

shown at the head of this article, which was destroyed by fire. Not completely, since the walls survive to form a conference hall annexe to the south of the theatre. Like all theatre design the new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre (as it was known then) had a mixed reception.

The theatre itself has little to do with the town—it just happens to be there. The kind of visitor Shakespeare's birthplace attracts and the kind his theatre attracts do not mingle much. The enthusiast who travelled from afar to see Peter Brooks' *Midsummer Night's Dream* was unlikely to be attracted by the fairies at the bottom of Ann Hathaway's garden. The Bierkeller in the High Street and even, dare it be confessed, Harvard House are not for him. What would suit the sightseer—especially in the limited time left if he does the day trip involving that picturesque British Rail branch—might be a potted digest of say four of "the plays", a quarter of an hour to each. Be that as it may the new theatre itself got off to a shaky start and it was not until well after the war that it achieved its present world renown. Such world renown in fact that it made me declare, "This and no other shall be the first home of my so 'lovable' computer control."

Now just as it takes two to make a quarrel so it takes two to make a contract; the Royal Shakespeare had to want the DDM control as well! In fact as readers of David Baker's article in our last issue will know it takes more than two to develop DDM! The technical basics of this new principle of control have been fully detailed in his article, and reference should be made to it. Here we have to concern ourselves with the circumstance of the Grand Control in the Royal Shakespeare theatre. I use the term in the same way as one would refer to the Grand Organ in St. Paul's Cathedral or the Royal Festival Hall or even to Grand Opera. Chamber Opera or a Chamber Organ are in a different scale which can be equally perfect in its way. A Little theatre, a Minor theatre and a Great theatre, Bolshoi as the Russians call it, all have their place. So too I consider when it comes to a lighting installation and the instrument from which it is played; what would make

them inappropriate is if they were out of scale with the rest of that particular theatrical enterprise. A large lighting installation with a masterpiece in control conception is as appropriate at Stratford as it would be inappropriate at the Young Vic.

It is curious that the new Stratford-upon-Avon theatre building originally did not have an appropriate installation when it opened. It is true that in 1932 installations did use spotlights in far fewer numbers and it is our localised lighting that is the great breeder of circuits. Four-colour compartment battens and footlights were wonderful circuit economisers—the technique being to put down washes of light and use the few spots as highlights, except of course in very dramatic scenes. Even so it is amazing how telling a couple or even one spotlight then could be. Behind windows the odd flood or two did wonders, lighting up the backing and shooting the sunlight through the window all in one go when strategically placed. These were the days before Pageant lanterns (beamlights) and of course Fresnels had never been heard of in the British theatre. Spots gave very little light—a 1,000-watt class B lamp was not exactly an efficient device when used with only a 6-inch diameter plano-convex lens. The arc was the theatre's only bright source in 1930 except for the recently introduced Stelmar spot. Four of these latter were used in the Memorial Theatre ceiling. The switchboard itself had only 20 out of the 56 dimmers, dedicated to spots*.

A feature of the theatre was its fore-stage, so it is strange how a mere two dozen circuits could ever have looked after both this and the spotting and special requirements elsewhere. Yet this installation was designed by Harold Ridge with his partner F. S. Aldred the stage lighting consultants of the time, in Britain that is. All the odder when one remembers that Ridge had been associated with Terence Gray's Cambridge Festival Theatre in its prime—a theatre where spotlighting was virtually the rule.

The tale of those times appears to have an all too familiar ring. Confusion reigned

*Twenty-four really, but that must wait for page 25.