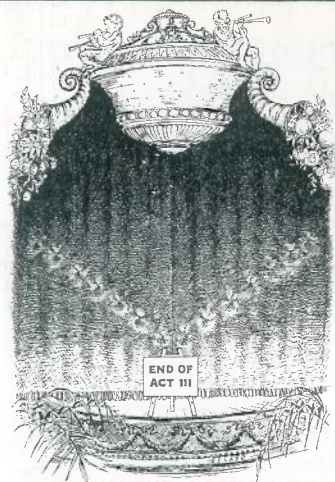


TABS

December 1973 Vol. 31 No. 4



TABS

Published by Rank Strand Electric Limited

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Editor: Frederick Bentham
29 King Street, Covent Garden
London WC2E 8JH

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Cover picture: The New Victoria Theatre as restored for Rank Leisure Services this year.

Aegean Instability?

We all know that the Greeks made a practice of having a word for it, so it came as a shock to learn from the Chairman of the Colour Group in his retirement speech that when it came to colour they didn't. His remarks found us writing down six words in Greek in our *Stage* diary.

Sure enough, Ralph Brocklebank (the Chairman in question) had not—as he might have, safe in the knowledge that few in his audience could or would check—led us astray. The Greeks of classic times had made a mess of defining and naming even the most elementary six colours. How in heaven could they use the *same* word to describe their lovers' eyes as "blue" or "grey" on the one hand and as "fierce" on the other. Of course, we know that they had a pretty poor idea of woman's soul behind those eyes, but as we also all know the lover's blue (or grey!) eyes were very likely as male as the beholder's!

Against this background the nomenclature of our Cinemoid represents precise definition indeed. Slate Blue No. 61 or Smoky Pink No. 27 for instance, though we have to observe that a distinguished lighting designer emerging from the smoke of his very home-made barbecue on his fortieth birthday when confronted with a sheet of No. 40 Cinemoid said, "What's that?" Perhaps if we had given it the nice up-to-date code, 31 359 04 40 he might have recognised it, or again perhaps not!

This editorial is not about "Chroma"—which incidentally to the Greeks seems to have meant "the skin" and/or, of course, "the colour of the skin"—but about opera houses. What is an Opera House?

Would not the process of stuffing something into the two giant skins down-under in Sydney have been facilitated if what was to be stuffed inside had been precisely defined at the beginning? Then again, why call it "Opera House" when the large hall turns out to be a concert hall, and not a very large one at that since it seats 2,700 as compared with the 2,895 of our own Royal Festival Hall.

True the place on the Bennelong Point

has, as we know, had a chequered history. Way back in 1956 what were the terms of the competition, what was the architect supposed to design? How high up in the brief came the words "architectural masterpiece" or "giant sculpture" and how low down the words "suitable for Grand Opera" and how grand, how often and from whence the grandeur—the players?

There are some, and the present writer is one, who believe that the place should have been left an empty shell once stage two had been completed—an unfinished symphony—a giant sculpture to be viewed from both outside and inside. The structure of the shells is too good, too dramatic to be obscured by the puny internal trappings, whether by Utzon or Hall, necessary to make a place of entertainment. Contemplation and perambulation would have brought continuous artistic rewards in excess of any performance. Another view is that efficiency is a term not to be applied to fine architecture. A pyramid though a stunning and enduring tourist attraction is an inefficient one-man tomb; it didn't even keep the burglars out!

Already the press notices show how captivated everyone is by the site. References to the lit-up boats sailing by abound; possibly somewhat aggravating to performers who are denied the same freedom of sideways motion within their concrete sails. Tickled by the ribs there is more than a hint that if the ABC had not insisted on the large hall becoming a concert hall then all would be well. Make no mistake, *that* stately pleasure dome was not suitable for an opera house either—as those of us who saw the plans at the very beginning could tell, and did, at a glance!

This is technical theatre stuff and it is not given to ordinary mortals—or even a lot of theatre people—to understand the needs of practical theatre. But what of the car park, how came this to be forgotten?

It is not fair to go on teasing and no doubt, now the place has opened, adaptable Sydney man like his adaptable counter-

parts everywhere will make the best of a place that really is *unique*—nothing remotely resembling it anywhere.

There *is* something else special about it and that is the inexhaustible fount of money to tide the giant building through all the hazards resulting from an ill-drawn up brief. Let others, especially in our own country, beware; for goodness sake make up your mind before you begin even to

Vesti la Giubba

Who is there that has not been stirred at the image of a clown “going on”, clutching his chest—presumably to hold the pieces of his broken heart together—and valiantly suppressing the sobs which threaten him to his very pantaloons? The show must go on. That the curtain must go up or that, if (as is not unlikely) it already is up it must stay up, is an unwritten contract from time immemorial between the showman and his audience.

There are well authenticated cases of actors virtually at death’s door—maybe through spending too much time next door—staggering out onto the stage rather than disappoint their public. Actors have been stabbed on the stage and comedians have died on it. Nor is this loyalty to the audience confined to those who occupy the limelight. Distinguished conductors have had to be tied to their rostra in the pit to prevent them falling over—yet they have brought forth great music. We well remember being under the stage when suddenly we were invaded by a quaint collection of managerial staff, stage hands, linkmen and aged, faded females whose role was probably to attend to the ladies’ lavatories. Was this a protest meeting? No it was not, for they all grasped the nearest piece of iron and pushed—and pushed very hard indeed. And on cue, in spite of the power cut,

The Third Act

One of the things that struck audiences in the London Coliseum during the visit this summer of the Chinese Acrobats and Jugglers was the endearing modesty with which the wonders were unfolded. Marvel

draw the thing. Make sure that your architect has the enthusiasm, the talent, and the *will* to carry out what you will.

Accurate specification is essential—shrug nothing off as something which can be settled later once the building is going up. Oh! and by the way, we wouldn’t advise using Classic Greek for the colours—but for the architecture—well, by now that might make a very nice change!

the stage at the London Palladium once more revolved to the plaudits of the audience. Justly can they claim in Argyll Street, “We know which way to turn.”

With this great tradition so firmly set ‘twixt and ‘tween the artistic and practical economics what are we to say about the announcement in *The Times*. According to its pages three public performances of *The Cherry Orchard* at the National were cancelled recently and the money returned to those who had already booked because Franco Zeffirelli wanted more rehearsal time for his own production.

Since the beginning, even when they were called “Producers”, directors have wanted more rehearsal time, but management used to have more sense than to give way to them. Any audience consists of people, whether they number six, sixty or six hundred, who have taken the trouble to get tickets. On top of this, goodness knows what else has been involved and planned for in the way of a baby sitters, hired cars or wedding anniversaries.

Although stout supporters of subsidised theatre and much that it does, we have to remark that we do not think a commercial management would behave in this way. The show must go on is not only a good theatrical tradition but sound economics as well.

succeeded marvel of dexterity right up to each climax without the usual tarradiddle on the snare drum or a roll or crash on the cymbal. It is true that the orchestra and the music are Chinese but, even allowing for

the custom we attribute to them of doing things the wrong way round or upside down, there were no ultra pianissimo passages as a signal. No, the music continued its steady rhythmic burble or rather twangle. The communication between stage and audience was that they seemed as surprised and as pleased as we were that each item had been carried step by step successfully to its unnatural conclusion. A lesson to us also was the attachment of a safety line when necessary so that no blood-thirsty element should pep up what was an exhibition of pure skill and balance. How far removed from *Chu Chin Chow* or *Doctor Fu Manchu* of our younger days!

The acknowledgement by the Shanghai company of the applause at the end of the performance was equally charming. We have always approved the Russian custom where those on the platform or stage applaud the audience which applauds them. The mutual hand clapping is a visual expression of that fact which the French recognise so well in their expression *assister à une pièce*. The show and the audience are one in a live performance.

Where’s this leader leading you will ask! Your Editor is seeking a formula to make his last bow—a farewell that has to be under-played on the one hand and dramatic, of the theatre, on the other.

Stemming, we hope, the cries from all sides of, “Good God, I had no idea that old Fred was so near retirement age”, it has to be said that it is not a case of age withering but of a change of Rank policy.

It is not the intention of our new managers to close down TABS but to change it. It may well increase its format to A4 and have more colour photographs, but it will be different in content and the way it is presented. It must be, otherwise the present editorial team would have continued. It may well be that those who want to know about stage and theatrical lighting, and that is what Rank Strand make, will be better served by the new TABS. A

larger page would help the publication of actual lighting layouts for productions, for example—something we have had to fight shy of in our small pages.

As we go to press my successor has been announced—Francis Reid. TABS readers who know the articles he has done for me, and who doesn’t, may feel that this appointment does not presage a great change of style! Maybe he has decided to turn over a new leaf and forsake sallies for sales, the soft sell for the hard stuff—we shall see.

By now our Covent Garden Demonstration Theatre, the home of TABS and of Strand Electric, and a habit for so many, will be but a memory. The last of many parties will have been held and the content of our excellent cellar sunk without trace. The last hangover will have hung up and except for the odd “cirrhosised” liver here and there not a rack be left behind.

But is this so? Of course not, for there were unbridled as well as unbottled spirits abroad through the years. Without wishing to be sadistic, it has been gratifying to hear of the genuine anguish with which our news has been received.

The various well lit up mourning crowds have all tried to express what we have done, and indeed under Rank were still doing. TABS, it is generally admitted, has never been better than in the five years since the takeover. It was left to John English to put his tongue on the exact word, to sum all up and send a warm glow rushing through our veins. Another rush took us to the bookcase* and under “Gropius” there it was—the word BAUHAUS. As long ago as 1936, Nikolaus Pevsner wrote of *that* unique institution:

“... it was to become, for more than a decade, a paramount centre of creative energy in Europe. It was at the same time a laboratory for handicraft and for standardisation; a school, and a workshop. It comprised, in an admirable community spirit, architects, master craftsmen, abstract painters, all working for a new spirit in building.”

And if you read it again carefully, substituting the word “lighting” for “building”, I think you may agree that English had a word for it too!

*Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius. *Nikolaus Pevsner. Published by Faber & Faber. 1936.*

A Tale of Two Cities

Frederick Bentham

I am not sure whether one of these is in fact a city, at any rate as we used to define it. Certainly, Leicester in England has a cathedral, although only since 1919 when the parish church of St. Martin became one of those of the new creation. Equally certainly Wolfsburg in Germany is devoted to the new religion—though to be precise, Aldous Huxley's *Sign of the T* has become the "Sign of the VW".

It was poignant, however, to survey the vast Volkswagen temple at the very time that the folk of that fearful new world were being told by newspapers and newscasters alike that the spirit behind it all was dwindling away. The sands of time were, so to speak, shaking down, and there might one day be no oil to pour into troubled motors. Wolfsburg and Leicester have both turned to Dionysius for succour and both have just opened theatres for him with seats for seven hundred adherents in each at a time.

Architecturally the two theatres present a great contrast, the one at Leicester forming part of a great shopping complex hemmed in right in the centre of the city whereas that at Wolfsburg is on the hillside above the town. There the theatre is strung out backed by woods and fronted by public gardens and the civic buildings of the town.

Moreover, the theatre at Wolfsburg is the last building by Sharoun (who died so recently), a lone star—a genius who was a law unto himself. The client presumably commissioned him and having lighted the blue touch paper, stood well back out of the way!

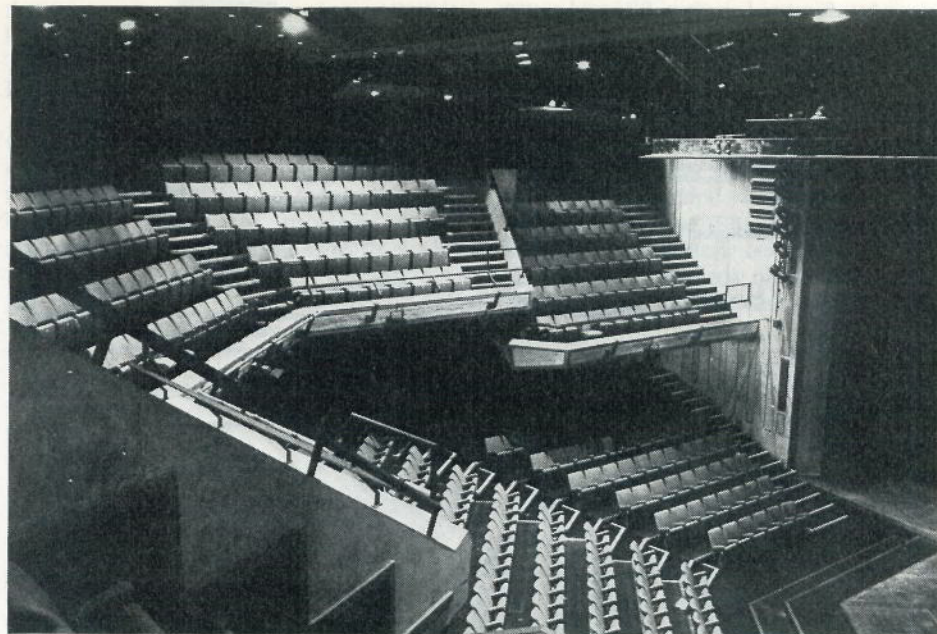
Although Leicester is an ancient city, architecturally it has become a complete mess. People have tried to do their best by the place literally over generations, and some fine buildings have been put up. Other generations have pulled them down but none so ruthlessly as the present one. Arriving from the Italianate railway station—complete from its semaphore signals (one a genuine Midland Railway

survival) to its row of urns atop the façade—one is greeted by a scene of progressive devastation stretching to the far distance. Even at the very moment that one walked along, a mechanical monster, its teeth bared, was tearing down an attractive building with a classical frontage.

There is still some of the past about in Leicester—most remarkable being the delightfully preserved fourteenth century Guildhall. This word has come to represent some vast substantial Victorian "esprit de corporation", but this one reminds us that once upon a time places of assembly needed to hold but few people. The tiny Phoenix Theatre in Leicester with its tight planning for 275 people is large compared with this Guildhall.

What a model mission theatre the Phoenix is! With the opening of the New Haymarket Theatre it is to become a youth theatre and available to other groups. Now ten years old, anybody wanting to design a small theatre/place of assembly should still make it Number One on their visiting list.

Note the sense of embrace, due to the division of the seating by two gangways into three *equal* blocks of eight and the placing of the outer blocks at a gentle angle. The temptation is to make the outside blocks smaller and reduce them to a mere token to ensure the maximum seats in the centre; here it has been resisted. Another nice example of self-discipline is the lighting control room. This is exactly the same size as when the place opened. Many times since then there must have been a temptation to remove some seats and expand sideways. In fact I do not know of a consultant who would have allowed it to have been built so small—yet it suffices, as does so much else: the foyers, the back-stage and ancillary areas all tend to be minimal but they are provided for, and the maximum number of seats and a large stage account for most of the space in this clever adaptation of a standard, small



Haymarket Theatre, Leicester, auditorium showing the novel conformation of the balcony.

industrial building.*

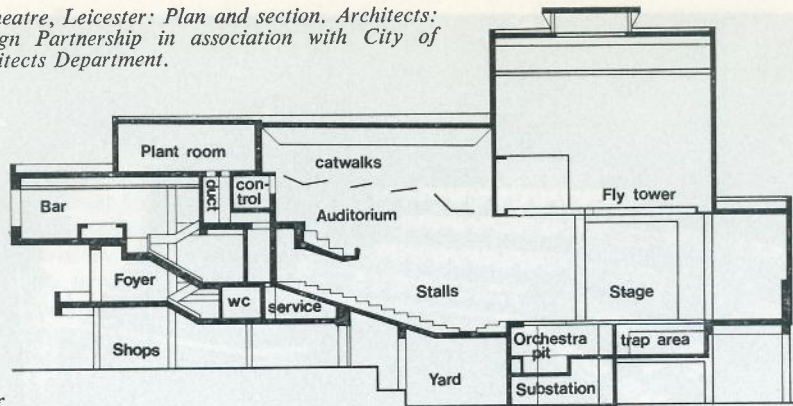
It is a far cry from "proper" theatre as was pointed out at the time of the idiotic Nottingham Playhouse versus Leicester Phoenix controversy, and now that ten years later Leicester has its own full-scale playhouse—the Haymarket Theatre—some valid comparisons can at last be made between the theatres in the two cities. The architects for the design of stage and auditorium of the new theatre are Stephen George and Dick Bryant of The City Architects Dept., both of whom were responsible for the Phoenix theatre, and Peter Forbes of the Building Design Partnership, architects to the Haymarket Centre.

I have long bewailed the addiction of architects, including the distinguished one of our new National Theatre, to fair-faced concrete. Brick, I have said over and over, is the material for theatres, You can knock holes in or through it, graft on extensions and finally knock the entire place down (if you really cannot stand it any more) with an ease denied to concrete.

*TABS, Vol. 23, No. 1.

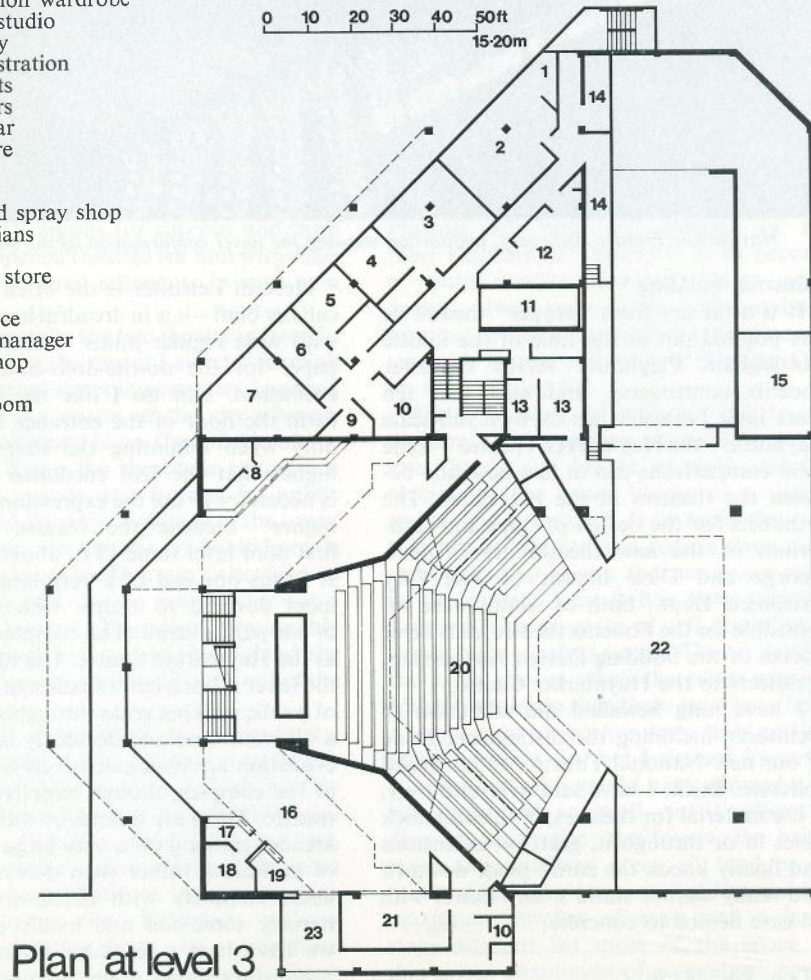
Here in Leicester is the brick theatre to call my bluff—it is in dreadful hard red brick with wide regular joints resembling brick-paper for the do-the-dolls-house-yourself enthusiast. Nor do I like the tiles which form the floor of the entrance foyer. It is only when mounting the stairs to climb higher that the feet encounter carpet. It is necessary to use the expression "climbing higher" because the theatre begins at first floor level some 18 ft. above the street. It forms one end of a very large development devoted to shops, with two floors of car park overall. The complex is known as the Haymarket Centre. The tiled floor of the foyer is but a continuation of the paving of public walking areas throughout. Tiles of a different kind and decidedly lavatorial in evocation are used extensively on the walls of the complex, though happily not in the theatre. There are a series of wide shopping arcades running off a very large centre hall of utilitarian rather than decorative grandeur, complete with escalators and less happily some sad and lonely plants. But we have here a laudable attempt to put pedestrians under cover among the things

Haymarket Theatre, Leicester: Plan and section. Architects: Building Design Partnership in association with City of Leicester Architects Department.



1. Supervisor
2. Production wardrobe
3. Design studio
4. Publicity
5. Administration
6. Accounts
7. Directors
8. Stalls bar
9. Bar store
10. WC
11. Hoist
12. Dye and spray shop
13. Electricians
14. Store
15. Scenery store
16. Foyer
17. Box office
18. House manager
19. Book shop
20. Stalls
21. Cloakroom
22. Stage
23. Lobby

0 10 20 30 40 50ft
15-20m



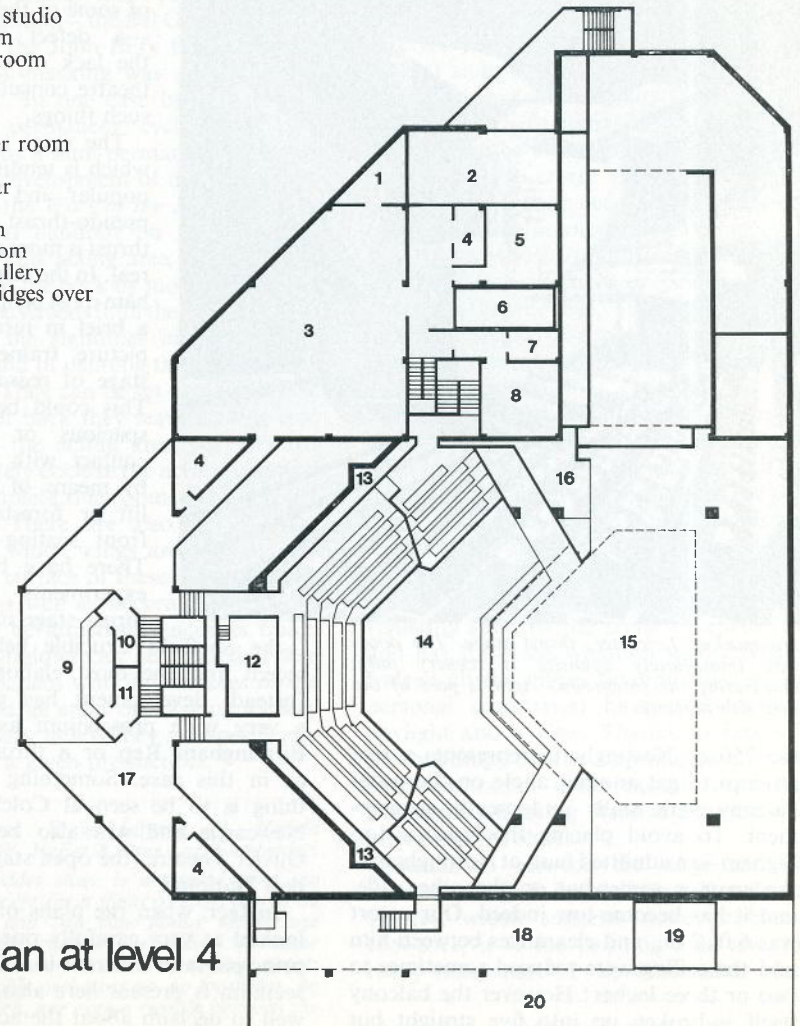
they are supposed to want, including a very large fluorescent store and restaurant. There is something of a parallel with the Imperial Theatre, Tokyo.*

Dumped by our taxi at street level in what later turned out to be exactly the right part of the complex, we could not at first find out where the theatre was! Architecturally it does not proclaim itself. Doubtless it will soon boast signs to outdo

*As described by Ian Albery, TABS, Vol. 31, No. 3.

those of "Habitat" so prominent at the moment. One mounts an open flight of steps to land up on a terrace facing the entrance doors with the theatre foyer displayed to one side behind very large plate glass windows rather suggestive of a shop front. The car people, however, have never had it so good since they can drive straight up to the roof, or preferably to the level immediately below, where it is only a matter of a walk of no real distance (and no steps) under cover right into the

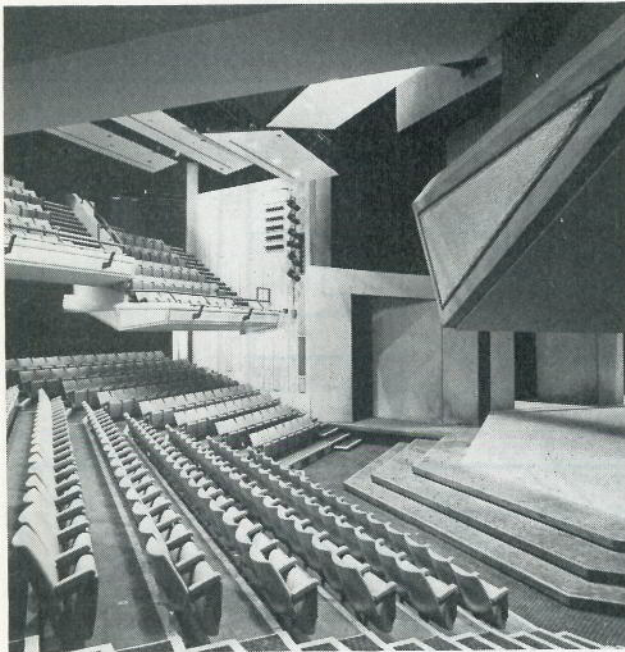
1. Recording studio
2. Green room
3. Rehearsal room
4. WC
5. Kitchen
6. Hoist
7. Dry cleaner room
8. Store
9. Balcony bar
10. Bar store
11. Bar kitchen
12. Control room
13. Lighting gallery
14. " bridges over
15. Stage
16. Void
17. Foyer
18. Free space
19. Plant
20. Car park



theatre foyer. Only if they have not got their tickets beforehand or have purchased them for the stalls will they have to use the stairs at all.

The predominant colour scheme inside the theatre is pale oatmeal—this is everywhere including the seating in the auditorium. I must say I hankered after a spot of colour, though not the fire brigade red which is *de rigueur* for the filing cabinets in the offices.

The auditorium of 700, compared with



Haymarket, Leicester, thrust stage. The doorway immediately opposite is scenery only, dominating the foreground right is part of the near side balcony.

the 750 of Nottingham, represents a real attempt to get another angle on the usual balcony with stalls underneath arrangement. To avoid placing the balcony too high up—an admitted fault at Nottingham—the error is somewhat on the other side, and it has become low indeed. Our escort was 6 ft. 2 in., and clearances between him and the ceiling were reduced sometimes to two or three inches! However the balcony itself is broken up into five straight but

angled blocks, though all seats are accessible as one balcony unit. The arrangement is very ingenious and works well. The auditorium gives a feeling of compactness and one really does focus on the stage when sitting naturally.

The auditorium decor, where it exists, is strangely non-committal and the ceiling virtually non-existent. There is an array of lighting bridges and an occasional cloud in the shape of a bit of disembodied ceiling. The clouds are not enough to do their job as blinders to the regions above but do get in the way of some of the bridge spots—a defect which shows the lack of a professional theatre consultant to detail such things.

The stage is of the type which is tending to become popular and which I call pseudo-thrust because the thrust is more apparent than real. In the days of Nottingham most people thought up a brief in terms of a non-picture frame proscenium stage of reasonable width. This could be made more spacious or have closer contact with the audience by means of an orchestra lift or forestage or extra front seating adaptability. There have been but few experiments with a real thrust stage in this country

—the Sheffield Crucible being the most recent and the most elaborate example. Instead, development has gone towards a very wide proscenium as at the new Birmingham Rep or a thrust impression as in this case. Something of the same thing is to be seen at Colchester and at Newcastle and will also be seen in the Olivier Theatre (the open stage one) at the new National.

In fact, when the plans of all these are looked at very carefully one sees that the principal fault inherent in a very wide proscenium is present here also. It is all very well to declaim about the actors' point of

command—about what the place feels like to him looking towards the audience—but what of the wandering eyes of the audience looking towards him? As Abraham Lincoln remarked, "You can rivet the gaze of all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot rivet the gaze of all the people all the time." A more blunt way of putting the problem is "What about masking?"

This kind of stage presents all the off-stage as well as all the on-stage areas to view; it generates acres of masking. In the two stages probably most responsible for the present fashion—the Bel Geddes project of 1922 and the John Bury Barbican project of 1966—masking was automatically provided for. In one case by a giant encompassing permanent cyclorama* and in the other by a semi-permanent periaktoi structure: a development of the permanent masking for the *Wars of the Roses* cycle.

The official handout on the Barbican explained: "This acting area is completely surrounded at the back by movable gridded screens. These screens fulfil the dual function of masking the sightlines into the back-stage areas and of defining the shape of the acting area. They can be set in a variety of positions. Set back they leave a large free area behind the acting area, set forward they completely enclose the acting area and create a complete one-room area with the auditorium. There are also intermediate positions in which wings are created . . . The gridded surface of these screens serves a practical as well as decorative function. Scenery can be attached, balconies hung, doors and windows can be created. These are the permanent working surfaces of the stage. Thus large areas of masking scenery are unnecessary unless they are specifically required for a given production."

*Extract from: *Stage-Lighting* C. Harold Ridge. 1930. W. Heffer & Sons Ltd. Cambridge. "The Bell Geddes stage is undivided from the auditorium except for a flight of steps across its entire front, and two side jambs which lose themselves in the curve of the ceiling. The same great cyclorama dome spans actor and spectator; there is no visible orchestra pit, no footlights, no proscenium arch, nor even a curtain between the two. . . ."

This was the permanent set which "framed" the acting area.

What will not do at all is to substitute black drapes and a large tin of matt black paint. When this is done we are confronted with an island setting in a black limbo† which completely separates that setting from the auditorium—an auditorium which is lucky if it finds itself not painted a matching shade of darkness.

In fact at this point I should like to make it clear that my attack on this form of stage is not levelled specifically at the Haymarket, Leicester. What the architects have done there is to provide an interesting and effective seating arrangement to face the kind of stage that some eminent directors and designers say they want.

It is time that theatre people learnt that black does not make things vanish. What it does do is to create a hole! And a hole large or small in the décor is something the eye has to take account of—to jump over. What does vanish is something neutral in colour neither negative or positive in its statement to the eye, simply not worth noticing. Neutral does not necessarily mean grey or oatmeal—it could be crimson in crimson ambience!

Backstage at the Haymarket, Leicester, there is plenty of space—sometimes somewhat irregular in shape, as in the case of the rehearsal room, due to the shape of the site. If it is strange to go up an outside staircase to get to the stage door it does mean that the production director's office for example does not have to be buried to be conveniently sited to the scene of operations and has full-sized windows with daylight. Indeed all the offices (except those of the personal secretaries) have a room with daylight and a view. Thanks to Leicester the buildings on the opposite side of the road are rather drear except for a fine period piece housing Stead & Simpson who are famed for shoes.

Insulation between the stage and the workshop area is by a single motor-driven shutter, which suggests noise problems. However, it is the painting area and the really noisy part of the work takes place

†Somewhat as photograph on page 186.



Stadt Theatre, Wolfsburg, showing asymmetric auditorium (opposite page) Inaugural Concert. Curtain to admit daylight is seen balcony centre right. Both the rear of the balcony and the ceiling above are well clear of this large window. Lighting slots with translation booths below are on balcony back wall left and control rooms under balcony left.

beyond and round the corner, with a second sound barrier, albeit manually operated, interposed. A large goods lift forms the get-in. For the rest the plans on pages 140 and 141 tell their own tale.

It is unusually difficult to reproduce the plans of the theatre at Wolfsburg properly in the confines of our pages because the theatre is spread out in such a long line. This is a great pity because the plan as such is good to look at. In fact, I never remember anything quite like it before. Certainly it is the exact opposite of Sharoun's famous Philharmonie of 1963 in Berlin. Although that concert hall was sensationally asymmetric the whole thing was compact and contained in plan. Sites usually insist on that kind of thing but what if they don't?

The Theater der Stadt, Wolfsburg, to use its full title, proclaims itself at once as

three separate entities: the foyer and restaurant area, the theatre and stage, and finally the dressing rooms and offices.

The various functions are all clearly stated except one, and that is the one that usually dominates a theatre building—namely the stage tower. Sharoun has managed, as so many architects would like to do, to lose the tower altogether. The section shows how this has been done. Maybe the grid at 22 m (72 ft.) is rather lower than some would like and the roof void above the auditorium uneconomically vast but not for once to see a stage tower when approaching a German theatre gives one a real lift in spirit. Honestly the heavy giant stage towers glowering menacingly at one all over that country begin to get on the nerves. "Scenery" is the purpose of this theatre, they growl. Had the theatre Volks-

wagen proposed in the 'fifties (designed by a firm of Düsseldorf architects) been built that is exactly what the 130,000 inhabitants would have been cursed with.

Not so now on the hillside above Wolfsburg. The artistic initiative in this case came in the first place from theatre lovers in the town—but it is Volkswagen who have weighed in heavily with the money. The result is a standard of finish everywhere with which Leicester cannot hope to compete; for "oatmeal emulsion paint" read "panelling in ash" for example!

Although a car town, it does look as if the driver when arriving at the theatre still has a walk in the wind and the rain having dropped his passengers. However, when one day they all come by bike there will be equality of opportunity once more. The single storey entrance and foyer give a friendly non-monumental scale although there is in fact lots of room everywhere. There is the usual German cloakroom with a long counter—positively encouraging one to dump the outer man as soon as possible. Large windows look towards the town and although the plans suggest the restaurant

has to content itself with something less out at the back, this is far from being the case.

The auditorium is designed so that the circulating areas immediately belonging to it and the staircases for access to the balcony above are all part of the one enclosure. Or rather there is no sense of enclosure, the people easily flow or climb as necessary to take or leave their seats. This is possible without the risk of noise from the bars, buffet restaurant and all the rest because they are in fact quite separate—a line of double doors forming a complete sound lock. The sense of all over free space is but an optical illusion. Likewise, the asymmetry of the auditorium appears much greater than it really is. It is the approach to the seating rather than the seating layout itself that is asymmetric.

The two seating blocks both at stalls and balcony level are split down the centre and angled to one another. This leaves the question as to what happens where they join? The solution is neither one thing nor the other. I could in fact squeeze through to get two friends in another row but I am slim. Perhaps there should have been a

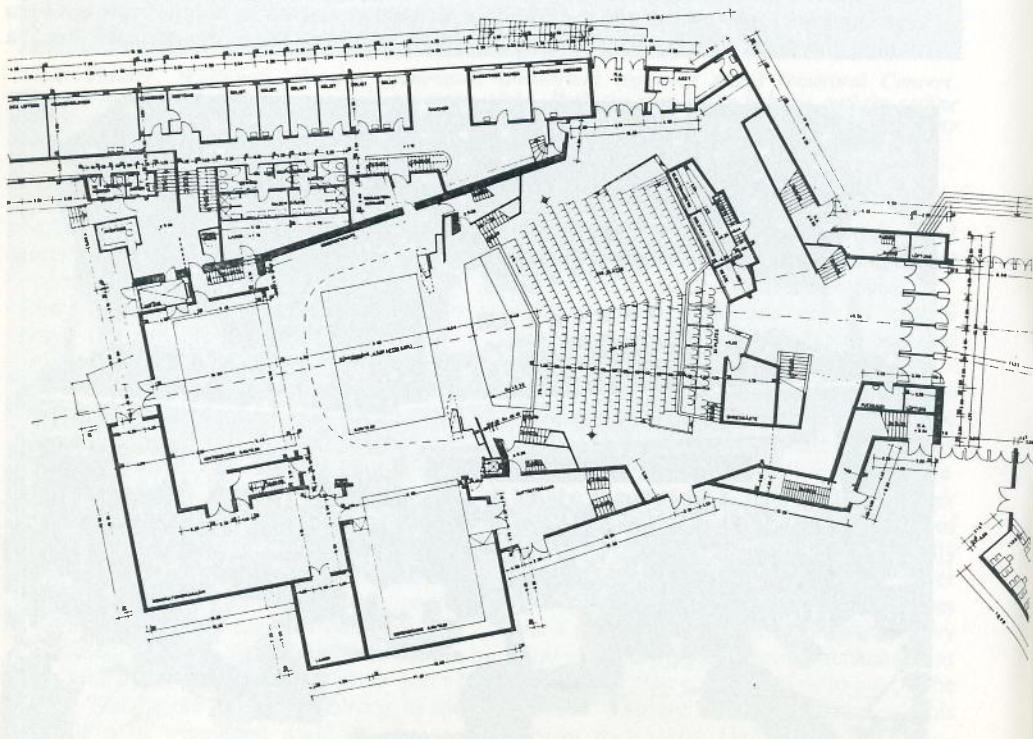
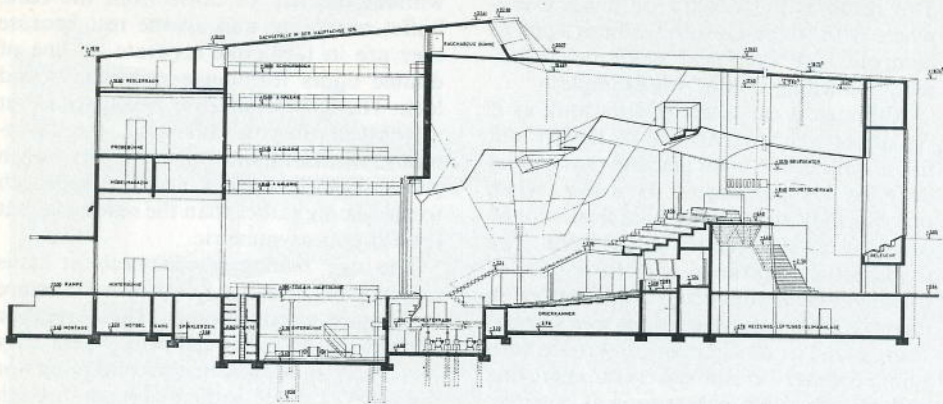


clear space equivalent to one seat—especially as the place is used for conferences—but then perhaps although the seatways are wide the law would have gone into action and all the regulations as to width of gangway applied to muck things up.

The side walls are dominated by six acoustic devices, giant butterfly wings of fibreglass, each side. Whether or not these

are acoustically necessary, visually they are essential to break up the wall. Likewise, the staircase from balcony to stage on either side (not necessary for access to either, we hasten to add) is a lovely device. It gives a sense of being able to wander anywhere, though why on earth one should want to, except at a conference, is another matter!

The walls and seats are in ash and the



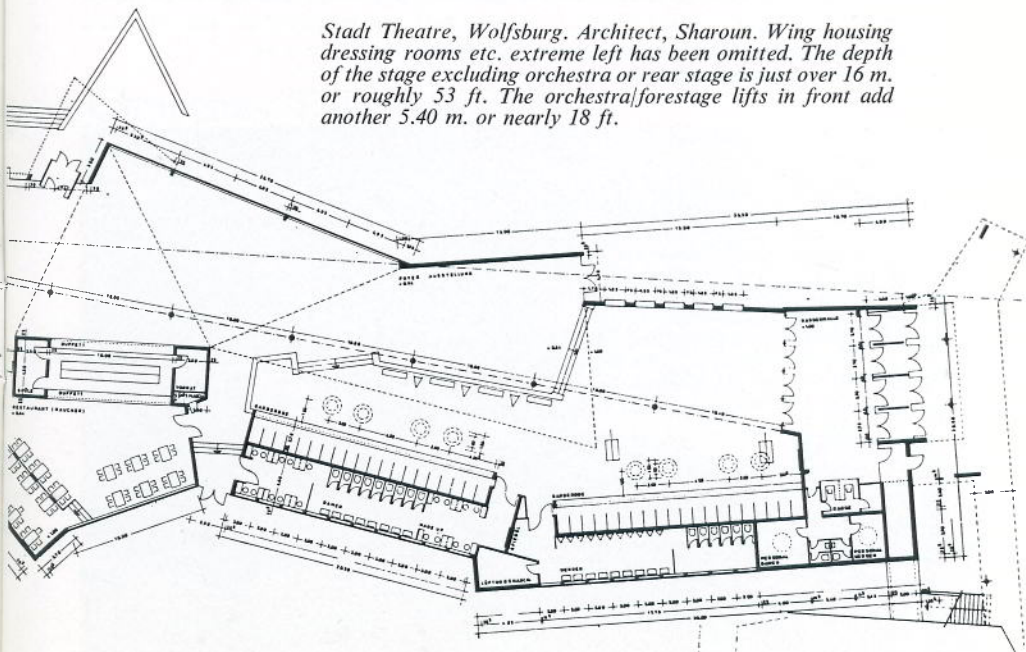
ceiling is painted a very light grey known to me from the days of my sculptor father, as "clay paint". The seats are wider than we are accustomed to and the fresh air is introduced through a grille in the top of their backs instead of from among the feet. As with Leicester, colour is notable for its absence but what is pleasant when working or conferencing is a very large double-glazed window at the back of the auditorium to admit daylight. This needless to say can be blacked out by pressing a button and then the decorative lighting is nice and sparkling.

All this light and air and spaciousness about might be expected to work against the auditorium as a theatre. Any faults as a theatre do not arise here but rather from the failure to observe basic principles. The stage floor is rather too low for the amount of rake applied to the stalls and above all there is the question of what to do to bring the show near to the audience.

Although the 18 ft. forestage is formed of two lifts, there is no way of getting rid of it, as would be necessary for a box-set play except by lowering the pair to form a chasm

for a small orchestra or a large one. The orchestra rail is a substantial fixed wall. Even if this flat area were accessible, to put extra rows of seats on it would spoil the feel of the place. The fixed apron and the usual German proscenium tower and bridge structure push that or any kind of scenic show even further away from its audience. So there is a large empty floor to haunt me but not apparently to worry those who work there. Funnily enough there is a curved and ribbed safety curtain, but that is for architectural effect and not to drop on the orchestra rail. Because the Haymarket, Leicester, fire curtain is a three-sided affair which drops on the edges of the "thrust" stage they can use scenery right down there.

The lighting bridges in the roof at Wolfsburg have much lebensraum allowing access to all parts of the Patt. 793 spots in comfort without any queasiness. The lanterns hang from substantial cast, slotted brackets which make acute angling and setting a pleasure. The wiring installation is by Rank Strand, Germany, and is superb—it really is—and the dimmer room is a palace with



Stadt Theatre, Wolfsburg. Architect, Sharoun. Wing housing dressing rooms etc. extreme left has been omitted. The depth of the stage excluding orchestra or rear stage is just over 16 m. or roughly 53 ft. The orchestra/forestage lifts in front add another 5.40 m. or nearly 18 ft.

what must be the largest window and finest view out of it of any dimmer room anywhere! The truth is that the room was constructed to house the dimmers of the well-known German competitor and although we have used our new Maxi dimmers the racks remain relatively small. Much the same applies to the lighting control room where the 180 channel (147 fitted) System MSR dimmer memory desk running along under the window looks like a small coffee table. Leicester has also got a portable stalls control for its MSR. This must be examined another day however as must the fact that the control desk for German use has the groups and locations carefully identified whereas that for the English relies on the numbers one to one hundred and twenty only.

However, I must take some space to salute Gerd Ohlmer and his team in Salzdahlum and to say that it is a source of

never-ending wonder to me to see so much "Strand Electric" equipment in German theatres. This was as inconceivable as the now common form of dimmer—the thyristor—when I joined in the 'thirties. It is a tale—nay, a saga—to be told, or whatever it is you do to sagas, another day.

There is good off-stage storage and an easy get-in at Wolfsburg but no workshops because, rather unusually for Germany, this theatre depends on visiting shows and artistes.

Wolfsburg is a Shangri La of a theatre with parkland up to the door and white carpet everywhere from then on; indeed one wonders now if one did not dream it all up. Whereas down in the City centre at Leicester, life is compressed and earnest with some awkward corners perhaps to knock into. *That* theatre is however certainly real and will have much to say for itself.

The Sherman Theatre

This theatre by Alex Gordon & Partners for the Drama Department of the University of South Wales and Monmouthshire was described with plans last June in our

article "The City of Cardiff". A photograph was promised after the building had opened and here it is.



Churches Television and Radio Centre

K. R. Ackerman

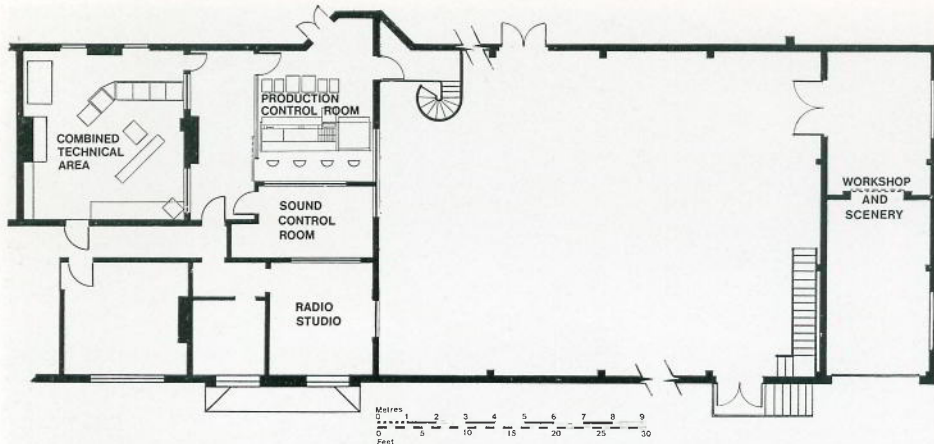
TABS has been principally interested in the "legitimate" theatre with an occasional glance at television, but never before as far as I know has it turned its attention to matters ecclesiastical.

At the end of a narrow and winding country lane on the outskirts of Bushey, Herts, one finds this late Edwardian country mansion, once the home of Mr. Peat of the well-known firm of Peat, Marwick and Mitchell. This connection with big business becomes more intriguing when one learns that the studio centre it houses is under the aegis of the Lord Rank Foundation for Christian Communications. In this age when one is more accustomed to Churches and Chapels being converted into tele-

vision studios and bingo halls, it is remarkable to find this Centre equipped with some of the most sophisticated broadcast television equipment which can be obtained today.

The Churches Television and Radio Centre has a three-fold function—training, production and research—and was first established in 1959 at Central Hall, Tooting. After a brief spell in the BBC Training School in Marylebone High Street, it moved to Bushey in 1965 when the 1,800 sq. ft. television studio was built and equipped for monochrome closed circuit production. During 1972 the centre "converted" [sic] to colour.

The studio building is an uncompromis-



Churches TV and Radio Centre, Bushey, Herts. Above: split-level plan, LH shows first floor and RH the ground floor. Previous page: the house and garden with TV studio at the far end.

ingly modern structure, not following the mock Tudor of the mansion but added discreetly as a wing to the main building. It does not clash with the air of tranquillity generated by the rural setting and the beautifully stocked and landscaped garden.

The technical equipment installed is generally to an enviably high standard. The three colour cameras are Marconi Mark VIIs which provide automatic line-up and colour balance. Video tape recording is by a 2 in. Ampex A.V.R.1 backed up by an IVC helical scan Type 871P. The vision mixer, quite remarkably, has 16 channels and is of the A-B-C-D-type with a 15-way special effects desk and Chroma key facilities. The sound desk is at present the poor relation, having normal basic facilities with 10 channels, but this I understand is due to be changed in the next phase of development. Telecine equipment includes a Marconi Mark VII colour camera with two Bauer Automatic sensing 16 mm. projectors and a dual-port slide projector.

Lighting is similarly professional. There are forty-four Berkey Anti-G spring counterbalanced telescopes suspended from standard heavy gauge cyclorama track which runs in rows 3 ft. apart down the length of the studio and at a height of 16 ft. A twin cyclorama track at 14 ft. follows the full studio perimeter. Control is from a 60-

channel Rank Strand Lightset 60 system with three presets and nine groups. Fifty channels feed outlets on trunking installed at ceiling level which, via a catenary suspension system, are then connected to the sockets on the luminaire telescopes. The remaining ten sockets are installed at ground level for cyclorama lighting. Power available for lighting is a generous 75 kilowatts. They have some sixty luminaires (for the Editor's benefit, lanterns), including 2 kW, 1 kW, and 500 W Fresnel spots, profile spots, soft lights and ten 4-lamp ground-row units. Where other equipment was so lavish it seemed to me a false economy that pole operation of the luminaires had not been provided. I was also surprised to note that apart from fairly rudimentary acoustic treatment on the ceiling, the walls were totally devoid of any treatment or finish to the breeze-block inner cladding.

The Centre has a fully equipped 16 mm colour film unit too and uses external commercial services for transferring or telerecording video-tapes onto 16 mm colour film.

The radio studio is comparatively austere, being some 180 sq. ft. in area and sharing the television studio sound control facilities. They are hoping in the not too distant future, however, to expand them to match the television facilities.

In these days of demarcation disputes it

was refreshing to learn of the multiple roles which each of the small staff took upon themselves. The entire production design and technical staff number ten. This excludes of course the reverend administrators and lecturers. The unit secretary for example "doubled" as Make-Up, Continuity, and Vision Mixer.

The work undertaken ranges from simple interviews and discussions for training purposes to short drama productions for dissemination to schools and other interested organizations. The Film Unit has produced a number of documentary films and has an ambitious programme of thirty-minute 16mm film productions under way. Training seems at present the principal function, and the Centre maintains close liaison with both the BBC and Independent Television and radio companies. Bertram Mycock, one-time industrial correspondent for the BBC, is on the permanent staff. A course would



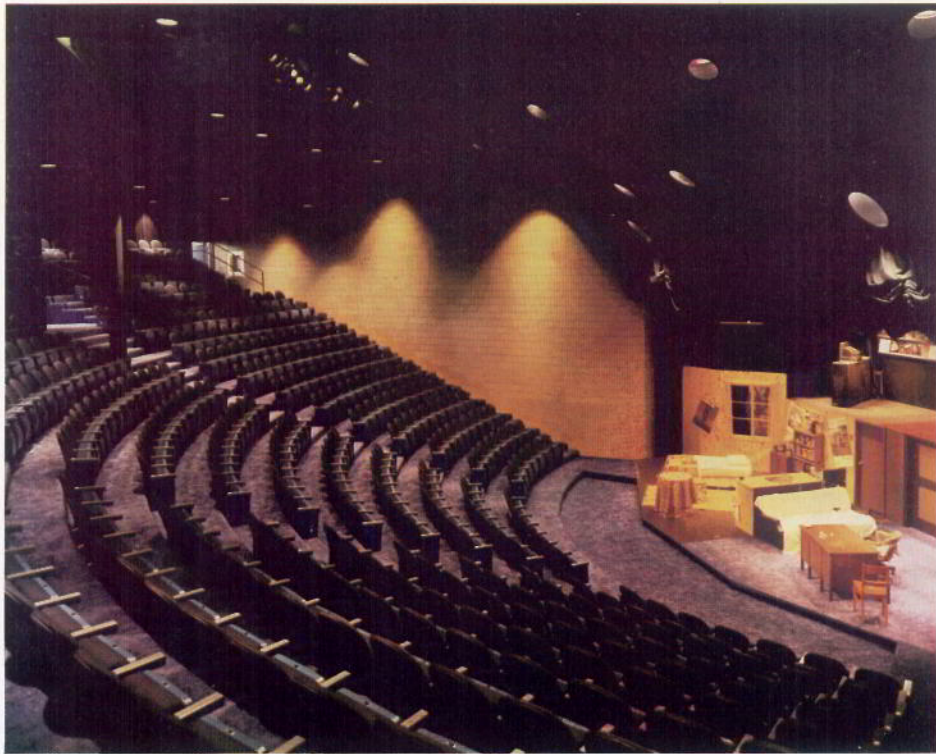
Main studio at Bushey.



The production control room at Bushey.

normally comprise twelve people from different denominations and last four days. During this time everyone does work in front of the cameras (two interviews, a solo, and discussion group work) all of which is recorded, played back and appraised. It must be a salutary experience.

I would like to thank the Editor firstly for inviting me to submit this brief report, for I found the visit most interesting and was impressed by the professionalism and enthusiasm of the small technical team involved; and secondly, because this is the last edition which he will be compiling and I would like to place on record how much I, and certainly many readers of TABS, are going to miss his idiosyncratic and eminently readable contributions.



Chinguacousy Theatre

A. Sheppard†

The Township of Chinguacousy* is a municipal district, some 120 square miles in area, located on the northwestern fringe of Metropolitan Toronto. To this writer at least it is an oasis of rural charm, beauty and prosperity. Initial settlement began just over a hundred and fifty years ago. The intervening years have seen the development of a sense of peace and maturity. An evening's or afternoon's drive along its well-treed side-roads and through its tiny hamlets can be a source of refreshment and enrichment as well as a handy escape from the pressures of urban life.

*Pronounced, according to the guidebooks, "Chin-coosy" and, for those addicted to etymological esoterica, transliterated from the Chippewa while losing, in the process any certain reference to the original. The best guess is that it honours one Chief Shinguacose who served the British forces with distinction during the war of 1812.

In the era of the automobile and urban sprawl it would be certainly futile, perhaps even condescending, to suggest that the area should remain untouched by the rapid growth of its neighbour. And indeed, it has not. In 1960 work was begun on the development of Canada's first satellite community, the town of Bramalea. Its centre is some 20 miles from Toronto City Hall and it now boasts a population of 30,000 and is well on the way towards its projected complement of 100,000.

The immediate impetus toward the development of the Chinguacousy Township Civic Centre was obviously the need for an administrative facility that could cope with this explosion of population and related commerce and industry. But the

†Mr. A. Sheppard is the technical director of Theatre Calgary and a consultant in Canada.

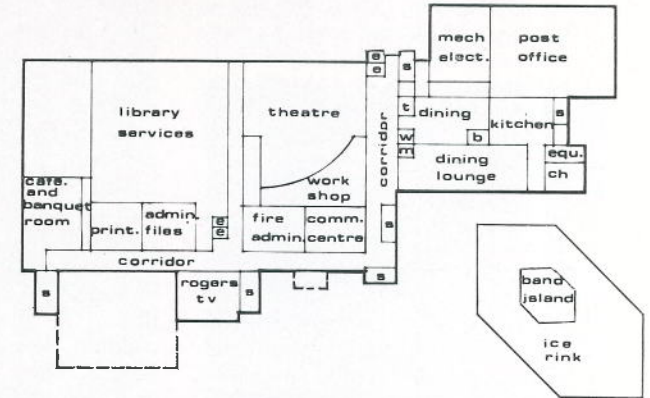
Township Council were determined to temper their response to this pressure with the conviction that the Centre should reflect and complement the character of the township and the expectations of its original residents. It should serve as the medium whereby the new residents might discover and develop a sense of community.

The theatre itself was dedicated to the memory of the late Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, in August. The theatre is not especially remarkable if considered in isolation from its context. There are undoubtedly many like it. Some are better provided in this or that piece of equipment, some are not. Its chief virtue is a well-contoured, comfortably-proportioned auditorium which balances nicely with a small but workable stage. The seating capacity is 475, and 508 with temporary seating added over the orchestra pit. Backstage storage and flying space are limited. Space for support facilities is adequate. There are sixteen hemp staging pipes and three lighting pipes with dead suspension from the grid. The stage lighting is through connected to thirty-eight 2 kW dimmers and the house lights to two 3 kW dimmers. The control desk is a Strand Century SP40 which is portable and may be operated from backstage or from the control booth.

In general, theatre manager Robert Whiteford feels that the theatre works very well and that he and his staff have encountered no major difficulties. He may have further comments in this regard in the fall. During fall the Elizabethan Players of Newport, Wales, are presenting a three-week season of four plays in repertory as guests of the Chinguacousy Summer Festival.

The theatre breaks no new ground in

technical or architectural terms. It is not a monument to the pretensions of its planners and builders. Rather it is an eminently practical facility working in the service of its community. Mr. Whiteford informed us that there were only twenty-one dark nights during the first year of operation and



Lester B. Pearson Memorial Theatre, Chinguacousy, Ontario. Ground floor plan and view of auditorium (left).

that overall attendance has averaged 72 per cent for a multiplicity of activities including productions of the Bramalea Little Theatre, orchestra recitals, band concerts, dance presentations, poetry readings, Town Hall and political meetings. In the afternoons, the theatre is rented to local service clubs or commercial and industrial interests for meetings, demonstrations and related activities. These community activities further broaden its economy base helping to meet overhead costs. Thus rental fees are kept within reach of local groups.

One is tempted to suggest that the Lester B. Pearson Memorial Theatre would make an ideal home for one of the growing number of small professional theatre groups attempting to take root in Toronto. This would be a welcome development indeed but only, if the participation of the community now characterising the theatre is not lost in the process.

When Drama is not Theatre

Barbara Berrington

It is now several months since I saw the latest of the Greek Plays at Bradfield College. The choice this year was *The Bacchae*, by Euripides, and in their open-air, classically-modelled theatre the aim—and indeed the achievement—was a clear-cut production to take the audience back to ancient Greece. It was, so to speak, the quintessence of the old public school tradition, performed in its original Greek by boys trained—nay*drilled—by director and dance-master to a predetermined state of excellence.

Until about ten years ago it was to this kind of end that every school play was directed, though rarely, alas, with a similar measure of success. It was a tremendously different experience that we found when I dragged off a reluctant Fred Bentham (ironically an erstwhile pupil at St. Paul's*) to see the kind of thing that is now being done in very large numbers of schools throughout the country under the name of "drama". Indeed a Bacchic frenzy might well describe the hubbub encountered when we went into a lesson for about fifty thirteen-year-olds in the old hall of Dr. Barnado's School—now the Educational Drama Centre at Redbridge.

Educational drama is clearly now a very different thing from "theatre". I think it is easiest to express that difference by saying that "theatre" is intended for an audience and "drama" for its participants. It is a means of harnessing the energy and effort they normally put into their own games—a controlled extension of "play".

Working in groups of about six or eight, the children were heaving drama shapes around and talking excitedly and with intense concentration about their "aspect of Christmas". It made a curious contrast to the serried ranks of orphaned Victorian shades: in one corner an Israeli plot was being hatched to get through Arab lines in

*There he tells me they too ended the school year with a play in Greek performed in the Great Hall more than inconspicuously in front of a proscenium of organ pipes.

a huge plum pudding; in another, three contenders for the title of Miss Christmas were put through their paces by a demanding compère; elsewhere employees begged a heartless Scrooge to let them leave at 9.30 this Christmas Eve, while "Down at the Local" the departing drinkers heard the glad Christmas tidings . . . and promptly returned for an extra festive round.

Relatively little talk seemed needed to get them started. The teachers had discussed Christmas in general terms as "others" might be experiencing it and suggested that the improvisation should, like work done earlier that day, start from or finish with a frozen "photograph". After that it all just seemed to happen. The children determined their own working groups, their own subject, their own approach and simply went straight ahead with it. At times during their work an entire group might halt, sit in a circle on



"The teachers had discussed it in general terms."

hastily formed-up chairs and have three minutes' intense discussion. Disputes were few; they would have wasted precious time.

Finally, after about twenty minutes they showed one another what they had achieved. The staff wandered round with the odd rare comment and then sent them off with the recommendation that they use these ideas elsewhere—perhaps in other lessons back at school. Then the staff from the school had lunch with those of the Drama Centre

while the content and approaches to the next week's session were thrashed out.

The group I saw was particularly well advanced. It had taken to the water like so many ducklings, and in this its second session had achieved a degree of concentration and unselfconsciousness that a more difficult group might not achieve over a whole term. In a less happy case there would be no showing of work to the other children; "actors" forced into performance too early would simply freeze and giggle. The drama team would just have to go on trying out more and more lines of approach until, as they said, they "found the way in".

Obviously this kind of work can use a large supply of "props". There are the drama shapes which are made of wood and have a tendency to disintegrate under child strain; sturdy but light plastic substitutes are sought and could be economically produced once the moulds were made. These are simple geometric shapes—instructional toys into which the children can put their own ideas—nothing too finished or too precise—though scenic leftovers from Thames Television are also incorporated. In fine weather outside work to create, say, a farm or a garden uses anything it can lay its hands on and a small rubbish tip can be a treasure trove.

Also from Thames came a large supply of old "78" records of suitable background music—often used with younger groups in something reminiscent of the BBC's *Music & Movement* series.

Drama work moves readily from music or speaking to painting or writing, and the teacher who comes with her class once a week for a morning or an afternoon (or occasionally but for an hour) can use this strange wild time as the inspiration for written work or discussion back at school.

It is only a gestatory nine months since Hugh Lovegrove, the Drama Adviser for Redbridge, acquired these premises (by dint of determination and squatters' rights), and his team of four now cope with coach parties from about seven schools a week, each group coming for about four or six weekly sessions. The Centre offers space and a freer situation, untrammelled by the risk of disturbing other classes, and with it a

degree of in-service training for the Drama, English and Remedial teachers who accompany their classes thither.

There is also a Youth Workshop in the evenings—mostly for the over-fourteens whose lengthy improvisations culminate in productions of shows like *Oh What a Lovely War!* which went on tour to a Festival of such work in Paris and Czechoslovakia. It is in the Workshop that stage



"Disputes were few; they would have wasted precious time."

technical experiments tend to appear and that special slides and effects are created. Indeed, for *Oh What a Lovely War!* a machine was specially built by a schoolboy under the guidance of a computer centre teacher, which I gather enables lighting, slides, sound and the like to be coordinated by pressing one of a series of buttons all housed in one little box.

The current efforts in Workshop are directed towards a production of the Gabrielli Brosse *Canterbury Tales* with a cast of sixty or seventy young people—the enthusiasts and the social misfits joining in with equal status and aplomb. On other evenings smaller groups of about fifteen take part in pure Workshops with no production in mind at all.

Seven or ten years ago "drama" was a new subject in schools and often suspect.

Hugh Lovegrove describes how, when his first junior school drama space was designed *without a stage*, the local officials had asked, what the Headmaster was going to stand on for the assembly (a facet of school life that seems to haunt areas set aside for drama)?; for assuredly he could not stand upon the rostra. "Eggboxes for the Headmaster!" Now new schools going up in the area all have drama spaces, and these, still stageless of course, are in fact often elaborately-equipped drama studios.

It is progress that in a new building such new facilities are a prerequisite, but they are alas often less robust than the makeshifts that are old. Today's soft floors are chewed up by tumbled rostra and hurrying feet and their very gloss and finish may make good make-believe seem tawdry; the little props are humbled and the work belittled by its surroundings. Nevertheless, it was impressive to see such a new studio at Loxford by the Borough of Redbridge architects dept., the first of four in process of completion in the area.

It is true that here children could never have painted trees on the walls by drawing round one another, arms outstretched, for trunks or have applied the foliage by pressing their paint covered palms flat against the hanging paper, but then in these new surroundings there were other benefits. . . . Or were the retractable bleachers at one end rather too reminiscent of the end of term productions in a Great Hall with beaming parents perched atop, and was there not something of the old proscenium in the two scaffolding towers a third of the way down the space where curtains had been hung to exclude the remaining third?

Be that as it may, careful planning had produced an area of about 60 x 43 ft. with a control room (JP.20) at one end* and at the other a projection room backed by a resources area and paint rooms. A curtain ran round the whole, enclosing the space inside, and there was the now expected pile of rostra, chairs and fragment scenery.

*This was in fact next to a second theatre, this time open air, in what would once have been the quadrangle.

Here a class, grouped by its birth certificates rather than by its real age, ranged from sophisticated Negroes who looked too old for school to demure Indian girls who almost looked too young, and in the middle of this incongruous group an elfin woman with a light voice was working on the theme of "conflict in the home"; I admired her nerve and her control and when they faltered I admired the surly but confiding



"Outside work to create say a farm."

voice which begged, "You start us, Miss!"

The heavily coloured lights were simply what was left over from the hop but this disco darkness helped to conceal the obvious self-conscious nervousness of the older pupils, working on a theme that in this tough area must have cut rather close to the bone. Lighting still has to conceal more than it reveals.

Lighting is of course simply another prop. Apart from general illumination, which may just as well come from the working lights, it is simply not essential. Perhaps this is a pity because if lighting were essential the difficulties would be overcome and it is obviously something that many teachers—particularly, alas, the ladies—find it hard to come to grips with. One Junior 8 seems ambitious, and as for two! The Centre's female technician is doing her best to educate such teachers, but clearly the floods are easiest to deal with—then Fresnels, as their edges do not create problems, and only last are the more atmospheric profiles considered, with their potential for simple projection and strongly atmospheric lighting; atmosphere at present

seems chiefly limited to heavy use of colour. Linnebachs and effects are only explored when the odd child shows a real inclination that way. The older children are allowed to play the lighting but the modern thyristor controls, now being introduced for their greater safety, flexibility and transportability, are not very labour intensive and are rather complicated in the relating of cause to effect; there is something of the "black box" syndrome about even a multi-core cable; so the effects we watched were haphazard rather than controlled. If the children are to do lighting themselves there is much to be said for a principle of one child, one light (with, preferably, its own dimmer) such as Dave Morton prescribed for his nine-to-thirteen-year-olds.*

Sound seems in many ways to have more to offer. The place to start is more obvious—record and player—nearly everyone (children and teachers) has met them before. Also modern music is highly emotive, whereas modern lighting as we see it in its show window, architectural and disco contexts is relatively-uninspired as well as being remote. The children find little in our society that can fire them. We are not as a people very aware of light; it is rather something to be taken for granted.

What educationists want is to build an atmosphere in which the children produce creative work. They must be aware of the effect of the light on themselves and of its effect on the others in their work group. For theatre people, who have always thought of lighting in terms of illuminating actors for the benefit of an audience, the distinction between "theatre" and "drama" can be difficult to get across. Illuminating actors for the benefit of themselves only appears in the psychological asides of Francis Reid's more witty articles.†

Educational drama does not require the same kind of equipment as the professional theatre and it is scarcely surprising that they do little exploration of light at present. The professional theatre needs a far better optical system, additions such as shutters, which are now compulsory in the small

*TABS, Vol. 31, No. 3.

†TABS, Vol. 31, No. 1.

500-watt profile range, and other sophistications of that ilk. Moreover, theatre is moving steadily away from such smaller lanterns and taking on the tungsten halogen lamps which are too expensive, too hot and unnecessarily bright for educational work.

When these teachers are using lighting equipment they are normally working in a drama studio, often a converted classroom where height is quite inadequate and heat output needs to be minimal. When teaching drama (as distinct from electrical circuitry or plug-wiring) the teacher wants to be doing things under the lights (or letting the children do things with them)—not to be spending time endlessly re-rigging them,



"Scaffolding towers could be placed at the corners."

and the aim is therefore something like the set-up Peter Cheeseman describes for repertory theatre in the round.* They need a grid (reasonably accessible) on which umpteen cheap lanterns can be fixed. Several lanterns cover each area and ideally there should be sufficient to change from "hot" lighting to "cool" lighting for basic mood evocation. Over and above this there are specials which might have, for instance, colour-change wheels on them. These are chiefly profiles because a profile allows the insertion of gobos so that simple silhouettes and patterns can be formed evoking, say, a prison cell, a leafy glade, etc.

*TABS, Vol. 30, pages 115 and 148-155.



Drama studio, Loxford Comprehensive School, showing floor area removed to form a well.

The ideal is something so flexible that it can be turned to any purpose. Without a grid, four scaffolding towers could be placed at the corners of the acting area to mark it out and light it simultaneously and the Drama Centre staff described one very successful session with a single tower placed in the centre of the acting area to hold the lights, and to be "the set", the focus of the action, or anything the

children's imagination chose.

I even got the sense that the children had in some way trained their mentors. The teachers watching them saw things to be extracted and later built on where I saw nothing; they had acquired their own language of games and approaches and a high sensitivity to the precise point at which some device had been exhausted. Their determination to make their lessons run after the children's interest, made them and the things they used highly flexible and, the less rigid the rules for what to do and what not to do, the better seemed the results.

Nevertheless, the National Association of Drama Advisors has recently put its recommendations into a new edition of the booklet, *The Design of Drama Spaces in Secondary Schools*.* The final comment goes to a review of this book written not by a wild-eyed dramatist but by a practising architect. He expressed the wish that other teachers would adopt an equally colourful and vigorous approach to their lessons since as far as he could see Drama had done more to liven up school life and school buildings than any other subject.

*This can be obtained from Mr. J. Melia, Drama Adviser for Newham, Town Hall, Broadway, Stratford, London, E.15.

Where the Girls are so Pretty

Percy Corry

It has always been a great pleasure to visit Dublin and to be welcomed into a theatre community whose congenial Irish spirit (abstract of course, but could be vegetable and mineral) is so heart-warming. In July last it was particularly pleasing to have Kevin Bourke as considerate conductor of a holiday mini-tour of a few of the places of entertainment in the city.

First call was Ireland's national theatre, the Abbey, dedicated to encouragement of Irish playwrights. What was seen was certainly the work of an Irish playwright but whether or not it was a play could be matter for argument. Perhaps it should be described, in modern jargon, as a "documentary", a fragmentary form of theatre that is rather fashionable at present, although dramatic documentation seems to fit more snugly into the techniques of television: this particular exercise rather emphasised the limitations of the less elastic techniques of theatre. The theme was based on the tragic events of Northern Ireland's Bloody Sunday; with slightly different partisan slant it could well have been based on the equally tragic Bloody Friday. To an agnostic from John Bull's major island, able therefore to take a detached non-sectarian view, its subjective sincerity was not matched by convincing theatrical significance.

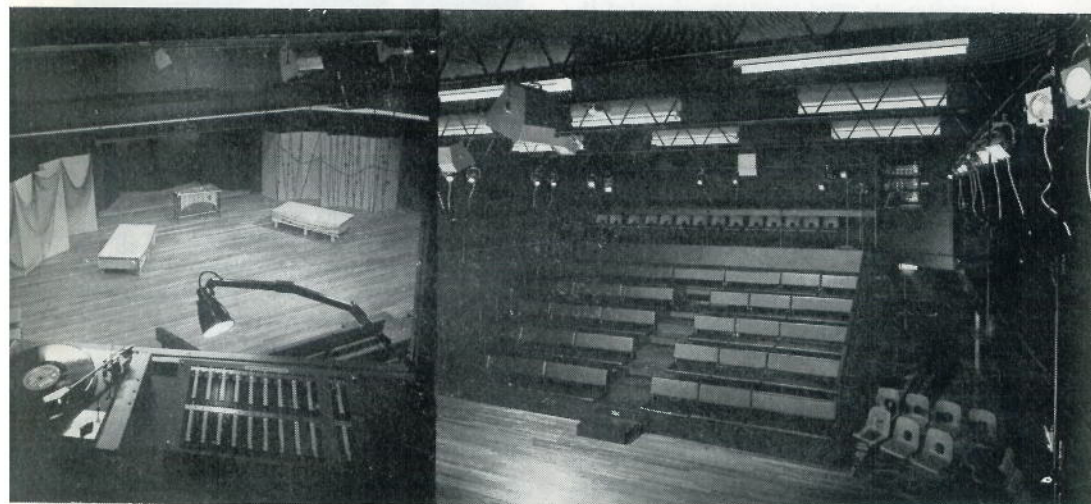
There was excellent comedy acting from the three players who carried the central flash-back scenes in spite of extraneous interruptions that seemed a thought too contrived. These players did more than justice to the author's rather tenuous material. It was impossible to avoid comparison with *Juno and the Paycock*, a play that vividly illumines similar events; and O'Casey won hands down. Appropriately enough, the three who had borne the heat and burden of the evening closed the performance with hands up, signifying their offered surrender to English soldiers who had already shot them down when the performance began. It was an open end-stage type of production, with the auditorium ceiling panels at maximum height,

and technical presentation in a composite set was very effective. Leading into the final scene however there was a somewhat baffling projection of a spotlight's white circle on a side wall of the auditorium, presumably having some elusive symbolism.

It was good to make a return visit to this attractive theatre, the first, alas, since the opening night in 1966. It was next possible to witness the work of the most celebrated of Irish playwrights in a production of *Misalliance*, albeit with slight preliminary misgiving caused by some performances in recent years that had done less than justice to Shaw; it had seemed that either directors or actors or both had not read his detailed guidance, or were unable to recognise the dramatic quality of his characters and their lines. Any apprehension was quite needless on this occasion.

The production was presented at the Gresham Hotel, being described as Equity Dinner Theatre. This association of Hotel and Equity was responsible for the first of such seasons in 1972.

The hotel ballroom served as combined restaurant and theatre. At one end of the room a fit-up stage with drapery proscenium (opening 22 ft. by 10 ft. high) had been well blended with the dignified environment. With a stage height of eighteen inches, sight lines from the flat floor were something less than ideal. Tables were staggered and fairly widely spaced to minimise the disadvantages. Candles, in silver brackets of course, gave gracious (and adequate) lighting during the meal, being discreetly removed for the performance. As dining capacity was limited to 180, it would have been possible, with only slight inconvenience, to remove the tables also and to rearrange the chairs *en masse*: the audience was too interested in the play to need alcoholic stimulant so the tables were superfluous, anyway during the performance. Actors have to work harder to get immediate and maximum reaction from people who are not near enough to each other to have acquired the collective



Another typical modern drama studio, Ball's Park College, Hertford. Control room left, bleacher seating right.



The Gaiety Theatre, Dublin.

personality of a theatre audience.

An excellent meal, pleasingly served, was a reassuring beginning and any misgiving evaporated within the first few minutes of the performance. This was a vigorously intelligent production with expert characterisation. Shaw set the scene in Surrey and it was a nice touch to give the prosperous draper, Tarleton, and his wife, accents of Lancashire . . . or near enough. It was obviously impossible to present the detailed opulence described by Shaw in the printed version of the play, given mainly for the benefit of his armchair readers who in 1910

were probably his most profitable audience. The space available was effectively used for a well-designed set, and a conservatory at the rear allowed for the convincing shadow of an aeroplane passing over the glass roof, with appropriately dramatic sound effects.

This was a civilised and satisfying evening: choice food for bodily and mental digestion. As we arrived early and secured a front-row table the flat floor was no handicap. This substitution of five courses and a bottle of wine for the more usual chocolates, ice-cream, or a quick one in the interval, is an interesting social development.

Continuing the combination of food and fun, this time in lush modernity, we next sampled dinner and cabaret at Jury's impressive new hotel. Here, the feeding audience was much larger than at the Gresham (capacity about 400) and the tables were on two levels. The stage was adequate for the purpose but slightly overcrowded with the entire company mustered. Song and dance had to compete with knives and forks. A conventional theatregoer's feeding tended to be spasmodic as it seemed impolite to concentrate on mastication while Irish harps twanged, or tenor and baritone tunelessly asserted that the moon had raised her lamp above. It was quite pleasing to have nostalgic melodies instead of the brash pop that might have been expected. Neither tenor nor baritone really needed the mikes that now seem to be universal hand-props. The tenor flourished his with flamboyant gestures that merely emphasised its redundancy. There was a generous measure of native comedy, and again the widely spaced audience (plus the knives and forks) forced a very competent comedian to work just a bit harder for his laughs than should have been necessary. There were a number of large parties at long tables which helped.

To fill in the interval needed by the performers, attractive models (we used to call them mannequins) displayed female form and fashion. Prices of exhibits (textile, not female) were announced in dollars as well as in sterling, obviously in deference to trans-atlantic tourists, and with acquisitive eye on Irish export figures. There was no reference to vital statistics, metric or otherwise.

Finally the Gaiety Theatre's annual summer revue, neatly announced as *Gaels of Laughter*, was found to live up to the bil-

ling. The Gaiety, seating capacity 1150, is a theatre of the red plush and gilt period . . . horse-shoe balconies, boxes, chandeliers . . . the lot—a splendid setting for this type of show which could be less well served by a modern, clinical severity. It was gratifying to see a full house enjoying itself in an old convention. As in the cabaret (with which the Gaiety shared two of the leading performers, a practice not unusual in Variety of years gone by) the routine was song and dance and front-cloth comedy, but the Gaiety had the addition of some bright sketches and much more elaborate spectacle; but no knives and forks. The popular star of the show was a comedienne whose vitality, expert stagecraft and petite figure reminded one member of the audience of Betty Jumel, and anybody who is old enough to have enjoyed the performances of the gifted Variety artist named will realise that greater compliment could not be offered to a similarity that was different.

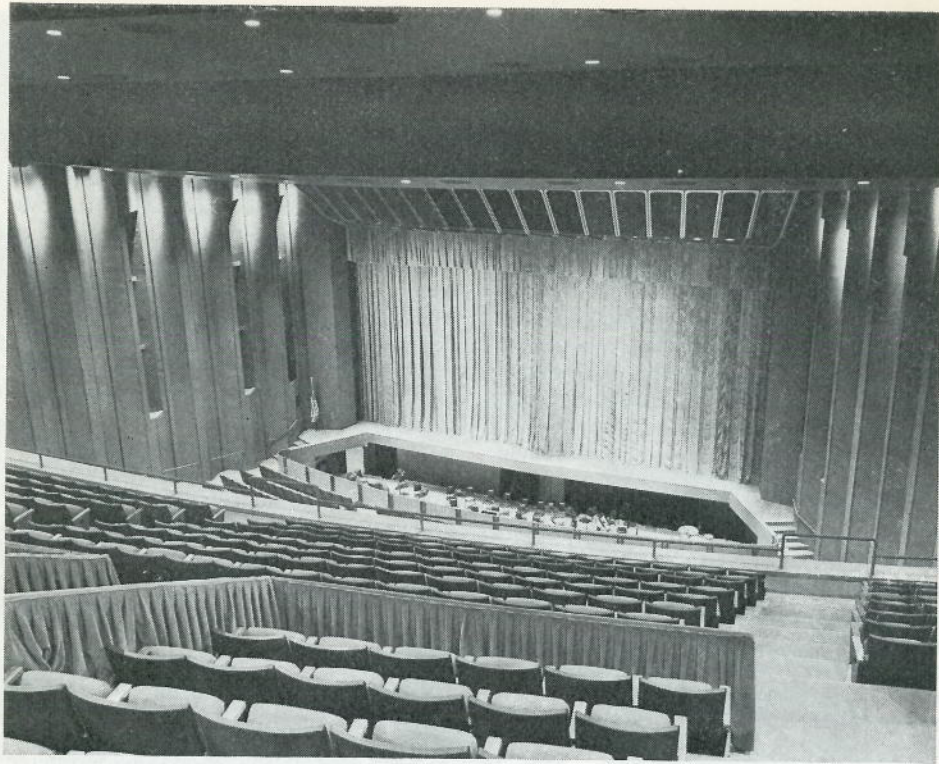
The spectacle was efficiently staged with lavish use of colour and light; more sensitive and less liberal use of the moving cloud effects would have been welcome. In spite of all the good advice offered so frequently, users of such optical effects as moving clouds and falling snow will persist in minimising impact by over-exposure; in trying to get too much for their money they get less dramatic value.

This short concentrated tour was stimulating. It was much too short and had to exclude those other well-known Dublin theatres: Olympia, Gate, Eblana and the Abbey's associated Peacock. The live theatre in Dublin is very lively. And the Dublin mountains are very lovely; and so are those of Wicklow. The Guinness isn't at all bad either. *Slainte!*

Tabs Index and Bound Copies

It has been our practice to publish an index so that readers who wished to have their copies bound could do so. It is in fact easy to get one-off binding done—even to the extent of having TABS and other information blocked in gold on the spine. The result is not expensive, especially when one takes into account that the literary content costs nothing!

We ourselves are binding the four issues of this year (Vol. 31) as one book, for sale at £1.50 post free in U.K. Another book covers the three years 1970–1972 (Vols. 28–30) at £2.50, but only a limited number are now available. The index for each of the above books is separately available free on application to the TABS office.



New in New Orleans

*L. J. De Cuir**

On January 9th, 1973 the doors opened for the first performance in the only major theatre built in the city of New Orleans in the last forty years. With the New Orleans Theatre of the Performing Arts architects Mathes-Bergman and Associates hoped to make up for this hiatus by giving the city a modern highly-equipped structure that could be a suitable home for a wide range of live entertainment. Since its opening the building has been called on to serve the New Orleans Symphony Orchestra, the New Orleans Opera, road shows, concerts, local and touring ballet groups, fashion shows, dancing school revues, and even an occasional church service. As with any theatre that must serve such a variety of

purposes there were a great number of compromises that had to be made to meet the needs of each group without at the same time impinging too greatly on the needs of the others. How well these compromises turned out in most cases shows the considerable time and thought that was spent on these areas by the architects and their theatrical consultant, Ralph Alswang.

From the outside the building offers little promise of the innovations that one will find inside. It is a large, slab-sided, aggregate-faced structure that is architecturally interesting only from the front.

**Mr. De Cuir is Lighting Designer at the New Orleans Theatre of the Performing Arts.*

The other three sides are simply massive and functional. At night, however, the glass front reveals the multiple levels, warm carpet and lighting of the lobby in an inviting façade. Its almost as though the theatre turns on at night beckoning to the audience outside.

Once inside, the lobby is broken into a number of levels and staircases around a large central chandelier. The interconnection of these levels offers many possibilities beyond simply crowding around waiting to get in. There are quiet corners for conversation and vantage points for the curious. The entrances on the ground level lead via ramps to the orchestra and box seating area for the convenience of the elderly or handicapped. In addition, there is a grand outside staircase beginning at the fountains in front and ending on the main lobby level above for those who would like a more leisurely or scenic approach. It is a well planned area that encourages the uses that a lobby can be put to besides the obvious.

areas: orchestra, box seats in centre, and further seating behind the boxes. An additional 929 seats in the balcony bring the capacity of the house to 2,317. This capacity is a compromise in itself. It has proved a good size for opera, adequate for symphony, borderline for legitimate theatre, and a bit small for musicals and popular concerts. In terms of serving all of these though it has proved itself a feasible choice.

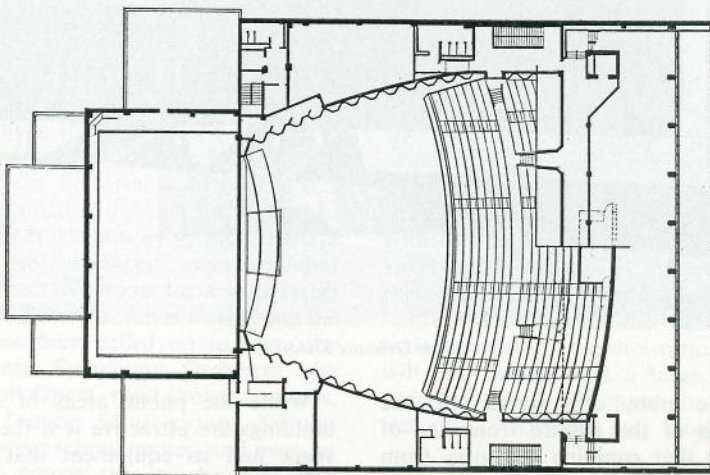
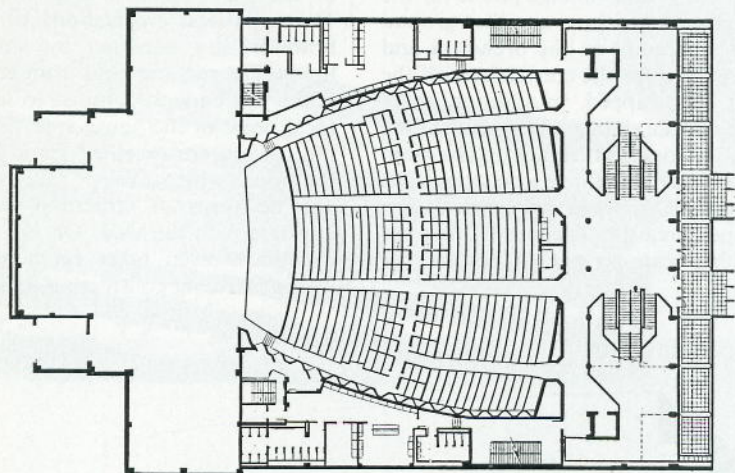
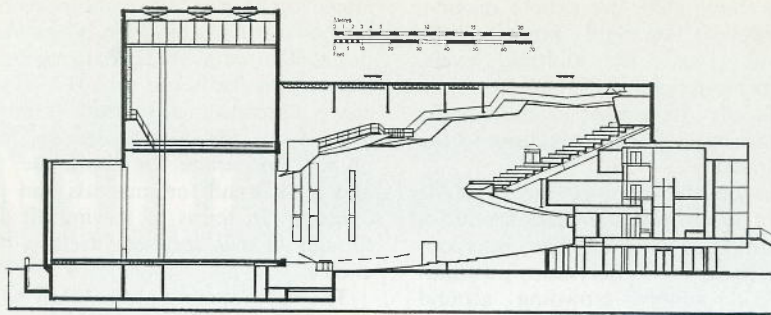
The red carpeting of the lobby continues into the seating area and is picked up there in the seat cushions and walls as well. The acoustical crenulations of the walls, however, are accented by amber down lights. The red and gold front curtain then offers just enough contrast to serve as the focal point of the house area. Sightlines to the curtain are excellent from any seat in the house with sufficient rake to the seats and no posts or structural members to interfere with the view. On the main floor the house even takes on a surprisingly intimate feeling considering its size.



New Orleans Theatre.

From the lobby one moves into the seating area of the theatre from one of three levels that combine entrances from the rear and sides of the house. The main floor offers 1,388 seats in three seating

While the public areas of many new buildings are attractive it is the backstage space and its equipment that make the difference between those that are theatres and those that are simply auditoriums.



The New Orleans Theatre of the Performing Arts. Architects: Mathes-Bergman and Associates; Consultant: Ralph Alswang.

The first way that many structures fall short is in allowing insufficient space backstage. This is not true in this case. The proscenium arch is large, 60 ft. by 34 ft. but the wing and upstage space is equivalent in size. From the stage-left wall backstage to the stage-right wall, for example, floor space measures over 170 ft. or about 55 ft. of wing space on each side of the arch. There is also 80 ft. of depth from the proscenium arch line to the rear wall. The theatre thus offers the amount of backstage space necessary to make such a large arch workable.

With this size of stage one very often also encounters problems just in moving the massive scenery required for a full-scale production. It is in this area of scenery-handling equipment that some of the most exciting and controversial innovations have been used at the New Orleans Theatre. The entire stage and orchestra pit area is a series of electronically controlled, motor and gear-driven stage lifts. The lifts, provided by Mole-Richardson of England, and the control equipment, developed by Evershed Power Optics, represent one of the most massive, integrated installations of this sort to date. There are twelve stage lifts each measuring 8 ft. by 18 ft. and six orchestra pit lifts of about the same size. All of these are controlled from one console, can be individually preset for different levels for different scenes and run to their preset levels at different or the same speeds. The lifts, within their range of operation (10 ft. above stage level to 7 ft. 6 in. below stage level) can thus be controlled much as we have already grown used to controlling lighting. It becomes possible to use the lifts as a real part of the production rather than just as instant platforming.

This area of scenery handling equipment also brings one to the most controversial item in the entire building—the Hydra Float system. The New Orleans Theatre has ninety-six battens on 6-in centres and nine wagon drives all controlled by Hydra Float. Simply put, the Hydra Float system is an electronically controlled, hydraulically operated, batten and wagon drive system. The basis of the system is a long cylinder

with a piston inside. Attached to each end of the piston are Teflon coated cables which exit the cylinder through special seals and then are attached to a line block when used to operate battens or, when used as a wagon drive, to a recessed track. An electronically-actuated valve controls the direction and rate of flow of the operating hydraulic fluid, while a transducer provides feedback to let the control console and the operator know what is going on. As with the stage lifts the battens can be preset for a high and low trim as well as the speed with which the batten moves to each position. The system as originally installed was not fully operational and a good deal of its development has been carried out in the building itself. Those of us concerned with the theatre and the system have great hope for its future. It represents a highly sophisticated scenery handling method that offers the user greatly increased efficiency and accuracy over conventional systems.

In turning from an area of controversy to an area of unquestioned success, however, one comes to the acoustical engineering and sound systems of the New Orleans Theatre. Dr. Robert Bonner as acoustical consultant for the building has done a remarkable job in this often uncertain area. A suspended plaster ceiling and plaster walls along with the ceiling and wall shape have contributed to what one visiting conductor called: "one of the four or five best halls in the country". It is also the excellent acoustics that have helped to make the size of the theatre workable. Productions that would have been lost in many halls this size have instead been successful.

The sound system itself, as provided by Altec-Lansing to Dr. Bonner's design, has also been very successful. It is extremely clean and well balanced with no more than two decibels difference between any seat in the house.

Finally, in the area of sound, the orchestra shell while being extremely heavy, which is desirable acoustically, is also extremely flexible which is desirable practically.

The design of the lighting locations and

choice of equipment for the New Orleans Theatre points out many of the difficulties faced in making such a compromise-house work. The equipment and locations must be able to handle the most sophisticated,

with individually removable tops and serves to light the orchestra pit when used as an apron or to provide a flatter angle to the main stage. Three box booms on each side of the arch in front are catwalked to three levels and give excellent side angles from the proscenium arch to the edge of the pit/apron. Upstage there are four light ladders down each side of the stage and extremely flexible plugging facilities. Seven, twenty-four circuit electric boxes on the grid are connected to the suspension battens via flexible lightweight, custom-moulded, multi-conductor cables that can easily be shifted from one to another as need dictates.

The patching and road-board systems also deserve mentioning. In addition to a standard cross-patch system and a 3,600-amp road-board power source, there is also a front-of-house-to-road-board patching system that allows road shows that want to use their own boards to tie in to the house wiring backstage very quickly and utilise house plugs in the cove, balcony rail, and box boom positions.

The light board is an 85 dimmer, 190 cue Century-Strand Memo-Q system that has proved extremely flexible for the building's needs. There are more sophisticated boards on the market today, but it is doubtful whether any of these could have met the variety of demands that this theatre makes as well. The manual mode of the Memo-Q system allows the operator to handle the amateur production, which has no idea of what its cues are till the last minute, just as easily as the professional company, which hands the operator a printed cue sheet as they walk in the stage door.

The New Orleans Theatre of the Performing Arts is one of the better examples of that sometimes most unfortunate genre—the multi-purpose house. These many-tenant buildings all too often end up having nothing for anyone rather than something for everyone. The New Orleans Theatre through intelligent planning has turned out quite the opposite. While not being an ideal opera house, nor a perfect symphony hall, nor an exemplar legitimate theatre it is a little bit of each of these and much more than just an adequate structure for all three.

expensive productions and at the same time be capable of lighting smaller productions cheaply and quickly. In this regard the lighting facilities have all been remarkably successful. *Thais*, the New Orleans Opera's most ambitious opera in years with over 120 complex light cues involving up to 130 instruments, came off smoothly as did a local dancing school revue for which the board operator did not receive the content of any light cues until the second that they were to be executed.

The lighting locations themselves are well planned both from the point of view of position and ease of utilisation. The ante-proscenium or cove position in the ceiling offers an ideal 45 degree angle to the proscenium arch line for area lights and is completely catwalked for safety. The balcony rail has forty-one box positions

The English Playhouse

Iain Mackintosh

The Development of the English Playhouse. Richard Leacroft. 282 × 222 mm. 365 pp. 189 illustrations. Eyre Methuen, 1973 £12.00.

"Another antiquarian's anecdote, £12.00, only 189 pictures and no colour." But, gentle reader, before you turn the page in search of racier reminiscences or more topical technicalities, pause a moment. First, this book is simply the best book on the development of English theatre architecture; second, it is superbly presented—with every plan scaled even more clearly than those in *TABS*—and third, Mr. Leacroft's book is indispensable for any theatre architect's or technician's library, an obvious choice to top any Christmas list and, if Mr. Ham will forgive me, my Desert Island theatre-building book (other than the works of Shakespeare that is, whatever the binding).

This, then is going to be one of those rare reviews. Let me try and make it a selling notice and keep the parade of reviewer's prejudices to the minimum.

Flip through Mr. Leacroft's book in the bookshop or at the library and your eye will immediately be caught by his thirty-eight isometrics, nearly all at 1/300 scale. These are three-dimensional cut-open reconstructions of theatres drawn from a helicopter, air balloon or kite over the audience's left or right shoulder. The same theatre is illustrated in its various states through the ages—eight of Drury Lane—and one can see how fires and fashion determined the evolution of England's greatest theatre.

In its 1958 form Drury Lane represents "an excellent example of what today is called a traditional 'picture frame' theatre with its stage viewed through the opening in the proscenium wall". The author wisely does not review or illustrate the many new theatre forms now emerging, the prototypes of which were being proposed, and often built, early this century. There is nothing, therefore, of Terence Gray and the Festival Cambridge 1926 or of other more recent innovators. However this is, ironically, one of the strengths of the book, for who is there who can trace the recent developments of new forms with the real detachment that Mr. Leacroft displays in assessing both the true proscenium theatre and the later picture frame houses? And yet we do get a history of today by opposites, or through a looking-glass, when Leacroft tells us how a

century and a half ago "The actor was pushed—protesting—through the frame to accord with a particular theory based on the importance of the stage picture, a move however, which conformed to the need to subdivide the fire risk of theatres into smaller and more compact compartments".

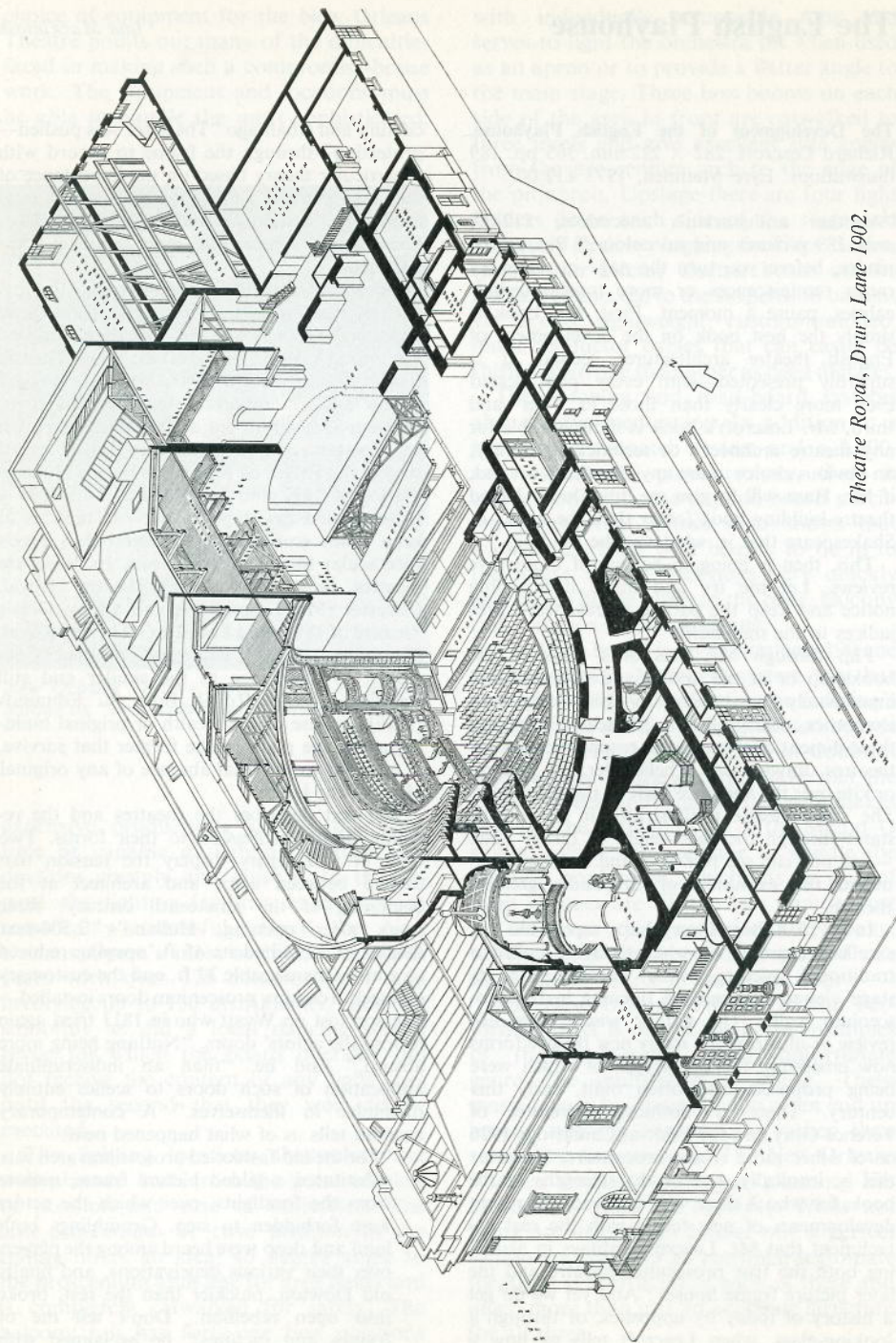
He does this in two ways—through the text and by the isometrics from the theatres of Jones and Wren to the choicer extant theatres: Richmond, Yorkshire (1788); the Theatre Royal, Bristol (as in 1948, without the still absent and all important forestage and proscenium-arch doors but at least complete with its necessary, and now sadly abolished, raked stage); the Palace as built in 1891; the Duke of York's of 1892 and Her Majesty's of 1897—Britain's first flat stage theatre—so built as to keep down scenic costs for Beerbohm Tree's spectacular Shakespeare revivals. Included are theatres now gone: the Theatre Royal, Leicester (Mr. Leacroft's home town); Daly's Theatre of 1893; and Foulston's Theatre Royal, Plymouth, of 1811 which is presumably included in preference to the similar and still standing Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds (1819) because of the wealth of original building and stage plans of the former that survive, in contrast to the total absence of any original plans of the latter.

The text describes the theatres and the reaction of the profession to their forms. Two tales of Old Drury display the tension that existed between actor and architect at the beginning of the nineteenth century: three years after opening, Holland's 3,500-seat theatre of 1794 had its 45 ft. opening reduced to a more manageable 33 ft. and the customary eighteenth century proscenium doors installed—a lesson lost on Wyatt who in 1811 tried again to lose the actors' doors, "Nothing being more absurd," said he, "than an indiscriminate application of such doors to scenes entirely dissimilar in themselves." A contemporary account tells us of what happened next:

"For the old-fashioned proscenium arch was substituted a gilded picture frame, remote from the footlights, over which the actors were forbidden to step. Grumbings both loud and deep were heard among the players over their various deprivations, and finally old Dowton, pluckier than the rest, broke into open rebellion. 'Don't tell me of frames and pictures!' he exclaimed with



New Orleans Theatre; note division of normal seating by "box seats" under front of balcony.



Theatre Royal, Drury Lane 1902.

choler. 'If I can't be heard by the audience in the frame, I'll walk out of it.' And out of it he came."

Back went the proscenium arch doors—in place of a lighting system in the advance perch position which tended to blow out when the curtain rose. So much for perfect sight lines and lighting requirements taking precedence over actor/audience contact.

A taste for naturalistic spectacle, the desire to cram in more spectators—which was finally realised with the introduction of the iron cantilever (reducing the centre tiers to deep shelves and the side tiers to what Jimmy Logan once called "doo'cots for the nobbs")—and admittedly sensible safety requirements for the fire prevention finally determined, at the expense of the actor's art, the shape of 80 per cent of today's theatres. This was a process aided and abetted by Britain's only playwright/architect, Vanbrugh, who in 1704 sacrificed, in the words of Colley Cibber,

"every proper Quality and Convenience of a good Theatre . . . to show the Spectator a near Triumphant Piece of Architecture! . . . This extraordinary and superfluous space [39 ft. opening and 45 ft. from forestage to back of the auditorium] occasion'd such an Undulation, from the Voice of every Actor, that generally what they said sounded like the Grumbling of so many people in the lofty aisles in a Cathedral—the tone of a Trumpet of the Swell of an Eunuch's holding note, 'tis true, might be sweetened by it, but the articulate Sounds of a speaking Voice were drown'd by the hollow Reverberations of one word upon another."

You will have to buy the book to read the brilliantly selected extracts from the *Treatise on Theatres*, which was written by George Saunders in 1790, and which is the original dogmatic "Theatre Planning" reference work, and also the précis of the work of Edwin O. Sachs, the original "Theatre Consultant" who did the electric installation at Drury Lane in 1898 and who was appointed adviser "on all matters architectural and mechanical at Covent Garden" in 1899, as well as writing the definitive *Modern Opera Houses and Theatres* (Sample: "In this country, with but few exceptions the Private Theatre is governed by investors or ambitious actors, who care for the pleasure of sensation seekers, among a people practically devoid of any feeling for architecture.") Yet today we retain some sympathy for the speculative architect of the late nineteenth century who had to cope with the first of the temperamental and over-zealous licensing auth-

orities "the authorities of Spring Gardens, who might step in at any moment and require an expenditure of £3,000 or £4,000 on matters which they had not before deemed necessary".

This is not a book confined to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries although these are indisputably the best bits. The opening sentence of Chapter One reads thus, "Existing buildings, erected for other purposes, have influenced the shape and form of playhouses and of theatrical representations through the centuries and it is not surprising that this study should start in the church." Mr. Leacroft does not succumb to the temptation of speculating on the present-day influence for good and ill of Thames-side warehouses or Edinburgh Assembly Halls, but rather does he launch straight into the obligatory chapters of scholarship and speculation on Early English theatres. The Tudor interlude in a Great Hall, command performance at King's College Chapel in 1564, Bank-side and Banqueting House all receive careful treatment. His reconstruction of the "Florimene" stage and auditorium of 1635 is more theatrically convincing than that shown at the recent Inigo Jones exhibition, while his conjectured reconstruction of the second Globe of 1614 is subtly different from Walter Hodges' latest version* and, in respect of the width of the acting area, a shade more convincing. It is when there is sufficient documentary evidence to support reconstructions, i.e. from Inigo Jones onwards, that the atmosphere of the classroom is dispelled and Mr. Leacroft starts to direct the traffic of our stage with skill and with excellent humour.

Mr. Leacroft has written a definitive account of the retreat into the Picture Frame. What is needed now is an equally dispassionate history of the English actor's escape from the naturalistic stage picture, stopping short perhaps at the last decade and a half where TABS has taken up the story. For the sake of theatre historians let us hope these vintage TABS survive to take their place as a vital and entertaining source book on theatre alongside Cibber, Saunders, Sachs and Ham†. Meanwhile buy Mr. Leacroft's book because if you enjoy TABS you will enjoy *The Development of the English Playhouse*. They belong together on your bookshelf.

*The Second Globe, O.U.P., October 1973. £3.00.

†Theatre Planning, Edited by Roderick Ham, and published by the Architectural Press in association with the A.B.T.T. London. £10.50; or University of Toronto Press. \$27.50.



Costumes at Stratford

This year's season at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre lasts from March to December, and involves thirty-nine actors in five productions—*Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II*, *As You Like It*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. The wardrobe department has been responsible for making every single thing the actors wear, apart from boots, and even then we have two men permanently employed on altering and remaking the boots we buy in. This season our full-time staff of thirty-five has created about 850 original costumes—more than most couture houses produce in a year.

The progress begins, obviously enough, with a set of designs. Our first task is to cost them accurately, to see if we have enough money to do as the designer wishes. If we haven't, then we're duty bound to suggest alternative ways of achieving the same results. This doesn't necessarily

**David Perry is Costume Administrator for the Royal Shakespeare Company.*

*David Perry**

mean using cheaper fabrics. Our experience is that cheaper materials look cheap, and often have a much shorter life. In addition, we are limited to using natural fabrics—wool, cotton, flax—because synthetic fibres usually cannot be vat dyed, or painted or textured. Materials like crimplene, specially developed to be crease-resistant, are useless because we often want our costumes to crease. They have to look as if an actor could have actually fought in the Wars of the Roses without going off to the dry-cleaners between battles. As most natural fabrics are imported, the main headache this year has been prices going up 10, 15 or even 25 per cent with every importation.

Occasionally a designer will supply his own fabrics; Lila de Nobili used to buy materials at the Flea Market in Paris. The dangers of using second-hand material came home when she designed *Twelfth Night* at Stratford in 1960 and produced the lining of an old door curtain to be made up into a cloak for Feste. It was beautiful stuff but so bleached and perished that by

the end of the dress rehearsal only the seams were left!

Once the material has been bought, it may be dyed or printed to the designer's specifications. We do all our own dyeing and printing, partly because we have to know exactly what has been done to a fabric when it comes to ageing, spraying and cleaning the final costume, and partly because then we have precise control over shades of colour, essential in a colour controlled show. We follow the principle



of buying what we can and altering it to what we want. In the case of *Love's Labour's Lost* this season, the designers, Timothy O'Brien and Tazeena Firth, wanted to get a decorative effect of foliage on the ladies' dresses. There was no way of getting a silk both of the right quality and able to have the designs woven in. Eventually we found the best solution was to silk-screen photographs of foliage directly on to material, using a two or three-colour compound. The designers' photographs were transposed on to silk-screens for us, and we did the actual printing. A further difficulty was that the design had to be continuous round the dress, so it



was impossible to print the material first and then make it up, or we would have lost parts of the design in the cutting and seaming. The dresses had to be cut out, basted, fitted, taken apart with all the fitting marks tacked in, printed individually to the shape, then taken back to the work-room to be made up. It meant that everything took twice as long, but the final effect was very good.

Normally, after the material has been dyed or printed and the fastness steamed in, it goes straight to the cutters. The cutters



then work with the designers to make the costume practicable—it may be, for instance,



Above and opposite: Love's Labour's Lost.

that the designer has allowed for seams in one place when we can only get the correct period silhouette by having them somewhere else. Each cutter then cuts out the costume and hands it on to his own staff. From then on the process is straightforward tailoring/dressmaking.

The individual actor comes at the first fitting—for us, a technical necessity. He can then make comments based on his rehearsal experience. He will by then have been in rehearsal for about two weeks, and his work may have suggested attitudes to the part which are not inherently possible in the costume, or he may be required to perform actions which cannot physically be done in that costume. In which case we make the necessary adjustments, or in an extreme case start again.

When the costume has been made up, we have a variety of techniques available to alter the look of the material, mainly involving the application of substances like PVA resins, latex, emulsion paint, coloured spirit, varnish, and aerosol paints. Often the resins are mixed with metal powders

before application (as in *The Relapse*, 1967/68, Aldwych Theatre) and *The Revenger's Tragedy*, 1966/67 and 1969/70), or have plastics such as sequins or glitter dropped into the resin surface while wet (as in *The Wars of the Roses*, 1963).

Most of these special techniques were devised for the *Wars of the Roses*, including the development of "gunk", a versatile latex which can be sprayed on lightly to produce a subtle texture or, at the other extreme, applied heavily to give the effect of encrusted mud.

In this season's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, for instance, Katherina's white dress must be impeccable in Act I, but filthy and bedraggled in Act II. The solution was to make two identical dresses; one for the wedding scene, and one which we sprayed with "gunk", spattered with transparent emulsion to make it seem wet, and finally tore it, burnt it, and damped it to make it shrink.

Our armour requirements are handled by an outside contractor, who makes



armour to our specifications and holds our stock—which he hires out for us. Generally speaking armour is prohibitively expensive



to make. A breastplate can cost £80 and buying a complete suit is out of the question. For *The Romans* last year, the armour requirements were fairly simple, and we were able to make it all ourselves. Seamstresses used to sewing silks and satins, suddenly found themselves bolting and riveting copperplate. We are (relatively) used to such tasks—for *The Winter's Tale* in 1969 we were asked for a ten-foot tall grizzly bear twenty-four hours before the curtain went up. It meant no sleep, but we did it.

When the life of a production is over, the costumes go into our hire stock. We maintain a thriving costume hire department, carrying a stock of over 20,000 costumes, and hiring to both professionals and amateurs. In many ways this is the most severe test of our costumes, but I'm happy to say that there are costumes on hire which were made fifteen years ago and are still going strong!

For full information: Hire Department, Southern Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon. Tel: 0789 5920.



A New Vic of 1930

Frederick Bentham

Chance, with a slight nudge from myself, has provided in one and the same month an opportunity to see three fine examples of theatre preservation. This subject is very much in the air at the moment and what makes all three so exciting is that besides being splendid examples each of their kind, they are all in regular use. Having said this I still think that the fact that we have no use for a particular building at the moment should not be allowed to constitute a reason for demolishing it. If fine enough it could be cocooned or put away for safe keeping against the time that those to come will find a pleasure in it or a use for it.

It was accidental cocooning that preserved Drottningholm for us but it was deliberate and careful dismantling of the

Baroque wood and plaster (so that it could be stored in a mountain cave) that enabled Munich's Residenz theatre of 1753 to survive the war. Like the old stained glass in our cathedrals the pieces have now been brought out from hiding and reassembled bit by bit. Unlike them, however, on a different site. The "Alte Residenz Theater" is now inside the main palace building and the old site is occupied by a "Neue Residenz Theater" which provides the opportunity to present plays in an up-to-date but much-as-to-be-expected house.

The old Baroque theatre makes one catch one's breath at the sheer theatricality of the auditorium. Tier upon tier the sparkling virtuosity of the craftsmen presents itself. Real marble that isn't marble at all but just

paint, and rich red plush swags but carved in wood and gilt that actually *is* gilt.

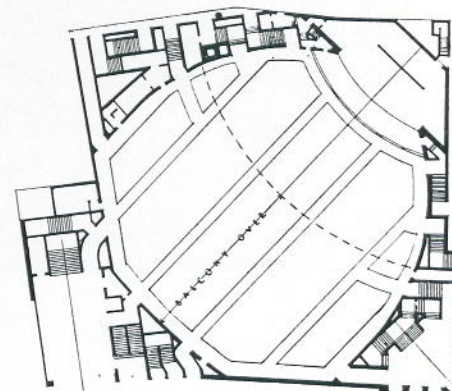
My second theatre is also in Munich—the Kammerspiel. This dates from 1901 and is a perfect and complete example of the Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) style. It too has involved careful restoration even to ensuring the authentic wavy line for the rows of seat backs. Mostly it has been a matter of stripping away the paint and plaster added in the intervening decades to cover up and alter the original theatre—to modernise it! It was all there, authentic metalwork and all, but hidden away. Now that these accretions have gone, the original colouring has been restored and the decorative lighting is as exactly reproduced as possible to give the effect of the carbon filament lamps of those days, we can walk straight into 1901. Only the Rank Strand Electric System MSR 120 seated slap in the centre of the Royal Box is there to remind us that we are in fact seventy-two years on.

Our third call is 1930, and since I was not only out and about at that time in history but also at nineteen of an age when memories are at their most vivid, it will be this the New Victoria Cinema restoration that I shall describe in detail. For a long time now what were once known as "picture palaces" and then as "super cinemas" have been pulled down, turned into supermarkets, or twinned or tripled to cater for our time. Thus it is that the internal magnificence of the Empire Cinema Leicester Square has vanished for ever—no uncovering for recovery is possible there or for so many other of the Plaster Palaces in seventy or two hundred and twenty years time!

Fibrous plaster was used by firms like Clarke and Fenn to prefabricate great chunks of "décor" and was delivered to the theatre site, there to be put together like so many scenery flats. Indeed, except that the stuff was stuck or screwed together to become permanent, scenery was just what it was. Like scenery it was a medium at once easy and difficult to design in: easy because anything could be done and difficult because you had to have imagination to think up that anything. Fibrous plaster is the stuff that dreams are made of, and in

the United States the imagination of architects like Thomas Lamb and John Eberson was well up to the task of providing a home fit for the silent screen of D. W. Griffith and Cecil B. de Mille.

It is worth remarking that the screen itself was in those days relatively small and was masked with rounded corners. If only to give the eyes a rest it was natural to put a show on the stage and even make a show of the auditorium. Sometimes instead of variety acts and visits from the big bands, the members of the cinema's own orchestra would creep out from the pit to arrange themselves upon the stage—the organist taking over the accompaniment on the screen the while. The cinema organ, now revered by enthusiasts as the very symbol of the great days of the super cinema, was essentially a practical instru-



Plan of Trocadero Cinema, Elephant and Castle (1930), now demolished.

ment to avoid the cost of two orchestras to cover continuous performance from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. The image usually drawn of the lone pianist thumping away is but a caricature of the real thing, as anyone who has heard Arthur Dulay and his successors in action at the piano in the National Film Theatre can testify. When a thousand or more seats became the rule then an organ was essential—if for no other reason than to provide adequate volume. It must be remarked that these very instruments were looked at by real organ enthusiasts then with something much less than the nostalgic adulation now freely bestowed on the



have seen the place in its original glory. It was in fact mucked about by Gaumont British when they re-decorated and did some alterations in the early thirties.

Tutankamen from his grave was responsible for a number of Egyptian cinemas in the twenties, or rather Egyptian decorated ones, for we are talking of the period referred to now, but not I think then, as Art-Deco. Much the favourite style to draw upon was Italian Renaissance and a good example of this kind of thing was George Cole's Trocadero, Elephant and Castle. That place also spotlights the great skill on the part of these architects in planning. Notice on page 175 how he got it all in, with a serviceable if cramped stage, by planning on the diagonal. Nevertheless when it came to decoration many of us

craftsmanship of even the smallest of them—indeed “despised” was not too strong a word to express their feelings.

Much the same could be said for the reaction to the architecture by the devotees of the modern movement. The Savoy Theatre had had its revolutionary though now familiar Basil Ionides interior put in a year earlier but, up to October 1930 when the New Victoria opened, a modern interior for a *cinema* in this country was unknown. There were some purpose-built cinemas by reputable architects but they had all tended to rely for their inspiration on historical building styles. Frank Verity's RIBA medal Shepherd's Bush Pavilion of 1923 had captured not only Roman decoration but Roman scale both inside and out. Dennis Sharp could not be more wrong when he says, “Its interior was little more than an emasculated version of a typical music hall.”* He simply could not

continued to champ at the bit and cast longing eyes at what went on in Germany where economy of means seemed to us to produce a superb discipline.

In 1930 a Batsford book† appeared to put into words and photographs exactly what we felt. The author was P. Morton Shand.

“Fettered by the lamentably vulgar, super-annuated taste or timorous, decorative conventionality of cinema-proprietors, it was till a few months ago rare indeed for bona-fide architects—in the few cases in which they were employed—to be allowed to discard those hackneyed Renaissance trappings and fly-blown ‘Oriental schemes of decoration’ that their clients assured them the picture-going public was demanding more insistently than ever. Neo-Grec—or perhaps one should say ‘Negro-Grec’—and ‘the Egyptian style’, which were the order of the day for the first few years after



New Victoria Cinema in 1930. Above: Foyer (note rubber flooring). Opposite: Wilton Road Exterior.

the war, take an unconscionable time a-dying.”

To Mr. Shand and the rest of us the German theatre was a model of all that was modern—it is curious to reflect that its style then did not differ all that much from the kind of auditorium they are now putting up in that country.*

It is against this backcloth that the reader has to judge what impact the New Victoria made when it opened in 1930 just about the same time as the Trocadero Cinema. I know, for I was at the latter for the opening night (in a dense fog) and at the “New Vic” in its second week! So it is with one

foot in 1930 and the other in the same month but in 1973 that we shall proceed to tread the carpets! Indeed, the carpet makes a good starting point because in this one case Gaumont British relaxed their house rule, which insisted on their standard red affair emblazoned with super laurel wreaths and G.B.'s entwined, to allow a greeny carpet with a wavy design—underwater ripples perhaps.

That so much has survived in this house is largely due to the fact that, as a good example of the super cinema plan, it had a large stage or at any rate sufficiently large to take, decades after, theatrical companies such as the Festival Ballet and the Black and White Minstrels. It is piquant that its

*The Picture Palace, by Dennis Sharp. Published 1969 by Hugh Evelyn, London.

†Modern Theatres and Cinemas, by P. Morton Shand. Published 1930 by Batsford, London.

*Das Ist Alles Möglich, TABS, Vol. 30, No. 3.

future is likely to depend on the continued availability of this kind of live product. The super cinema has perforce become "super" theatre and it is only staged spectacle that can keep at a distance the dread threat of twins.

Be that as it may Rank Leisure (prodded not a little, it must be admitted, by the local preservationists) have just redecorated and Rank Strand re-wired the place, and there are 120 channels of stage lighting to be controlled from a System MMS modular memory control desk.

Approaching the building from Wilton Road, that is the Victoria Station side, one immediately becomes aware that there still beats within every theatre manager something of the vandal's heart. Whether it is the Dark Green resident Manager—or the migrant Black and White one—or both together that are responsible, the fact is that the clean lines of the canopy in our photograph are covered by a ghastly erection of painted hardboard. Neon letters would be better than this and more in period. However, canopies are weak nowadays; think of what has happened to the Strand Palace Hotel and of those plastic affairs of mouldy pyramids and droopy lighting all over the town. Nothing has ever bettered the real lure of the massed ranks of bright white lamps we used to pack on the underside of our cinema canopies.

Managers always complained of the lack of display space and here, unusually, the architect had provided a series of built-in largish display windows for publicity which are still there and in use.

There are two identical façades, except of course that one is left-handed and the other right-handed, because the entrance hall goes right through the thickness of the balcony to Vauxhall Bridge Road. The floor used to be of rubber—no plastics in those days. There is now a red carpet, and in the recess where once we were regaled with tea and cakes a frightful eyesore dispenses something called Pepsi-Zing, hot dogs, beefburgers and Lyons Maid.

One walks straight off this space into the best seats—the front circle. Staircases from the opposite side take one up to another foyer and thence to the upper reaches of

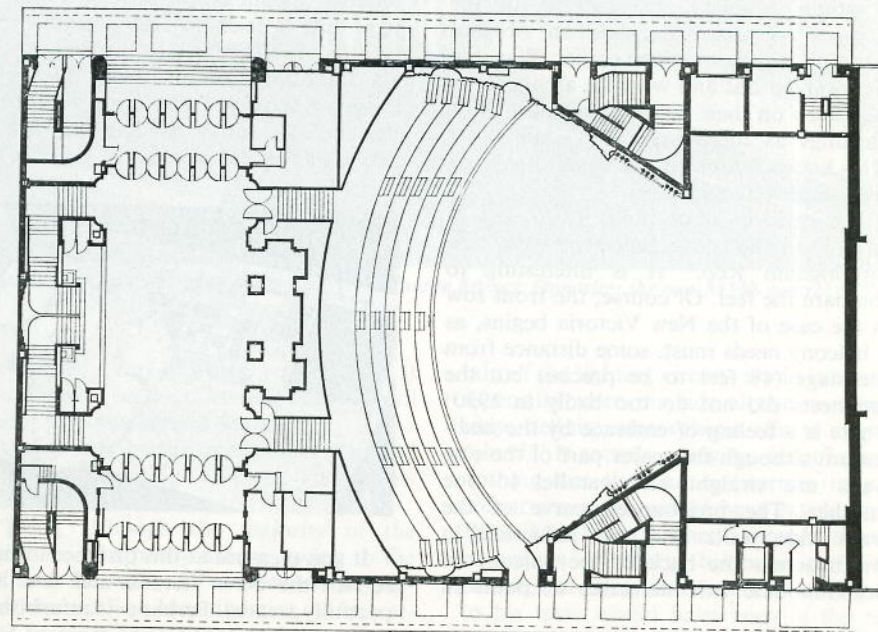
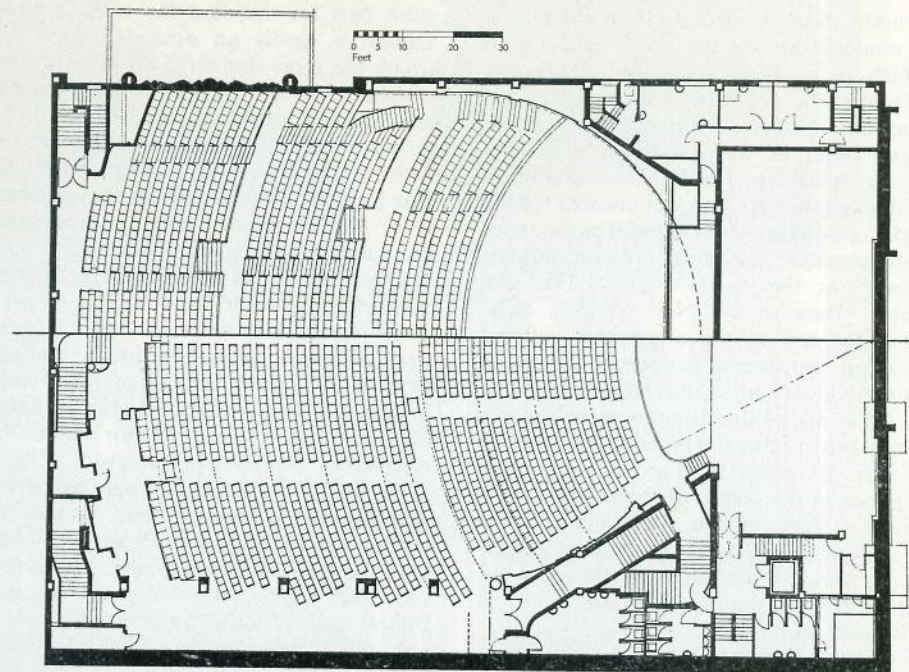
the balcony. Access to the stalls is direct by two other staircases which join at the bottom to bring one up sharp before a glazed partition before passing into the auditorium. This partition, though well made in polished wood, I well remember shocked me all those years ago as much as it does today, for it is completely out of character with the rest of the decoration. Perhaps it was added at the request of the LCC or perhaps the notion of virtually open staircases leading up to the entrance foyer provided too much distracting noise.

The rear gangway joins capacious side gangways actually under the pavements of the two streets either side. These side gangways are so large as to resemble internal queuing spaces. The toilets are housed at the stage end of each—also under the pavement. The plans reproduced here repay close study, for they show what could be done by experienced architects working for people who really knew what they wanted. With buildings butting directly on each end, note how everything fits and how 2,786 people could make their way in and out.

The stalls are more steeply raked from behind the cross gangway than in front of it which helps the sight lines, though of course the deep overhang of the balcony does exact its oppressive toll. Some attempt was made to break up this large ceiling area by means of a giant shell-like feature with concealed lighting. The front stalls area and the entire balcony are wholly admirable with everyone able to enjoy the unusual decorative scheme.

And unusual it certainly was—Neptune's under-sea palace—and, except for one notable casualty, it is all still there! The eighteen giant glass stalactite fittings made by F. H. Pride (twelve of which were twelve feet long) are alas represented by mere stumps. Less noticeably the series of little vertical alcoves, set into the walls and evocative of candles, no longer light up.

Much to my surprise the vertical front-of-house stage lighting booms, added all that time since, fit in well, and the fact that our lanterns always leak a certain amount of light at the colour frame and the shutters, becomes for once a positive merit as they



New Victoria Cinema 1930. Plan ground floor level. Above composite stalls balcony levels.

twinkle away. A second boom either side is mounted among the side wall columns which carry the organ pipe display so characteristic of this proscenium. The display was of course a dummy one, the real pipes were, as was usual for a cinema organ, totally enclosed in two chambers with swell shutters. It is not unusual for the pipes of an organ show front to be dummies—for example, the centre ones forming the “logo” at the Royal Festival Hall are dumb. Here at the New Victoria however, the rest of the organ also suffered from an impediment in speech; the sound came straight out at the balcony but, due to the depth of the decorative shelf which formed the top of the proscenium, it could neither get down to Reginald Foort the organist in the centre of the orchestra pit, nor to those under the balcony. The Compton Organ Company built an amplifier system to “re-broadcast” the organ but amplifiers and loudspeakers were still in their early days.

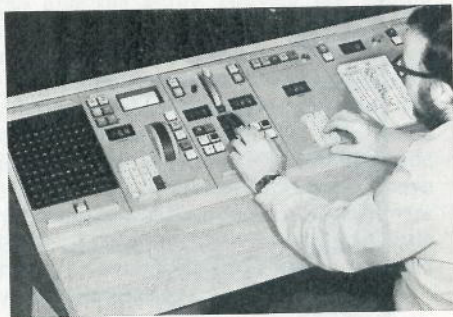
The tale is worth telling for the organ was no mere auxiliary, and but for the onrush of the “talkies” it could have been a serious problem. The puzzle for the historian is how was such an obvious planning fault not noticed earlier. Was it in fact pointed out and were the architects so mad keen on their décor as to ignore these warnings as mere technician’s quibbles? Who knows? Anyway the organ itself has been removed long since.

The balcony alone holds 1,076 seats—more than the entire capacity of the new Birmingham Rep.* It is interesting to compare the feel. Of course, the front row in the case of the New Victoria begins, as a balcony needs must, some distance from the stage (48 feet to be precise) but the architects did not do too badly in 1930! There is a feeling of embrace by the auditorium although the major part of the side walls are straight and parallel to one another. The pronounced curve of the front side walls and the reduction in width across the back of the balcony to accommodate exit staircases accounts in

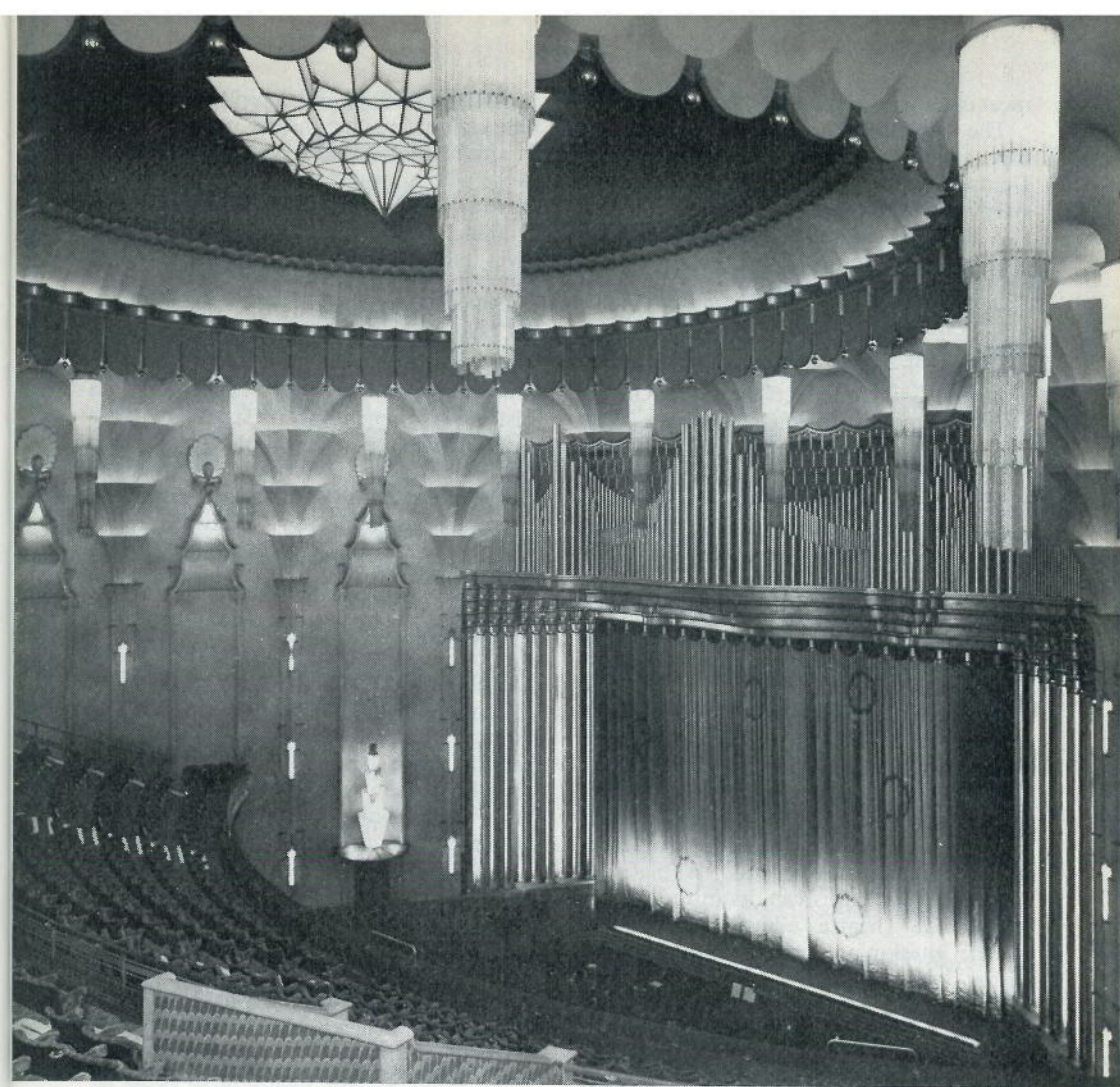
some part for this, but the sense of wrap around is really an optical illusion for which the large dome (65 ft. in diameter) is mainly responsible. The projection room and follow spots are housed in the dome giving an acute angle to compensate for which the screen has to be partly tilted. For live performances the screen structure is in fact dismantled and removed from the building.

The stage is not large but it is at least regular in shape and has a 68 ft. high grid. There are 20 counterweight and 19 hemp lines operated, unusually for a cinema, from a fly gallery instead of from stage floor level. The normal orchestra pit takes 20 and this is enlarged for ballet by removal of two rows of seats.

Originally the concealed lighting of the auditorium had three colour circuits for colour mixing. Neptune’s Palace went well with the green and blue changes, but under red and amber the monarch became Pluto—quite effectively as I recall. There is only one auditorium decorative effect now and it still depends on small tungsten lamps concealed in cornices and coves with consequent maintenance problems but this light has a friendly feel and the multi-colours in the fitting which forms the 20 ft. eye of the dome are very pretty. Incidentally there is a sliding shutter arrangement up in the roof to admit daylight through this fitting and it still works.



It was pleasant at this distance in time to re-visit the New Victoria and find it respectfully treated. Perhaps its refurbishment has come just at the right moment for the true merits of its decorative scheme to be



New Victoria Cinema 1930. Note original stalactite fittings. Opposite: the new MMS control of 1973.

appreciated—two or three years earlier it would have been concealed behind wall drapes or some sort of flummery.

And it was in this mood that I turned back to something I wrote about this cinema in 1932*:

“Here, although the majority of the effects are of a pretty nature, owing to the fact that the walls do not possess any definite decorative characteristics, when cer-

tain of the lighting circuits are in use, more especially when the side alcoves are alight only, definite atmospheric effects are obtained.” It sounds grudging, but of course nothing less than an auditorium to play colour music on would have satisfied me. What Mr. Morton Shand thought there is no means of telling; his book came out before, not after the event. Probably more to his taste would have been in the true Art-Deco of the Odeons. Take away the “Deco” in those and you would be left in

*The Builder, September 2, 1932.

*(Maximum seating capacity 919).

most cases with little more than a plain box.

The first Odeon at Perry Barr, Birmingham, opened in 1931. Thereafter Oscar Deutsch with architect Harry Weedon swept across the country to arrive roughly two hundred and fifty Odeons, and but six years later on the site of the Alhambra Theatre in Leicester Square. The majority of Odeons were built to a very tight economic plan, but for the flagship in Leicester Square with Harry Weedon and Andrew Mather as joint architects the approach was decidedly more luxurious. The black glass exterior is largely unchanged and the Compton organ remains, but the "leopard skin" seats and original decoration have vanished—the latter having been concealed behind the trappings of a later, but let's hope less enduring, fashion.

There has been a lot of anxiety over the preservation of our London theatres. We now have the report of Sir James Richards to the Arts Council* which perfectly sets out the need to keep the theatres we have and above all the ambience of London's Theatreland where so much is going on. One of the necessities is not only to preserve the theatres but to ensure their continued use. There are dangers inherent in general classification as "a place of entertainment"; this can, as in the case of the Saville Theatre, allow the rebuilding of the interior as a twin cinema without either twin having the possibility of reverting to use as a live theatre.

The New Victoria is a strange case. At one time an excellent super cinema with a good stage for mixed use in the same show (i.e. Cine-Variety), it holds too big an audience to confront the cinema screen, but the stage is not big enough readily to hold the size of show which could fill the place. Any new theatre built today has a much bigger stage than the capacity of the audience can possibly justify—hence the need for subsidy.

Yet another force comes into play in the case of the New Victoria and that is the need to preserve it as itself and this is in

fact what is behind its continued existence. One cannot imagine theatre people joining in any petition to preserve it but there are those who consider that it should be preserved—inside and out—for its merits as a building. And why not? A building which gives pleasure may have to be divorced from the question of whether it is efficient for its purpose. If this were not so, most of our cathedrals and churches would have been torn down long since. It was the scheduling of the New Victoria as an historic monument, so to speak, that has saved it. Think of it, this is putting a cinema on the same level as a palace or a stately home. Yet what is the difference? The New Victoria was built as a palace for the people whereas the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, was built for the self indulgence of one man.

Evidence of pride in their "New Vic" is not only seen among the staff but in the neighbourhood. It is quite noticeable that, as the audience enter by the balcony vomitories, their eyes come up and gaze around. Once they are seated they continue to take a deco with evident surprise and enjoyment. This auditorium is an experience, "a happening" in its own right.

After writing this article I discovered that the New Vic had been featured in *London Architect*†—the story as recollected by Mr. Wamsley Lewis. As one had suspected he was the real architect of the place, W. E. Trent's job was administrative. As the articles show, Mr. Lewis was the right man in the right place at the right time. What we saw then and to some extent still see today is what he felt at the time he created it—call it a de-luxe super cinema, a theatre with too large an auditorium and too cramped a stage, a Mermaid's palace, or an historic monument—it is in fact a work of art. Another generation to come will pay good money to see this whether there is a show there or not—let us see that like the Residenz and the Kammerspiel we in London can keep it for them.

†*Journal of the London Region RIBA. Jan. & March 72.*

The Last Benevolent Despot—The end of the Longest Run

Eric Jordan*

There has certainly been no lack of attention given to fire prevention in recent years: there is now a considerable volume of codes, standards, regulations and rules directed to all aspects of structural fire protection and fire precaution measures.

Despite this and the considerable scientific study of the behaviour of materials in fire, disastrous fires continue to occur with disturbing regularity; fortunately, however, fires involving loss of life are sufficiently rare to attract the kind of publicity which accompanied the recent Summerland fire in the Isle of Man. An official enquiry is now in progress and although it would be unwise to pre-judge the findings, it is most unlikely that it will disclose anything which is not already known to experts about the behaviour of materials in fire. Whether it will lead to recommendations for stronger control is another matter. In any event, comprehensive powers already exist to deal with fire precautions and means of escape in "places of assembly and resort" under the new Fire Precautions 1971 Act.

At present the provisions of this Act do not apply to theatres but can be so applied at any time by an order made by the Secretary of State.

This may be a good time to review the existing system as to its effectiveness in dealing with safety in London theatres.

All those concerned with the theatre are well aware that there is a long history of control over theatre buildings and activities, and in particular the powers exercised until 1968 by the Lord Chamberlain in his capacity both as a censor of plays and as the licensing authority for London theatres, and it may be of interest to consider briefly how the most eminent court official came to be invested with these special and unique powers.

It was the established custom in Elizabethan times for every great nobleman to give his patronage and licence to a company

of players who did not confine themselves to entertaining their lords but were permitted to travel around the neighbourhood, and this custom was given legal recognition by an Act of 1572. As far as London was concerned, the actors came under the direct protection and control of the crown. This led in 1581 to the constitution of the office of Master of the Revels, who was also given the authority to censor theatrical performances throughout the country. This office was brought within the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain in 1624. Theatres were closed during the Cromwellian period and many were pulled down, but with the Restoration of the monarchy came the restoration of the theatre, and Charles II gave his royal patent to two impressarios, Sir William D'Avenant and Thomas Killigrew, to present stage plays. These patents were exercised at a number of different theatres and have survived until the present day in the rights exercised by the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

Although the patentees had the exclusive rights, plays were performed at a number of other theatres without authority. This ultimately led to the passing of the Licensing Act of 1737 by which the Lord Chamberlain was given power to grant restrictive licences for theatrical entertainments in the City of Westminster and wherever the sovereign might reside.† Persons acting in unlicensed premises were deemed to be rogues and vagabonds and made amenable to the Vagrancy Act.

This still did not prevent the perfor-

*Eric Jordan was in charge of the Theatres Section of the GLC from 1957 to 1970 and is now in private practice as an architect and theatre consultant.

†The Theatre Royal, Windsor, came within the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain under this Statute.

*Planning and Redevelopment in London's Entertainment Area with Special Reference to the Theatre. *Arts Council. 50p.*

mance of plays in unlicensed premises, and in 1843 the Theatres Act was passed to extend the Lord Chamberlain's power to grant full theatre licences in the Cities of London and Westminster and the Boroughs of Finsbury, Marylebone, Tower Hamlets, Lambeth and Southwark. Justices were given similar powers in all other places, but the power of censorship remained with the Lord Chamberlain.

The first record of an inspection of a theatre made on behalf of the Lord Chamberlain is at the Pantheon in 1812: surveys and inspections at this time were made by the Inspector of Theatres (an official of the Lord Chamberlain's department) assisted by a professional surveyor.

In 1828 the Brunswick Theatre, Well Close Square, collapsed during a Sunday rehearsal a few days after opening. This was attributed to the weight of the iron used in the fire resisting construction of the stage area. The brief official report records laconically that a few actors were killed.

Whether as a result of this is not clear, but in the same year, all theatres were surveyed as to structural stability by the Surveyor of H.M. Works at the request of the Lord Chamberlain. The practice of surveying theatres annually began in 1855 and has continued to the present day.

Although it is apparent that the Lord Chamberlain's control was initially directed at good order and decency together with censorship (originally of a political nature) safety measures also became incorporated following a series of spectacular fires and disasters towards the end of the nineteenth century. At the same time power was given to the Metropolitan Board of Works to make requirements in relation to danger from fire. Whilst these powers (under the Metropolis Management Act 1878) were independent of licensing control, the Board and its successor the L.C.C. worked closely with the Lord Chamberlain.

The extent of the powers of the Lord Chamberlain and the means by which they were exercised were considered an anachronism and were brought to an end by the Theatres Act of 1968. The passing of

this Act opened the way for a significant change in the manner in which control over public safety is exercised in London theatres.

It is true the responsibility for licensing London theatres was transferred to the G.L.C., and this continues to be the principal means for ensuring public safety, pending the application of the Fire Precautions Act to theatres.

However, another change has already taken place in that, as a result of an organisational change within the G.L.C., the Theatres Section which had existed from the earlier days of the L.C.C. has been disbanded. Over the years this group gradually built up considerable collective knowledge and expertise on the safety problems of places of public assembly; many of its members devoted the whole of their official career to this work. Such narrow specialisation is nowadays unfashionable and in the interests of organisational efficiency and of the career opportunity of the individual technical officers, the members of the Theatres Section have been dispersed in "all-purpose" groups.

The Fire Precautions Act which in the words of the explanatory memorandum was directed "at strengthening and rationalising the law relating to fire precautions", divides responsibility between fire authorities and building authorities broadly as follows: the fire authority will inspect premises and, if satisfied with the means of escape and fire precautions generally, issue a "fire certificate"; it will also be responsible for administering regulations regarding fire precautions which the Secretary of State is empowered to make. The building authority will administer requirements relating to means of escape, etc., which the Minister of Housing and Local Government will be empowered to incorporate in the National Building Regulations.

This kind of control (which corresponds to that exercised under the Factories Act and Office, Shop & Railway Premises Act) is very different from that to which theatres are at present subject.

An incidental effect of the application of the new Fire Precautions Act to the theatre will be the loss of the distinction

which was made under the licensing system between public and private theatres in that the latter were subject only to building and fire protection controls of general application and not to the technical regulations and rules.

Without going into the background behind this curious legal distinction or seeking to defend its logic, it is doubtful whether without it some of the developments and innovations which have taken place in present day theatre would have been possible. It has to be remembered that regulations and technical standards cannot anticipate new techniques and must *ipso facto* be based upon established practice. For this reason, they must always appear to the expert to lag behind current ideas. Therefore so long as theatre clubs were not bound to comply with such regulations they could experiment with presentation techniques which provided valuable guidance not only to theatre technicians but also to those responsible for recommending safety standards. In this way, for example, a formula which allowed the presentation of plays on open stages in the licensed London theatres came to be devised.

The effectiveness of the Lord Chamberlain's control derived from circumstances which are either no longer regarded as tenable in our modern egalitarian society or are impossible under the system by which the responsible authorities now exercise their powers and are administratively organised.

It could be said that the absolute power enjoyed by the Lord Chamberlain was open to abuse; in fact, in modern times at any rate, his Lordship was in relation to the theatre a benevolent despot and, his iron hand was always clothed in a velvet glove. The outward and visible signs of his very considerable powers comprised merely a licence and a simple document of a few pages headed "Rules and Regulations". These were generally regarded, both by the Lord Chamberlain and also by the licencees and their technical staff, as a summary of what was necessary to achieve standards of safety considered by authority

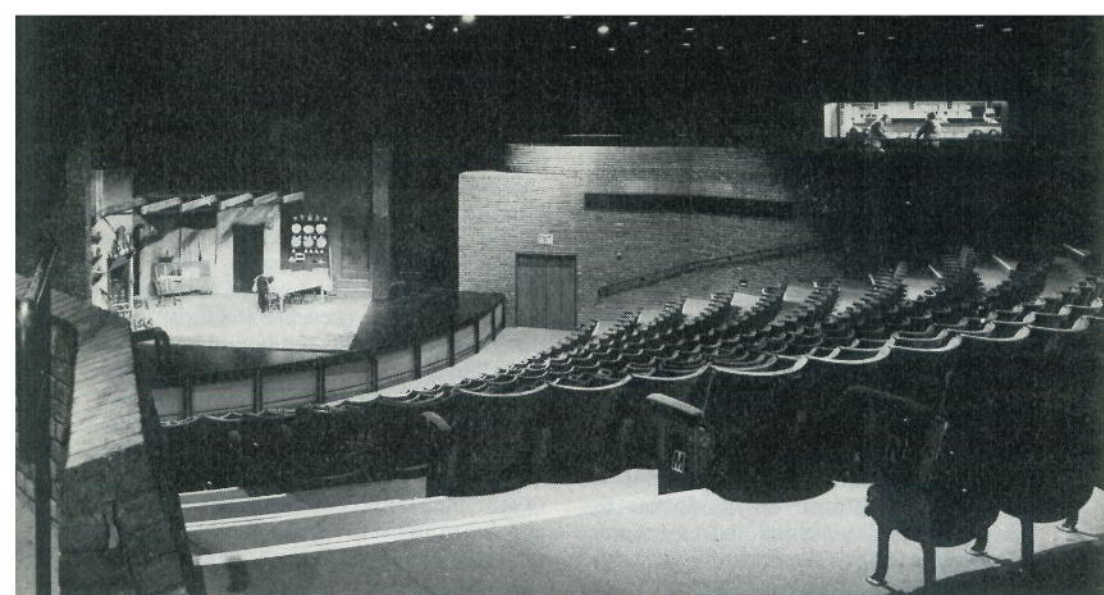
to be reasonable. It was always recognised that there could be no absolute standard and that variation to meet individual circumstances must be allowed for.

It is true the Lord Chamberlain had the backing of much more detailed regulations of the L.C.C. (later the G.L.C.), but the essential virtue of the system, which disappeared when the Lord Chamberlain ceased to be the licensing authority, was that his Lordship was not bound to require compliance with specific detailed technical requirements.

Whilst a hierarchy existed this was seldom involved in practice and the effective working basis was a close arrangement between the Lord Chamberlain's advisers and his professional and technical advisers (employed by the L.C.C.).

Under such circumstances, the need to apply rigid regulations or to seek formal waivers did not arise, and each application was considered objectively on merit. Because the technical officers were specialists with some knowledge and no little sympathy with needs and problems of the theatre, and because managers and theatre technicians were responsible in their attitude to safety, there were few occasions when requirements were in dispute. There was no provision for appeal to a magistrate's court or quarter sessions, etc., but in fact theatre licencees had recourse to a much more effective appeal or waiver procedure than any devised by modern legislation.

In the last resort if it was impossible to find a solution acceptable to both the theatre management and the Lord Chamberlain's technical advisers, the Lord Chamberlain would invite the licencee (or, in matter of general interest to theatre management, representatives of the Society of West End Theatre Managers) to meet and argue the case under his Lordship's chairmanship at St. James's Palace. In such a setting, surrounded by pictures depicting such subjects as "The Tsar Reviewing his Troops before the Winter Palace", it was hardly surprising that any dispute about mundane technical matters was amicably resolved.



University Theatre Newcastle auditorium with island type of setting. Opposite: keyboard attachment to standard Rank Strand SP80 control.

Piano Keyboard Modification for SP80

My brief for the lighting of the new rock musical *Orgy*, presented by the Tyneside Theatre Company on June 14th, 1973, was—even by the standards of the director involved—difficult and challenging. The show seemed to call for every effect in the book and several not yet in it. In particular there were three musical sequences which called for light to move around the stage at a very fast rate indeed; the whole set needed to dance around in time to the music. To try and achieve this my first thoughts were of using automatic switching or dimmer cycling devices—or a sound-to-light converter. But these would have been unsatisfactory for two reasons: firstly I have always found these sorts of device visually boring when used for longer than five seconds, and secondly the lanterns to be pulsed would also need to be used for normal static stage lighting. What seemed to be called for was a system that involved a human operator—thus infinite variety of rhythm, tempo, and lantern com-

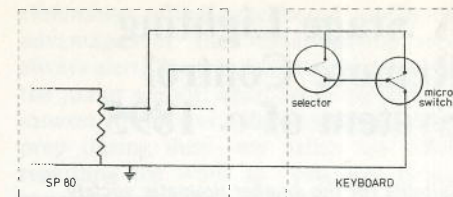
ination—and that used an ordinary lighting control.

The board at the University Theatre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, is an SP80 which had been modified some months earlier to deal with a difficult “bedside light” sequence in Jean Anouilh’s *The Baker, the Baker’s Wife, and the Baker’s Boy*. The two group faders of one preset were given overriding relays operated by the two bedside pull switches on stage. The actors quite happily operated about twenty-five perfectly synchronised snap cues while the other two presets of the SP80 were being reset. This ability to snap on or off complete lighting states at the touch of a button was clearly an idea to be developed. In deference to the Editor of *TABS*, I cannot claim to be the first person to think of using piano keys to operate stage lighting but here the musical analogy was very strong. Six piano keys were mounted in a cabinet and arranged to actuate change-over microswitches. These were connected

to the master faders of the SP80 using the circuit shown alongside.

Thus the six preset groups of the SP80 were given alternative piano-key control. An additional toggle switch on the keyboard was used as a selector switch for key operation or normal fader operation. The circuit chosen was such that depressing the piano key snapped up the preset group to its master level. Other variations are of course possible; for instance, the key completely overriding the master fader and taking the preset group directly to full. Fortunately all parts, including an old piano, were available from stock so the keyboard was constructed and installed from scratch in one and a half days.

In practice the operation of the keyboard was successful. Once I had decided upon the preset groups to be used it was up to the operator to “play” the keys in any combination or sequence that he felt to be right. Two or three rehearsals with each number were sufficient to find out what sort of thing worked and what did not, but of course the lighting for these keyboard sequences was never exactly the same twice. This forced the operator to be fully involved with the show; he was compelled to watch and listen and play his keys sympathetically. I found the result visually very exciting.



The use of the keyboard did have some disadvantages, although the sceptics who had predicted epidemic lamp failure were proved to be entirely wrong; we had the lightest period of lamp failures ever. The real disadvantage was that all of the board was used up for what amounted to one lighting state. If six keys were to be used then the outgoing and incoming states had to be included, but I did find that four keys were sufficient when used in conjunction with strobes. Perhaps the ideal would be eighty keys, almost an entire piano keyboard, available as an additional and overriding switch for each channel. A virtuoso performance on this keyboard could be very exciting indeed!

Lawrence Southon has since become Technical Director at the Leicester Phoenix where he has fitted a similar keyboard to the LC Control. Keyboard attachments to our Mini-2 dimmers are also made commercially. Particulars from Tabs office. ED.



A Stage Lighting Remote Control System of c. 1895

T. E. Howard*

Suitable for the smaller dramatic society stage and incorporating memory and remote positioning facilities.

My father, Herbert Howard, developed a keen interest in theatre at an early age, and from about nine to eleven years old presented regular performances on a model stage in my grandmother's wash-kitchen (an old Yorkshire wash-kitchen—ample room for elaborate productions as well as a fair audience). He charged one penny entrance for the children of the neighbourhood and always had full houses, a tribute to the quality of the shows, I think, as a penny was a lot of money to most children in the days when a farthing could be expended quite pleasingly. The repertoire of the theatre was wide, I was told, and being an embryo science schoolmaster his "effects" were most spectacular. In fact his theatre was finally closed down by Grandmama after a classical incident when—probably in the final scene of *The Miller and His Men*—he blew out the windows of the wash-kitchen and lost most of his hair, fortunately without further damage to himself or his audience.

Compensation for the loss of his theatre came soon after. He went off to college where, as a pupil, he was able to expand his theatrical talents in the college dramatic society. In due course he went to Cambridge. I have no record of him taking part in any University theatrical activity beyond a Nigger Minstrel Group, but his first post after leaving Cambridge was as science master back at his old college, where he again became immersed in the dramatic society.

Though productions of the society were ambitious the lighting of the College stage was, as was usual in such places, most

inadequate; I have no evidence to show whether it was oil or gas—the few photographs I have of productions being taken in daylight, the photographer apparently finding it necessary to assemble the casts outdoors.

My father overcame the lighting limitations in an ingenious way, and I was told



by independent witnesses that the results were quite spectacular and created much interest at the time. He acquired—whether on loan from local police, or by buying them in as "optical equipment" for the college lab., I do not know—about fifteen or twenty "bullseye" oil-fuelled lanterns. These he placed mostly in perch and wing positions, attaining the higher levels by mounting on large step-ladders. Each lantern was controlled throughout the per-

formance by an "ASM" recruited from the older members of the junior school of the college. Each ASM had his college cap, and with this, in front of the bullseye, blackouts and any speed of dim or increase could be attained, and intermediate degrees held; colour mediums were also used. A single lantern, or all, were at command, for intensity, direction and colour. The operators learnt their parts, like the cast, and therefore little cueing was required; when necessary it was done by an unobtrusive light or sound signal.

The system was simple and subject to little or no technical breakdown. The

elimination of the switchboard was a great advantage for the ASMs—lighting were always alert. The jobs were much coveted by the junior school; apart from the intrinsic interest, there was a lightening of science prep during duty—my father no doubt regarding the work as "practical optical experiments"—and after the show there was generous free provision for them in the college Tuck shop.

Both the Sydney Paget drawing (Sherlock Holmes The Red Headed League) to illustrate Mr. Howard's article and the article below come from the first bound volume of the Strand Magazine (1891) and may therefore be contemporary to his tale.

Lighting for the Tableaux Vivants

So much attention has lately been given to tableaux, that it will no doubt be interesting to go through the minutiae which must be properly attended to before anything like success can be attained. We have often seen tableaux completely ruined by an awkward piece of mismanagement, clumsy grouping, or bad lighting, which, but for these defects, would have been very effective.

It is contended by some people that scenery is unnecessary, and only takes the eye from the group in front; but such is not really the case; and where artistic scenery is obtainable, relative to the subject of the group not too strongly expressed, and prettily arranged, it is most helpful, and in fact, a *sine qua non*. As regards the properties, the stools and boxes, of which, generally, a good number are required, should be made on purpose, of different heights. These are most helpful in posing groups; but the stage should not be overburdened with them, as they are then only in the way, and make extra work in removing. It is a great thing, if possible, to have these properties so made that they will suit all the tableaux to be presented.

Perhaps the most important subject is the lighting. It is a disputed point as to whether footlights are advantageous. In the tableaux here illustrated they were always used, as sometimes it was found that the limelight does not reach the feet, and a hard white line is the result. The overhead floats are a necessity. As to the limelight, the two men who manage this must throw their light from a height of not less than six feet; they should be opposite one another, and room must be arranged for their apparatus and oxygen bottle. It is well to have reliable operators for this work, as they are not always trustworthy; and not to allow them to leave the stage until their work is completed, as should anything go wrong with the limelight the tableaux would



be inevitably ruined. On figures draped in white, or statuary, the blue light is perhaps the best, and altogether the most suited to the subject, on account of the softness it gives to the drapery; and, especially in the case of statuary, it has all the appearance and effect of marble. As tableaux are generally shown two or three times, the curtain is rung down for a few seconds while another pose is arranged. A

*Mr. Howard is Honorary archivist and curator to the British Puppet Guild and runs an amateur puppet theatre of 22 seats in Chelsea.

different lighting effect may be used in the second and third exhibitions: for instance, in "The Snow Queen" in the first representation, the blue light was used; and in the second a red, and this, of course, combined with the light from the floats and footlights, produced a happy effect.

Special attention was paid to the grouping and lighting. Of course in the case of "The Snow Queen" all the dresses were of a pure white, in keeping with the subject, and a very effective foreground was made with some light, diaphanous drapery, the realism being heightened by some glistening powder, known as Jack Frost, thrown over the dresses of the figures at the last moment to represent hoarfrost. This tableaux was encored every time.

In "The Summer Shower" the dresses, if not quite white, nearly approached it, and the mixture of blue and white in the lighting was very appropriate. The tableau represents three young ladies, who have been caught by a shower, taking shelter under a somewhat conventional tree until the sky clears again. This tableau always found favour with the audience.

In arranging tableaux of this kind, especial care should be taken not to throw contradictory colours on to the groups, such as red light on to yellow. The red light is generally used to re-

present evening; the blue, moonlight; and the white sunshine. As the operators cannot communicate with each other whilst the curtain is up, a complete and exact list of the lights required for each tableau must be supplied to them beforehand, so that no hitch occurs. The gas wants good arrangement, so that the man who attends to it can turn the footlights and floats up exactly at the right moment, or moderate the light as required. The curtain should as a rule, be up for fifteen to twenty-five seconds, or even more, at the stage-manager's discretion, as he will be at the side watching the group, and should any of the members show sign of wavering or moving, he will at once ring down the curtain.

There is one caution to be noted. The soot from the gas in the floats sometimes collects on the ironwork overhead, and, having got red-hot falls. It was noticed in one of the tableaux that the audience did not consider it a success on account of a young lady, who was supposed to be putting on her shoe, but who was in reality pinching out a large piece of burning soot, which had fallen on her dress. A fine piece of wire gauze under the float will entirely remedy this. Indeed, floats should never be fixed without it, as otherwise an accident is so liable to happen.



The Rank Strand System MSR control has been referred to in several of the preceding articles: That shown above is the 180 channel (150 fitted) MSR recently installed in Sadlers Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, London.

Synopses

Aegean Instability?

Une expression anglaise attribuée aux Grecs la capacité de posséder un mot pour chaque circonstance. Ils manifestent toutefois une singulière imprécision dans le domaine des couleurs. Etre précis dans sa commande paraît essentiel à l'Editeur, qu'il s'agisse d'une pièce de Cinemoid ou d'un théâtre lyrique à Sydney. Il suggère qu'en formulant une commande nous nous laissons inspirer par l'architecture égéenne plutôt que la langue.

Auf englisch gibt es eine Redensart Die Griechen haben dafür (worauf es gerade ankommt) den richtigen Ausdruck, aber merkwürdigerweise ist es in dieser Sprache nicht, möglich, Farben präzise zu bezeichnen. Deutlichkeit beim Auftrag ist unbedingt nötig, meint der Redakteur, ob es sich um ein Stück Cinemoid oder ein Opernhaus in Sydney handelt, und er schlägt vor, dass man, wenn man einen Auftrag formuliert, sich wohl bei der Architektur, aber nicht in sprachlichen Fragen an jenes Land ageischen Meer halten soll.

The Third Act

A l'instar de nombreuses compagnies étrangères, les acrobates de Shanghai applaudissent avec le public à la fin d'une représentation pour la révérence finale. On souhaiterait l'existence d'une telle coutume au sein de TABS pour permettre à l'Editeur et ses collègues de tirer leur révérence aux lecteurs de TABS. En effet la fermeture pour raison financière par Rank des bureaux et bâtiments de Covent Garden et du théâtre de démonstration ont forcé Frederick Bentham à cesser ses fonctions d'Editeur. La nouvelle direction à Brentford annonce une toute nouvelle approche de l'éclairage scénique et un TABS consacré uniquement à l'éclairage.

La présente situation semble exiger ce changement, mais il est apparent que beaucoup de personnes regretteront la disparition d'une époque et la fin des activités d'une compagnie établie de longue date au cœur du quartier du théâtre.

A Tale of Two Cities

Frederick Bentham visite deux nouveaux théâtres municipaux, de 700 places chacun. Il trouve l'un s'étendant sur le coteau au-dessus de Wolfsburg et l'autre confiné dans un grand centre commercial au centre de Leicester. L'architecte de l'un (Sharoun) et la situation de l'autre conspirant à produire deux théâtres très originaux.

Frederick Bentham besucht 2 Stadttheater, beide mit 700 Plätzen. Das eine breitet sich am Abhang eines Hügels bei der Stadt Wolfsburg aus, während sich das andere in einem Verkaufsgeschäftsblock in der Stadt Leicester befindet. Auf Grund des Architekten des einen und der Situation des anderen, sind das zwei ganz ungewöhnliche Theater.

Churches TV Centre

Ken Ackerman décrit le nouveau studio de télévision construit dans un cadre inusité et très attrayant à Bushey, Hertfordshire, fonctionnant sous l'égide de la Fondation Lord Rank. Son but est de préparer des programmes religieux, de former et d'explorer de nouvelles avenues pour présenter le message chrétien. Il est équipé pour la télévision en couleur avec du matériel ultra-moderne.

Ken Ackerman beschreibt ein neues Fernsehstudio, das ungewöhnlich hübsch in Bushey in der Grafschaft Hertfordshire gelegen ist. Es wird von der Lord Rank Foundation unterstützt und dort werden christliche Programme ausgeführt für Ausbildungszwecke, und neue Methoden gesucht und ausprobiert.

Chinguacousy Theatre

Il est réjouissant d'apprendre l'existence sur le continent nord-américain d'une ville et d'un théâtre capables, l'un et l'autre, de résister à la démolition de s'agrandir. Le Lester Pearson Memorial Theatre, de 475 places au maximum, semble être l'incarnation idéale de cette belle ville, de son charme rural et de sa prospérité.

Man freut sich, wenn man hört, dass es auf dem nord-amerikanischen Kontinent eine Stadt und ein Theater gibt, die keinen Drang zum Ausdehnen haben. Das Lester Pearson Memorial Theatre scheint mit einem Umfang von 475 Plätzen die ideale Verkörperung des ländlichen Charms, der Lieblichkeit und des Wohlstandes dieser Stadt erreicht zu haben.

When Drama is not Theatre

Dans le numéro de septembre, Dave Morton traite de l'art dramatique dans les écoles. Intriguée par cet article, Barbara Berrington décida de visiter une école dramatique à Redbridge, aux environs de Londres. Elle décrit ici ce qui s'y passe et ce qui est nécessaire pour ces activités.

In der Septembernummer drückte sich Dave Norton über Drama in Schulen aus. Barbara Berrington wurde dadurch neugierig und daraufhin besuchte sie eine Schuldramazentrale im londoner Bezirk Redbridge. Sie beschreibt, was dort vor sich geht und was man zu dieser Tätigkeit benötigt.

Where the Girls are so Pretty

Percy Corry parle de son récent séjour en Irlande, où il a visité une grande variété de théâtres, en passant d'un documentaire nationaliste à l'Abbey Theatre à une soirée à l'Equity Dinner Theatre au Gresham Hotel—sans oublier la revue "Gael's of Laughter" au Gaiety Theatre et la pièce "Mésalliance" de Shaw, son auteur préféré, et tout cela sans jamais perdre de vue ni le lieu ni la représentation.

Percy Corry berichtet über seinen unlängst stattgefundenen Besuch nach Irland, wo er eine Reihe verschiedener Theater und Aufführungen gesehen hat. Eine "Documentary" Aufführung eines nationalistischen Dramas im Abbey Theatre, ein Abend beim Equity Dinner Theatre im Gresham Hotel, und auch die Revue "Gael's of Laughter", sowie das Stück seines Lieblingsdramatikers Bernard Shaw "Misalliance", wobei er stets die Aufführung und deren Stätte im Auge behält.

New in New Orleans

Auditorium à buts multiples de 2317 places, ce théâtre moderne, techniquement sophistiqué, est aussi fier de son premier système "Hydrafloat" que de son excellente acoustique. Son succès semble supérieur à celui de beaucoup d'autres théâtres similaires pour la raison suivante: "sans être un théâtre lyrique idéal, une salle de concert parfaite ou un théâtre typique, il présente quelques-unes des caractéristiques de l'un et de l'autre, et est un bâtiment plus qu'adéquat en chaque cas".

Dieses moderne Theater hat einen Zuschauerraum mit 2317 Plätzen, der auch als Mehrzweckhalle dienen kann. Das Theater hat ein neues hydraulisches Punktzugsystem und ausgezeichnete Akustik. Es hat grössere Erfolge als andere Theater dieser Art erzielt, denn, obwohl es weder ein ideales Opernhaus, noch die vollkommene Konzerthalle, noch ein hervorragendes Theater darstellt, ist es ein bisschen von jedem und bedeutet viel mehr als nur ein ausreichendes Gebäude für alle drei Zwecke.

The English Playhouse

Iain Mackintosh a lu le splendide livre qui vient de paraître de Richard Leacroft sur le développement du théâtre anglais. Il décrit entre autres ses superbes plans isométriques et comment le jeu des acteurs prenant place derrière le cadre de scène a influencé la construction du théâtre au 19e siècle.

Iain Mackintosh schreibt eine Kritik über das hervorragende neue Buch von Richard Leacroft über die Entwicklung des englischen Theatergebäudes, mit isometrischen Plänen und definitiver Behandlung der Art und Weise in welcher sich das Drama im 19. Jahrhundert hinter das Bühnenportal zurückzog und wie dieser Brauch den Theaterbau beeinflusst hat.

Costumes at Stratford

David Perry, administrateur des costumes de la Royal Shakespeare Company, décrit les déboires et triomphes de son travail et quelques-unes des techniques spéciales utilisées pour la création de 850 costumes inédits par an. Le nombre actuel de costumes à disposition se monte à 20,000 et ceux-ci sont régulièrement loués tant à des professionnels qu'à des amateurs.

David Perry, der Garderobemeister der Royal Shakespeare Company Stratford beschreibt die Schwierigkeiten und Erfolge, und auch die besonderen Verfahren, die dort angewendet werden, um jedes Jahr 850 neue Originalkostüme zu gestalten. Der Gesamtbestand zählt jetzt über 20000 und wird regelmässig an Berufs- und Amateurtruppen verliehen.

A New Vic of 1930

Le New Victoria Cinema de 2786 places a été récemment rénové par Rank Leisure Services et a retrouvé quelque chose de sa première splendeur. Frederick Bentham examine la préservation de ce bâtiment, style 1920-1930 (*art deco*), et l'âge du super-cinéma. Il a assisté à la première de ce cinéma et de bien d'autres en son temps.

Das New Victoria Cinema, mit Plätzen 2786 enthält, ist jüngst von Rank Leisure Services zu seiner einstweiligen Pracht wiederhergestellt worden. Frederick Bentham betrachtet die Erhaltung dieses typischen Exemplars des Stils der zwanziger und dreissiger Jahren. Er hat seinerzeit der Eröffnung dieses und anderer ähnlicher Kinos beigewohnt.

The Last Benevolent Despot

Eric Jordan, architecte, a passé la majorité de sa carrière dans le département du théâtre du Conseil Municipal londonien. Il décrit le rôle du Lord Chamberlain dans la préparation des plans du théâtre et le compare aux lois de sécurité plutôt impersonnelles et rigides qui vont en prendre la place.

Der Architekt Eric Jordan, der den grössten Teil seiner beruflichen Laufbahn in der Theaterteilung der londoner Stadtverwaltung verbracht hat, beschreibt die Rolle, die der Lord Chamberlain beim Theaterentwurf gespielt hat und vergleicht damit die anonymen, unanpassungsfähigen Sicherheitsgesetze, die jetzt stattdessen existieren.

Modification for SP80

Laurence Southon décrit l'addition d'un petit clavier à un jeu d'orgue standard SP80, qui permet aux lumières d'être jouées rapidement avec une flexibilité rythmique, un peu dans le genre de l'ancienne "console d'éclairage".

Laurence Southon beschreibt, wie er dem gewöhnlichen Stellwerk SP80 eine kleine Klaviatur zugefügt hat, sodass er Beleuchtung mit Schnelligkeit, doch mit rhythmischer Bewegungsfreiheit spielen kann, so ähnlich wie bei der einmaligen "Light Console".

A Stage Lighting Remote Control of c. 1895

T. E. Howard, qui dirige un théâtre-amateur de marionnettes de 22 places à Chelsea, décrit les activités théâtrales de son père au environs de 1890. Son théâtre était la buanderie de sa grand-mère et plus tard il éclaira ses représentations avec des projecteurs "Bull's Eye Dark" contrôlés indépendamment, semblables à ceux utilisés par la police à l'époque.

T. E. Howard, der ein Amateurmarionettentheater mit 22 Plätzen im londoner Stadtteil Chelsea bespielt, beschreibt die bühnertechnische Tätigkeit seines Vaters um 1890 herum. Er führte in Grossmamas Waschküche auf und später beleuchtete er Inszenierungen mit unabhängig gesteuerten "Bull's Eye Dark" Scheinwerfern, die bei der Polizei im Gebrauch waren.

Traduit par Jacqueline Staub

Übersetzt von Ilse Bertham

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