



early stages was studied and costed but because it was such a good cinema the original scheme was to make temporary use only of the auditorium and convert back to a twin preview theatre later. In the final plans the whole building has been converted to production area, control rooms, scene dock, dressing rooms, offices, canteen etc. while at the same time preserving as much as possible the original character of the building.

Negotiations to purchase commenced in July and were completed by the end of the month. A project team of TVS engineers was formed during this period and architects, builders, contractors and suppliers were appointed. Structural tests were started on August 1st and the project was begun.

Top steels were installed on reinforced roof beams to support self climbing hoists borrowed from those ordered for the Vinters Park Complex Maidstone. The luminaires and associated equipment were also taken from the Maidstone requisition but Camera and Sound came from a de-rigged O.B. vehicle parked at the rear. In the original planning it was assumed that the existing power supply would be adequate for the production lighting but later the air conditioning had to be augmented and additional supplies were laid in.

The Telestage companies involvement in the project has been continuous before and after the purchase

of the property, as they were asked to produce schemes for the likely sites as well as the one finally chosen. Telestage then received the contract to reinforce the roof and supply the total lighting and cyclorama support scheme including self climbing hoists and fixed and variable height cyclorama lighting barrels. Roof reinforcement and installation of top steels was completed within six weeks. The self climbing hoists were installed two weeks later following the laying of the epoxy screed floor with a polyester top coat by Elgoods.

Strand Lighting supplied the laniro Quartzcolor luminaires for the studio.

Air conditioning and electrical



distribution was installed by a local firm TCL.

The proscenium arch was partially removed and reinforced to support acoustic doors into the scene dock area. Telestage installed a gallery above the doors and also on the other two sides. The balcony and its seats were preserved on the fourth side as were also seven rows of seats down below. The seats were recovered to match the general decor.

Behind the seats an acoustic wall was built and the control rooms were constructed behind the wall. The dimmer room and lamp storage area were built into the scene dock area. Dressing rooms, make-up rooms, a two level restaurant and admin offices were constructed with the existing structure behind and above the control room area.

Thus Phase I came to an end providing full technical facilities for the first production on target on December 16th.

Phase II of the project — which is being carried out by the contractors who can take much credit for the swift completion of the first phase, Messrs Wyatts — will provide extra accommodation. It will also, and this would please the Editor of TABS, include the refurbishment of the reception area in the thirties decor of the original cinema. All will have been completed by the time this magazine is published.

Thus we will have managed to build at the pre-war speed, as well as, partially, in the pre-war style!



by John R. Pierson-Hagger

*John's experience in TV lighting is considerable. He entered the television industry in 1960 by joining the Howard Steeles' Engineering Design team at ABC TV, Teddington.*

*From there he later moved to Yorkshire Television, where he spent four years working with the famous Phil Parker.*

*After a number of years working abroad, he returned in 1972 to Thames Television where he spent four years working on planning and installation. His next move was to Thorn Theatre Lighting where he worked on Lighting Vehicle Design.*

*He next joined Rank Strand as Sales Engineer, leaving last year to join the newly-formed TVS Design Team.*

have been able to identify more of these if the Russian guests had not insisted on pronouncing the place names in their own language. Incidentally, travellers intending to go on the famous Moscow underground should be warned that the station names are not written up on the walls as they are in London or New York, but are announced as the train pulls in. This led to some fairly extensive exploring of the little known suburban ends of the system by our doughty pair!

Some of the liveliest visitors to the exhibition were a student delegation from the Theatre Techniques department of Moscow University who, like students everywhere, not only wanted to know a lot but had some very firm ideas of their own.

In addition to the hardware on show, audio visuals on Galaxy and the new lanterns were shown and re-shown.

David rang Brentford during the exhibition — Yes, subscriber trunk dialling works just as at home or in France, or Germany — and we were able to tell him that Galaxy had been selected for The Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford upon Avon. And let no-one

think that the fame of The Royal Shakespeare Company has not travelled as far as Japan in one direction and as far as the Siberian wilderness in the other. Yes, I know they are both actually in the same direction but you know what I mean!

Our two heroes set out on expeditions of exploration during their evenings. The discovery which impressed them the most being the Moscow State Circus. Alan described it as a very permanent concrete building but shaped like a tent! He identified no less than 14 carbon arc follow spots in use and what he described as the best flame effects he had ever seen.

David, who is of a more cynical turn of mind, remarked that the performing bears and crocodiles put him in mind of the staff of our own dear Brentford.

Russian theatres already have a number of Duets in use. Since our exhibition more have been ordered and, naturally for the land of Tchaikovsky and Shostakovitch, attendant Preludes and Harmonys.

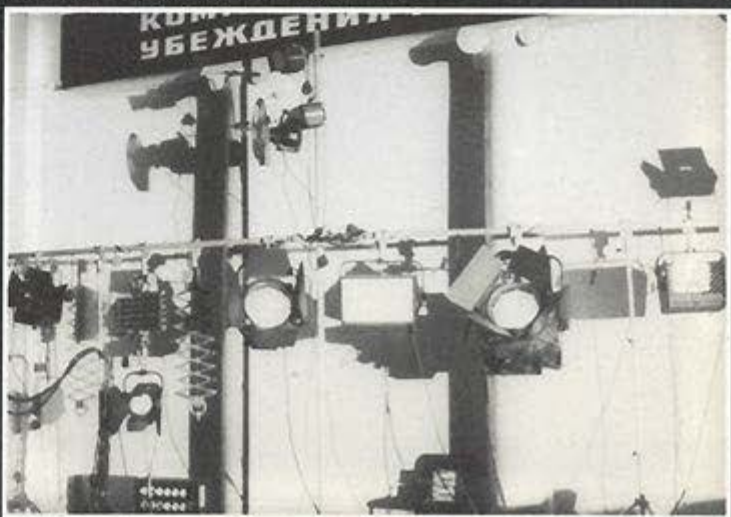
One last tibia of information. Like all good tourists Red Square was visited — and this is a very human touch —

the supersmart sentries who are always on duty outside Lenin's tomb have their winters' lot made easier by portable electric fires which are provided for their two hours of duty.

I asked David if the fatalistic Russian approach to life which comes through

to Western readers so strongly in Chekov and Tolstoy is still to be found 100 years later.

David thought over this question very carefully — "Ye-e-e-s — but only when they are driving in Moscow traffic!"



Some of the Strand group equipment on display.