

are all readily amenable to future development. Put another way, we could certainly see—inside the next decade—one computer being used to control not only the lighting but also the box office. It is no longer so much a question of what can you do but rather what do you want to do!

System DDM is made under Patents and Patents applied for. We shall be describing an important theatre installation of DDM in detail in our next issue.

Pre-set spots and other Irregularities

The Stage Guide. Compiled by Michael Holden in conjunction with the A.B.T.T. Published by THE STAGE Newspaper £4.50 incl. postage in UK.

Reviewed by the Editor

If I had had to reply to Roy Plomley's question as to what book, excluding the Bible and Shakespeare, I would take on that desert island along with those ten gramophone records I would have said either *Bannister Fletcher* or *The Stage Guide*. Being a practical man—another of his questions—the choice would have been the latter because the weight of "*The History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*" would have sunk me before reaching the shore.

The Stage Guide of 1946 was a dim green volume of 200 pages or so but packed with intriguing information in small print, some of it very strange indeed. There were things called "F.O.H. Pre-set Spots" about whose nature or even existence their owners seemed uncertain. The New Theatre claimed "four" whereas the Palladium, which had sixteen with 4-colour remote change, did not consider the spots worth a mention. The Savoy announced "automatic colour change" with their six but did not realise that they were one-up on the others because theirs were Mirror spots. "Four floods on stands" and, in at least one case, "one flood on stand" were scheduled with pride. One was reminded of the entries in *Who's Who In The Theatre* where length is not so

much a matter of merit or worth but rather a reflection of the amount of trouble the entry himself was prepared to take.

Then again on the matter of "Prosc." height there seems to have been great indecision as to where to drop the tape-measure from. Such other dimensions as turned up were so irregular as to defy study on the comparative method! Sir Bannister himself would have been vexed but even in his case one suspects he had to content himself with what came to hand rather than what he would like and this too was obviously the case with the Guide.

Nevertheless I found the *Stage Guide* of '46 a very valuable companion and, thanks to its closely-packed pages, developed the habit of always visualising a theatre name as a pros. (or rather as *The Guide* put it "a prosc") width and a seating capacity spread over a number of tiers. Just to compare two theatres at random will show what I mean. The New Theatre—31 ft. 6 in. with 741 seats on four tiers and the King's Hammersmith—32 ft. 6 in. but 1,566 seats over three tiers only. Then again the great stages of Drury Lane and Covent Garden were pinned down for ever as just over 40 ft. and the London Coliseum as impossibly wide at 54 ft. 10 in.