

Slight on stage lighting

The scene is set in the drawing room of an ordered establishment in London's West End. The room, which is small and not particularly well furnished, can be entered by a door U.S.R. To the right of it and somewhat downstage stands an upright chair, above which is suspended a two-armed wall bracket of the kind now found only in JMB Hire. To the left of the door stands a telephone table which is surmounted by a crude sketch of Winston Churchill executed in pen and ink and lacking the essential cigar. Beyond the table is a high window with a few fronds of greenery just visible through the skimpy folds of net curtain and a little downstage of this stands the outline of another upright chair with its attendant wall light. The only concession to true comfort is an armless settee which occupies the centre of the room and behind which a table holding a couple of bottles can vaguely be discerned.

Scarcely any of these details are in fact visible when the curtain rises since the sole illumination is a broad shaft of moonlight through the window from the garden beyond. The room is quite unoccupied, but the PS loudspeaker nevertheless bursts into energetic life.

REID. Well, this is starting to build the picture. Now let's assume that the cues start in the way that they always do—usually not with the first act of the show but with the second act. It's moonlight, and the curtain goes up and the moonlight is streaming through the window. My favourite moonlight is without a doubt No. 61 (slate blue). I have to put my cards on the table and explain I'm a romantic, and that the moon to me, no matter what Fred Bentham may say, is blue—it's very blue—but the sort of moon I want is one that's normally blue, rather cool perhaps but when it strikes an actor's face I want it to be warm and this 61 of course is marvellous for this. Unfortunately, when you photograph it, it comes out slightly purple.

BENTHAM. Yes, it's quite extraordinary. I'll have to admit it's a good colour as you see it on the stage. In fact, I almost thought of copying it for some of my more exotic colour music but haven't yet—unless it's

been left in the lantern by accident. Of course the real thing to say about moonlight is that it is a very low level of lighting, at which we do not see colour at all, and there's no filter that we or anybody else makes which enables one to cut out all colour and just get that extraordinary black and white.

The other thing I love saying about moonlight is the fact that on the stage we're always using much higher levels of light than in real moonlight and for sunlight we're using much lower levels than for sunlight. In fact sunlight and moonlight are often at very nearly the same intensity on some stages. There's certainly not much difference between them, so you've got to rely on colour to establish, perhaps, that it is moon.

Enter Lyn through the door U.S.R. She is an attractive and energetic Australian and moves immediately to the light switch on her right.

REID. Here's the cue that we all know about, those of us who work switchboards. No sooner has the curtain gone up on the beginning of Act II with the moonlight and perhaps the flickering fire, than in comes the actress, over to the switch—the right one we hope—and flicks it on and we come up in dead synchronisation with the light. In this case it's a wall bracket. We've tried to make the light that comes on in association with the wall bracket to be fairly meaningful. We need a lot of co-operation from the Director here. One hopes that the first light the actors switch on is the one that they are going to play in for a moment before the scene fills out and here she's just put the light on and we've put on the backing in the area that she's in. This of course wouldn't keep us going terribly long, because other actors will come in.

Lyn is joined by Thelma and Barbara. Thelma esconces herself on upright chair D.S.R. while Barbara pours drinks at the table and Lyn seats herself close by on the settee.