

HALL-NOTTINGHAM

What are the minimum essential uses for flying? First, it must always be possible to hang things over the stage. This requires "skyhooks"; as many as possible and at centres that can be linked with simple pipes or a lightweight truss when necessary. This will provide for suspending extra lighting for television or pop rigs, the cinema screen and smaller slide projection screens and for the banners and slogans customary at party political conventions and sales conferences. Twenty-five motor driven point hoist units were therefore provided in the roof void above the hall at approximately 3 metre centres in rows of five. The lifting hooks disappear into the ceiling when not in use and lower to stage level for rigging. Those in the canopy area pass through matching holes in the canopy. Of course, nothing can be flown out of sight but this possibility was eliminated when the decision to have no flytower was taken. The type of touring show envisaged will rarely expect to be able to fly in the theatrical sense.

STAGE Lighting is not so much a problem. A big, ideally situated, front of house lighting bridge was incorporated into the ceiling design and slots in the side walls also give an excellent choice of lighting positions. The canopy was also provided with two positions for stage lighting from above the platform. The ceiling bridge and side slots had to be behind glass to preserve the acoustic integrity of the ceiling. On the canopy the lighting positions are covered by sliding doors when not in use. Finally, for the benefit of television and other specialist users, 2kW and 5kW sockets were distributed liberally in the wing spaces, on the side stages and choir tiers and in the roof space. A total of 120 dimmers controlled from a 196 way Galaxy memory board were provided for theatrical lighting. A full range of one and two kilowatt spotlights are installed on the bridge, in the slots and on the canopy.

Many are fitted with remote colour change. The remainder of the 190 operative Galaxy controls are used for a fixed installation of concert downlighters over the platform, the house lighting and a colour floodlighting installation that uses the extensive surfaces of the roof and

upper side walls to provide varying colour lighting effects more related to pop psychedelic than super cinema. Naturally, remote riggers control is provided for Galaxy and Strand engineers also devised a permanently installed remote control using the riggers wiring that allows the Stage Manager, front of house manager, or projectionist, access to select and control fades to 100 memories so that they can take full advantage of the effects lighting. If all this is insufficient, a 400 amp three phase supply is available on the platform for the portable dimmers used by touring shows and TV.

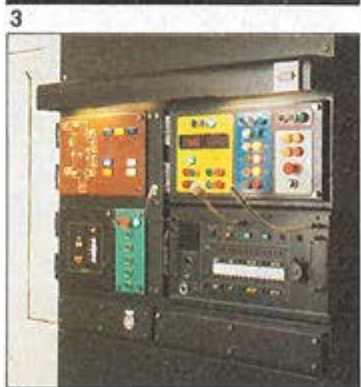
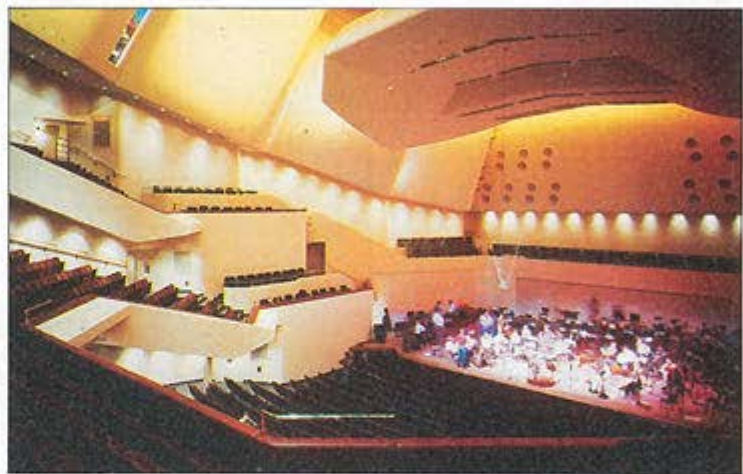
THE sound system in a classical concert hall is usually determinedly unobtrusive. For classical concerts at Nottingham this is indeed true, as no reinforcement or electro-acoustic devices are needed or necessary. But, and realise that this change of use can happen within hours, when anything else is happening on stage, full sound facilities are essential. Big pop tours will, of course, bring their own rig complete. All they need is power and a control position. This is provided in the centre of the rear stalls where seats can be removed and the sound desk installed. Floor ducts to the stage keep cables clear of gangways. Every other user expects the sound to be provided and ready for immediate use, and indeed, it is. A trap in the acoustic canopy opens and a large 6.7m wide sound bridge containing 36 loudspeakers lowers automatically to its predetermined height, 3.4m loudspeaker towers are wheeled on from the wings and fixed loudspeakers in the auditorium walls and balcony ceilings are switched on. Microphones may take a little longer but, with the Strand Sound mixing desk alongside the Galaxy in the combined lighting and sound control room at the rear of the stalls, (or when necessary, moved into the open stalls operating position) the facilities are excellent.

OTHER facilities that space does not permit to mention in detail include a full size orchestra pit below the first four rows of seating, a wide screen 35mm film projection system, a large electronic concert organ, Strand Sound paging and communications, and, for the convenience of stage staff, a special Rank Strand worklight switching system.

Dressing rooms are close to the stage and comfortable, air conditioning works well and silently,

seating is comfortable, the foyers are extensive and have large and attractive well stocked bars. Outside, the building is modern and welcoming and a special properly controversial neon light animated 'sculpture' (not by Rank!) clearly marks the building as a home of the arts, enlightenment and joy.

Nottingham has done itself proud and not least, its technicians who have been given facilities to stage the often daily change of programme that cannot be easily bettered.



Auditorium and Foyer Lighting: Tony Corbett & Bob Anderson
Sound and Communications: John Pilcher & David Collison
Stage Lighting: Jeremy Godden
Site Engineer: John Bardwell
Project Assistant: John Walsom

Specialist Sub-Contractors
Stage Lighting Equipment: Rank Strand
Stage Sound Equipment: Rank Strand Sound

1 Interior of Nottingham Concert Hall. Photograph: Christine Ottevil.

2 The Concert Platform seen from the Sound Control Room. The Strand Sound 12 channel mixing desk in the foreground.

3 The Sound Bridge containing the main loudspeaker system - six bass units, eighteen horn units and ten high frequency units. Two speaker towers can be brought onto the stage for music reinforcement. The back of the hall has speakers in the ceilings led through digital delay units.

4 A Strand Sound technician during commissioning. Balancing the loudspeaker coverage required each sound source to be individually adjusted while the Sound Bridge was suspended at working height 12 metres above the stage.

5 The Stage Manager's control panel incorporating controls for the Worklight System (Top Left), Canopy and Soundbridge (Top Right), Houselights (Bottom Left), Acoustic Banners (Bottom Centre) and Cue and Intercom System (Bottom Right). Photograph: Steve Stevens.