

Half a mile from Shakespeare



by Ron Horsley

HALF a mile from the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon with its Strand Galaxy there is a church hall with the second largest proscenium stage in the town and a Strand Tempus 18. Although it is the second largest its size is only 24ft (22ft when the house curtains are open) by 9ft high and a stage depth of 13ft plus a 3ft apron.

For the last 5 years it has been my pleasure to light a variety of shows, dancing and other schools, drama, musical concerts and pantomimes, plus informal concerts in the body of the hall. All very different in their requirements. When not lighting I have been stage manager, set builder, etc. for the last three annual Gilbert and Sullivan productions.

Compared with the RST down the road, facilities are minimal. 2x6 way dimmers are connected to the 30amp 'stage lighting circuit' and 1x6 way dimmer plugged into a 13amp ring main socket. A glance at the heading of the accompanying 'plugging and connected load schedule' will illustrate the constraints this imposes. Overload connection is not unusual. Pantomimes for example are invariably lit with a connected load several kW over the maximum. The main fuses only surviving because of very careful use of dimmers from a critically followed 'lighting cue synopsis'. Which goes first, a 30amp HRC mains fuse or a 5amp circuit fuse when there is a circuit fault and the full connected load is 27 amps? I haven't yet found out.

The equipment has been bought by the hard work of the church drama group and generous donations, or is home made. It comprises: 8 Pat 23 (FOH), 5 Pat 123, 11 Pat 137, plus 4 PAR 38 cans, 6x150W reflector cans and 2x6ft battens, all home made and pressed into service when the lighting design requires it.

For the pantomime 'Mother Goose' a few extra spots and fresnels were brought along and a home made 3 channel chaser used on the auxiliary circuits. One has to watch how many extras are added to the ring main, orchestra pit lights, band amplifiers,

etc, can quickly increase the load. An electric fire for the prompt's cold feet would be disastrous.

The control 'room' is in fact a folding cupboard, on the side FOH, that hinges open to provide an area screened from the audience. Communication from the S.M.'s corner is by traditional red and green lights. FOH hall lights are operated by the FOH manager at the back of the hall following cues given by wall lights controlled by the lighting board operator.

Show sound is relayed to dressing rooms which are separated each side of the hall and a S.M.'s call-boy microphone sometimes used. Again all home built equipment.

The lighting plan for Mother Goose is illustrated. 6 Pat 23 FOH covered 3 DS areas, open white or with straw or pale gold Cinemoid. The other 2 Pat 23 FOH spread to cover the DS area with steel blue. On No.1 bar 4 Pat

123, open white or with straw cover CS in 2 areas. 2 Pat 137 floods were used with steel blue and 2 Pat 137 with snoots fitted to keep light scatter off the border and directed CS. No. 2 bar was used for specials with Pat 23's. No.3 bar in addition to carrying 2 cloth legs held the 6ft battens with open white and light blue in separate circuits for changing the back wall 'sky', colours and lighting a roller scene cloth. Other specials involved 2 Pat 137 and 2 cans open white for the fairy DSR and 3 Pat 137, green and blue, for the demon DSL. Extra cans helped DSL and DSR and a pair of Pat 23 and 123 provided light for a special band spot item. The chaser was used on the auxiliary circuits for a red, white and blue sequence when the rocket 'took off'. Down light cans were used for the back of the gauze mirror image.

My daily employment with buildings and their services has

LIGHTING CUE SYNOPSIS		JAN '84	
		Lighting	
1	GOOSE ACTION	1	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2
2	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	13	F DEMON 12 F FAIRY
3	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	14	7.8.9.10.15.16 17 18
4	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	15	F
5	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	16	AG 4/F
6	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	17	CHANGE OVER 17 18
7	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	18	7.8.9.10 15 16 17 18
8	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	19	FADE 04 - (UP & DOWN) TO B.O. (SHARP)
9	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	20	FADE 04 - (UP & DOWN) TO B.O. (SHARP)
10	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	21	FADE OUT TO 0
11	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	22	IN 15 16 17 18
12	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	23	1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2
13	6000 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2	24	LAST UP TO 7 ON WHITE



The inside of the cupboard control 'room' with the Tempus 18 on a hinge-down desk. On the left the auxiliary board controls 3 circuits on the pros, hall wall lights, red and green cue lights and operator's working light.

