

applied and changed—if necessary actually during the performance. The little-used stage lifts of 1932 come into their own and tilting top surfaces are also being fitted to them. The rolling stages remain, as they have for so much of their life, unmoved. Giant structures—the “gridded screens” we heard about during the launch of the Barbican project—make an appearance as *periaktoi* on the main stage and are shown in the model—though in the aspect they present in the photograph they look like more ordinary, if large, wing units. When set like this there is a suggestion of great stage depth with a vista all the way up to the parking position of the old cyclorama (removed in 1964).

It is a solemn thought that exactly 40 years after this theatre opened the auditorium/stage relationship still needs attention. Of course it might be thought that the notions of close actor/audience relationship and of the running production of Shakespeare’s scenes without breaks were not around in 1932, but they were! The theatre as designed was supposed to provide for

these, but they got it wrong; what should have joined together, in fact had put asunder.

Meanwhile in another part of the wood other forces were at work:

“It was obvious, however, that the style of lighting had changed so much since the installation was put in, in 1951, that the existing equipment could no longer adequately meet the demands of present-day producers. . . . The large number of spot-lights in use may seem extravagant, but in order to get ‘pace’ into Shakespearean productions is often necessary. . . .”

The date above has in fact been changed by me. It should have been 1932 as the quotation comes from TABS in 1951*. David Brierley, the RSC General Manager today, could use much the same words. The development of the “multi-lantern complexity” and the increase of light intensities elsewhere has tended to make the lighting somewhat lack-lustre whatever was done

*TABS, Vol. 9 No. 3. Peter Paget-Smith the then Chief Electrician on the new 1951 installation.

System DDM. Rehearsal Control in the stalls. Sir Marmaduke’s D’oly Carte mansion on the stage.

