



■ The imposing Ivan Vazov Theatre in Sofia. This is Bulgaria's National Theatre.

along, until they felt confident.'

In line with the pledge to Strand customers of having a service engineer 'on the spot' as promptly as possible, Antony managed to fit in two other calls during his stay, to the M'hat and the Mali theatres, both bordering Red Square, where he made pre-installation checks for Galaxy boards.



■ Varna Opera House.

And sightseeing? 'It was solid work from eight in the morning until six in the evening, so there was no time to see the sights,' Antony explained.

Meanwhile, in Sofia, service engineer Andy Syposz was installing a new Galaxy 3 in Bulgaria's National Theatre, the Ivan Vazov Theatre, as part of a massive refurbishment programme.

The director of the theatre originally approached Strand representatives at an exhibition in Germany, having already seen a Galaxy elsewhere and having obtained glowing reports from his engineers.

A team led by Strand's Steve Futers

visited Sofia to give a technical presentation. Agreement was reached and Andy Syposz supervised installation of the Galaxy and a special demux cabinet to allow interface with the theatre's existing dimmers.

He said, 'The local people were very helpful. I speak Polish and German, which they understood, and many people there speak English, so the installation was supervised in three languages.'

The Ivan Vazov theatre is due to reopen soon, when it may be used to demonstrate the Galaxy to directors of other theatres in the region.

● Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, a Galaxy 3 has also just been sold to the Tylovo Theatre in Prague.



■ Varna's control room.

AND BELA IS GOT

In scenes reminiscent of a spy thriller, internationally-respected Hungarian theatrical designer Bela Gotz was air-lifted from behind the Iron Curtain to make a surprise appearance at a conference in Holland. And the success of the mission was due entirely to delicate undercover negotiations carried out by a team led by Strand Lighting's marketing manager, Camilla Aitchison.

The unusual challenge was taken up by the Company's marketing department only days before an international conference in Hilversum, sponsored by the International Illumination Committee of the UK, and the Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation (NOB).

Bela Gotz (49), who works for Hungary's Madach Theatre and whose set designs have been staged throughout Europe, had been invited to the conference as principal guest.

But travel restrictions imposed on him meant that he was unable to bring currency out of Hungary, so could not pay hotel and travel bills. This also meant he was unable to obtain a travel visa.

Enter Strand Lighting. Camilla Aitchison explained, 'We decided that we would pay Bela Gotz's expenses just to get him to Hilversum, so I telephoned the Madach Theatre direct, to try to speak to them.'

'I don't speak Hungarian but I expected they would be able to speak German. Once I had explained what I wanted they said they would phone back.'

Gotz was persuaded to take Strand 'on trust'. He managed to scrape together sufficient money for his air-fare, on the promise that he would be paid a lump sum in US dollars once he reached the West.