



DAVID HERSEY'S LIGHTING IS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS NEW WEST END PRODUCTION

► that the back of the stalls below the balcony – where the sound desk is located – is a different acoustic room altogether.

Some of the most striking visual moments were reflected in the changing skies throughout the show – at first I thought there must be several sky cloths, only to discover that it was just one cannily lit and projected. LD David Hersey let slip that his yachting background fuels his imagination for meteorological effects on-stage and his ability to visualise the sky's variety. The first new cloud effect disk to appear in four years has also been commissioned for the show: there are five projectors on the back-cloth and a further three out front, all combining with different lighting states to set climactic lighting tones for each scene.

For David too the lack of space was a headache. "We managed to get a lighting rig in but it took a lot of negotiating." The grid is crammed with instruments including PARs, Can'tatas, fresnels, Sils, HMIs, codas, digital light curtains, Birdies, M16 battens, beamlights, scrollers plus a miscellany of light sources within numerous set pieces. The rig's configuration shrinks in perspective as it moves upstage in sympathy with the set's own perspective.

There are some Vari*Lites – twelve each of VL5s and 6s. In true theatrical style, you rarely see these move. He had custom colour wheels

made for the 6s, and Vari-Lites have come into their own here as the space restrictions make multi-function lamps invaluable.

There are a few more usual bits of kit such as 2.5K 60° Sils and Broncolour Flash Profiles, specially adapted photographic strobes that, complete with gobos, fire the main lighting flashes on the stormy skies. "These aren't cheap," says David, "but on a show like this you can afford a few toys!" In some scenes David's main task is to light it without revealing the fly wires. Digital light curtains enable him to get light where it's really needed, and because they can pitch and tilt it's less crucial if on-stage props move a few feet.

Lighting control is a combination of an ARRI Imagine 3 and a Galaxy that has been customised to trigger the Imagine, plus a Macintosh that controls the digital light curtain. A MIDI link from the sound desk triggers certain lighting cues to coincide with sound effects.

Lighting has a flamboyant role in this highly visual show, encompassing a broad spectrum of moods from the sinister and foreboding to the frivolous and luxurious. Along with all the other production and creative elements, it keeps the pace steaming on. Certainly, like the sound department, David is in good spirits: "We're all still talking to each other and sitting this close together, so yes I think I can say it's gone very well," quips Kevin.

Credits

Designer: Anthony Ward

Director: Sam Mendes

Production Manager: Kevin Eld

Lighting Designer: David Hersey

Sound Designers:

Paul Groothuis & Mike Walker

Musical Director: Martin Koch

Orchestrations: William D Brohn

Musical Staging: Matthew Bourne

Lighting Equipment: Whitelight

Vari*Lite Programmer: Robert Halliday

Assistant Lighting Designer: Jenny Kagan

Senior Production Electrician:

Bill Wardoper

Production Electricians: Gerry Amies,

Nick Reed, Charles Howell (for Oliver)

Palladium Production Electrician:

David Seaton

Sound Equipment: Autograph

Assistant Sound Designer: Janis Gurr

Assistant to Sound Designer: Brian Beasley

Sound Operator/Music Preparation:

Richard Brooker

Production Sound Engineers:

Paul Spedding, Tim Lynn (for Oliver)

R.F. Engineer: Mike Weaver

Technical Manager (for Palladium):

Bill Smith

Scenery Operator: Mike Sharp