

OFF BROADWAY

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ment experience of alternative theatre groups is a major problem. The Off Broadway is made available with a Box Office person and a Technician, whose basic salaries are paid by the funding authorities. It is now becoming apparent that the inexperience of some groups will require that additional support staff be provided.

As of now no funds are available for this, but dialogue is commencing with the funding authorities to develop some scheme of assistance for groups who in their innocence are unable to organise themselves or use their resources in the most efficient manner.

Apart from these problems Sydney now has access to an exciting 200 seat theatre, fully complying with all Ordinance 70 Regulations, with an open end stage. There is a small 'proscenium arch' about 16 feet upstage which was the original rear wall of the church. This wall could not be removed for structural purposes. The result is an end stage with a rear stage behind this proscenium.

A spacious foyer complete with bar is located at the side of the auditorium, and access for handicapped people has been provided. A small raised section of the foyer can be used for late night 'entertainments'.

The theatre equipment comprises the following:-

LIGHTING LUMINAIRES

8x Prelude 16/30 650 watt Profile Spots
16x Prelude 30 500 watt Profile Spots
6x Minim 500 watt Fresnel Spots
2x Pattern 123 500 watt Fresnel Spots

CONTROL

2x Ten/20 Portable Dimmer Systems with
1x Rank (Aust) DMC 24 Channel 2 preset 2 Group desk
2x Strand (Aust) 48 way MiniPatch

HOUSELIGHTING

6x Minim 300 watt Fresnel Spots controlled by
1x Strand (Aust) MTU 50 Unit Dimmer

SOUND EQUIPMENT

A very basic sound system has been provided consisting of:- a Tandberg Half Track Reel to Reel Tape Recorder, a Rank (Aust) PA100 Amplifier, and a pair of Rank (Aust) Column Speakers.

The Off Broadway has bookings six months in advance and tentative bookings until February of 1985. The devotion, energy and hard work of the Gadds should be an inspiration to many who would like to build their own theatre. ■

STRAND PERSONALITIES

NO 2

ALAN LUXFORD

by the Editor

Two facts – Alan joined Strand straight from school – and he was the last man recruited by Strand. No – this doesn't mean that we have not taken anyone on since 1968 – it just means that a few weeks after the old Strand Electric and Engineering Company recruited our young hopeful Strand became part of The Rank Organisation.

Alan originally inhabited the King Street showroom, the starting point for so many Strand personalities who trod this road, all upward, although to various destinations.

After an apprenticeship of answering queries on Cinemoid and demonstrating Patt 45s and 10/20 Dimmer Packs, our hero transferred to the Lantern Laboratory, where he spent some years under the tutelage of the immortal 'Mac' Mackenzie, the father of so many Strand lanterns, including the 700 series that some fourteen years ago brought the tungsten halogen revolution to theatre lighting.

I suppose the 765 CSI follow spot was the product to which Alan made the greatest personal contribution. I originally met him in 1969 during my first week with Strand. I was taken to the Mackenzie realm, to be greeted at the door by

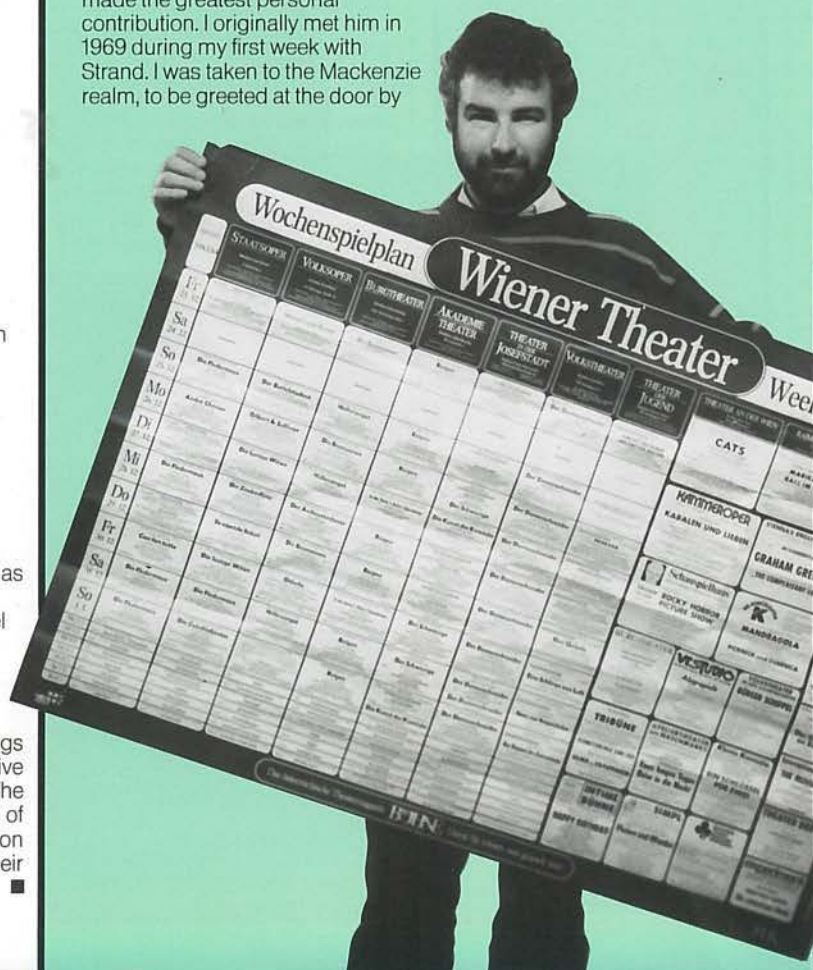
young Luxford peering at me through a 15" diameter 765 'Edinburgh Tattoo' front lens. The effect was unforgettable.

Alan's next move was to become a member of the UK sales team where his most prestigious job was a 'no holds barred' plus colour monitor MMS for Glyndebourne. The nicest MMS installation we were ever allowed to do. Some six years ago he was again promoted to running an overseas territory.

The Editorial Pentax shows him at a triumphant moment – more theatres on Vienna's 'What's On' poster he is so proudly holding are equipped with Strand memory systems, all supplied through our Austrian agents, Messrs Pani, than would be the case with an equivalent London theatre poster.

Young – as I still think of him – Luxford now looks after Australia, so that he can escape the English winter, and Russia so that he can escape the English summer. Of course, he covers a few other spots on the world's surface in the interests of Strand theatre and television lighting.

His home base? That excellent gleam in the Prince Regent's eye, Brighton, which in my youth was always promoted as the Queen of Watering Places. One of its more interesting buildings is the Dome, the site of quite a few Gang Shows lit by our hero in pursuit of his hobby – stage lighting, what else? ■



"PUTTING ON A PLAY"

by Michael Legat

Published by Robert Hale £9.50

Many people would say that for them, the ultimate satisfaction in amateur theatre is to create an entertainment when the available resources are stretched to the limit, and ingenuity triumphs over the production budget.

If these resources comprise little in the way of material assets, but an abundance of enthusiasm (either due to financial constraints or because the formation of a group is still at the 'when I've finished decorating the house' stage) then Michael Legat's book is worth rescheduling the first rehearsal to read.

His hints and advice throughout the book are logically explained and helpful, but above all, are written in an easily digestible conversational and amusing style. Each ingredient is described in detail: hints on choosing a suitable play (and suitable actors); advice on arranging the rehearsals, publicity, staging, costumes and make-up.

Mr Legat places particular emphasis on the two most important factors, namely production techniques and acting methods: advice compiled from the author's obviously enjoyable experiences of both producing for and acting in small amateur companies.

And, to contrast the fame, glamour and excitement of treading the boards, the less popular but still important organisation tasks are covered, including controlling the finances, preparing the refreshments, arranging the dressing rooms... and even clearing up after the show.

Michael Legat has also broadened the scope of his book for those who enjoy some success with their hobby and look forward to the new challenges in the competitive forum of drama festivals. But whether competing or not, the advice given about preparing a festival piece and performing in front of the critical gaze of an adjudicator is valuable for everyone.

This book is a must for actors, producers and helpers (various) who are entertaining and being entertained in the smaller theatres, and I can only conclude by saying that with 208 pages of excellent material, there is only one omission: in the 'recommended reading' section – under the letter... 'T'! (For Tabs, of course.) ■

Andy Collier