

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

continued from page 17

opera singers to look at the conductor when they are not looking at the conductor. The Galaxy fades the picture to black when gauzes or curtains fly in.

DRAMA THEATRE (144 way)

120 mag. amps for stage use

4 mag. amps. for house lights

1 mag. amp. for the orchestra pit

9 non-dim contactors

CONCERT HALL (144 way)

57 mag. amps. for stage use (including 1 available for orchestra music stands)

18 mag. amps. formerly used for house lights and shortly to be converted to stage use)

24 portable triac dimmers for stage use

20 PAM house light dimmers.

It is hoped in the next few years to expand the dimmer capabilities in all theatres.

To correct the dimmer curve we have invented a patch output profile curve, which seems to please nearly everybody except the Australian Ballet Company whose Head Electrician Richard Stuart spent days huddled in a corner with a volt meter, a light meter and miles of graph paper and finally came up with his own amended version which was immediately dubbed 'Sophies Choice'. He seems happy with it!

With these two profiles entered into memory zero, there is no space for any special effects profiles as was originally intended. Hence the 'Fade Profile' on the theatre playback.

There is one facility that we wished we had kept quiet about. The channel to dimmer patch has been the undoing of many an otherwise sane floor electrician.

For example: the far prompt lamp on Richard Ornbo's now famous Orchestra Bar in the Opera Theatre (TABS Vol 32 No.1 April 1974) no longer a Pat. 764 but an in-house modified 30 degree profile lamp of another company - with 2 sets of shutters, focus knobs on the top, and the whole lens tube able to swivel (we did it first!)

This above mentioned lamp has the following numbers:

Bar circuit - 1

Magnetic Amplifier - 101

Old Siemens Lever - 2

Australian Ballet Company

Patch - 001

The Australian Opera Patch - 150

It is often easier to point at it!

The time available for the installation was very tight. The Opera Theatre changed first. Because this theatre is in use 52 weeks a year (6 and sometimes 7 days a week), the Galaxy was simply placed on top of the old desk one Sunday and an overnight team of electricians worked to change the control cables in the dimmer room. The first show to use the system was the 1982 annual 'Christmas at the Opera House'. While waiting for Memory Back-Up to be finally developed, the future Concert Hall system sat beside the

main desk to be used in case of failure. (Once or twice it did save the show.) This meant, the total length of the Galaxy control system in the control room was 4.5 metres. It looked very impressive!

The Drama Theatre followed in early 1983 and the Concert Hall in May that year after Memory Back-up arrived. In the Concert Hall, we were able to move into a much larger control room (the former projection suite) and so we have been able to leave the old desk in place, although no longer connected.

The Opera House was very lucky to have Peter Willis (then Rank Electronics - Melbourne, and now Rank Strand R & D Brentford) as the engineer in charge of the installation. Peter, and later Stephen Found, also from Melbourne, made every effort to ensure that the installation matched the original high standard.

When Peter moved to the U.K. he took with him our thoughts on Theatre Playback. I think we both would like to think of it as 'our baby'.

Theatre Playback and its associated 'H' program software, almost makes Galaxy a totally new board. As well as the previously mentioned automatic follow-ons (called 'Wait Time'), the 'Mood' control knob (which when used, must always be re-set) has been replaced with 'Delay Time'. These times together with the 'Fade Times', the 'Fade Profile', the 'Fade Type', and the 'Links' can now all be entered on the alpha keyboard. The noting of a 'Fade Type' means that a 'Move Fade', for example, will always be a move fade, no matter which fade button is pushed. The update time on the V.D.U. has been dramatically improved. With the selection of 'Time Remaining', it is possible to see the 'Wait'/'Delay'/'Fade' 'Times' count down to zero.

The changes on the channel controller are also important. Now, with the use of 'Thru On' a group of channels selected in the same way as the normal 'Thru' push will exclude those that are not on. And at last, a memory that has been tracked can now be cleared from the screen when it's finished with!

For the record, Theatre Playback had its world premiere on 20th August, 1984 with Born Yesterday starring Jacki Weaver in the Sydney Opera House Drama Theatre.

Galaxy is not yet perfect. I am working on a new list of wants and list of idiosyncrasies to be eliminated in version H3 or any other future system (to be called 'Nebula' or even 'Black Hole'?).

The Tour Guides at the Opera House have been telling their patrons for years that 'all the operator has to do is push one button and then sit back - the computer will do all the rest'.

Now, with Galaxy and Theatre Playback, it is theoretically possible!

COLLEGIATE SCHOOL Prince Edward Auditorium

by R S Field-Dodgson

Collegiate School is an independent boy's boarding school for 530 pupils, situated in Wanganui on the west coast of the central North Island of New Zealand.

The Prince Edward Auditorium - His Royal Highness the Prince Edward graciously consented to the use of his name to commemorate the time he spent as a tutor at the school in 1982/1983 - was designed by the Christchurch firm of Warren and Mahoney, renowned in New Zealand as the architects of the Christchurch Town Hall and the Michael Fowler Centre in Wellington.

The architects' brief was to design a multi-purpose building that could, when the need arose, seat the whole school. Primarily, however, it would be used to accommodate smaller audiences for plays, concerts and the larger group entertainments that are peculiar to a school; in other words, as flexible a space as possible was required.

The building is 36m x 19m with an assembly/storage area at one side.

The entrance foyer has brick walls and a tiled floor with the main external wall windows set in arches. There is a steeply tiered auditorium (18m x 19m) and the stage is (11m x 19m).

The auditorium has fixed seating for 406 while two side galleries, running the full length of the building, can seat a further 64. The orchestra pit, which can accommodate 25 musicians, can be covered over and will then take 28 temporary seats. For the occasion when the full school is to be seated, it is possible to place 152 seats on the stage area.

The walls of the auditorium are finished in brick throughout and the roof is wood, supported on massive beams of Douglas Fir. The seats are covered in a russet-orange fabric and a deep red carpet is used in the aisles and along the galleries.

The stage has no proscenium - a full width house curtain (which can be opened the total width of the auditorium and 'stored' on special tracks against the side walls) and a border allow for variation in the

STRAND IN NEW

proscenium opening. A stage grid allows suspension of lighting spot bars, borders, legs and tabs as in a conventional theatre, though there is no fly tower. The brick and timber finish of the auditorium are continued through the stage area. The stage floor is of oiled New Zealand Rimu - the predominant wood used in the building.

The assembly area has storage

