



*Liverpool Playhouse showing detailing of the 1911 auditorium carefully restored.*

two sections and is motorised. The stage fire curtain is also on a motor, so no back-breaking winding of winches is needed and the provision of a "Tallescope" is another civilised touch.

The lighting installation is fairly comprehensive for the size of the theatre. The switchboard and sound equipment are housed in an adequate room at the back of the dress circle, so the operators enjoy a good view of the stage. The board is a 72-way PR system with two presets, the dimmer banks being installed under the stage. The main onstage lighting position is of course the number one spot bar and this is made up of a mixture of Patt. 23s and 123s, a total of twenty-four in all. Upstage, there is a 12-way flood bar (Patt. 49). The front-of-house lighting is provided by Patt. 263s, mounted on the upper circle front. In addition to this there is also a generous amount of additional equipment that can be hung as and when required. Footlights are not fitted but the red velvet house tabs are lit in No. 6 Red (what else?) by a pair of Patt. 223's located

between the boxes and the proscenium wall. The orchestra pit is very deep but can be covered to form a 6 ft. apron, although one does then run into sightline problems from the upper circle. The auditorium seating is in the process of being replaced—needless to say from Rank Strand—by Viceroy's in a shade of purple which blends in well with the general colour scheme.

And what about the drawbacks? Surprisingly few, apart from the low grid. The only other big problem is a 6 ft. by 6 ft. girder that extends right across the stage at grid height. This was essential to achieve the basic reconstruction that has been carried out, but it does mean that we lose 6 ft. of valuable flying space.

So there we are; not a "multi-purpose" theatre, whatever that may mean! but I think I'm right in saying that the Liverpool Playhouse has made the very best possible use of a building that started life as a music hall over a hundred years ago.

*Geoffrey Haley is a freelance Lighting Designer recently at the Liverpool Playhouse.*