:

**Control:** Strand Galaxy 3 for 768 channels, including theatre playback and standard back-up.

**Dimmers:** Strand EC90MD plug-in dimmers comprising: 54 - 25A, 340 - 10A. Some of the dimmers are installed with the Castle for control of floodlighting.

**Luminaires:** 42 - Strand Cadenza 9/15 profile 2kW; 12 - Strand Leko 11, 8 x 13 profile, 1kW; 22 - Strand Leko 18, 6 x 16 profile, 1kW; 16 - Strand Leko 26, 6 x 12 profile, 1kW; 24 - Strand Nocturne floodlights, 1kW

### VIDEOPOLIS STAGE LIGHTING:

**Control:** Strand Galaxy 3 for 580 channels including theatre playback, full tracking back-up and PALS motion control panel.

**Dimmers:** Strand EC90MD plug-in dimmers comprising: 25 - 45A/10kW; 12 - 25A/5kW; 432 - 10A/2.5kW and 34 - 16A/3.5kW non dims

**Luminaires:** 20 - Strand Cadenza 9/15 profile 2kW; 40 - Strand Cadenza PC 2kW; 24 - Strand Cantata 18/32 profile 1.2kW; 12 - Strand Iris 4 cyclorama 4 x 1.25kW; 13 - Strand Orion 4 cyclorama ground row 4 x 625W  
**Special Effects:** 40 Strand PALS scrollers

### EXPLORERS CLUB STAGE LIGHTING:

**Control:** Strand MX24 with foot control pedals for cue operation by musicians.

**Dimmers:** Strand EC90MD dimmers comprising: 24 x 10A/2.5kW  
**Luminaires:** 2 - Strand Cantata 8 - Strand Cantata Fresnel 1.2kW

### WESTERN COOKOUT (INDOOR AND OUTDOOR STAGES), STAGE LIGHTING:

**Control:** Strand MX24 (indoor stage) and MX12 (outdoor stage), both with foot control pedals for cue operation by musicians.

**Dimmers:** Strand EC90MD dimmers comprising: 36 - 10A/2.5kW;  
**Luminaires:** 8 - Strand Cantata 26/44 profile 1.2kW; 8 - Strand Cantata Fresnel 1.2kW

### LUCKY NUGGET SALOON STAGE LIGHTING:

**Control:** Strand Galaxy 3 for 288 channels including theatre playback and standard backup.

**Dimmers:** Strand EC90MD plug-in dimmers comprising: 12 - 20A/5kW; 232 - 10A/2.5kW  
**Luminaires:** 18 - Strand Cantata 18/32 profile, 1.2kW; 30 - Strand Cantata 26/44

profile, 1.2kW; 15 - Strand Prelude 16/30 profile, 650W; 40 - Strand Prelude 28/40 profile, 650W; 30 - Strand Leko 40, 6x9 profile, 1.2kW; 20 - Strand Cantata Fresnel, 1.2kW; 40 - Strand Prelude Fresnel, 1.2kW; 20 - Strand Cantata PC, 1.2kW; 40 - Strand Prelude PC, 650W

### FANTASYLAND THEATRE STAGE LIGHTING

**Control:** Strand Galaxy 3 for 192 channels including theatre playback and standard backup.

**Dimmers:** Strand EC90MD plug-in dimmers  
**Luminaires:** 48 - Strand Leko 26 6 x 12 profile 1kW; 60 - Strand Leko 40 6 x 9 profile 1kW; 24 - Strand Cantata Fresnel 1.2kW; 54 - 1kW; 96 - Strand Nocturne floodlights 1kW for cyclorama.”

And this does not even mention Premiere Architectural Lighting Controls used in the entrance hotels!