

CUE

Technical Theatre Review



John Wimbled
-81

November - December 1981

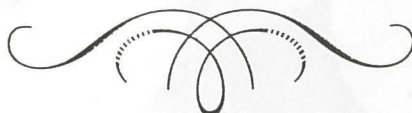
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At this festive season we at

*CCT remember the good will of
you our customers and friends
and wish you*

A Very Merry Christmas



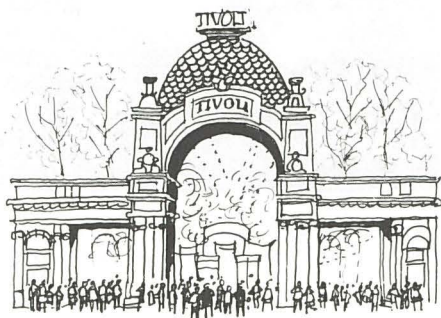
*May 1982 prove to be a happy
prosperous and brighter*

New Year



theatre lighting limited

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Tivoli is situated in the heart of Copenhagen. Enticed by this summer's poster which forms our cover, some five million visitors passed through the Tivoli turnstiles between May and September. Most of them entered by the main gate sketched above.

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14 November – December 1981

Administrative Design

As time and money get less, the danger is that designers may be pressured into becoming visual administrators – cost effective and efficient. We need to re-affirm that a designer is a visual artist working in the theatre, whose currency is the artistic and creative contribution to the production. The increasing interest in collecting designers' drawings as works of art shows that a section of the public anyway, definitely believes this.

These words deserve our contemplation. They are part of Pamela Howard's admirable introduction to the *Designers* section of the 1981 *Alternative Theatre Directory* which for the first time includes listings of set, costume and lighting designers: another small step in the recognition of the Society of British Theatre Designers . . . although we must record just a touch of surprise at the inclusion of some names whom we would never have automatically associated with the alternative theatre movement. Time and recession make strange bedfellows of us all.

But do we *really* need to re-affirm that a designer is a visual artist making a creative contribution? Surely this is accepted? Indeed a cynic of our acquaintance recently suggested that the pecking order of our theatre is currently administrator, designer, director, author, actor and then audience. The administrator in our little saloon bar gathering protested that she was thoroughly designer-pecked.

Designers' drawings can certainly be collectable art: but surely, as they are a means rather than an end, their quality is not necessarily related in any way to the quality of the realised design. Theatre Design is, after all, applied art rather than fine art. The designer needs a creative imagination, but the design process is surely cost effective visual management.

And Pamela Howard recognises this when she says *designers have become inexorably linked with the increasing difficulties of working within a shrinking economy. They have sometimes found themselves publicly accountable for the seeming large expenditure of public money, while at the same time have been forced to be increasingly resourceful at producing the expected standard of work, with half the resources.*

Long may we continue to marvel at the magic of the art of the theatre designer: the art that produces *so much from so little* rather than *so little from so much*.

The Pleasures of Tivoli

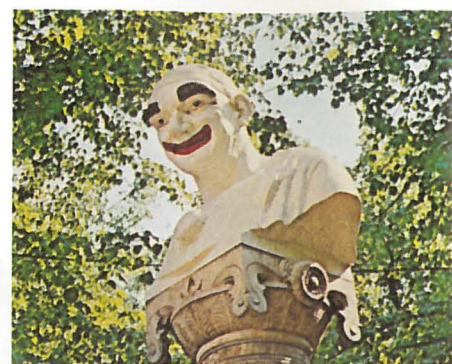
FRANCIS REID

Something for everyone is one of the more frequently heard battle cries of the entertainment publicist. I have myself used it to sell an ill-assorted bag of miscellaneous performances, none of which would have remotely appealed to my own reasonably catholic tastes if I had been in the position of buyer rather than seller. But there *is* something at TIVOLI for everyone. The Tivoli's own literature does not use the phrase and Copenhagen's guide books do not need to fall back upon it. *Magic* and *unique* are the sort of words that these travel books use, and I am happy to concur. An American journalist found that the Danes have a word for it: *hyggelig*, roughly translatable as *cosy*, and I like it. However, I squirm at *Copenhagen's Danish Pastry*, a gruesome example of the sub-editor's art that attempts to conceal art.

Another phrase that I dislike is *Arts and Entertainment*: it implies that the two are different. I have never been able to under-

stand that difference. Tivoli is full of arts and it is certainly full of entertainment. But above all it is full of *style*. I defy even the most pedantic hair splitter to categorise the myriad of *experiences* that comprise a walk through the Tivoli gardens.

These experiences can include music of all kinds (classical, folk, jazz, pop, rock, brass, the lot), revue, variety, ballet, children's theatre, and a pantomime that is almost certainly the most genuine *com-media dell'arte* that can now be seen anywhere in the world. Plus some two dozen eating and drinking establishments covering the whole spectrum of gastronomy. Many are the varieties of Merry-go-Round and Rollercoaster — something to suit all stomachs, something to excite all nerves. Fountains to calm, flowers to admire. All pulled together at dusk by massed light bulbs into an experience whose ambience fully justifies such worn adjectives as *magic* and *unique*.



Niels Henrik Volkersen, Tivoli's famous 19th-century pierrot who still watches every performance.

Tivoli opened on 15th August 1843. The 25-acre site, just outside the city walls, was until then part of Copenhagen's fortifications. Indeed the lake is said to be a residual part of the original town moat and the zig-zag avenues to follow the lines of the old bastions. The lease was signed on May 29, a company set up on June 8th and the site completed for that August 15th opening. The entrepreneur who succeeded in getting Royal consent and making Tivoli "happen" within such an incredibly short time was Georg Cartensen. Students of the elusive chemistry of that animal whom it is now fashionable to call 'Arts Administrator' may be interested to know that Cartensen was a Danish diplomat's son, early childhood in Algiers, law student, army lieutenant, editor in Paris, publisher in Philadelphia.

The speed of the original construction is partly explained by the use of light building materials including a lot of timber and canvas: the military authorities stipulated that it must be possible to clear the site quickly



The fantail of the peacock curtain opens to reveal the painted drapery of the act drop.



The Pantomime Theatre (1874)



Prompt corner at the Pantomime Theatre. Sound effects by traditional slapstick, but thyrister controlled lighting memorised on punched cards.

in an emergency so that the cannon could have a clear line of fire! These 1843 buildings erected *for the amusement of the people* included a theatre which set traditions still fundamental to today's Tivoli – a few seats but plentiful standing room, lots of acrobats, jugglers, gymnasts, dancers, singers, etc. At first there were plays but pantomime, based on the traditional Italian *commedia dell'arte*, was introduced in the second season and eventually ousted the spoken word. Today's Tivoli is still a *lyric* experience: the one performing art that takes a back seat is spoken drama.

The 1843 concert hall was a salon of light lacy open construction with a "Turkish" flavour. There was an airy colonnaded Bazaar containing shops, elegant restaurant and a printing office for the Tivoli news sheet. For thrills, a choice of steam-driven carousel or "Russian" switchback offering a 7-second coast down inclines on a roller mounted sledge. "Tivoli will never be completed" said its founder and certainly its development has been continuous and is continuing. However that very first year established the basic elements of the mix. Cartensen's concept remains. Like many theatrical successes it is linked to site and circumstances. A formula that does not travel, however accurately it is copied. Therein lies the Tivoli magic that is unique.

Tivoli Today

Tivoli is open 10 am until midnight from May 1st to mid-September. Admission is 10 Kr (around 70p or \$1.40 in the middle of last summer's snaking exchange) and this gives standing access to most entertainments except the Revue Theatre and some of the Concert Hall events. A small surcharge (5 Kr) buys a pantomime seat on an elegant timber and cast iron bench. There are around five million visitors a year and the flowers they admire include 54,000 tulips and hyacinths, 20,000 other bulbs (anemones, narcissi, etc), 20,000 pansies and 150,000 other flower varieties.

From flowers to something more technical: the lighting. There are 110,000 electric bulbs used for outdoor illumination, 8,300 being for the fascia of the Concert Hall and 6,600 for the main entrance. (No, I didn't count them. I lifted these vital statistics from the menu of the *Viften* while indulging in a small snack of Frikadeller med sovs, kartofler og agurkesalt which I thoroughly recommend to anyone interested in the juxtaposition of meat balls and cucumber salad.) The magic of all these light bulbs is that they stand still. All bulbs, no neon. Not a flash, not a flicker, not a chaser. Well, almost not a chaser: there are a few trees with spiky, clustered candleabra which did chase, but it took a lot of my concentration to decide whether it was a chase or an illusion from the breeze (well, zephyr) that was rustling the leaves. Tivoli, like Hong Kong, is testimony to the magic of standing light. But, of course, light and shade carefully balanced. Lighting designed so that the thousands of bulbs are (there is no other word for it) *fairylike*; yet the light that is cast by the bulbs gives just the right

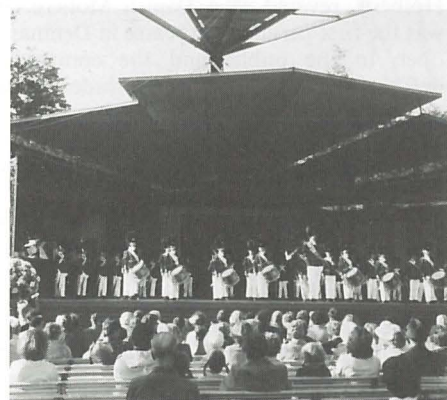


Most of the "rides" in Tivoli have a Viking air.

ambience throughout the multi-part fade that is dusk. In 1855 Tivoli had its own gas-works and I'll bet that was lovely too!

The Tivoli Guard

This *Lilliputian* army was founded in 1844 and in its present form dates back to 1868. The boys (aged 9–16) parade in truly toy soldier uniforms. They arrive theatrically – marching through the gardens to come to a halt centre stage at precisely 5 pm so that a clock (outside the gardens and therefore presumably beyond the control of the Tivoli's stage management) chimes as a dead segue to the last note of the drum and fife band's arrival march.



The Tivoli Boys Guard parade in the afternoon on the "plaenen" stage.

The opening number of their counter-marching medley seems a trifle inappropriate – they wish it to be known, it would seem, that they have a lovely bunch of coconuts. But no doubt the tune is an old Viking war song. Surely marching bands in a small space must be a choreographer's dream (although they would probably claim that it is a nightmare). But the real audience puller is not the marching or the music, but the tiny boy flautist at the end of the line!

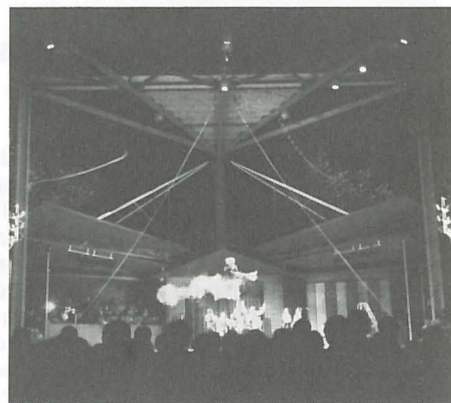
Tivoli Teatret

Revue is played in the Tivoli Teatret which also bears the title (in light bulbs, naturally) *Glassalen* and this gives a clue to its form – all glass and wrought iron, rather like a Victorian pier theatre. Some of the pillars

provide excellent foh lighting booms in positions that would certainly never be permitted if the pillars were not structural – and, by definition, something that gets in the way of a sightline just has to be a good lighting position. A luscious central chandelier does not however intrude for it flies up into a dome during the overture.

Plaenen Open Air Stage

The Plaenen open air stage is mainly devoted to the performances of that gallant band of ladies and gentlemen who have devoted their lives to overcoming the laws of gravity by incessant practice. This is a stage for jugglers, trapeze virtuosos and the like. The high stage roof glides apart to allow even more height for family pyramids



By night the "plaenen" stage becomes the home of acrobats, jugglers and trapeze artistes.

or anyone wishing to hang upside down to suspend a partner who rotates around an unlikely suspension point such as neck or ankle. All in a blaze of par cans with the band playing jolly speciality music with cut-offs for dramatic timp rolls when danger threatens.

Concert Hall

Today's Tivoli Concert Hall was built in 1951 and, in celebration of its silver jubilee, an exhibition of *Tivolis Koncertsals* was mounted in the foyer this summer. This is the fourth concert hall and its predecessors were illustrated by some rather splendid blown up illustrations based on prints of the first hall and photographs of the later ones.

The 1843 Hall was a square pavilion in the Turkish style and the many oil lamps illuminating the window panes gave it an arabian nights atmosphere. Here H. C. Lumbye conducted his 22-man string orchestra. Lumbye (the Danish Johann Strauss) was Musical Director of the Tivoli from 1843 until 1872 and during that period wrote some 700 waltzes, polkas, marches and galops, naming several after such Tivoli amusements as the merry-go-round and switchback (eg *Tivolis Damp-Carroussellbanen Galop*). Lumbye also wrote the music for several of the ballets of the great Danish choreographer August Bournonville: much of his music is still popular today – particularly at Tivoli.



Cloths tumble and wings slide: a 19th-century scene change at the Pantomime Theatre.

In 1863 a new and larger hall was erected: an octagonal *Glass Hall* with seating around the outer walls, but the centre left clear for promenaders who enjoyed an afternoon stroll with music. (The exhibition included the original plans and coloured elevations dated 1861). The glass hall was replaced in 1902 by a *Turkish Hall* by Knud Arne Petersen who had designed the famous Chinese Tower a couple of years previously. This hall was adorned with oriental minarets and an onion-shaped cupola. It was lit by gas until 1939... however, with the occupation in 1940 all the lights went out although Tivoli remained open, achieving its highest ever number of visitors (112,802) on its 1943 centenary day. In 1944 there was a great blaze, visible as far as neutral Sweden: several of the Tivoli buildings had been fired as a reprisal against the Danish resistance movement.

However 12 days later Tivoli was again in action with temporary structures. The present concert hall has a rather functional interior – indeed one might say bleakly functional by Tivoli standards. But the facade fits the landscape and provides a splendid fascia for displaying light bulbs. The resident *Tivoli Symphonorkest* has 64 players and many of its concerts are free – and free concerts are a good way to introduce a goodly proportion of new music. The Concert Hall stage is also used for visiting international ballet companies and the world's star entertainment names.

Pantomime Theatre

For me the climax of Tivoli is the Pantomime Theatre. More – it is one of the world's great theatrical experiences. An opportunity, now probably the only opportunity, to experience something approaching genuine commedia dell'arte. This is the real thing: an experience far, oh far, removed from the balletic posturings of the residual Harlequin, Columbine and Pierrot who contribute some of the camper moments on our light entertainment stages and screens.

The commedia dell'arte in Tivoli is a living tradition handed down over some 300 years in a direct line from its 17th-century origins in Bergamo. Early in the eighteenth century several Italian travelling troupes reached Denmark and the names of Harlequin and Columbine appear for the first time on a Danish playbill at the 1723 opening of the Grønnegade Theatre in Copenhagen. This was the theatre of Holberg, revered as a Danish Molière. It was the first permanent theatre in Denmark open to the public and the commedia dell'arte was performed as interludes in the drama or as an epiologue.

However it was around 1800 that the real foundation of today's Tivoli pantomime was laid. Two troupes linked up for summer Sunday performances in the Royal Deer Park: the Italian family Casati performed pantomimes with the English family Price who specialised in juggling, tightrope, horseback and other acrobatics. They moved in winter to the Court Theatre (now the Theatre Museum, see CUE 13) where Price became Pierrot and brought to Casati's pantomime the theatrical machinery, illusionist effects and character concepts that were a feature of John Rich's productions at the Lincoln's Inns Fields Theatre in London.

The Price troupe became very much in demand, both nationally in Denmark and internationally with travels to Moscow and St Petersburg. From then until now, the name of Price has never been absent from the Danish stage. In the early days of Tivoli, three young men acquired the Price pantomime rights. One of these was an artist named Volkersen and he created for over 40 years a Pierrot so popular that when he died, he was immortalised in a statue in the Tivoli gardens – a statue which has watched all the performances ever since.

There have been some changes over the years. In 1911 the pantomimes were shortened to approximately half their previous length to accommodate ballet performances later in the evening. And Pierrot has become gradually more of an actor

rather than an acrobat. A man of humour and capriciousness rather than an exponent of acrobatic artistry.

The pantomime is performed in the Peacock Theatre built in 1874 by Vilhelm Dahlerup of the architectural partnership responsible for Copenhagen's Royal Theatre, finished in the same year. It is a Chinese fantasy and its most famous trademark is its curtain. The peacock's tail in the form of a fan parts centre and folds down, dropping into a slot by the footlights. Then the Peacock sinks. It is a magical moment. There can be no other word. The sets are lovely cloths and wings. There are frequent scene changes with the cloths flying on a half-way tumble while the flats substitute on sliders with the coordinated precision that can only be achieved with old transformation machinery of the type that has been working nightly in this theatre since 1874.

There is some modern technology. There is a forward bar with 8 Pattern 243s (6 with colour change) and there are Patt 223s to light the peacock curtain from each end of the pit. Lighting control is by thyristors with a Grossman punch card memory. But in the final tableaux – the apotheosis – there is a red bengal light manufactured by Tivoli's own master of fireworks. It is lit over water buckets. For smoke, the theatre owns an old blower worked by means of a spirit flame across which lycopodium (dried fungi) powder is blown by mouth.

The continuous music, assembled from the nineteenth and earlier centuries, is played by a classical chamber orchestra of about 15. The elegant stage business – sad and hilarious – is exquisitely timed to the pit.

At the end Pierrot appears before a drop curtain and the audience traditionally shout *Say something Pierrot*. The origin of this goes back to the Volkersen performance when a dancer's skirt caught fire. The curtain was lowered and Volkersen came out in front. The shout *Say something Pierrot* was heard for the first time and he replied *Her love for me is so strong, it caught fire*.

But the simplest pleasure of Tivoli is probably its greatest pleasure – to wander. Whether one saunters in sunshine by day or bulbshine by night, Tivoli makes the world seem a good place to be alive in. A stylish juxtaposition of simple pleasures like pantomime, food, colour, and MUSIC.

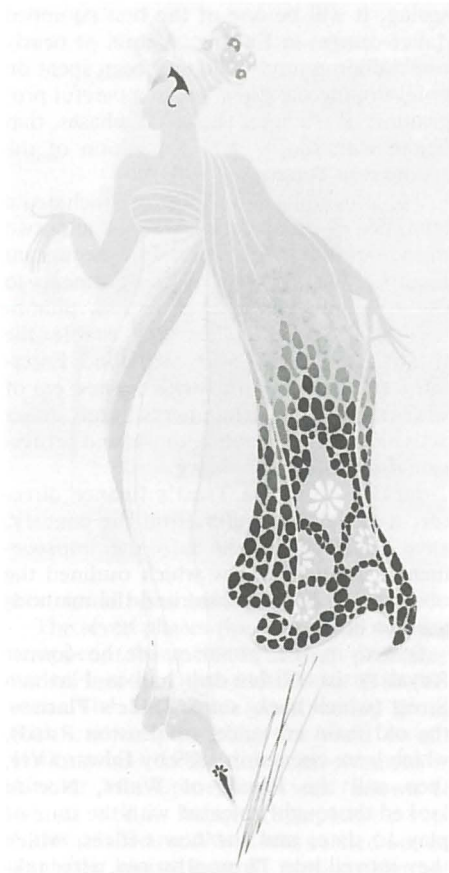
All the music is live: no gramophones and few microphones. Tivoli is an acoustic miracle. The various bands play away in the open air but the sounds do not interfere with each other. If you fancy the sort of songs that might be classified as eurovision, performed with all the feeling of a click track, you will be happy around tea time. But if, like me, you savour the kind of programme where a Bach siciliana is interpolated between a Waldeufel Waltz and a Lumbye galop, then you will be happy as the sun sets. Wander a few yards and there is a big band sound. Further along for jazz. Then folk. Its all there and its all live.

In Tivoli Arts & Entertainment are synonymous. I like Tivoli.

Autolycus

The Bidding is with you

The auction of selected theatre designs in aid of the Theatre Design Course took place in the Olivier Theatre on December 4, bringing the latest exhibition of works to an end. It began at Riverside Studios in early November and moved to the Lyttelton Foyer in the National Theatre on November 30. Among the works to go under Sotheby's hammer were designs by Hugh Casson, Gordon Craig, Erte, Jay Hutchinson Scott, Lesley Hurry, Derek Jarman, Ralph Koltai, John Piper, Patrick Procktor, Bill Tidy and Albert Rothenstein. The flurry of activity marks a significant renewal and sense of purpose for this valuable course. Perhaps one should even say, this invaluable course.



The Theatre Design Course started life as the Sadler's Wells Design Course, later becoming the design course at English National Opera. For 15 years it has trained ten young artists as designers in the theatre. Under the direction of Margaret Harris and Hayden Griffin it has provided practical experience and workshop opportunities for students of all backgrounds: from fine art, other branches of the visual arts, or simply theatre workers who wish to adapt their talents to theatre design. The year's work-in-centred around six projects, of which four are usually plays, one opera and one dance. Each project is under the direction of an experienced professional, who is 'aware of the current developments in the theatre'.

The course is now based at Riverside Studios, still under Margaret Harris' supervision, and invitations are now being sent out to private individuals and organisations, who might wish to support a student for a full year; or perhaps a term's course of lectures; or in exhibitions, design materials or furniture. Friends of the Theatre Design Course are being recruited as well as in-



dividuals who wish to be known as Benefactors to the course. The full range of the curriculum takes in costume design; various aspects of costume in relation to character; the history of the stage; lighting; interpretation of the texts; practical make-up; prop-making, construction and scene painting (in nearby workshops and studios). At least one production per student is expected (either at a drama school, TIE company or fringe theatre) which, though carried out on a limited budget, translates theory into practice — often the hardest part of a design brief.

A course leaflet states: 'Theatre designers must be creative artists whose work evolves out of a text or score. They must be skilled technicians and craftsmen, able to collaborate with many people involved in production. The final responsibility of the designer, is to create the visual realisation of the production.' To this end, each student works on an individual design for costumes and sets, making scale models, technical plans and working drawings, (practical) costume designs, and details and designs for the principal props, from conception right up to the final stage when they are ready to go into production.

Despite periodic funding difficulties, there is no question as to the course's unique role and surprising effectiveness.

Ask anyone who has been on it, taught its students or seen one of its exhibitions. It must continue. And long may it thrive in its new home: a fitting arts-centre, whose multi-discipline activities with a strong bias to the visual arts provides the perfect balance and outlook it requires.

Open plan for Council house

The Arts Council is, by the terms of its own charter, a stimulating, but frequently stormy place. And quite rightly so. Recently a fresher wind has been detected than the usual duststorms, squalls and general turbulence. It is a wind of change, no less.

A significant shift of emphasis has resulted: a greater awareness of activities in different departments, within the organisation; and a greater openness towards the outside world, too. It stems from a meeting held in the gracious surroundings of Leeds Castle, Kent, in May 1981, when senior officers and members of the Arts Council sat down to take a 'longer-term' look at their work than is normally possible at their regular monthly meetings. The outcome of Leeds Castle, was outlined by Dr Richard Hoggart, vice-chairman of the Arts Council in a report this autumn, which may be summarised as follows.



Dr Richard Hoggart vice-chairman of the Arts Council — 'not enough conversation across artistic boundaries'.

The Council was 'invited' to take a 'more synoptic' (ie general) view of the arts, to regard the various art forms as less rigidly confined to their own compartments than they often seem and so to look for greater collaboration among its own departments. Not that the Council is much different from society as a whole, he added, which tends to compartmentalise and pigeonhole for sheer

convenience. 'There is not enough conversation across artistic boundaries' he said. 'Each art form tends to inhabit its own private world, with its own language, *dramatis personae* and myths'.

As examples of divisive controversies, Dr Hoggart cited: 1) whether it was the Council's job to help artists or to encourage audiences; and 2) whether the Council should be more concerned with present-day art or with art of the past? The arguments vary widely, in every department, apparently.

Then there was the strict interpretation, or intention, of the founding charter. The aim of making art 'accessible' to the public, may once have meant accessibility in geographical terms, but now the Council was also concerned with accessibility in another sense, that of helping to make the arts more generally understood and appreciated. This implied breaking down the barriers of background and education, and, to do this, involved the Council in greater emphasis on education . . . in 'a wide sense'.

The vexed topic of whether the Council was becoming more interventionist, was also raised. No doubt financial pressures forced this role upon it, but 'informed choices' had to be made and promulgated, whatever the pressures. *Dirigisme*, on the French model, where a national policy for the arts is set out, should be avoided. But serious debate should be encouraged about the role of the arts in a democratic society, and about its funding. 'Both of these debates are undernourished at present' he commented.

Then Dr Hoggart moved into more controversial – and more widely misunderstood – areas.

'The Council could not escape the problem of assessing standards and making judgements' he said. 'No precise checklist on standards was possible; but neither was a total relativism intellectually creditable. It was necessary to build up a body of case-law. 'Assessments must be in written form, but would be acceptable only in the context of face-to-face continuing relationships with clients. There was every argument for explaining in writing why a grant is given as well as why it was withdrawn. *The whole process of assessment had to be more continuous, more open and more active.*' (Our italics – Ed.) Dr Hoggart expanded this theme, and added, tellingly: '*Clients must perceive the process as being fair, well-motivated and much more open than hitherto.*' 'Council reached the unanimous conclusion' Dr Hoggart said, '*that a greater degree of openness was desirable in the conduct of its work.*' As a rider, however, he indicated that, on balance and 'after lengthy argument', they were not in favour of open Council meetings, on the grounds that further frank discussion might be inhibited. Openness best came after that stage, said Hoggart, when options had been clarified. The possibility was considered of opening to the public certain advisory panel meetings.

The appointment of a new public relations officer, Barry Jackson, formerly with the Greater London Arts Association and North West Arts, was an important part of

implementing the new 'openness'. Papers reflecting aspects of various policy-making discussions will be published (some have already appeared this autumn – more will follow early next year) and it seems likely that a greater number of public forums will be held. The *Arts Council Bulletin*, the monthly news-sheet, is a prime medium for disseminating news of all kinds, but other methods are being examined.

If any readers wish to air views or suggestions on any aspect of Council policy or specialist activities (training technicians; bursaries; exhibitions; grants) the time is now ripe for committing them to paper and creating a pile on Barry Jackson's desk, at 105 Piccadilly, London W1. Avoid phone calls, please, he says.

To be . . . or to be Continued

Given the historic and contemporary fascination of the British with continuing stories and their hatred of endings, whether happy or sad ('don't let Little Nell die', they pleaded), it is surprising how few writers for the theatre proper have attempted to serialise their works. Novelists, yes, and writers for television by the Channelload, but playwrights no. And yet the revival of *characters* in plays seems a much more creative undertaking than the tired old business of revivals *qua se*, and much more likely to bind the loyalties of what are optimistically called 'regular theatre goers' (defined pessimistically in the NOP survey for the Society of West End Theatre as people who go to the theatre '3 times + a year'). The Greeks, of course, knew all about the to-be-continued syndrome. The use of roughly the same cast of characters by Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles, 'though it probably made it more difficult for an audience to remember whose play exactly they had come to see, made it infinitely easier for them to settle back and empathise with a comfortable feeling of "this is where we came in"'. Shakespeare ran more or less the same Romans through two plays, Jack Falstaff ('Banish him not,' the groundlings shouted) through three, and chaps like Glendower, one feels, through ten. When you're on to a good cast-list, don't knock it.

But, in recent years, and surely what's been happening on TV should have taught them – J.R. being just as potent a model for villainy as Simon Legree – playwrights seem to have missed the opportunity to go on cashing in on personifications that catch the public imagination. The exceptions that could prove the rule might be Alan Ayckbourne with his "Norman Conquest" trilogy and, perhaps, Harold Pinter whose *conversations*, play by play, seem to take up where they left off before. Generally, however, the point has been missed that if you've made a good play and specially if you've brought to life strongly defined characters – they can be secondary to the main plot, like Mrs Malaprop in "The Rivals" or Doolittle in "Pygmalion" or, indeed, like Ena Sharples in "Coronation Street" – the cast and the setting and the same kind of dialogue can turn up all over

again in your *next* play. Change the argument or the moral of the work as you wish; what the audience will like you for *most* is the opportunity you give them for meeting and recognising old friends again.

Ever mindful of its responsibility for keeping theatres and minds open, CUE has some suggestions for the consideration of playwrights and managements of differing heights of brow. Would the appropriate authors try these titles of forthcoming attractions on for size?

"Wolfgang in London" (a play about an infant prodigy and his tyrannical father); "The Mitford Women" (Nancy in Neuilly, Jessica in jeopardy etc); "Won't you come home, Bill Bailey?" (continuing the life of Barnum); "Grand Motel" (a perfect vehicle for Noelle Gordon's return to the stage).

Pirouette at the Place

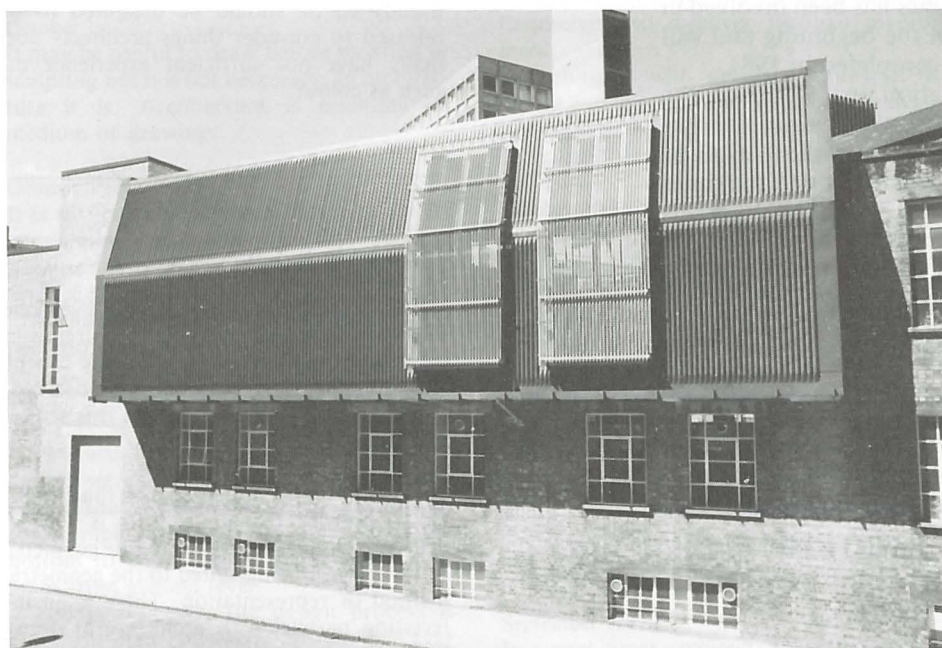
When the London Contemporary Dance Trust's home in Euston is completed next spring, it will be one of the best equipped dance-centres in Europe. A total of nearly one million pounds will have been spent on redeveloping the premises, in a careful programme of changes, tackled in phases, that began with the Trust's acquisition of the freehold in September 1976.

To date, conversion work has included a complex of nine dance studios and two music studios, a library and restaurant facilities. On completion, improvements to the building, lighting, ventilation, plumbing, safety regulations, will enable the theatre to operate with a Public Entertainment License, ushering in a new era of wide-ranging entertainments and other activities – from drama, music and professional rehearsals, to dance.

Jack Norton, the Trust's finance director, a genial commuter from the country, gave CUE an insight into the improvements, in an interview which outlined the obstacles to be overcome and the methods used to do so.

Seated in the premises of the former Royal Artists Rifles drill hall in Flaxham Street (which backs on to Duke's Place – the old main entrance, off Euston Road), which were opened in 1889 by Edward VII, then still the Prince of Wales, Norton looked thoroughly pleased with the state of play to date, and the new offices, which they moved into 18 months ago, after taking them over from London University, their former landlords. 'It has been every bit as difficult, in its way,' says Norton 'as the Barbican development, about which so much is being written. The difference lies in the complications involved in adapting parts of this old building for drastically changed uses.' One phase had to be scrapped almost entirely, owing to unforeseen structural weaknesses; and, after all, that's no way to build rehearsal studios, with dozens of dancers leaping in unison. There are sometimes constraints to which there are no economic answers; so it has proved here. On occasions, solutions were just too compromised to bear serious consideration. Other phases were exploratory, requiring a successful outcome before the

The Place will be one of the best-equipped dance centres in Europe when completed.



next could be embarked upon.

The seven phases (including one that was scrapped, owing to structural problems) varied in cost from £15,000 to £580,000, each. The MacAlpine construction group took over responsibility for most on-site work, thanks to the timely involvement of Alastair MacAlpine, who was 'known to us', as well as being a sympathetic supporter of the arts. Work was carried out on an at-cost basis. 'Indeed', explains Norton, 'no papers were signed at any stage – or will be. Quantity surveyors' reports and so forth were never finalised with anything more than a handshake'. But owing to good working relations with a sensible foreman, and the like, they cut all possible corners in order to save money. 'We took down existing doors and used them again' says Norton, beaming like a Boy Scout.

Where did the money come from? Coutts, their bankers, didn't rebuff them, exactly, but the deal they suggested wasn't quite right. So Norton approached the ICFC (Industrial and Commercial Finance and Credit), set up for small businesses by the clearing banks. Total property value, given its present usage, is worth in the region of three-quarters of a million

pounds, or a bit more, Norton estimates. This managed to underpin the cost of redevelopment. 'If we had to sell up today everything we own, touring lightboard, equipment, everything . . .' he calculates, 'I tell my bank we'd pay our bills and be left with around half a million in hand, tomorrow'.

Parenthetically, Jack Norton tells a delightful story about how they came to receive a £105,000 grant under the Urban Aid programme from the Department of the Environment. After applying earlier for a grant to Camden, the local council, they struck lucky third time around. Paring the grant request right down to basics, to improve the chances of acceptance (these are harsh financial times, he said to himself), he put in for £85,000. One of his board of trustees, who sits on Camden Council, was permitted to squeeze this request on to the year's DOE Urban Aid suggestion list, numbered in order of importance, from one to ten. Norton's number was 11 – out of ten. It was therefore, a non-recommendation, in effect: but it was the best they could wangle. Imagine Norton's amazement when he got a note saying he'd been allowed not £85,000, but £105,000!

Someone, somewhere, hadn't gone along with Camden's order of priorities (to put it politely) on the vital list of 'worthwhile' projects locally, deserving Whitehall support. Or could it have been a deliberate snub? Camden, at the time, were suing Michael Heseltine's department (DOE) over another matter: could this have been wilful bureaucratic tit-for-tat, as large as life? Well, Norton didn't stop to argue: he spent the money instead. In exchange for improving his cultural facilities for the benefit of the neighbourhood, Camden will be offered more participation and local involvement in the finished building than was possible before. So everyone's quits. The Place will serve to complement the nearby Shaw Theatre, which plays host to various visiting companies and performers, in a more traditional pros arch setting.

The Place will continue to offer 250 seat-capacity, but with variegated seating arrangements: horseshoe shaped, for thrust stage, and 'U' shaped. Acoustics will permit music as well as speech, for drama. The 50ft x 30ft performing space, with its sprung oak floor, will not be altered. A computer board for lighting and improved sound facilities will be added, though, by the time the theatre opens next September. Seating could be upgraded by a firm offering to supply and install in exchange for permanent crediting of the company name (they're open to bartering: it is a very noticeable item – unlike say, improved plumbing, which is where so much of improvement grants must first go, to meet regulations.)

So the finished theatre will serve as a full-time commercial, small-scale experimental venue all year round, save for the few weeks of periodic workshops and school performances. Even with Ballet Rambert using some of the Trust's studio space, as at present, the students who formerly used the theatre, now use the studio-space for their work. The programme for an average year could look like this:

London Contemporary Dance Theatre performing on the road for at least 20 weeks a year, perhaps 24. Plus 4 weeks at Sadler's Wells; and another 4 weeks at The Place, with smaller productions. The remainder of the company's year will be taken up with rehearsals and holidays.

As for the theatre itself, it will be in use for some 35 weeks; the rest will be outside lets, at individually agreed rates. Profitable lets are clearly preferable, but preference could be given to hirers for music, in order to foster links that may contribute to their dance programme.

By the time Jack Norton comes to select a franchise applicant for the catering – wine bar, restaurant, or whatever they decide – The Place could begin to revolutionise its corner of the theatre market in London. Names such as Twyla Tharp and others, who started out at The Place, before going on to the Wells and elsewhere, have already benefitted. The pioneering role can only be strengthened in future, and built upon. There can be little doubt that they've got what it takes.

Autolycus columns contributed by Anthony Pugh and Anthony McCall

The Riverside

THE ARTIST'S STORY

A recent edition of CUE featured the redevelopment scheme for the Riverside Studios Arts Centre in Hammersmith. The project has a number of unique features not the least being the presence of an artist on the design team.

The usual practice, of course, is for an artist to be involved, if at all, at the end of an architectural scheme, illustrating the designs of the architect or adorning the building with an art work. This limited and traditional contribution is decidedly not the case at Riverside. The artist Gareth Jones has been involved in all aspects of the scheme from the beginning and will continue until the building is completed in 1984.

It was his initial collaboration in 1979 with the architect Will Alsop which forms the basis of the current scheme. Two major awards from the A.C.G.B. have sustained Jones's involvement through the times when it was impossible to predict the full extent of his worth and the Arts Council are to be commended for backing their judgement that an artist's role is not limited by traditional precedent. The fact that the collaboration is successful and the scheme about to come to fruition amply justifies their risk.

Throughout Jones has kept a diary of his observations on the scheme, attitudes to drawing and the behaviour of the collaborators. This will be given in full in a lecture at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in February 1982. There follow some extracts.

COLLABORATION

September 1st

Today I began to consider how colour might be used in the scheme, especially how it affects the light and mood of the place. Whereas there has been a certain amount of questioning of my involvement in the form of the building, my role as colourist is received almost enthusiastically. The pre-conception exists that form is the architects domain and colour the artist's. It is something I question strongly because it reinforces role playing and thus undermines the collaboration and its free exchanges.

September 2nd

Now that I am working in another context there is a freedom to use any artistic style. Every artist feels constrained by the concept of originality and makes an effort to avoid a multitude of styles or similarity to another artist's work, but the context of architecture releases me from these considerations. I am a stranger and can assume any identity I please. In architecture everything artistic is original because it is new.

September 4th

It has become clear that I have entered another art form and that the collaboration is not a balanced entity. The hard fact is that the architect has the means to employ the artist but not *vice versa*. Therefore the architect is always 'at home'.

I am continually in the position of asking questions of the architects and they only find out about art by the nature of my questions on architecture.

October 13th

Architectural practice has provided me with a renaissance context, something I find suited to the broad range of my own work. In practice you are called upon to provide everything from structure to signs and from colour to spatial layout. These diverse skills so often frowned on by the art establishment have an outlet of expression here.

October 16th

Having made a considerable number of gauches 'playing' with colour, ie having no deliberate or intended use in the scheme, I am surprised how appropriate the paintings are when considering specific aspects of the scheme. When the application is 'unforced'

as it is here I know that my role in the practice is right. My work is relevant and effective without losing its identity in problem solving.

October 30th

Will and I discussed the collaboration this morning. He is concerned that in designing the art gallery I have come close to doing his job. I agree, but we differ in our interpretation of this fact. He regards it as usurping his role whilst I see it as proof the collaboration is working.

There is no doubt that the pressures and deadlines have forced us, to some extent, to revert to type. (In this instance, however, Will is simply role playing.) If the gallery I have designed is good then it really does not matter who is responsible and there is no discussion that it is other than good. Instead of worrying that he is not responsible for the form and structure as an architect usually is, he should be delighted to be released to consider things architects normally have not sufficient experience of, such as colour.

DRAWING

August 10th

When you take a photograph everyone knows it is a record of something already in existence, but in a drawing no one can be sure whether it is imagined or observed. Drawings are always original in this sense.

August 15th

Leger only chose subject matter that would fit his drawing technique. That is why he drew urban and industrial life, the geometry of the subject being suited to the geometric method of representation. There is an interesting parallel with architectural drawings. The predominant use of mechanical pens in conjunction with rulers and mechanical curves means you can only draw a limited type of image.

August 18th

Architects either cannot draw natural form or they regard it as unimportant. People, trees, etc., when they appear in drawings are always ciphers.

August 24th

In the midst of a drawing I drew an ink line around a shape enclosing it. It looked exactly right. Then as I inked in the surrounding area the shape got smaller. The line had been 'captured' by the ink surround; it was part of the surround not the shape. The status of line is fascinating. I am reminded that in football the line belongs to the surround whilst in rugby it is part of the field of play.

September 8th

I have been told that architects' drawings are accumulative in effect, ie it may take several drawings for an architect to represent what he wants. The artist, on the other hand, will attempt to do what he wants within one drawing. It is this that leads to

the concept of uniqueness in art.

Architects view the form and content of their drawings as separate. The idea/design after all will become a building; it will be transferred from one medium to another. Most artists have no need to deal with this issue, their work is an end in itself. The collaboration, however, has forced me to recognise that if I am to be seen to effect the final product I must also consider my drawings as transferable in content.

September 28th

Architecture is more represented by drawings than actual buildings; there are drawings of schemes unbuilt as well as those accomplished. Although drawings are more fragile and ephemeral they often prove more durable. Buildings are demolished to make way for the new; drawings have no such pressure placed upon them.

October 1st

It may be useful to draw before painting or sculpting but it is not necessary. In architecture it is. Architecture is essentially a medium of drawing.

October 10th

It is difficult not to draw things that your imagination tells you are exciting just because of some regulation or lack of finance to implement it.

Architecture is the difference between expectation and fulfilment.

October 14th

The success of the classical architecture of Greece was largely due to the fact that their designs were relative to perception. It is well known that the columns of the Parthenon, for example, are thicker at the top than the bottom to allow for perspective diminishment from ground level.

Today, however, the design process is based on plan and elevation. No one ever sees a plan view and elevations give a false impression of how the building will appear. Hence, perceptual subtleties and adjustments are given no place in the design and the architecture suffers accordingly.

October 21st

Looking at some of my old sketch books this evening I was struck by how many of my drawings included buildings. Most drawings contained a variety of subject

matter, people, landscape and buildings. Then I drew buildings unselfconsciously. Views are indiscriminate, they enjoin the artist with the world and it would have been natural to have worked with an architect at this time.

The struggle in the visual arts, however, to rid themselves of representation has led to an increasing concern with categories. The 'achievement' of abstract art is to separate the painter and sculptor from the other arts and from 'the world'. Collaboration becomes a wilful act.

The architect can never be separate. Architecture is unavoidably linked with everything else.

October 25th

The organizational aspect of architecture — telling other people what to do, though not beyond the ability of artists is probably antithetical to them. They need to do things themselves, to discover through involvement.

Architects will delegate drawings to others and assume to know about the drawing without having to do it. The medium therefore loses its importance.

October 30th

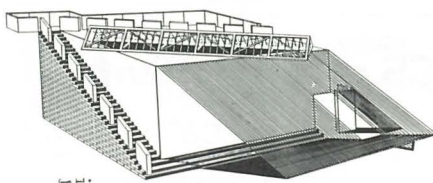
Given recent disappointments, especially the demise of the planned art gallery because of budgetary constraints, it is tempting simply to open the door and enter the drawing; to share its existence since it cannot share yours.

Might the artist be the 'conscience' of the practice? Showing what is best rather than what is simply affordable.

STRUCTURE AND FORM

September 3rd

In recent times architects have had more a sense of structure than form. For example,



they do not consider how a building grows upwards from the ground but how to achieve its verticality structurally. It is no accident therefore that structure has been 'elevated' to a style.

Structuralism is the abstraction of architecture. In the same way as abstraction in art alienated the public because it was accessible only to the initiated (artists and critic) so structure, or rather an overriding interest in structure, is limited to architectural cognescence. Thus public disaffection stems from a sense of exclusion.

Structure is a 'hard' concept, a thing in itself, a system; form is relative to light and shade. Buildings used to be designed in light and shade and this gave them their relationship to perception. Now that is gone, there is no light in architects drawings and shade expressed as tone obscures structure.

September 28th

A building can be structurally sound and formally weak.

November 14th

The fact that architects never actually make anything is worrying. Their understanding of form is theoretical. Perhaps that is why they rely so heavily on structure in their design.

MISCELLANEOUS

October 9th

Since I began to write about architecture the observations have come thick and fast. The reason was so obvious at first I missed it.

Architecture is all around you, it is unavoidably a constant visual reference. What a contrast to the state of affairs in sculpting. There is so little actual reference that one is forced into theoretical discussion.

October 28th

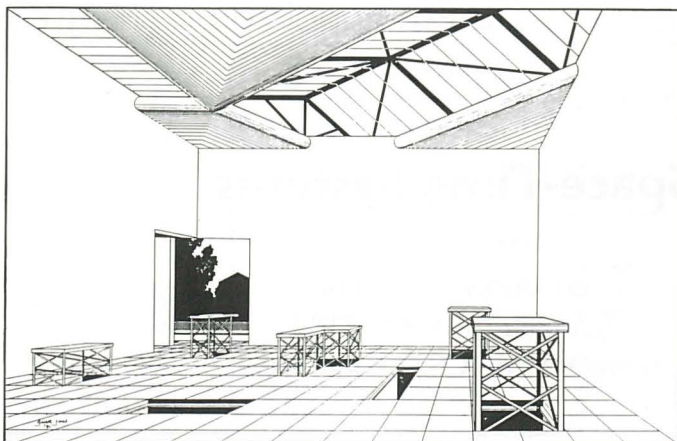
Perhaps the only alternative to aesthetics is to record. This is where time or rather durability establishes the worth of something over and above any value judgment. Anything which has held its place in the world over a considerable period of time has earned its worth. It has survived or been allowed to exist, an affirmative if implicit comment on its value.

November 6th

There is an old movie in which a man is shown by his guardian angel what would have happened to his home town if he had not existed. What he sees is something far worse.

It would be lovely if life was like that and I could know (and show others) what would have happened if I had not worked on the Riverside Scheme; what it would have been like without an artist's influence. I will never be able to prove my worth conclusively and I cannot be sure that it would have been worse without me. It would have been different and I must assume that my influence will be for the better.

A drawing by Gareth Jones for a projected art gallery in the Riverside development.





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REIDing SHELF

Popular Drama is the goal, the concept, the hope – perhaps even the illusion – that unites every theatre manager whether motivated by profit or some more fragile ethic. A drama that is popular implies a full house and no theatre thrives on empty seats. But what constitutes popular drama?

In 1977 a Canterbury conference of the University of Kent set out to examine some aspects of popular entertainment and now Cambridge University Press – in a commendable venture far removed from any concept of popular publishing – have printed selected papers from the proceedings, in a book called **PERFORMANCE AND POLITICS IN POPULAR DRAMA**.

The conference was subtitled “a festival and an enquiry” because it included observations of a performance by Strathclyde Group and a rehearsal by Joint Stock. Both companies subsequently joined in discussion with the conferring audience and the book includes an edited transcript.

If any conclusions were reached, they do not leap from the page. There is a summing up chapter by a Lecturer in English and American Literature, Bernard Sharratt, whose use of the English language indicates that he has little respect for the written word as a means of popular communication: if phrases like *experiential obverse* fall easily upon your ears, then Sharratt is your man. But if you are interested in a language more fundamental – even as basic as the language of popular theatre – still pick up this book for it includes a lot of good stuff for the theatrical think tank.

The quality of essays is somewhat uneven: just like the quality of papers at any conference. Perhaps the best chapters are the ones on the more factual subjects. The last great British popular theatre was Victorian and there is an informative chapter by Derek Forbes on Water Drama where we can read details of aquatic spectacles like Clarkson Stanfield's Drury Lane *Cataract of the Ganges* with its exit on horseback up an inclined cascade with fire raging all around. At Sadler's Wells, the stage tank had side branches running off-stage in the bays between the wing flats. This enabled the model boats to make an entrance with the aid of the water boys. (This watery stage crew were issued with thick duffel trousers and received a glass of brandy before and after immersion. The stage doorkeeper has left us a memoir: “Full houses were the reward of having a leaden tank full of putrid water – for it was not renewed but once in two months.”)

The London stage's treatment of the Crimean war is discussed: a function of popular theatre that was overtaken first by the newsreel and now by the television correspondent. There is a reconstruction of popular theatre in Victorian Birmingham

and David Meyer reminds us of the importance of music in popular melodrama.

This gives a bridge to today's popular theatre: there is a strong musical element in much of the ‘fringe’ theatre that has grown up as an ‘alternative’ to more formal mainstream drama. But this alternative theatre tends to be a superimposed popular theatre, developed from an intellectual assessment of what a popular theatre should be – whereas the Georgian and the Victorian popular theatres surely arose from an audience demand imposed by the box office vote.

There is material on Mummers, Meyerhold, Eisenstein, Piscator, American Agitprop and French melodrama of the 19th century Boulevard and 20th century Front Populaire. There is a discourse on the disaster movies of the seventies (only the stars survive) and at the end of the book we reach the real popular drama of today: Television.

A lot of meat in this book. It could become essential reading for drama students – especially as it will be a happy hunting ground for those who set examination questions: the following statement is surely ripe for essay treatment. ‘*The Vic*’ was a great proletarian theatre in the days before it was anaesthetised by the *Coffee Taverns and Lilian Bayliss*.

Popular Theatre is part of the subtitle of John McGrath's **A GOOD NIGHT OUT**, a title that conveys much of the essence of what a popular theatre must be about. The full subtitle is *Popular Theatre: Audience, Class and Form*. McGrath is obsessed with “class” which he views with all the simplicity of vision of a politician of either extremity. I wonder if he has read Jilly Cooper on the subject: her book *Class* is very perceptive yet to read it is to experience the literary equivalent of having “a good night out”.

Yes, the book is a polemic. It has to be.

For it is a report from a battlefield. A battle to establish a new kind of theatre. To fight, you have to have an enemy; and to win, you must not allow yourself a single tiny doubt about that enemy's villainy. McGrath's book will be a key source book for future reassessment of the “alternative fringe” that exploded across the British theatre scene of the seventies.

Unlike the essayists in “Performance and Politics in Popular Drama”, John McGrath is not an academic observer. His analysis is from within. His theatrical apprenticeship is impeccable, if narrow: Royal Court dramaturg reacting against that stage's ideals – reacting with the inevitability of one generation responding to the immediately preceding generation. Via Liverpool Everyman to the foundation of 7:84 whose success had both stimulated his writing and been dependent upon it.

A Good Night Out is a sextet of Cambridge lectures given by McGrath during a sabbatical at the end of the first decade of 7:84. There is some routine bashing of mainstream theatre (the lectures were given just before alternative theatre was embraced by London's West End) and the Royal Court is dismissed as “a theatrical technique for turning authentic working-class experience into satisfying thrills for the bourgeoisie”.

This is all part of the reaction that is an inevitable part of the creative process. The importance of this book is that John McGrath has not only recorded a genuine evocation of the politically oriented alternative theatre of the seventies, but he has revealed the polemic thinking that was part of its creation.

What will the next reaction be? Will it create a theatre whose popularity will bring all classes swarming into theatres as they did in Georgian and Victorian times?

Administration has become a major arts growth area, and arts administration has

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range of professionals as authors but was aimed at amateurs. By 1936 the separate articles, greatly enlarged plus much new material, were published as *Stage Lighting Principles and Practice*. I had something to do with this book in two ways. Firstly, Aldred was an engineer and believed that figures should be checked. The best place to do this was in the new Strand Electric demonstration theatre in Floral Street, of which I was the sole custodian and attendant. The second role for me was as inventor of the Light Console which was at the time in the theatre all polished and brand new from Compton's. Strand had not delivered (or completed) the dimmer bank, so nothing worked but no author of a new book dare neglect it. Thus it was that I found myself sitting alongside the great Harold Ridge on the console bench and explaining what it *would* do and how.

The young inventor holding forth confidently had no difficulty in convincing Ridge of the merits of the wonder machine. Every scrap of that loquacious confidence was extinguished two hours later in the Garrick – his first lunch in the awesome aura of a London club!

The three pages devoted to the invention begin "This Light Console is superior to any system that has been invented hitherto and is likely to hold the field for many years to come." And so on plus some of my very own words. And *nothing* had been demonstrated to work as yet. Such are the gambles that plague that author who would be up to date in a technical field. The console received its press launch in June 1935 and the book is dated 1936. So allowing for the slow process of book production the interview must have taken place in 1934 – certainly the four dials above the keyboards, in the photograph Pitmans used, are dummies painted-in.

It is a fact that a bit of lightning lighting invention took place at that interview long, long ago. Having heard the whole spiel, Ridge turned to me and asked how did one find out the level of individual dimmers. This had not been provided for. There were the four 'setters' (hence the four dials) to allow dropping-off at levels when setting from zero in a blackout or behind the tabs (I always intended to be out-front) but all the rest was intended to be judged by eye. If it looked right, it was right! However, if the great man wanted it, then individual dimmer readings there *had* to be. Instantly, I replied to the effect that you press the particular dimmer stopkey to second touch and read the result on one of the master dials.

That original Compton relay bore those hastily vamped-up extra contacts right up to its untimely end, accidentally at the hands of the refuse collector, just ten years ago. This brainwave was to stay right through the electro-mechanical era and indeed the germ remains in the centre push of the channel rockers on my last control – the DDM of 1972 at Stratford-upon-Avon.

During the war Harold Downs asked Harold Ridge to bring his old *Theatre and Stage* material up to date for an edition conceived as two fat volumes. In which case all the stage lighting would come together as one section instead of as a series of four-

page instalments. Ridge having been out of theatre for some years referred Downs to me. This could not have come at a better time. Condemned to a strict sanatorium regime at Midhurst extending uncertainly into infinity or limbo, here was something which could be done, and was, entirely from bed. The result was aimed wholly at amateur theatre. So far so good, but I had thought for some time of writing a comprehensive book and here was a nucleus to expand and better still, a publisher who might not need much persuasion.

On the sixth day of August 1946 a contract was signed for a work "entitled *Stage Lighting*" and with it went a small fortune – a £50 advance "on receipt and approval of the MS." The MS, diagrams and drawings were nearly complete when early in 1947 Pitmans published *The Technique of Stage Lighting* by R. Gillespie Williams and I thought my own book was sunk. Surely they would not run to two books on stage lighting. Pitmans would not realise that in Williams they had got hold of someone who *always* saw stage lighting in terms of colour changes! However, after some months the galleys began arriving, then the page proofs and there was the index to do. I am a great believer in a comprehensive index but they are a difficult job – especially in bed with an enormous window wide open to allow the wind to blow everything about. I stress the bed regime in this context because it does mean that the bulk of the book *Stage Lighting*, which was ultimately published in 1950, was written straight out of my head without any books of reference to hand or other means of checking anything. The delay caused by the Williams book turned out to be an advantage because I was able to substitute some last minute photographs of dimmer banks, light consoles not yet installed and add a two-page appendix to describe "Recent Progress". The picture of Electronic-Preset here was of the very first prototype with hand-made dimmer levers, and the 216-way Drury Lane Light Console was a scale model in wood and plaster made for me by my brother.

By the time the second edition came out in 1955 these things were facts. There were many more installations to photograph and it is these rather than large changes in the text which is the main feature. Working in type-metal imposed disciplines unknown in these days of computer setting and word-processors. Changes buried in the text had to be matched exactly in the existing space and the ends of chapters were happier areas for revision. Above all pagination must not be upset, due to the mass revision of the index this might entail. Television, although rating two minor entries in both editions thus far, secures a proper place in my pages in 1957. The happy days when Strand Electric was master in both theatre control and television control had begun. One more make do and mend edition follows, in 1961 I think, as I have no copy but remember putting the photograph of a 1961 C.D. console at Miskolc Hungary in it: though there must have been a few other changes as well. It was now time for a major re-write but being very busy indeed, the 'old' book got viewed as a youthful esprit best buried.

Goaded on by Percy Corry who said it was now or never and with the late 'B' Bear to help with proof reading and the index, the job was done fairly easily.

This edition of 1968 appeared under the new title of *The Art of Stage Lighting* and is, perhaps, my favourite of the whole series. It is a real book of the right size for any bookshelf and except in one respect makes a good comprehensive survey of what was then the technique of stage lighting, how it got there and where it was about to go. Solid state thyristor dimmer systems were well established, electro-mechanical ones on the way out and instant dimmer memory had *just* made its entry on the scene. There was the usual difficulty, neither my two (WHZ and IDM) nor Thorn's (Q-File) were anything but early prototypes. They were going far, obviously, but they had not really started as yet. I was very cagey about Q-File's numerical call-up, being a firm believer in my individual rocker tablet per channel, and felt it unlikely theatre would take to it! The weakness of this edition was the scanty treatment of what Richard Pilbrow called the multi-lantern complexity, the massed ranks of spotlights which started here with Joe Davis's versions for H. M. Tennant of the American lighting layouts for shows like *Death of a Salesman* (1949). Large layouts I did envisage, otherwise why a Light Console in the thirties suitable for 200 or so channels when sixty or so was considered large. I think it must be an instinctive distaste for all that *special* rigging and expensive labour for the lighting of *one* production only. Another instinct at work may be the original writing for amateurs who had little experience and money to deploy. Shades of my own amateur days and the unwritten law of the old Strand Electric: Is it necessary? If it is, then don't pay anyone to do it if you can possibly do it yourself! Another foible was the relatively large amount of space given over, in a book of stage lighting, to theatre architecture. Mind you, Ridge's own 1928 book had a chapter on "Design of the Theatre" and another on "The Next Theatre?" examining the Bel Geddes project.

What was a good idea in my 1968 edition, was the chapter headed "Equipment in Common Use". This enabled equipment of my own time, some of which might survive a long while yet, to be lumped together with that at any moment to become obsolete and the very latest about to be launched. However, by the time the 1976 edition came out the pace of equipment turnover had hotted-up so much that David Adams was right in declaring, in a review somewhere, the "in Common Use" part to be misleading. This I neatly corrected in the 1980 edition by changing the title of the chapter to "Equipment Around and About". The stuff simply *has* to survive; in museum store or hanging over the stage, the locus is immaterial. The amateur theatre is proving a great help in conservation. In some quarters there is a reaction against installing the 'latest' – as it is bound to be out of date in four years. Elderly, durable discards from professional theatres (which have had to succumb to the pressures of

marketing) are cherished, reassembled with skill and pleasure to be put back to work for many years yet in their own theatres. For example, two C.D. consoles complete with their electro-mechanical dimmer banks are back on active service in amateur theatres in Nottingham and Birmingham.

The 1976 job involved a great amount of revision and new material. The age of numerical call-up had taken over and computers (real ones not glib media misnomers) had made their entrance trailing entrancing software possibilities. As usual this author proceeded within the rigid disciplines of type-metal. Having completed the task and sent it off, Pitmans announced that they were changing the format and making a much bigger book of it – almost a coffee table job. Had I have known I could have allowed myself a much freer hand to follow the logic of the text rather than of the type. There was one aspect in which I was more free, I was no longer alone. In 1970 Studio Vista had published *Stage Lighting* by Richard Pilbrow. Here at last was the authentic voice of the multi-lantern complexity, a real expert from the world of large special lighting layouts for profes-

sional productions. No longer need I feel guilty at having given that subject such scant treatment. Very fortunately as it happened; because even without taking up space to detail that, it turned out that my material had to be cut. What should come out? Do without a chapter on architecture? Certainly not; out came one of the two oldest chapters in the book – “Colour Music”. This and the other one “Colour” had remained virtually unchanged from the very first and investigation, which I have never carried out, might well show some other chunks of original text still surviving.

In 1979 Pilbrow's second edition came out and needless to say I enjoyed looking to see how he had in his turn tackled the problem of up-dating. And Francis Reid tells me that he is at the same task with his *Stage Lighting Handbook* (1976). With *The Art of Stage Lighting* 1980 my tale of a standard work comes up to date. When was it really born? How much major and minor surgery has it undergone through its long life? Above all; how many authors has it really had? For not only has equipment changed during that time but so have I.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I never write to the papers!

But I am breaking this rule to say how totally I agree with your leading article in the September/October issue in which the future of the ABTT Trade Fair is discussed.

For years I have been shouting in the wilderness that the ABTT Trade Fair should be linked to an overseas visitors' conference, thinking I was the only person in the world who held these views – now I find a learned journal agrees with me – wonderful!

Yours truly

RICHARD M. HARRIS
Manager
Commercial Lighting Division
Rank Strand,
Brentford, Middlesex

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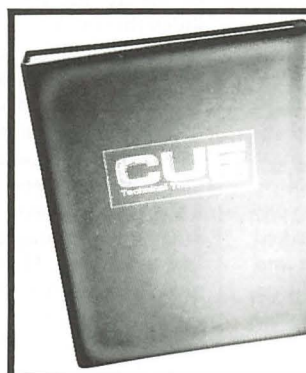
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Lighting Design Education: A Time for Change

LIGHT EDUCATION

Twentytwo leaders in American lighting held a conference at Purdue University to discuss Training of Lighting Designers (T.O.L.D.). The group included lighting design professors from the theatre departments of several universities, representatives of Strand and Kliegl, specialists in film, TV and architectural lighting, and the owner of Lighting Dimensions Magazine. They produced the statement opposite which appeared in the Journal of the United States Institute for Theatre Technology.

The statement was produced on January 11th 1981 and in the first six months or so it was endorsed by:

American Society of Lighting Directors, North Hollywood

American Theatre Association, Washington, D.C.

International Association of Lighting Designers, NYC

Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, NYC

Professional Entertainment Production Society, Los Angeles

Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, NYC

U.S. Institute for Theatre Technology, NYC

United Scenic Artists, L.U. 350, Chicago

University/Resident Theatre Association, Washington, D.C.

General Electric Lighting Institute, Cleveland, Ohio.

The only significant body that appears to be missing from this list is Local 829 of United Scenic Artists — the union of the Broadway lighting designers.

What do our readers think?

Is a theatre lighting designer

(a) a lighting designer who specialises in theatre
or (b) a theatre person who specialises in light?

Is the TOLD Statement a little remote from the reality of lighting a show?

What do YOU think?

"It is necessary to improve educational programs for lighting design. Design complexities and energy constraints require special instruction with a broader foundation than present curricula provide. Lighting design education should cross departmental lines.

Lighting design encompasses esthetics, perception, illuminating engineering and specific technical expertise. These are used to reinforce project goals. Improvement lighting design education must fulfill the needs of the designer and those served.

Design for the arts, architecture, industry and other applications requires a thorough understanding of the psychological, psychophysical and physical aspects of lighting. The characteristics of human, photographic, and photo-electric receptors must be addressed.

Properly trained people are readily employable but job entry requirements are significantly more stringent than in the past. Educators must respond.

Lighting design is the process of creatively using the qualities and functions of lighting to affect people, objects and space. The qualities of lighting are intensity, form, color and movement. The functions of lighting are visibility, mood/atmosphere, composition and motivation. Study should include at least a fundamental understanding of the following

Design Technique and Application:

color, light sources; photometrics; brightness relationships. Introduction to, and evaluation of, typical lighting applications. Drafting and visualization.

Human Responses to Light:

sight; esthetics; behavior; photobiology.

Electrical Control and Distribution

Optical Control and Distribution

Lighting Equipment Types and Application

Specialized Topics:

Conservation of energy and materials; safety codes and regulations; history; photographic and photo-electric reproduction technology.

Today's instruction in specialized areas — theatre, communications (TV & film), interior design, architectural and engineering departments — is no longer sufficiently broadly inclusive for the actual needs of the industry nor for the needs of graduates seeking employment."

Georgian Richmond

Francis Reid hits the tourist trail to Yorkshire where Richmond's Georgian Theatre and Museum is surely Britain's leading historic theatre monument for both specialist and non-specialist tourists.

My introduction to the theatrical magic of Richmond came with my 1955 discovery of a secondhand copy of Richard Southern's *The Georgian Playhouse*. I was no stranger to the charms of that Yorkshire market town. In 1952/53 I had been processed by that extraordinary sausage machine in Catterick which undertook the conversion of the nation's youth into soldiery in but four weeks and into military radio mechanics in a further twenty. Richmond was the railhead for Catterick's sprawling garrison. It also represented civilisation and so I sauntered its alleys, drank in its bars, and gazed into its rivers dreaming of theatregoing past and theatre career yet to come – knowing nothing of the historic theatre that I must have passed and re-passed in my wanderings around the alleys of that compact town.

In 1957 I visited Richmond with "Opera for All" to play in a school. This was before the restoration but we were able to visit the hibernating theatre. I can still recall the tingle of my first experience of Georgian theatre. To contact the stage from a courtyard side gallery and to embrace the house from a proscenium door!

Strangely perhaps – but perhaps not so strange to those versed in the ways of theatre life – I never quite contrived to visit Richmond from that day until this summer.

Richmond's Georgian Theatre is now firmly established on the Tourist Trail and its visitors include not just theatric tourists but many uncommitted people (I nearly wrote normal people) who have never hitherto given much thought to the finer excitements of theatre architecture. One of the pleasures of my visit was to note the lit-up eyes of people to whom it would never occur that Matcham and Phipps might be anything other than an old established firm of solicitors or wine merchants. (And that, whereas Izenour might perhaps not have been the distinguished general who became President, Mackintosh was certainly a chap who boiled sweets.)

The theatre and its museum are now open daily from 1st May to 30th September from 2.30 until 5.30 plus Saturday and bank holiday Mondays from 10.30 until 1.30 (outside this tourist season: by arrangement).

The restored theatre was opened in 1963 and its museum was added in 1979. This is not a general theatre museum but a specialised display of the history of one theatre. It is well laid out and it is well captioned – not just in English but with French and German translations alongside. The museum galleries lead the visitor through the history of the theatre from its

opening by Samuel Butler in 1788 (22 years after Bristol and 31 years before Bury – our other two extant working Georgian theatres) through its various vicissitudes until its rebirth in our own time.

We learn of Samuel Butler's circuit including the theatres that he built in Harrogate, Kendal, Ripon, Northallerton and Beverley as well as Richmond – with Whitby and Kendal as winter quarters in alternate years. A rugged circuit: consider the journey across the Pennines from Kendal to Northallerton which some of the players are known to have *walked* in two days. There is correspondence from Butler to the Mayor of Richmond over leasing details, and engravings of Butler's Richmond contemporaries including Frances L'Anson (the Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill) and Jane Wallis who went on to achieve considerable national acclaim at Covent Garden and Bath.

Kean's snuff box is among the artefacts that remind us that the great man, when a seventeen year old named Carey, joined Butler's company in 1808 as a singer of comic songs and "walking gentleman harlequin" at fifteen shillings per week. He returned in 1819 (at raised prices) and it is said that he refused his fee out of gratitude for Butler who had died in 1812, leaving the theatre under the management of his widow. In 1829 he played once again but by this time he was in decline and could not even fill the house at normal prices.

Playbills lead us to a gallery displaying the oldest surviving painted scenery in Britain, dating from 1836. The official guide book reports that this has been lent, in perpetuity and at Richard Southern's request, by the Society of Theatrical Craftsmen and Designers. This is a body new to me. I must attempt to find them: they are not the organisation set up in the mid-seventies by the removal of the word "lighting" from the Society of British Theatre Lighting Designers. This scenery was included in that marvellous Hayward Gallery exhibition of 1975 from whose catalogue we glean

In 1818, George Rivers Higgins, an actor and scene painter in a travelling company of players, settled in Royston and founded a decorator's business. He became a leading light of the local Dramatic Society and was assisted and succeeded in his business by William Hinkins who had been one of His Majesty's Servants in Norwich. By 1866 the firm of Hinkins had a large stock of stage scenery which was hired out, the nucleus of the stock supposedly being brought to Royston by Higgins in 1818.



An inventory of 1881 lists five drop scenes, three of which still exist. On the back of "The Woodland Scene" is painted a "Blue Drawing Room with Fire", panelling and a picture over the fireplace. The flats exhibited were listed in the inventory as *eight trees*. This set has been frequently retouched in the last one hundred and fifty years and there are even signs that one width of canvas of the three piece backcloth has been replaced above the second seam. The canvas of the flats appears to be original. Allowing for retouching this is the oldest scenery surviving in Britain.

The woodland scenery is now displayed in a room with a scaled down replica of a Georgian stage and is viewed under ambient lighting.

The Butler family connection ended in 1830 and the theatre was used infrequently by visiting companies during the general period of theatre decline until 1848 when the pit was floored over and the building survived a period of usage as wine vaults, auction room, corn chandlers and salvage depot. There are photographs of the latter years of this phase when the remaining theatre furnishings even survived a wartime fire of salvaged newsprint.

The third gallery is devoted to the restoration. The rediscovery of the theatre

started with a clean-up for some occasional performances in 1943/44 including a commemoration of the enfranchisement of the town by the second Earl of Richmond in 1093. These performances were given with the pit still floored over. Indeed the Sunday Times of 25th July 1943 declared *There is no raised stage, the action takes place on the floor of the auditorium*. An understandable mistake, for it was to take some expert research to determine that the wine cellars had been an unrecorded modification following the cessation of stage performances in the mid-nineteenth century.

The principal detective was Richard Southern and we can follow his illustrated account in the official guide book. Had this really been a theatre without a raised stage?

The cellar was so solid, so separate from the theatre above, and seemed so integral a part of the building, with the crown of the vaults coming so close under the floor of the theatre, that the case for the theatre being a freak, with no raised stage, seemed proved.

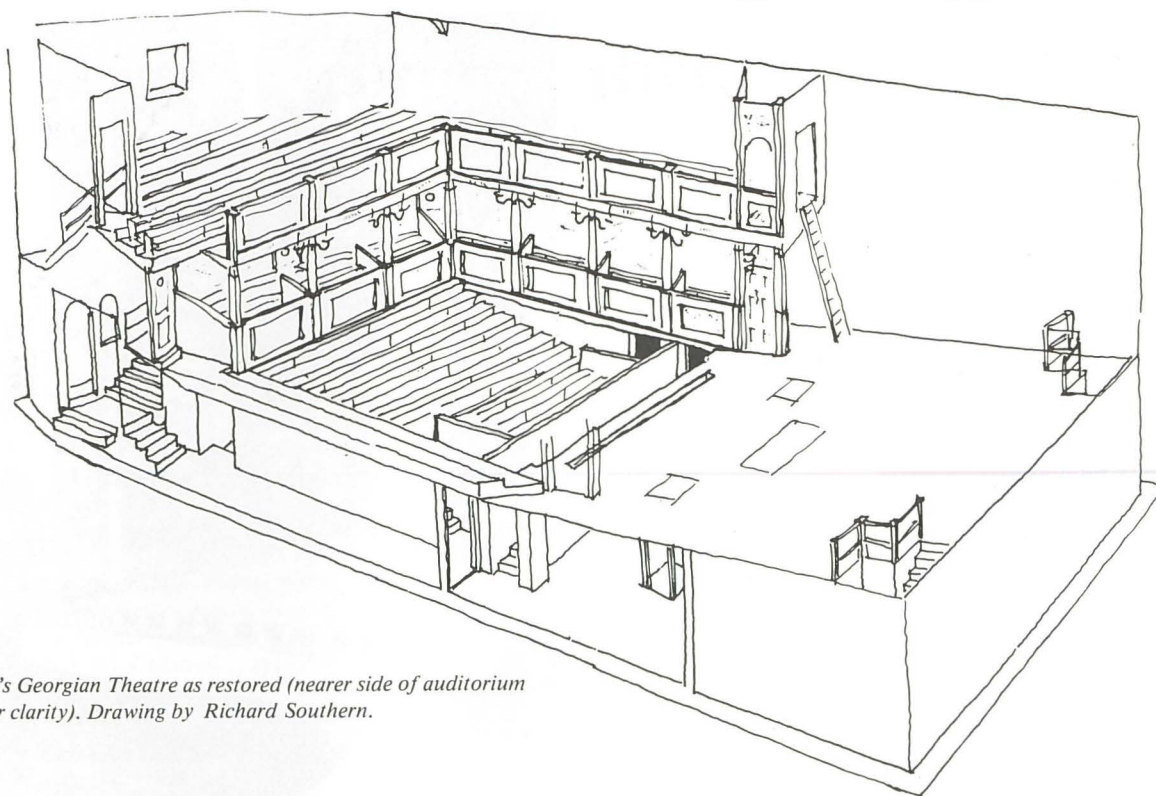
But there was one final clue; in the floor of the theatre appeared signs of three nailed-up traps. One of these was opened. The brick vault was found underneath right enough, some 18 inches down — but just below the opening of the trap itself was something else, namely a sloping groove. In this the trap door had once slid aside to free the opening. For what purpose? Clearly to allow an actor to rise on a platform to the stage for an effect. But the machinery for such an effect must require some 8 or 9 ft of depth. Thus it was inevitable that the whole cellar was an intrusion.

This inevitability was reinforced by a study of the pit passage which plainly gave conventional access to the front of the pit — the only existing entry being that through the centre box which however



The Georgian Theatre, Richmond, Yorkshire. Built 1788. Restored 1962.





Richmond's Georgian Theatre as restored (nearer side of auditorium omitted for clarity). Drawing by Richard Southern.

showed the marks of having been originally panelled in.

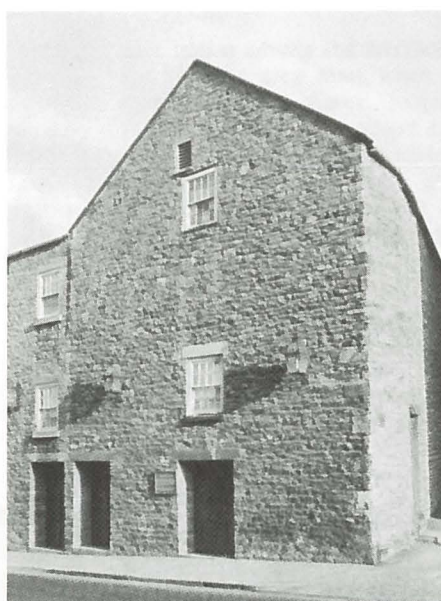
All this encouraged the removal of the wine cellars and it was discovered that the whole of this cellar had been built *inside* the walls of the theatre, leaving a narrow cavity of only a few inches between. Once the cellar had been removed, all sorts of clues were revealed including signs of steps leading down to the understage dressing rooms, a cross-wall dividing a machine room from the rest of the theatre, a door from that machine room into a one-time orchestra pit, more evidence of the pit passage and finally, signs for the reconstruction of a sloping floor in the auditorium, turning the building into a proper, orthodox Georgian theatre with a sunk pit and – consequently – a raised stage.

The way was now clear to proceed with the full restoration that is photographically documented in the museum, culminating with the 1963 reopening performance when Edith Evans spoke the prologue and Sybil Thorndike the epilogue. Their scripts are, of course, included in the display.

The final section of the exhibition is a series of model theatres, viewed through peepholes, of various theatre forms from the Greek theatre until today – with the purpose of showing the place of the Georgian stage in this evolution.

Then one waits in a green room with walls bearing photographs of royal visits and a collage of actors and musicians who have appeared since the reopening. Here one awaits the climax of one's visit: a conducted tour of the theatre itself.

I am continually surprised by the way in which the auditorium of any theatre seems smaller when viewed from the stage. Richmond feels particularly domestic in scale.



An outside view which gives little indication of the pleasures within.

This domesticity is somehow reinforced by the rectangular form. The pillars supporting the second tier of boxes are the only curves. They relieve and yet stress the right angles of the auditorium shape and its panelling. The architecture acknowledges the format of the major metropolitan theatres – for this is a *proper* theatre with pit, boxes, gallery, doors of entrance and a trapped stage – but the builder has absorbed the requirements of a theatre into a vernacular style that owes much to both breakfast room and chapel.

The lighting, presumably in the interests of tourist health and safety, is augmented during museum opening hours by some

rather rough working light. So the Richmond tourist misses the lighting ambience that the theatre can create at performances with its electrified candles. In earlier articles in this series, I have indicated my emotional response to performance lighting conditions in Drottningholm and rehearsal lighting in Copenhagen. Perhaps it was good for me to experience Richmond under conditions more likely to induce objective standards of judgement.

Yet I cannot remain emotionally detached from things like onstage fireplace and gallery kicking boards. I cannot but thrill to walk past a pay box and along a pit passage. Or to sit in a centre box from where a narrowing of the eyes fills the stage with perspective scenery. Or hang on a side wall like a Rowlands or Cruikshank.

All despite my own frame being out of scale: for as Ivor Brown reminds us in the little official guide book whose authorship he shares with Richard Southern

The Georgian playgoers were quite ready to sit cramped in narrow, backless seats, even in the boxes, with very small divisions between the rows. They looked on shoulder to shoulder, and knee to shoulder too. An important point is that people were on the whole smaller than they are now, and that there was length of leg for which to find leg-room: but there was corpulence and a very fat neighbour must have been unpopular.

Before leaving I enjoy one last look from the top of the gallery stairs. I am a Georgian theatre manager (administrators are a ghost of theatre yet to come). The overture has started – lots of continuo and much uncertain sight reading, yet robust and rhythmic. I pat my corpulence for tonight my *pit overfloweth*.

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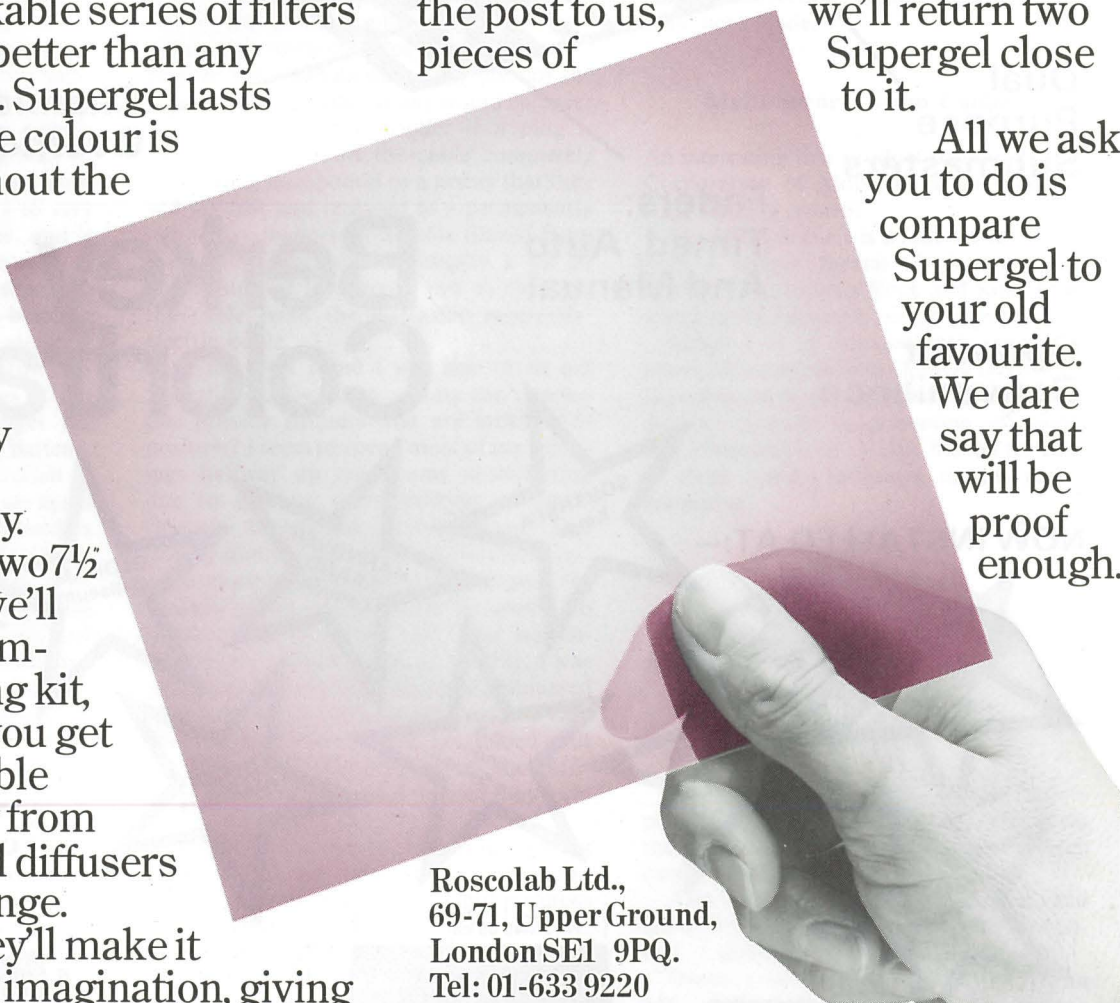
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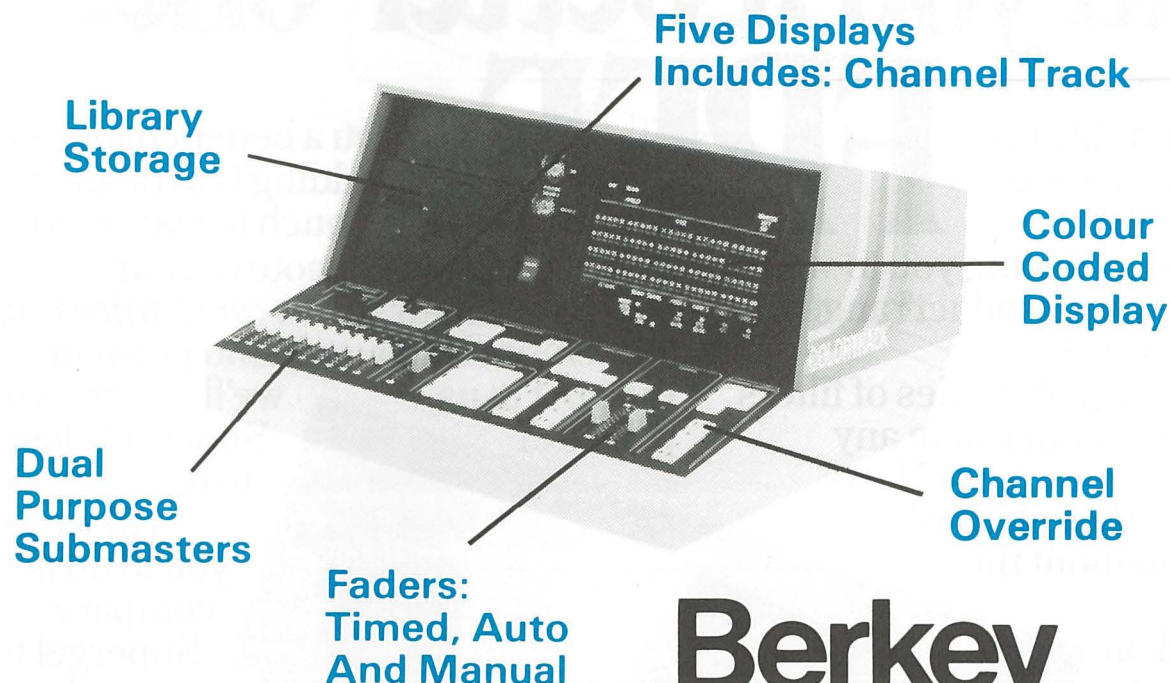
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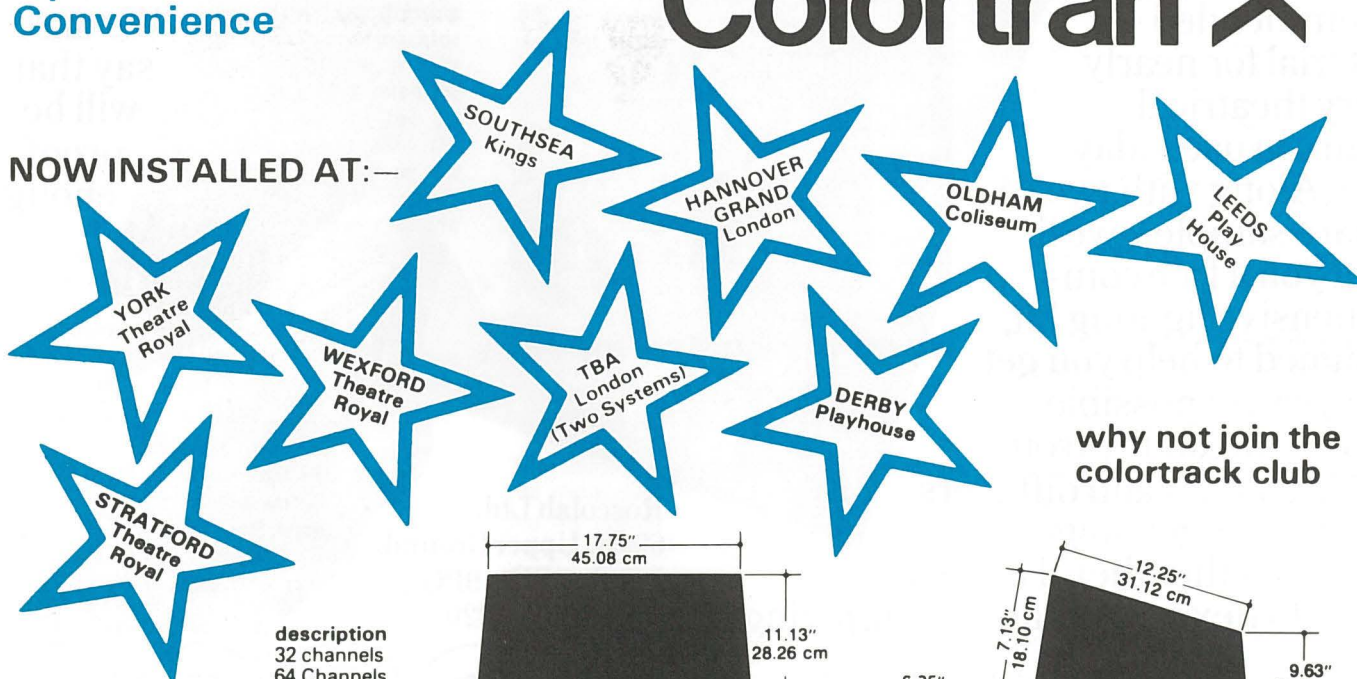


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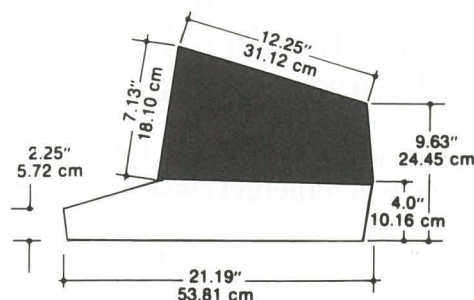
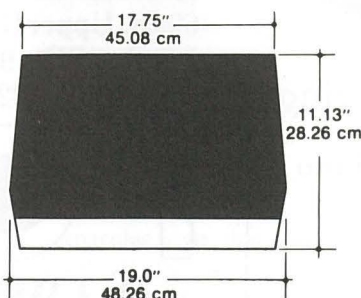
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PRODUCT NEWS

You can't have too much of a good thing and the ABTT Trade Show was just that. So before it slips into the limbo of historical events, we are adding some personal impressions and valid comments on products received from Dorian Kelly who you will recognise as one of our most entertaining occasional contributors.

He writes:

A Personal View

One of the great delights of the 1981 ABTT Trade Show at the Round House was the fact that as in previous shows, I managed to stumble over practically everyone I had ever known in the business. (In some cases the word stumble can be taken quite literally, as the other great delight was the fact that the bar was open all day) and also to meet a few new friends. One person who I was surprised and delighted to see again was Martin Dye of **SUFFOLK SCENERY**, who I last saw in my home town some twenty years ago, he an amateur lighting man of some skill, I an amateur actor of none whatsoever. He now builds scenery to very high standards at competitive rates, and is apparently drawing business from quite a few well-respected names. He was sharing a stand with another East Anglian business **ANCIENT LIGHTS**. Apart from stocking a good range of modern lighting stuff, including those hard-to-get spares from recent obsolete lanterns, like hinges for barndoors and colour frames for S Battens, Jim Laws also has an amazing collection of bits for lanterns I never thought to see again like lenses for pattern 43s and bulbholders for pageants, back knobs for the Mk 1 P23. My optimistic enquiry, however, for 'proper' Grelcos' (not approved type, but nice) was met with a rueful negative. At the stall opposite, *AJS* of Bournemouth showed me their latest import – a new shuttered 15A splitter, reasonably priced and claimed to be shatter resistant. It was however totally unstackable, which will doubtless endear it to the GLC. They also showed me a transparent 15A plugtop which enabled connections to be checked visually. To my eye these looked a little fragile, and had a clipped-on rather than screw-fixing top, which would make me a little wary of pulling a plug on a live circuit from the top of a Tallescope, but there is no doubt that the concept is a good one. I was also very impressed with the follow spot that they import from France. It accepts a 28v. 250 Watt lamp and is very bright. A second lamp is incorporated on a mechanical slider with a changeover switch in case of lamp failure. There is a good grabhandle, and the colour change is more accessible than usual. It is a very cheap unit to run as the lamps only cost about two pounds each, and it

seems to be a very good little lime for a small to medium theatre.

RANK STRAND were represented in force with the Galaxy, and their new range of luminaires. I am told that certain features of the Harmony and Prelude series are to be revised before production really starts to roll, but among the things I noticed were the difficulty of fastening the thumb-screws that held the lamp tray in position, and the spring clip that is provided presumably in order to prevent the iris from jumping vertically upwards during performances, but which in practice would produce a lot of burned fingers and swearing from the top of the tallescope. They are a dream to clean and maintain, and the lens adjustment is very positive and simple. The safety chain anchorage point should be moved to a point nearer the trunnion arm to enable the lamp to be sufficiently tipped up to get at the lamp tray. If the Harmony profiles are to be used on the spot bar, then something better than the standard hook clamp needs to be employed as for some reason I found it impossible to lock them off lightly enough to prevent radial movement at the slightest touch from passing french flats, tallescopes etc. And I would like to see the Europlug connectors provided with retaining clips of some kind to prevent them falling out. They are not the most reliable of plugs as any sound engineer will tell you, and I wonder if a plug is needed at all? With the cable completely removable, its a pound to a penny that they will get lost and replaced in a permanently temporary manner by a cable filched from the sound department, (usually a bit of non-heatproof 0.5mm) or just as likely by the cable from the wardrobe mistresses' electric kettle.

At the **CCT** stand I was able to air my favourite hobby horse – why can't someone provide shutters that are lockable in position? I seem to spend most of my mornings halfway up the booms re-shuttering due to careless scene shifting or insufficiently breastlined flown pieces. This usually means a disruption of the mornings' work by everybody, due to the demands for various pieces of furniture or cloths to focus onto. Although they had no immediate suggestions to make on this, I was pleased to discover that they had eliminated another problem with the shutters, the ease with which they could be pulled out altogether. For the problem of the difficulty of cleaning the back lenses, they have no easy answer.

When I first started drawing lighting plans, I used to carve india-rubbers into crude representations of the lantern shapes with variable results, mostly messy. **THEATRE INTERNATIONAL SUPPLIES** have produced a series of rubber stamps for this purpose, and they seem to produce more or less consistent results, and it is certainly a quick and efficient method of producing layouts for one's own use. Personally, I am waiting to see rub-down sheets of each lantern produced (preferably free) by the luminaire manufacturers.

To me, however, the star of the show was undoubtedly the new **HMI 1200W** follow spot. Bearing a startling resemblance to the

French follow spot, but nevertheless firmly labelled with the **BERKEY COLORTRAN** logo, it has the finest pin-spotting ability that I have ever seen. It is fitted with both Iris and Zoom Lens, and this enables one to conserve light. The Zoom stays in focus throughout its effective range and the Iris really does, by some alchemy, iris right out. There is also a dowsing plate for blackouts, which can also be used to produce a square beam. It does make the basic mistake of not having any side-to-side shutters, thus leaving one with the old problem of how to follow an artiste offstage past the tormentors. Do we stop dead on full spot, wait for him to walk out of it and then fade off, or do we iris to head and shoulders first, or do we keep him in the centre of the beam and splash all over the prosc? And as always the colour magazine obscures the view of the operator from almost every operating position. Why can't the magazine be in the one logical place, underneath the lens? Take five operators, and you will have five preferred positions and five sighting methods, but surely it is not beyond the wits of follow spot designers to produce a suitable viewfinder with crosswires and parallax correction, perhaps using a fibre optic light guide.

Multi-Scene 1 from Canada

An interesting first product from the Rydez Corporation of Montreal is this portable stage lighting control.

The Multi-Scene 1 is a four-scene console with a unique format. It was designed primarily for touring Rock and Roll shows where quick, versatile control is required.

Scene 1 is a conventional fader-type preset allowing variable channel intensities. Digital latching pushbuttons, with LED indicators provide programming of scenes two, three and four. A clear button for each of these scenes facilitates instant reprogramming.



An independent scene is also incorporated for direct access to any channel via the scene one faders. A blackout switch cancels this function when necessary.

Also featured, on each channel and scene, is a full intensity pushbutton for control of quick scene changes and punches.

Output control voltage is 0-10VDC via an MS series amphenol multipin. The mating connector is provided.

A twelve-channel expander is available and may be patched directly.

Each Multi-Scene 1 is supplied with a high quality flight case and a detachable gooseneck lamp.

For further information contact: The Rydez Corporation, 5997 Laurendeau St., Montreal, Quebec, Canada 4HE 3X3.

Between Cues

The thoughts of
Walter Plinge

National Reading Lights

The *Performing Arts Book Fair* at the National Theatre provided the lovely afternoon of my expectations. Having received a bank statement that very morning, I was able to resist most of the goodies. Well, until I sighted some posters of my own yesterday's hits (and flops). Immediately I was waving a cheque book with all the narcissistic fervour of my profession. National faces began to redden as dusk fell. The Fair was on a slow fade to blackout. Someone somewhere is presumably reading or writing a memo to the effect that Book Fairs were not in the original building brief for the NT's foyers. It is unbelievable but I believe it. However a forest of anglepoises and lesser reading lamps, fed from a spaghetti of stage leads, quickly sprouted to save the day. I hope that there were enough grelcos left for the evening's performances.

One Mo' High

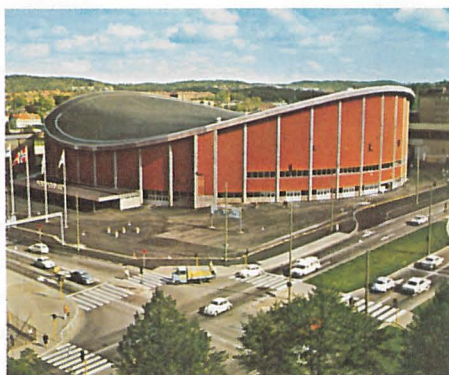
The alchemy of a performance is, thankfully, beyond analysis. I am sure that the singers and musicians in *One Mo' Time* never ever give anything less than total power. But I caught a Monday night when they seemed to be responding to some sort of compulsive overdrive. Was it the presence in the audience of their New Orleans friends, the *Preservation Hall Jazz Band* – on the only rest night of the British tour by those great veterans? I can only say that hearing both Preservation Hall and *One Mo' Time* within a couple of days gave me a rather high *high*!



Park Theatre

To Francis Reid's enthusiasm for the pleasures of Tivoli, Walter Plinge would like to add a word of praise of *Liseberg*. Gothenburg's version of a summer entertainment park is perhaps just a little bit more contrived, perhaps just a little bit less

relaxed. But there is enough light-hearted filigree in the architecture to bring considerable pleasure to a Sunday stroll and an *al fresco* lunch. The performance stages include a theatre sitting amidst its botanic landscape with such confident dignity that its orange dome seems the only possible permissible structural form.



... and Car Park Theatre

Gothenburg's *Scandinavium* also has a distinctive shape and again the architecture befits the environment: road junctions and car parking. Billed as Scandinavia's largest indoor arena, it houses ice hockey, show jumping, and all those other athletic pursuits which are somewhat alien to the plingual physique. This Walter prefers spectator sports like *Aida* and, if the trumpets are sufficiently *ad lib*, his imagination will see him through the splendours of a triumph scene with the slaves in tuxedos. Especially when Nicolai Gedda lets rip. The sound was generally jolly good – and that is high plingular praise for opera with microphones. As a concert it was more than OK: staged in the middle of this vast arena, it would have been more than fantabulous.

IDM Recalled

Of course Gothenburg has its more conventional theatres. The central broad avenue sweeps up to an open square across which Konserthuset and Stadsteatern face each other, flanking the art gallery. The Stadsteatern is the city playhouse. Music Theatre has a home in the charming old *Stora Teatern* where I once had a rather special experience – or at least an experience that was rather special for 1969. The board was an IDM and it worked impeccably. Quite impeccably. At morning plotting, at afternoon rehearsal, and at



evening performance. That night I drank to the new technology at a British Consulate reception. The next morning I sent a congratulatory postcard to 29 King Street, Covent Garden, London WC2. That was to be my one and only production experience of IDM. I was one of the lucky ones.

An Operatic Polemic

It is not unusual for an opera house to crave the indulgence of its audience on behalf of singers who agree to appear despite some degree of malfunction of their vocal apparatus. It is, however, rather unusual for advance attention to be drawn to any visual shortcomings. Today's stage has lost the capacity to surprise or shock. We enter an opera house in the secure knowledge that upon the stage anything and everything is possible. We certainly retain the option of closing our eyes, although curiosity always gets the better of my eyelids. The rationalists have acquired control of the opera – that irrational art! The revolution started with a little sensible infiltration from the playhouse by sensitive directors who did a bit of visual tightening up and gave some assistance with role interpretation and the dramatic interplay of ensemble. Fine. But then came invasion by interpretative teams with an imagination stimulated by an attitude to music that can be labelled as disregard or dislike according to charitable taste. So when a Hamburg Staatsoper programme prayed for the understandings of the publikum for alterations in the stage pictures at today's performance, I was not unduly dismayed. (If I translated accurately – and the restricted range of the omnibus words included in my pocket dictionary does necessitate a creative approach to the task – the scenic restrictions were the consequence of a serious stage accident last year. But whether this affected the original rehearsal schedule, or its aftermath was restricting current operations, I am unsure). What I am sure is that *Così fan Tutte* works in a simple environment of frocks and furniture. But its cynicism has the delicacy of a wine wager rather than the witlessness of Götz Friedrich's bordello bet. If he had ears, he would know that this opera is about caring men and Guardian women. Mozart's sincerity invests even the most ephemeral expression of love with blinding truth. Anne Howells and the Band were magic.