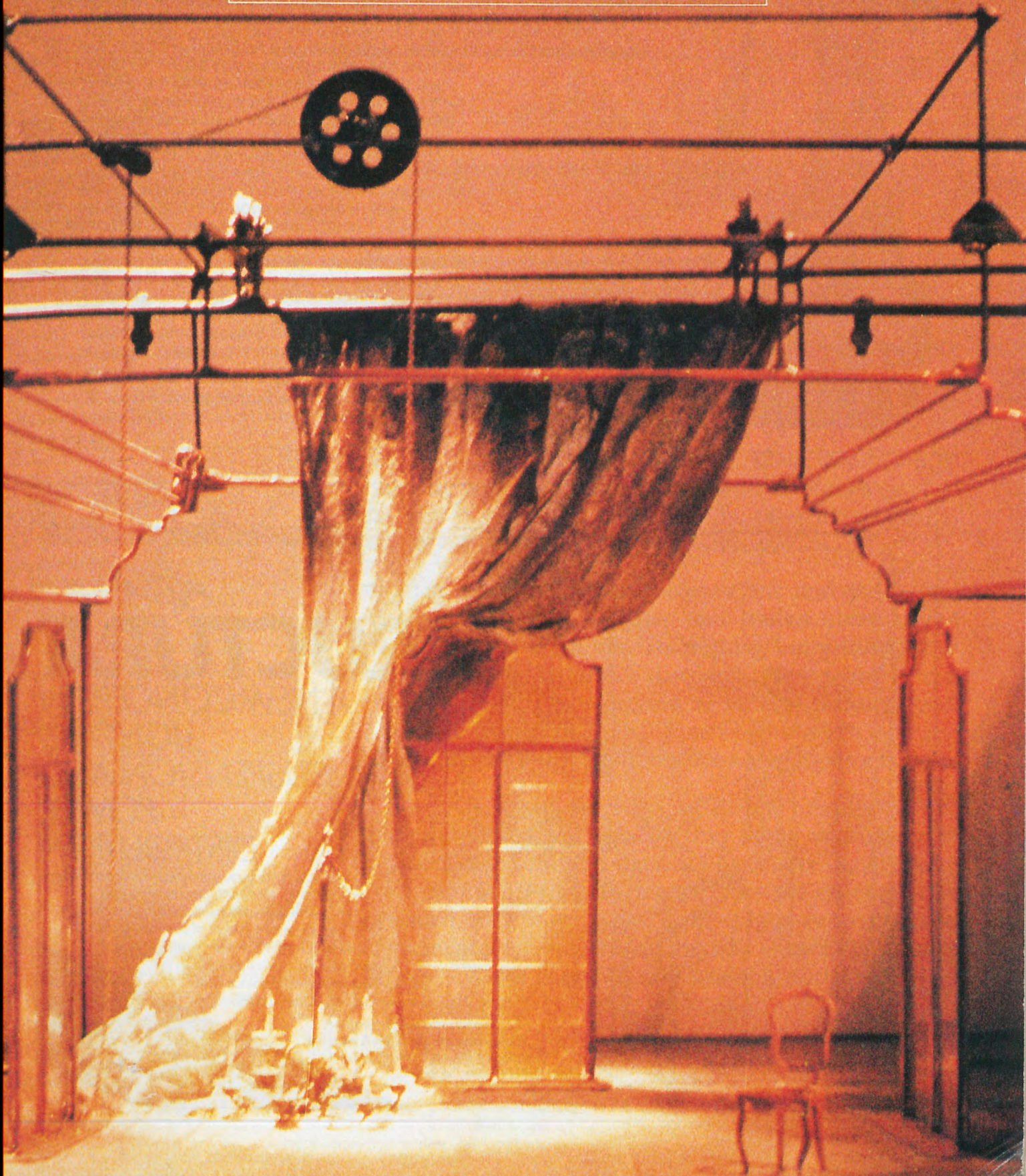


CUE

Technical Theatre Review

March/April 1983 £1.75





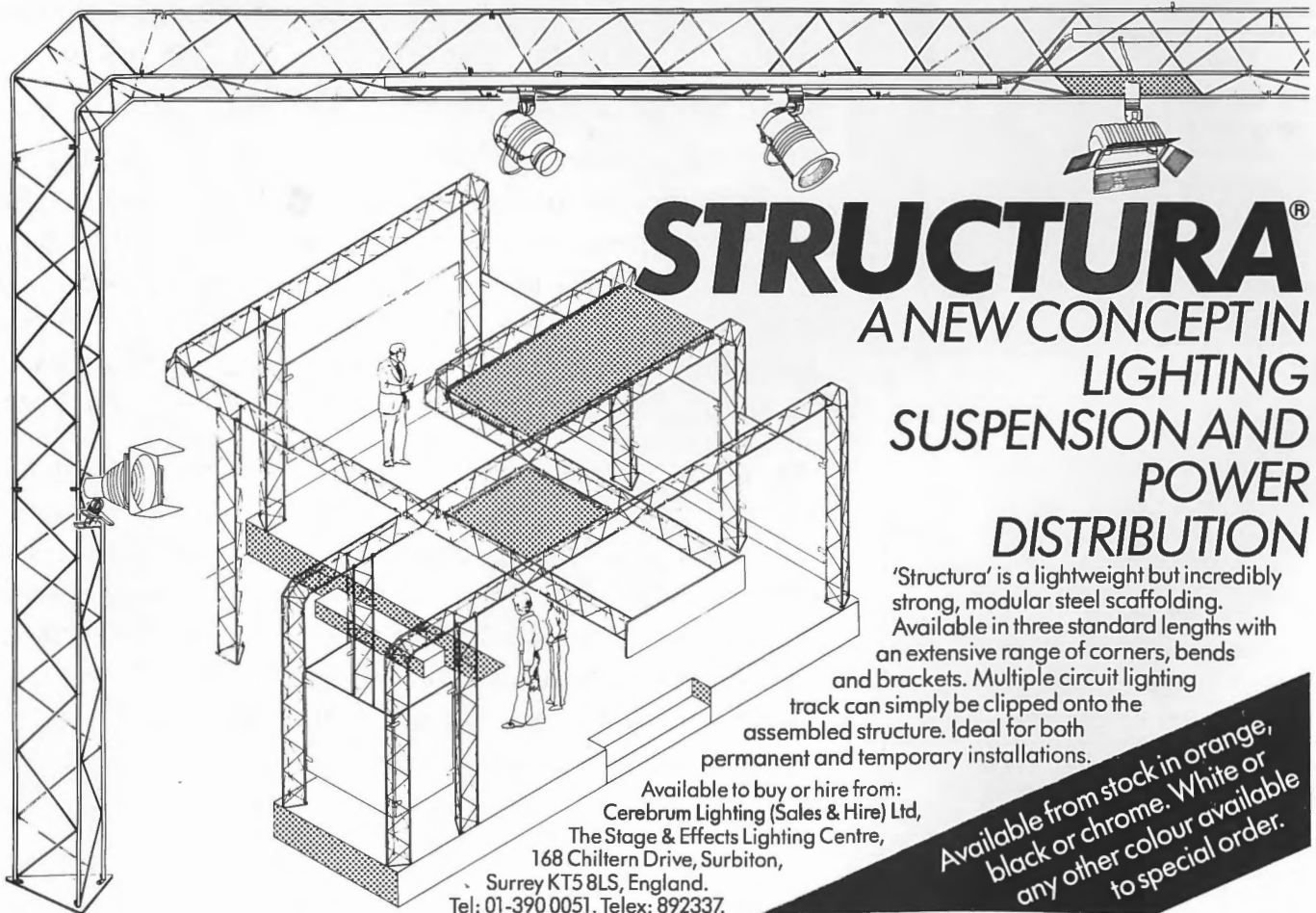
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Charles Spencer reviews the Contemporary British Theatre Design Exhibition on page 4. Among the well-executed models to be seen there was Robin Don's set design "Marriage of Figaro" for English National Opera North, and reproduced on our cover. The mobile draperies are designed to arrive in a new position for each act. During the overture they travel from the preset house curtain position straight into the Act 1 shape.

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CUE

Technical Theatre Review

March/April 1983 22.

*This particularly rapid, unintelligible patter
Isn't generally heard, and if it is it doesn't matter*

Ruddigore, W. S. Gilbert

Despite the use of sophisticated sound systems in our lyric theatres today a good deal of what does matter still remains unintelligible. Words are either swept away in the gale of the orchestra or, when they can be heard, are directionally unrelated to any action or individual on stage. Where's the sense, for example, in each singer having his own radio microphone if we then collect the results into a single point source. If we are going to dispense with live, natural, multi-directional voices in favour of electronic reproduction then let us go the whole hog and have it stereophonic too.

Then again many of us prefer to hear and understand English versions of German and Italian librettos and unlike the opera purists feel nothing but gratitude for the work of ENO in this direction. How relaxing it is therefore for the non-linguist to be able to follow and enjoy the story as well as the music without first having to mug up the synopsis before the house lights go down.

Surely it is not necessary to design new systems to hear the words and whence they come in the largest auditorium. We find it hard not to believe they already exist. Shouldn't we look rather at how the system can be operated with more skill. Achieving a proper vocal/instrumental balance will do much to ensure that what is *generally heard* is not all *unintelligible patter*.

British Theatre Design 1979-1983

CHARLES SPENCER

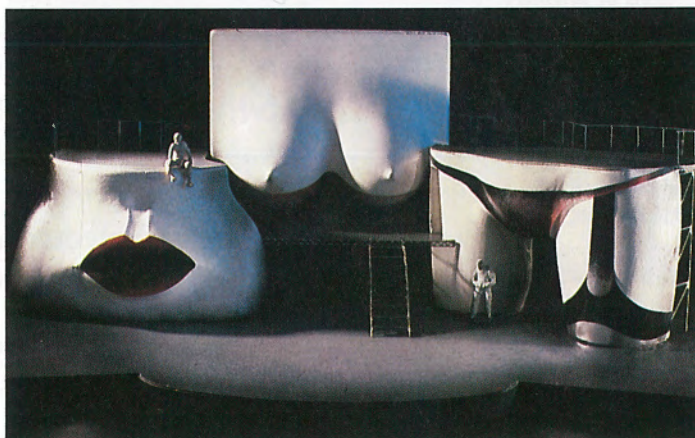
Exhibition of the Society of British Theatre Designers
The Round House, London, 24 February to 19 March 1983

Draughtsmanship, as that illustrious old stage designer Edith Cavell might have said, is not enough. Certainly it was not too much in evidence at the exhibition of the Society of British Theatre Designers. By comparison the model-making was positively brilliant. The swish art-deco-ish platforms of Stefanos Lazaridis were covetable works of sculpture, as were the exciting concepts of Philip Prowse and Farrah, notably the latter's *Henry V* for the RSC. Yolanda Sonnabend's tattered set for *The Messiah* was typical of her collagist poetry, and both Vanek and Pamela Howard showed impressive interpretations for *Terra Nova*. Elroy Ashmore made an interesting case of fine model-making in comparison with dismissive drawings. Some of the best sets came from Liz da Costa, all of whose work expresses that rare commodity – individuality; Maria Bjornson, perhaps because she is not British, possesses it to a fine degree. I admired Bob Crowley's model for the RSC's *King Lear*, but again, in comparison with fascinating photographs, the costume sketches seemed not for public consumption. The same kind of comment could be made of Chris Dyer's contribution to *The Roaring Girl*, also at the RSC. Nicholas Georgiadis's masterly dramatised elegance marked out his contributions to *Orpheus* and *The Tempest*, which rightly won him The Standard 1983 Ballet Award. Happy memories of Jonathan Miller's down-town *Rigoletto* were relived in Robertson/Vercoe's models; even happier ones would have resulted from John Gunter's *Guys and Dolls* masterwork, but we had to be satisfied with the lesser *Beggar's Opera* (in all senses). Saul Radomsky's wit and charm shone through, but for weight there was Timothy O'Brien's bold concept for that controversial opera *Le Grand Macabre*. I admired Sally Jacobs' spare style for the New York production of *Black Angel*, as I did Terry Brown's work, whilst for Robin Don's opera models the only word is wonderful.

Two of our most distinguished practitioners set interesting questions. I had the good fortune to see at Stratford-upon-Avon Koltai's contribution to *Much Ado About Nothing*. The production itself provided exasperation with a camped-up production and an audience enjoying every inch of Derek Jacobi's limp wrist. I thanked God for Ralph Koltai's brilliant set, despite the fact that it would have benefitted from a more mature, sophisticated version. His model at the Round House, however, gave little intimation of



Julius Caesar, Riverside Studios 1978
Set design, Alison Chitty



Die Soldaten, Zimmermann, Ken Russell,
Opera Lyons Feb 1983. Set design, Ralph Koltai



Tempest, Glen Tetley, Ballet Rambert 1979
Costume & set design, Nadine Bayliss



"Pictures at an exhibition".
Lighting (Tower Hire) Leeds.

the magical, changing imagery achieved on stage. Why, I pondered? Was it simply inadequate, or badly made; was the artist's idea impossible to three-dimensionalise; did it improve in the making? In the end who cares! I certainly did not sit in the Memorial Theatre, bemoaning surrounding illiteracy, praising Mr Koltai.

In other words the tools or means a designer uses to explore, to inform, to communicate, may in the end be unimportant. What matters is what eventually happens on the stage, what we in the audience see and experience. But — and for me it is an important but — the tools of draughtsmanship and model-making can prove vital, since inadequacy to process ideas may prevent important dialogue with colleagues.

Koltai and other major figures, perhaps, do not need to persuade, or even communicate; their styles, manner, professionalism can be taken on trust.

This surely applies to John Bury. He works more like a sculptor than a draughtsman, thinking and working three-dimensionally, so that his director is under no illusions. He is fortunate with a wife who is a gifted draughtsman (woman, person?); Elizabeth Bury's meticulous fantasies do not merely visualise ideas, they directly influence stage imagery.

Obviously a major stage designer does not necessarily need gifts as a draughtsman or model maker. Assistants, after all, are among my best friends . . . and certainly among the best friends of some of my artist friends. Craftsmanship after all is only craftsmanship, not necessarily inspirational, spiritual nor creative, no matter what Ruskin or William Morris presupposed.

The British Theatre Designers' exhibition was a professional fair, not primarily a public presentation, although non-professionals and theatre-lovers would, and did, derive much pleasure and instruction from it. They avoided tarting it up, few of the drawings being framed, and the pleasant sense of overcrowding and clutter suggestive of working conditions — apart from the almost ostentatiously spaced introductory section of the eight artists chosen by Ralph Koltai for the British Council and a Paris showing last autumn.

Having generally approved of many of the models, let us turn to the drawings. It hardly needs hiding that most did not impress me, although I continue to underline that poor drawings do not necessarily



The Burning Fiery Furnace, Benjamin Britten, Cambridge Opera Group, Greenwich Festival 1980/82. Masks, Ariane Gastambide



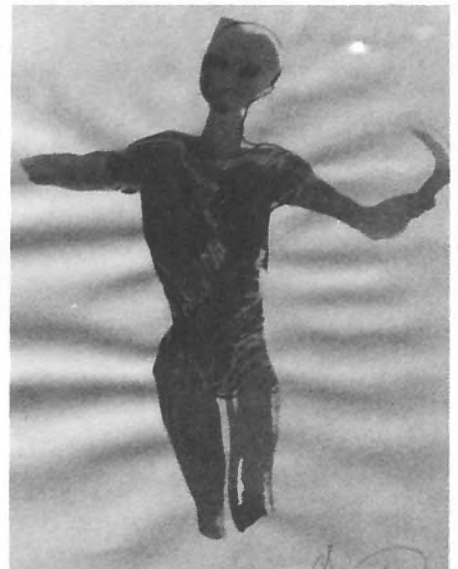
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Royal Exchange Theatre Co. 1982. Set & costumes, David Short

equate with poor costumes. Yet it would be less than honest not to admit a preference for good over bad drawings, for draughtsmanship which reflects individuality, an eye for detail and character, a line which moves with elegance or drama — handwriting, in fact, which indicates the quality of the designer.

Much of the costume drawings at the Round House was in Ye Olde English style — out of Lovat Fraser, Whistler, Messel, Beaton. National character is a much

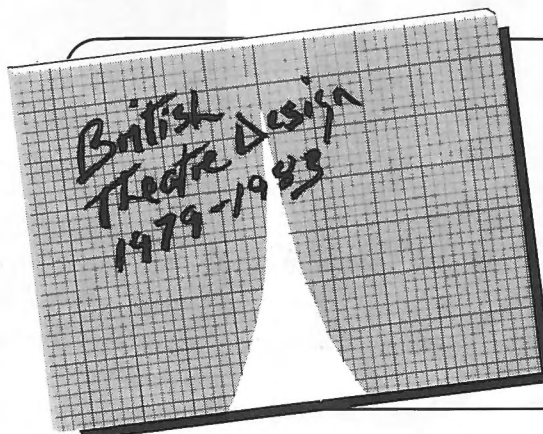


Eight Songs for a Mad King, Peter Maxwell Davies, Edinburgh Festival 1982. Set design, Russell Craig



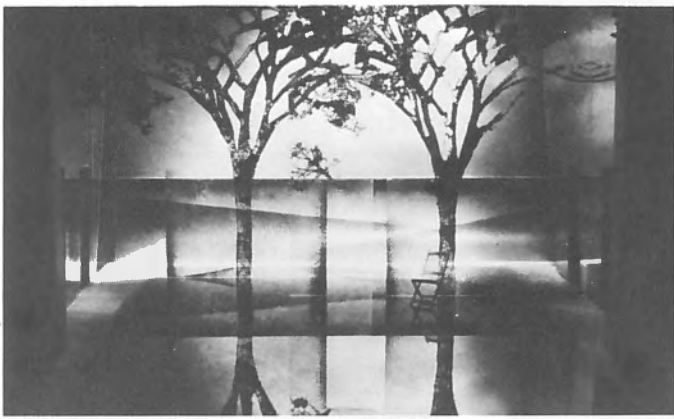
Messiah, Martin Sherman, Hampstead Theatre 1982. Design for one of the poor Jews, Yolanda Sonnabend.

underrated force, as powerful and prominent as individual character, especially the English character, in which it plays a weighty role. Local culture has even more measurable influence in Wales or Scotland, yet the locals seem able to retain greater individuality. Even more so in Europe, especially since ego and talent is succoured and promoted from birth (hence the similarity between the Yiddisher Moma, and Momma Italiana as compared with the English Mum). Good manners and reticence has

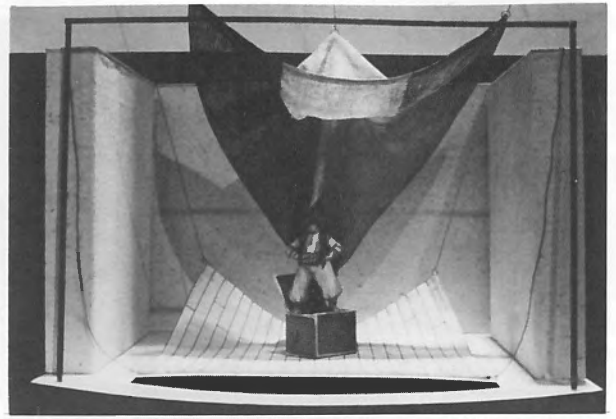


This lavishly printed booklet produced to coincide with the Theatre Design Exhibition presents a wide selection and a permanent record of British designers' work over the past four years. It contains more than 100 art reproductions of models of set designs, photographs of sets in performance and costumes, several in full colour.

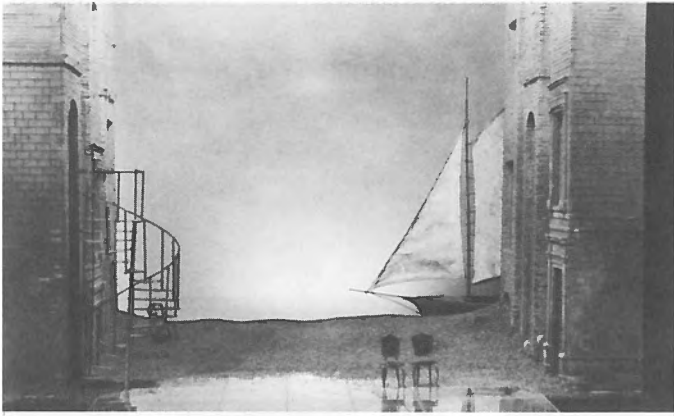
A limited number of copies are still available at £4 including postage and packing from CUE, Kitemore House, Faringdon, Oxon. SN7 8HR.



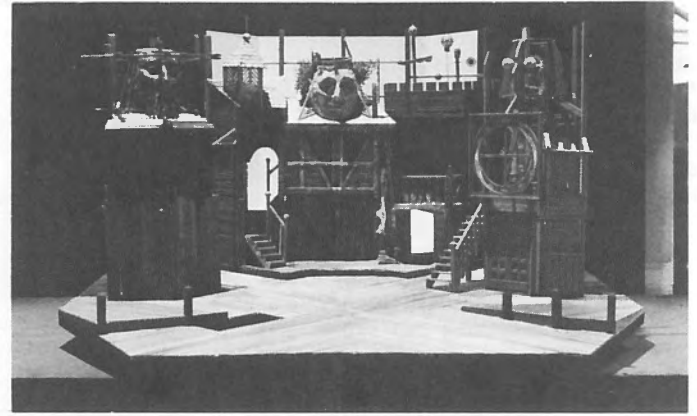
Much Ado About Nothing, William Shakespeare
Royal Shakespeare Theatre 1982 Set design, **Ralph Koltai**



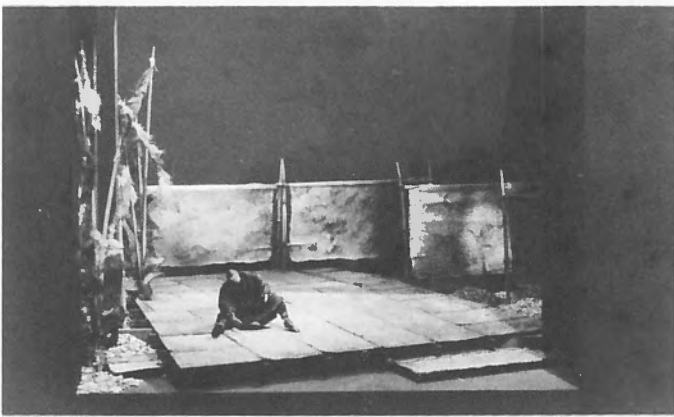
The Brigands, Offenbach
Opera Viva 1981 Set design, **Johann Engels**



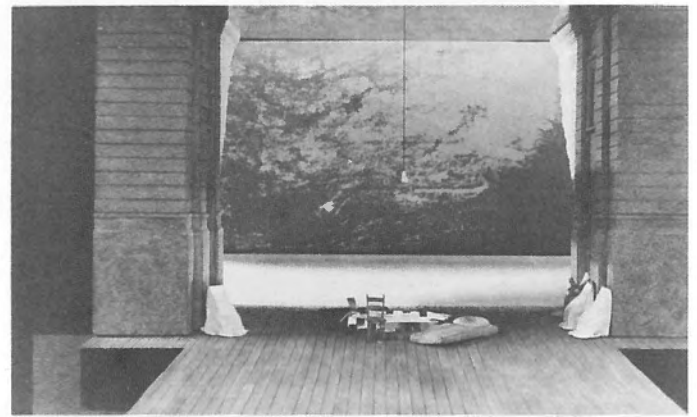
Cosi Fan Tutte, Mozart Opera North 1982
Set design, **Russell Craig**



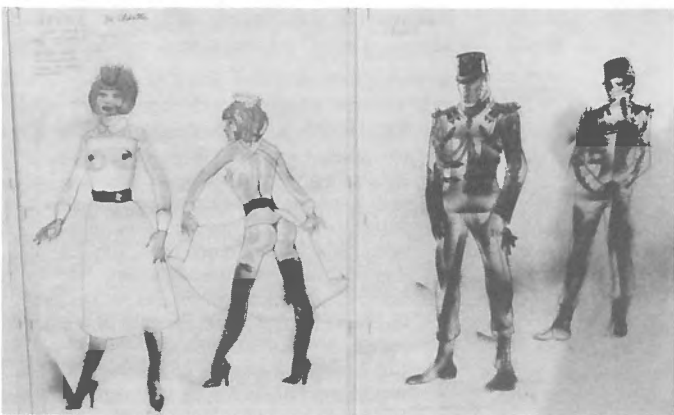
Roaring Girl Royal Shakespeare Theatre and Barbican 1983
Set design, **Chris Dyer**



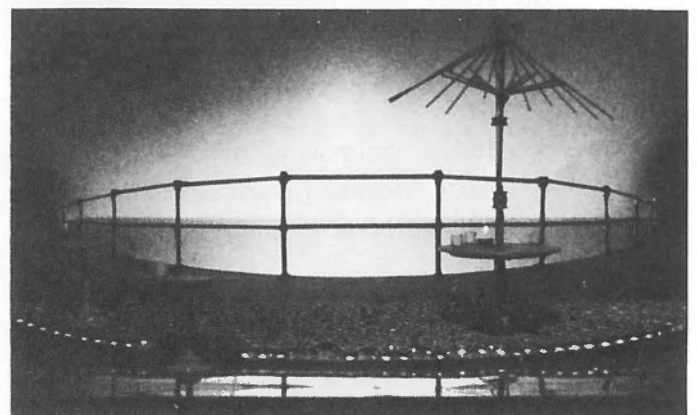
Tibetan Inroads, Stephen Lowe,
Royal Court Theatre 1981 Set design, **Roger Bourke**



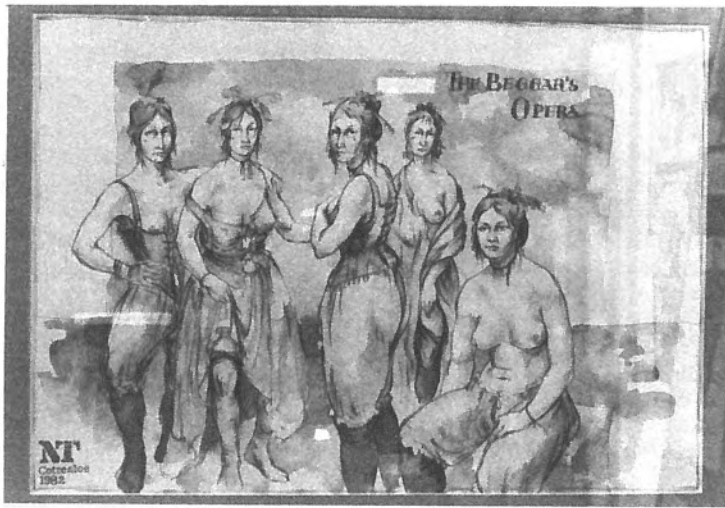
King Lear, William Shakespeare
RSC Stratford 1982 Set design, **Bob Crowley**



Die Soldaten, Zimmerman, Ken Russell
Opera de Lyon Costume design, **Annena Stubbs**



Musicians Crossing a Bridge Without their Instruments
David Drane ICA 1981 Set design, **Robin Don**



The Beggars Opera, John Gay, National Theatre (Cottesloe) 1982
 Designer, John Gunter

probably done more to stifle talent than any other feature of our national life – not only in the theatre, of course. Far too much on the walls of the Round House was good mannered, hardly enquiring into the characters being played on the stage, holding back from scoring paper with bold theatrical images. Whatever the final realisation, as viewed here in tentative plans the effect was often dispiriting.

As I have already indicated, there were exceptions – on both levels. Koltai and John Bury would probably make no claims for their draughtsmanship, and equally they

could claim this made little difference to the splendid images they finally set on stage.

However, as a Mussorgskian visitor to an exhibition, the pleasures of fine, elegant, dramatic, impressive, and appropriate drawings, are not to be ignored. On this hedonistic level I noted Terry Brown and David Short; the simple severity of Sally Jacobs or the splendidly powerful character studies of Annena Stubbs; Belinda Ackerman; Georgiadis's Byzantine formality, in contrast to Yolanda Sonnabend's looser poetics; the very different aspects of realism in Diana Seymour and Maria Bjornson; they

sheer pleasure of the drawings of Deidre Clancy and Priscilla Truett, the powerful images of Philip Prowse.

Whatever else one could say about the British stage, it is certainly professional; there is evidence of study and training, of rehearsed care, of craftsmanship in acting, direction, production. But oh, how one sometimes longs for passion or inspired improvisation (like those magical, surprising Georgian-Rustavelli concoctions). When was the last time you were really surprised in the theatre?

Contemporary standards of writing do not impress; what many producers and theatres involve themselves in is often depressing, not only on qualitative grounds, but as with most newspaper editors for the ghastly misanthropic view of the potential public.

The two biggest recent theatrical triumphs have been the RSC's adaptation of Dickens, and the National's revival of a tried, old, Broadway musical. Their glory was not literary – so similar to the theatrical home-life of our dear departed Queen Victoria – and only marginally were they dependent on performance. No, it was the visuals, the work of the designers, which contributed to their memorableness. Come back Sean Kenny, nearly all is forgiven . . .

There is good historical precedence. From the Renaissance onwards pantomime, ballet, opera, even the Shakespearean extravaganzas of Charles Kean and Irving, were primarily visual entertainments. Their descendants are Erté and his pals at the Folies-Bergère and Busby Berkeley and his Hollywood chums.

The Round House exhibition provided all the necessary evidence that in the happily wide spectrum of national opera and ballet, plus the current splurge of musicals, the designer not merely fulfils a vital role, he is often one of the stars – Gunter with *Guys and Dolls*, John Napier with *Cats*, and so on.

Let us not discuss whether British designers are superior to their international colleagues; who has the evidence anyway? On paper, at least, few can bear comparison with the brilliant artists used by Diaghilev or Reinhardt, or those who created the Constructivist Theatre and the Bauhaus Stage, let alone the horde of international talent attracted by the Parisian Grande Revue. But let us leave art history to the boring old Courtauld Institute and unread encyclopedia. The Society of British Theatre Designers is but a stage; by which do I mean a platform for inspection or a measurement of time?

Charles Spencer is a former editor of 'Art and Artists' and the author of books on Erté, Bakst, Diaghilev and Cecil Beaton. He lectures on art and theatre at the Central School of Art and Design, London, and art schools throughout Britain, as well as for the British Council abroad, and also in the United States. The founder of the Charles Spencer Theatre Gallery, he organises exhibitions of stage design; most recently for the Camden Festival in March, and next at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, in the summer of 1983.

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OISTT Scenographic Commission in London

MICHEL JULIAN

The relationship of the Designer to the Director was the theme of one of the main events during four days intense activity in London last month when it was once again Britain's turn to host the Scenographic commission of the OISTT. For those not *au fait* with the acronym, the Society of British Theatre Designers is the British component of the International Organisation for Scenographers and Theatre Technicians (OISTT).

OISTT has constituent organisations in 42 countries at the latest count and apart from what has become *their* quadrennial in Prague they have set up a number of specialist commissions not dissimilar to the various sections of our own ABTT, the other half of the British membership of OISTT. Each commission utilises their occasional meetings to discover first hand the situation in the host country. Not surprisingly, therefore, this meeting coincided with the British Designers' exhibition at the Roundhouse and provided opportunities for delegates to discover the Barbican first hand. (Britain had hoped to host the meeting last year to coincide with the opening of the Barbican, as a follow-on to the last British meeting held when the National opened.

The Designer and Director Seminar was a useful opportunity for British colleagues to watch a kaleidoscope of theatre designs from around the world at the same time as discover some of the very different circumstances their overseas colleagues work in. After John Burgess from the National introduced the subject from a director's perspective, highlighting a few home truths affecting designers in Britain, many of the foreign presentations returned to the marriage keynote of his address. There was genuine surprise amongst them to learn that he thought designers were probably the worst paid theatre workers, followed closely by directors (as an observer I could not help contemplate how Britain's playwrights would have reacted to this statement). Burgess explained that unless a designer also retained a teaching post, the financial pressure on them was such that they could easily be involved in anything up to ten different productions at any one time. This made developing a rapport with a director, often extremely difficult, and explained why so many directors keep working with the same designers having established their own short-hand. He also reminded the delegates that whereas visitors might be impressed with the training presently available in Britain for theatre designers, there was still no real training for directors as there was in other countries.

The Soviet delegate, veteran designer Alexander Vasilev could not resist picking

up the marriage analogy reminding us as in any marriage, that like a couple having a child, the relationship between designer and director must assume that the final product resembles its parents – he was afraid that if the designer was thinking dresses and the director trowsers the product would disappoint everyone. Although he lamented the fact that too often designers were treated as taxi drivers who were merely bought or hired, he personally had never been able to escape the fact that good design, like good direction must be based on the person who gives everything they have, their mind, their ideas, and their physical abilities, or in other words as he summed it up . . . "accept that the theatre will kill you." After this engaging introduction he went on to show a panorama of Soviet design styles, reminding us that the Soviet Union's 650 theatres produce more than 3000 new productions a year of which maybe only one hundred are remembered in any one season.

The Polish designer Adam Killian, confined himself to Poland's current preoccupation with the Theatre of Metaphor, and chose to underline the theme of the seminar by illustrating the growing number of designers in Poland who are also becoming directors and even writers.

The so-called third world was, as regrettably seems almost traditional at such events, barely represented at all. However, Prof Ramzi Mostafa from Cairo redressed the balance with a harrowing *exposé* of the problems and contradictions in Egypt. There exists a dichotomy between the commercial theatre where everyone is self taught and tickets can cost up to £25 each and what Mr Mostafa calls good theatre for which training has existed only since 1950 and tickets average 25 pence each. Designers are still considered to be second-class citizens in Egyptian theatre and the slides he showed illustrated the continuing rarity of non-realistic stage settings.

Mr Pekka Ojamaa of Finland talked of his preoccupation with Action and Atmosphere and illustrated work where his designs originally created a basis for rewriting the script to accommodate the visual action. He also showed how some theatre groups were now using designers to help them harness existing settings, such as an old gas works, into a performance environment, rather than superimposing designs in the conventional manner.

Both the East and West German delegates were considerably hampered in their presentation as there was no suitable equivalent projector for their slides. Uwe Thill from Hamburg concentrated on large-scale production procedures, stressing that 150 theatres in the Federal Republic had their own comprehensive workshop

facilities. Jochen Finke from East Berlin an obvious disciple of Von Appen stressed that the designer had become a true partner with the director in the creative process, as each had learnt about the other's seemingly separate disciplines. He illustrated his point with a series of slides showing his design sketches prior to meeting a director, then the final sketches and production shots.

Eric Fielding from Utah chose to illustrate the seminar's theme with examples of one creative team's evolution. Michael Bennet's direction with Robin Wagner's designs for Promises Promises, See Saw, Chorus Line, Ballroom and Dreamgirls. His was the only presentation that concentrated on the integration of all technological innovation, stressing the importance of both the choreographer and lighting and sound designers as well as the director and designer.

Other presentations from Australia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Japan resulted in a near surfeit of visual and informative stimuli in one short six-hour session.

Training Theatre Designers and their Relation to the Profession

The Jeannetta Cochrane Theatre hosted a session when the OISTT delegates were joined by over 150 students and staff representing all the English theatre design courses. The meeting heard details of training courses for designers in the various countries and discussion centred around a number of topics including the balance between practical and studio work, the importance of involving practical professional designers, directors, actors, writers, and technicians as teachers, and the problems of job opportunity – should we limit the number of designers in training?

For further information about the British section of the OISTT write to ABTT, 4-6 Great Poultny Street, London W.

The author in his capacity as Director of the British Centre of the International Theatre Institute attended the OISTT meeting as an observer. The OISTT is one of the eight specialist theatre organisations represented on the National Liaison Committee of the British ITI Centre.

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13 Years up a School Hall Ladder

GEOFFREY M. DONALD

We are indebted to The Ephor, The Cranleighan for permission to reproduce this graphic account of School Theatre Lighting at Cranleigh from 1968 to 1981. The author, Mr Geoffrey Donald, gives a lively portrayal of the school's technical achievements and the happy association of successive groups of pupils who made up his lighting teams during those 13 years and who on the way discovered the fun of lighting plays.

The School has just presented a new ladder to the Speech Hall. It is made of aluminium. It is low enough when 'down' to roll away under the side aisles. It can fold even further and be tucked away in a very small space. When fully extended it can reach the highest points in the Hall. It has lockable wheels for safety and telescopic legs to make it even higher. It even has two 'out-riggers' which clamp in place and keep it rock-steady in any position. Best of all, it has a basket at the top from which one can work with both hands without fear of mishap.

And what of the old wooden ladder? Over the past few years its joints had worked progressively looser giving a most un-nerving swing to its top section. Whereas originally one person could comfortably work from it, things had slowly degenerated until two people, each with one hand for the job and one for the ladder, had become a necessity rather than a luxury. Finally only the most acrophiliac souls would venture up it at all! So now it lies forlornly in the builders' yard awaiting final dismemberment. Yet lest it be forgotten, and since its life exactly spans my own as master in charge of Theatre Lighting at Cranleigh, I feel its passing provides a useful watershed from which to view something of those thirteen years.

When I first came to Cranleigh in 1968 my predecessor had just started experiments with 'solid state' controlled dimmer circuits for the Speech Hall. Still around were the remains of the old 'slider-rheostat' banks with their Heath Robinson pulleys and coloured-handled cranks for coupling them together. Former Cranleigh ingenuity seems to have triumphed here too as several of the pulley plates had evidently started life on the control panel of some water supply (they now form part of the Planetarium!). Incidentally, the Laboratory Technician, once came up with parts of an even earlier dimming system, an earthenware drain-pipe of copper sulphate solution and adjustable plunger . . . electrically horrific but apparently perfectly workable! However, the move to solid state thyristor dimming was inevitable after the invention of the transistor and its allied devices. To be able to control light, both with subtlety and from a remote position where the whole stage is visible, is radically superior to

manhandling the old 'toasters' in a hot and uncomfortable gallery built into some obscured part of the stage itself.

The first attempts at circuitry had run in to a few snags. Each lamp dimmed all right, but a lack of radio-frequency suppression caused neighbouring lamps to flash on or off unpredictably and also played havoc with any radio or 'sound' equipment in the vicinity, neither effect being in any way desirable! In addition there were problems with the isolation between the 'mains' voltage lamps and the essentially low-voltage 'control' circuits, namely the wires running through the Speech Hall loft to the knobs in the 'Booth' in the gallery. (I discovered this myself when a supposedly low-voltage wire touched earth . . . there was a flash, a bang and the sixty-amp circuit-breaker tripped!) Experiments with home-made RF chokes (18 swg wire wound on old loudspeaker transformer cores) solved the former problems whilst diligent enquiry of Eastbourne College, who were known to be experimenting with similar circuits at that time, solved the latter. They very kindly passed on to us their ingenious idea of an 'electro-optic link' (now a standard commercial device) by which low voltages in the control circuit altered the brightness of an ordinary torch bulb. This in turn shone on a 'light dependent resistor' which then governed the main circuit. Complete electrical isolation was ensured, there being no possibility of high-voltage back-firing down the lines. The final circuit was perfected and tested during the Christmas holidays and in January 1969 the mad rush started to build and test the entire thirty-channel system in the month or so before the final rehearsals of *Boris Godunov* later that term.

The basic circuit has remained the same until the present, a few minor revisions being made in such as the power supplies and the provision of the main on/off contactor. The only major innovation actually proved in some ways to be retrogressive. In the electro-optic link, if any torch bulb burned out or became loose in its socket, the mains bulb would follow its every flicker. In the early 70s 'light-emitting diodes' hit the market (at over 80p a time; they now cost 25p!) so we replaced the torch bulbs with non-burning-out LEDs, effectively curing the problem. However, the light output / current law proved dif-

ferent for tungsten filaments and LEDs and the result was that never again did we have such a 'linear' fade up and down of the theatre lights, even a change from 'lin' to 'log' pots in the control board did not improve matters much and we have had to accept this drawback ever since . . . but more of this later.

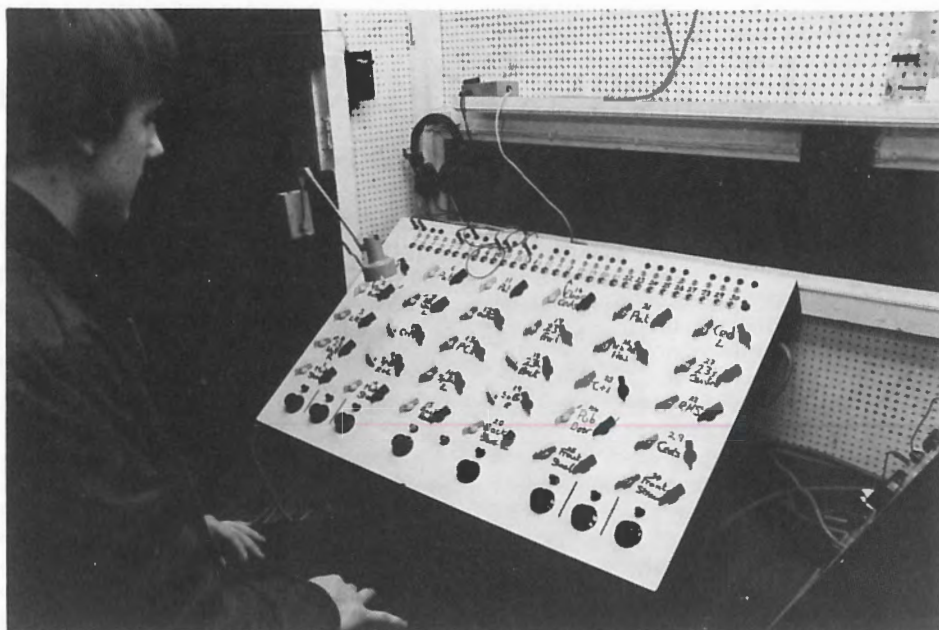
A few notes on 'hardware' . . . the essential lamps themselves. In 1968 we possessed two '123' Fresnel spots, four '23' Profile spots, seven old 'major' spots, one 1000-watt travel spot (affectionately known then and now as Big Bertha), four nearly ruinous floods and some lengths of old batten and footlight. Major productions could only be lit by borrowing. For a school boasting so much in the way of Drama this was not too satisfactory, so an agreement was negotiated with the Bursar, to purchase, amongst other things, two new lamps every year or so. This has continued up to the present, though spots costing fourteen pounds ten shillings each in 1969 now budget at over sixty! In addition, much ancillary equipment has been purchased; iris diaphragms, barn doors, narrow-angle lenses and two new travel spots. Also much of the old equipment has been cleaned, painted and given a new lease of life, for example the battens are now restored to their traditional place in three rows over the proscenium stage and the four old floods now light the School's examinations! Doubtless we will continue purchasing; there is always room for more!

The design of the control board was dictated, in part, by the requirements of the strong drama tradition of the School. Fourth and Fifth Form lessons took place in the Speech Hall at that time and the aim was that part of their 'experience' would be to 'have a go' at controlling their own lights. This necessitated a control board which was not only entirely safe, hence the mains isolation problems, but also portable anywhere in the Hall and not confined to the Lights Booth, and yet again would be sufficiently simple in layout for even the least inspired amateur to hit the right light. We decided to make a complete departure from the standard practice of rows of slider controls in favour of a 'geographical' layout of ordinary rotating pointer knobs . . . rather more difficult to handle in groups of more than one at a time, but

gaining a certain desired simplicity. By 'geographical' we mean that a control knob in, say, the top-left of the board operated a light in the same position in the Speech Hall as looked at from wherever the control board was situated. This was accomplished by making the thirty dimmer-circuits 'patchable' into any of the fifty sockets arranged at strategic points around the Hall. With the advent of Lower School drama lessons and more use of play sets 'in the round' we early installed extra sockets in the body of the auditorium to supplement those already in the traditional stage area. The board was essentially a 'two preset' control, one scene playing whilst the next is set up ready to be faded in on cue. In addition there was a means by which individual or groups of lamps could be switched from the preset cross-fading and operated independently in up to four sub-groups. The number of subtle possibilities in the hands of a versatile lights operator was surprisingly large. So successful has this plan been that when the board was recently rebuilt, its layout was copied exactly, though the number of 'sub-groups' has been increased by a further two to a total of six.

Over the years I have resisted several persuasive attempts to build in 'memories' and other devices intended to take over the routines of lamp cueing and fading. Rightly or wrongly I have always felt that, nearly essential though such things may be in the professional repertory theatre, in a school context where only one play is set up at a time and where the lights team are essentially learning their art, it would be more profitable to do things the traditional (hard!) way, plotting each cue as it comes from the 'recipe' sheet. Even so, as if to bear this point out, I have more than once been exasperated by operators being too keen to go by the cue and unwilling to keep a weather eye on the stage to give that subtle touch on a knob here or there which can improve it or even circumvent disaster! It is initiative in 'playing with light' which differentiates the artistic from the merely competent, no matter how many 'memories' abound!

As for the 'operators', the Lighting Team has always kept itself fairly small in numbers, rarely more than eight at any one time. The pattern has established itself in the recruitment of usually two 'apprentices' at the end of their Fourth Form year, training them up during the Lower Fifth and presenting them with their 'key' to the equipment stores as a mark of graduation at the end of that year. The hope, in creating this hierarchy, has been to achieve a continuity in techniques passed from senior to junior . . . and also a certain sorting out of 'sheep and goats'! It usually works, and there has always been room for the inspired late arrival. Whether they appreciate it or not, they have been brought up in the shadow of Frederic Bentham and Francis Reid, two household names in the field of professional theatre lighting . . . their books on the subject are by now almost required reading. In the early days we paid visits to the late-lamented 'King Street



The Control Board in position in the 'Lighting Booth' at the rear of the auditorium. 30 dimmers on two presets, six subgroupings possible. The top of the board is of 'Formica'; cues can easily be written and erased with an ordinary spirit pen. Just visible to the right is part of the control board of the 8-channel 'Portable Dimmer' here being used for a battery of 'follow-spots', independent of the main board. (Photograph: Andrew Boulter)



The control board in use during a rehearsal, placed on a table in the body of the auditorium within easy reach of both operators and producer.

Theatre' of Rank Strand in London where 'The' Fred Bentham gave illustrated lectures on the art of stage lighting. I well remember being introduced to the wonders of 'Linebach Projection' there, but have never had the opportunity of trying it at Cranleigh. Sadly, those days are no more. There must be many who regret the passing of 'King Street'.

Our field of operations has never been limited to the Speech Hall. Cosy though our little booth in the gallery may be with all its telephones, stage 'bugs' and controls 'like a 747 cockpit' (we once squeezed seven in there, plus a coffee percolator) we have had to set up our lights and circuits in a variety of other places. We early constructed a six-channel 'portable dimmer' and this has lit events in the Chapel, Gym, Dining Hall, Quad, M1, Music School, SFC Barn, Gatleys, the Prep. School Chapel and Gym and even as far afield as Mannings Hill, and we have provided lights for everything from the most serious plays to the *PHAB* disco!

As to the plays themselves: in a school which prides itself on its drama and produces at least one 'spectacular' each year, together with a host of other events by such as Common Room, Houses, Sixth Forms, Foreign Language Departments, visiting companies and even individual boys 'trying their wings', I cannot hope to comment on more than a few of the number which must now top a hundred in thirteen years. I can only limit myself to some of those which, for some reason, come to my mind as master in charge of lighting.

As mentioned before, the 'baptism by fire' of the Speech Hall circuits was *Boris Godunov* . . . a massive undertaking in itself! The producer proved an exacting taskmaster in his lighting plots. Those early lighting teams soon learned the triumph of ingenuity over the impossible ("I want no shadows anywhere!") or the merely incomprehensible ("I must have it dappled!"). It was this producer who once remarked to me, "I know the inverse-square law works in your Physics laboratory, but there's no reason why we should be inconvenienced by it in the Speech Hall!" It was he, too, who developed the Lower School drama lessons, not only to spot likely actors but also to encourage freer self-expression amongst the more inhibited Fourth Formers. I well remember once entering the Speech Hall by the back door and hearing the exhortation, "Now . . . slowly . . . feel your long, hairy legs . . ." from behind the curtain. Peering round in anticipation of finding an orgy of some nameless vice in progress, I was somewhat reassured to find that IVD were being 'spiders' for that lesson! Anyway, *Boris* was memorable: not only for the mad rush to build the circuits in time, but for the imaginative setting, almost entirely in black and white save for the amber of the fire symbolising the burning of Moscow (not to mention the immolation of the two Jesuit priests) and for the yellow of the funeral robe in the 'death' scene. After so much toil with the soldering-iron it was reassuring to us that the only hitch from our point of view was the night Boris 'died' in the wrong direction . . . out of the spotlight we had

carefully prepared for him!

Trial by Jury necessarily returned to the traditional proscenium-arch box-set which gave us the impetus to dig out the old battens from the loft and clean and rewire them before returning them to their rightful place in three rows over the stage. (G and S seem to have gone out of fashion at Cranleigh; are we getting too serious?)

Twelfth Night contained some stunning visual effects, though none better than the opening of the play as the harlequin (Feste) climbed, in a dimmed spotlight, from the orchestra pit onto a blacked-out stage and with a slow, sweeping gesture conjured a complete baroque garden out of the darkness . . . trees, trellises, seats, statue and classical temple. This proved a breathtaking spectacle to behold, but it was sheer hell in the Lighting Booth! It required three pairs of hands very carefully rehearsed as to which knob to turn next and how fast to fade the light in. We produced a similar effect when the Prep. School, in one of its not infrequent excursions to our side of the road, produced *Noye's Fludde*. After a rather jolly 'storm scene', a rainbow, hitherto screened by darkness, gradually lit up, colour by colour, by judicious use of the battens. (I have always had a great affection for the Prep. School productions; they usually provide some element of the unexpected . . . such as the weighty words of Brecht tripping inconsequentially from the tongues of ten-year-olds . . . or merely Scrooge's hair catching fire!)

'Special Effects' are the answer to prayer for the ingenuity of the technical teams. Even the shaft of stark moonlight casting a shadow of the window casement on the torture-chamber chair in *Men Without Shadows* was more difficult to rig up than one would anticipate if it were not to look 'corny' . . . and when *Hassan* asked us for an illuminated silver-swan fountain with a

real live 'putti' figure astride its back and spouting real water which had to turn to red blood at one point . . . well, how we did that is a trade secret! It was *Spacejack* (*The Tempest* and *Star Trek* combined) gave us the opportunity to try differential lighting effects on scrim (gauze) for the 'Transporter Room'. This worked a treat, save on the one occasion that the spacemen forgot to shuffle a little backwards out of the last of the light-spill as they were transported away . . . it made the words "Look, they've gone!" a trifle ludicrous! We have had other minor disasters, such as a one-off production of *The Bacchae* in which forestage lighting was not asked for and yet was very obviously needed; most of the action took place as a curious kind of silhouette against a lit stage! . . . and then there was the House Play which forgot a whole scene two nights running, thus throwing all the lighting cues into chaos!

Our biggest 'in the round' production must undoubtedly have been *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*. The stage took the form of a cross stretching the entire dimensions of the Speech Hall. This was raised above the audience, who were thus confined to the four corners left between its arms. This gave us headaches enough in lighting it without the inevitable light-spill being too aggressive for the viewers; but also gave them yet more of a sense of involvement in that at the 'gold-melting' scene four little Fourth Formers, suitably attired as Incas, crawled out from under the cross equipped with furnaces (of jam-tins, bulbs and amber gel) and, by waving hands and fingers over the top, produced the glow of flickering fires throughout the whole Speech Hall, audience and all!

Perhaps the most breath-catching moment of all those thirteen years was the 'Papal Blessing' scene in *The Representative* in which, to the accompaniment of

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REIDing SHELF

I picked up **THE GUINNESS BOOK OF THEATRE FACTS AND FEATS** rather expecting a collection of information that would vary from the superficial to the irrelevant. No reason at all why I should: except that I seem to keep reading newspaper reports of people attempting the superficial and irrelevant so that in the *Guinness Book of Records* they can strut and fret their hour upon the stage of achievement until someone else does it more/bigger/larger/quicker – but not better, since only objective measurements are admissible. However, this book is never irrelevant and considering the amount of information in so slim a volume, rarely superficial. But then its author is Michael Billington, a critic whom I have grown to respect and with whom I quite frequently agree.

There is a chapter on musicals and the one on laughter-makers takes us into variety, but the majority of the facts and feats pertain to the theatre of drama. It is strong on potted biographies, whether of actors, companies, critics, directors, playwrights, or the theatres themselves. Much of the information is essential knowledge for the theatre student. Almost without exception the pictures are relevant, yet surprisingly few of them come from that routine significant selection which is the backbone of so many theatre history books.

A good place to find out about who, what or where was *first*. And, on the rare occasions where the information verges on the superficial or irrelevant, well it's rather fun. I enjoyed reading, but forgetting, that the only American play to take place in the human stomach is 'Another Interior' by Edward Goodman, 1915. The leading character was called Gastric Juice.

Some day I would like to read an account of the stage technology of **THE FOLIES BERGERE**. The sales potential would never support a book but perhaps someone with doctorate aspirations will devote their theses to a study of the means by which such an extensive sequence of lavish visual images are presented so quickly on such a small stage. (If anyone has already written this, please contact.) I go to the Folies Bergère once per decade: the difference between the 60s and 70s was in loudness. I hope that the 80s have brought the introduction of a lighting designer: frontal wash light can have a very flattening effect on the contours of even the most nubile ladies.

Meanwhile I have been enjoying Charles Castle's cosy book, worthy of a place in every theatrelover's holiday reading knapsack. It is full of anecdote by and about the Folies stars – and these stars of course include the designers and the chorus. Much of this has a flavour of glitter and gush that is both inevitable and appropriate. It takes an extract from Colette's 'Music Hall

Sideelines' to catch the flavour of backstage reality; I would quote from this but every single of her thousand or so words is indispensable.

The book's illustrations are all in monochrome, and so little of the splendour of the Folies Bergère pure theatricality comes through in the photographs. However, the magic breaks through in the lines of the costume design drawings of Erté and Alec Shanks, and in the posters which have projected the Folies image for over a century. And in a welter of facts and figures I find a truly suitable candidate for a *Guinness*: a new production involves 30 pailleuses (the specialists who apply beads to costumes), two of who work for an average of more than eleven days on each costume.

Another book spawned by the celebrations of two hundred and fifty years of the three theatres on the Covent Garden site is **A HISTORY OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE COVENT GARDEN 1732–1982**. It is a collection of four related historical essays: one on the architecture of the buildings and the others on the major arts which have been houses: drama, dance and opera – although the book does not ignore Covent Garden's contribution to the more minor arts of the ballroom, the jitterbug and the campaign to repeal the corn laws. It is particularly well illustrated, but the absence of any credits to artists and engravers is to be muchly deplored. Of all the recent ROH books, this one is probably the key reference, although *The Covent Garden Album* (CUE 20) and the catalogue of the *Royal Opera House Retrospective* (CUE 21) will also be indispensable to anyone wishing to probe the influences that make an old theatre more than just an old building – or to anyone just wishing to know who painted what in this new book.

It is rather a pity that the triumphs of our theatre designers in the 1970s (including the collecting of group awards at both PQ 75 and PQ 79) were not recorded in book form. However, the present decade has got off to a good start with **BRITISH THEATRE DESIGN 1979–1983**. This includes the work of some 46 of the exhibitors at the Society of British Theatre Designers spring '83 exhibition in the Round House. Fifty-one pages of plates, seven of them in colour, illustrate the designs by photography (both of models and productions) and drawings. It is good to find a quality coated paper in use, giving the monochrome photographs much better half-tone definition than has become standard in so many recent books (including those discussed above). Good intros from Alexander Schouvaloff and Peter Mair, plus biographies of the featured designers. Indis-

pensable for anyone interested in visual aspects of theatre.

THE GUINNESS BOOK OF THEATRE FACTS AND FEATS. Michael Billington with research by Toni Huberman. Guinness Superlatives Limited. £8.95 (UK).

THE FOLIES BERGERE. Charles Castle. Methuen. £9.95 (UK).

A History of the ROYAL OPERA HOUSE Covent Garden 1732–1982. Andrew Saint, B. A. Young, Mary Clarke and Clement Crisp, Harold Rosenthal. Published by the Royal Opera House. £5.95. (Paperback) (UK).

BRITISH THEATRE DESIGN 1979–1983. Twynam Publishing for the Society of British Theatre Designers. £4 (UK) (Paperback).

The London Theatre Record and Index

As that famous Doctor once said, "a man will turn over half a library to make one book". It is this sort of prodigious research which goes into the compilation of Mr Herbert's fortnightly **London Theatre Record**. A fascinating read if only for the great variety of drama criticism which Ian Herbert has diligently collected for us from most of the newspaper arts columns and magazines. But the Theatre Record's primary interest for everyone working in theatre, which must include researchers and theatregoers, is the complete information about the cast and production details for every show of importance opening in the West End and on the Fringe and now in 1983 selected news and reviews from theatres outside London.

A summary of the 26 issues is published as an Index to the Record and though supplied free to regular subscribers can be purchased separately at £5. This is excellent value for what amounts to an omnibus account of the whole year in London Theatre, its plays and its personalities. **London Theatre Index** is of course abbreviated but it does contain the essential information in concise and well-arranged and cross-referenced tables. As well as chronological and alphabetical listings of the year's productions there is a comprehensive list of names referring to actors, directors and designers, even agents holding rights are included.

Anyone seeking a greater depth of information and comment than the Index provides are recommended to consult the **London Theatre Record**. Published fortnightly the Record is available on subscription at £45 for 26 issues which includes the annual index – a trifling cost of 12 pence per day or less than the cost of a single daily newspaper. **London Theatre Record and London Theatre Index** are published by Ian Herbert at 4 Cross Deep Gardens, Twickenham TW1 4QU.

Could Your Spotlights Be Brighter?

A.P. HEATHCOTE

Tungsten filament lamps have been gradually improved since they were invented about one hundred years ago. There have always been three improvement objectives – more light output for satisfactory life, maintained light output and best utilisation of this output. Add on to this reliability and ease of handling and the development programme is basically complete.

Lamps used in theatre and studio spotlights are no exception and four generations have emerged since the 'thirties. Initially, lamps were large to prevent the glass bulb from melting and to spread the inevitable internal blackening over a larger area, thus slowing down the rate of light loss. Class B and S types, with screw caps and central bunch filaments are examples followed by the first big "colour temperature" bipost lamps which went on to form the backbone of studio lamp design.

For best optical efficiency, the filament must be accurately positioned with respect to lenses and reflectors, while being small in size. Gradually "monoplane" grid filaments became popular and the basic luminaire design concepts used today were established.

In the early 'sixties the second generation emerged. These were the first with halogen additive to the gas filling and were somewhat smaller, having "hard", borosilicate glass bulbs which enabled the inside glass wall to operate safely at sufficiently high temperature for the halogen to overcome the bulb blackening problem. The biggest advantage was the maintained light output during use.

In the meantime lamp manufacturers capitalised on their newly perfected quartz-halogen lamp manufacturing techniques and a number of smaller mass-production types soon appeared, followed around 1970 by the first single-ended theatre and studio lamps with quartz envelopes.

This third generation of quartz-halogen lamps gave the biggest improvement to date. Now the bulb could be much smaller, and was strong enough to contain much higher gas filling pressure. The combined effect of this and the halogen compounds was to permit the lamp to burn brighter or longer, or a combination of both. Spotlight designers soon took advantage of the new quartz-halogen lamps to produce smaller and lighter hardware.

This range of lamps from the early 'seventies is still in common use today. All lamps have the monoplane grid filament construction shown in Fig.1.

Lamps With More Useful Light

The fourth generation, introduced by Philips in 1980, is a range of lamps all having biplane filaments as shown in Fig. 2.

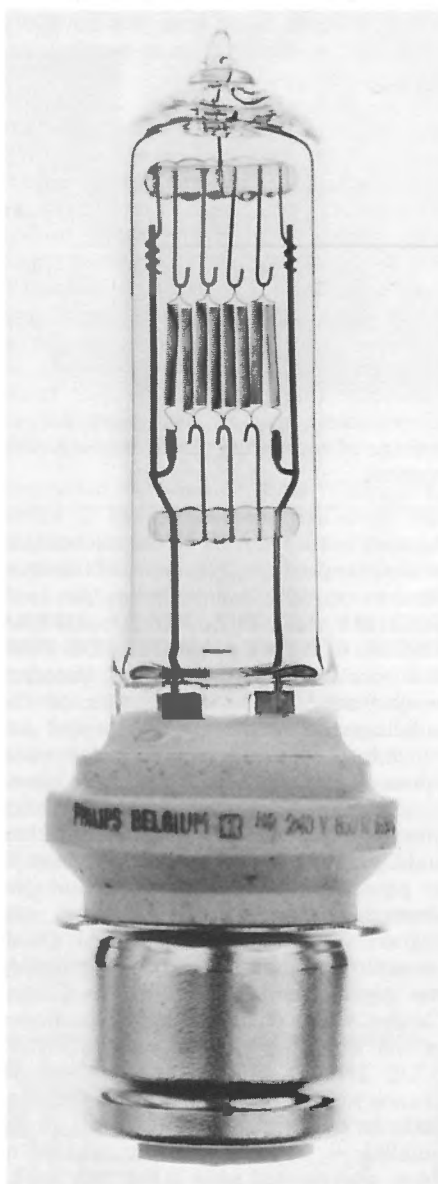
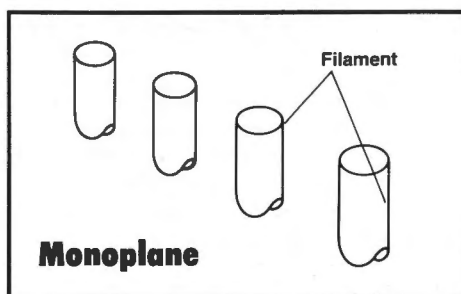


Fig. 1



Other than this they can be interchanged with the existing monoplane types although they have different T or CP numbers. But this change to biplane filaments gives another most significant step forward towards the goal of greater beam intensity, this time by enabling the spotlight luminaire to be more efficient.

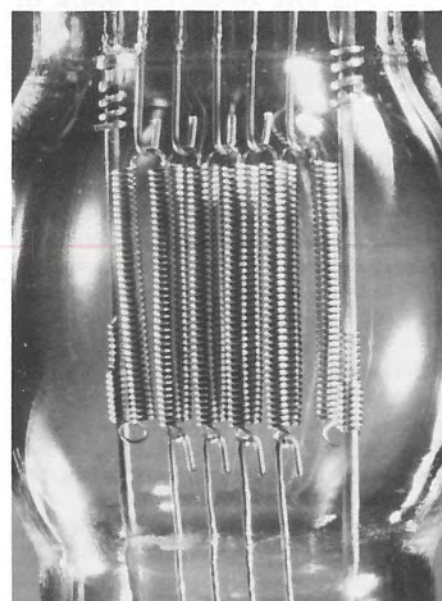
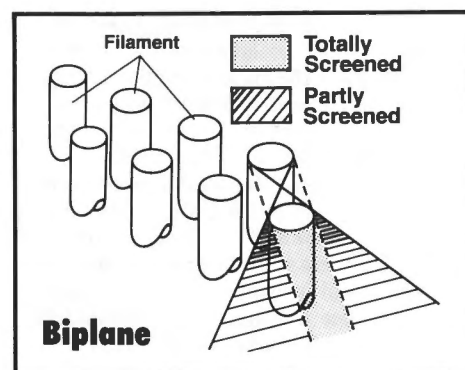


Fig. 2



In fact the biplane filament is not a new concept at all. It has been used for many years in some projector lamps and indeed in one or two old theatre lamp types. More skill in coil manufacture using special tungsten wire is necessary to create a robust construction, and this has proved to be successful over a very large number of lamps. Biplane filaments produce more useful light because they are more compact, thus providing a higher light output per square centimetre at the focus of the optical system. This enables a greater proportion of the emitted light to be gathered into the beam. The most outstanding performance is enjoyed with narrow angle beams, with typical increases of 50 per cent, sometimes more, when one of these lamps is fitted. At wider beam angles, the gain decreases, however, until in full flood there is usually little discernable difference between monoplane and biplane lamps.

A large number of laboratory comparisons using biplane and monoplane lamps have been made with spotlight luminaires of various designs and from different manufacturers, always showing this

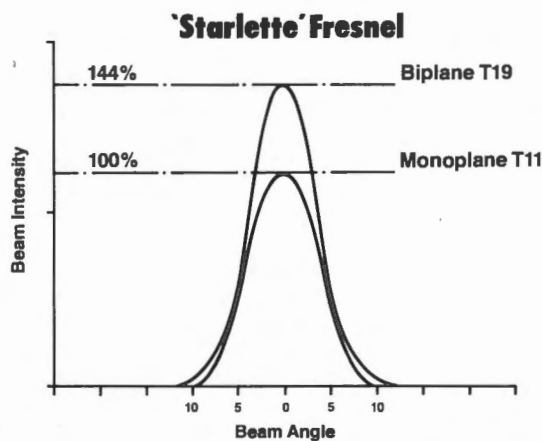


Fig. 3

same overall pattern of gain from biplane lamps. Two popular 1kW types are illustrated in Fig. 3 (fresnel spot from CCT) and Fig. 4 (variable profile spot from Rank Strand) where respective candela increases of 44 per cent and 37 per cent can be seen over the monoplane versions. There is no doubt that biplane lamps offer brighter lighting and at no extra cost.

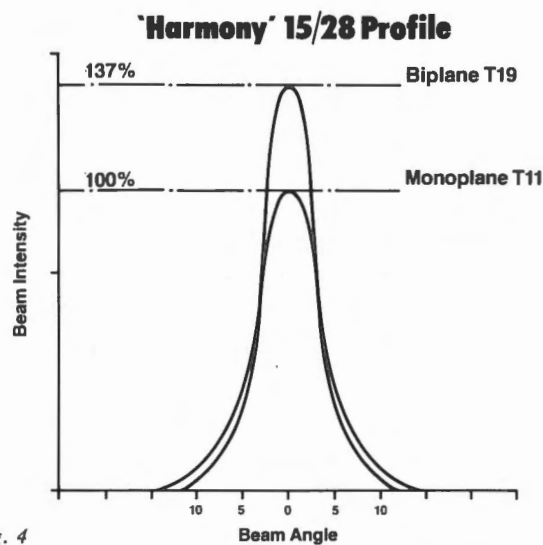


Fig. 4

Care must be taken in interpreting the published lamp data, where the total lumens of a naked biplane lamp are shown as less than the equivalent monoplane version. This is due to occlusion of the light by adjacent limbs of the filament (Fig.2 again), fooling the measuring sphere — which cannot distinguish between light which is in a useful direction and that which is not.

What next?

Proximity reflectors look interesting. These are flattish, internal mirrors mounted inside the lamp directly behind the biplane filament and one purpose is to make redundant the spherical external reflector fitted behind the lamp. These external reflectors suffer a rather arduous existence and if tarnished or distorted become inefficient. A fresh reflector with each new lamp will maintain the full output at only marginally increased cost.

Some CP versions are already available, and are gaining favour abroad, where often more importance is attached to light than life. Fig.5 tells a convincing story, perhaps relevant to many installations. This shows how a Delschaft T50 which has seen some service behaved initially with a CP/40. The biplane equivalent CP/70 gave an immediate 37 per cent gain and finally a massive 81 per cent increase was obtained with the CP/63 biplane — proximity lamp.

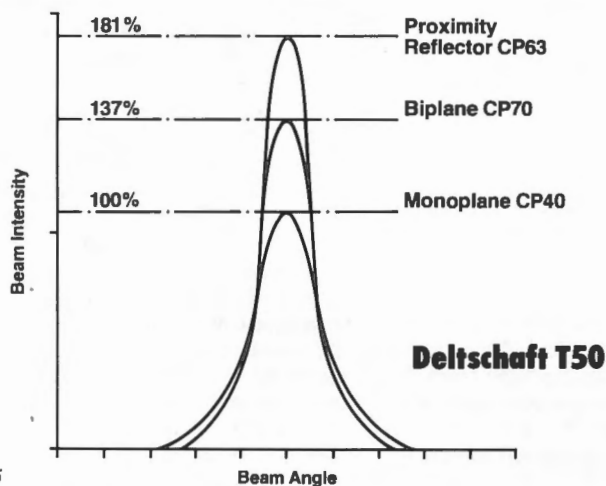


Fig. 5

Mr. Heathcote is Technical Product Manager, Philips Lighting

World Guide to Performing Arts Periodicals

"The theatre is an ephemeral art, and is still regarded in many quarters as not quite academically 'respectable'. Periodicals about such disreputable subjects are much more likely to end up as waste paper than in bound volumes. Yet the theatre worker or researcher has an immense wealth of material at his disposal in the many magazines throughout the world devoted to his subject, and even the most inept of linguists can comprehend much from the universal language of illustration" so begins Simon Trussler's Foreword to *The World Guide to Performing Arts Periodicals*.

This functional directory lists over 630 separate journals around the world devoted to one or more aspect of theatre. Fifty-two

countries have collaborated with the British Centre of the International Theatre Institute to produce the first ever world Guide devoted exclusively to theatrical periodicals. In addition to having the responsibility for producing UNESCO's Theatre journal *Theatre International* the British ITI in researching and producing this unique reference tool has once again contradicted its critics and reinforced the need to keep the British ITI alive. This mammoth task, undertaken against a background of non-existent revenue funding and constant threats of impending closure, is the culmination of three years' research. Edited by Chris Edwards librarian at Rose Bruford College, the Guide lists twice as many titles as any previously available listings. More

than that it gives a whole host of information not previously available on each title such as circulation, finance and editorial as well as how and where to obtain copies. Copies of the Guide are obtainable from British ITI Centre, 31 Shelton Street, London WC2H 9HT for £9.50 plus £1.50 post & packing. You can also obtain further information about the ITI and their other publications from the same address.

Near complete runs of the sadly missed *Theatre Quarterly* magazine ie with two or four of the forty issues missing are available for £60 and £50 respectively plus £6.50 p&p while stocks last from the British ITI Centre, 31 Shelton Street, London WC2H 9HT.

Simplicity is compatible with Quality in Small Theatres

TIM FOSTER

The flood of new medium scale theatres built in this country during the 1960s and 1970s, not to mention the buildings for the big national companies, has now in the 1980s slowed to a trickle. This is largely a result of the stringent economic times, but is also because in many areas, though by no means all, the supply has caught up with the demand. What resources are available are now being directed mainly towards the refurbishment of the many fading gems of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and to the provision of much more modest theatres for small scale professional companies, community use, and schools. It is with this last category which I have recently been involved, as an architect specialising in theatre design, and with two schemes in particular, The Edward Alleyn Hall at Dulwich College and the Tricycle Theatre in North London.

Small scale theatres form the base of the pyramid of theatrical experience, and it is through them that many children and adults will start to develop their first interest in the live theatre, on both sides of the footlights. This gives the small scale theatre an importance which outweighs its size, and while even architects and theatre designers have to recognise that what counts most is the quality of the work which goes on in these places, well-designed buildings can and do make a significant contribution to the success of a venture.

At this scale money is always a problem, and for most organisations of the kind I am discussing it is a question of build or convert within the limited funds which can realistically be raised, or don't build at all. The problem is therefore one of how best to direct one's resources. If you can't have everything you want, what can you best do without? What often happens, I believe wrongly, is that money is spent on equipment, and 'quality of space' goes by the board. Some equipment is of course necessary, but usually less than most people suppose, and curiously it often takes an impartial expert who understands what the available technology can and cannot achieve, to advise on what may be dispensed with. It should also not be forgotten that equipment can be bought or hired later, while the theatre space will still be there many years after the equipment becomes redundant, and therefore it had better be good. Quality of theatrical space is hard to pin down. It obviously has a good deal to do with the geometry of stage, seating and sightlines, but there is also the intangible matter of atmosphere, which is critical. The architecture must have character. This need not necessarily be expensive. It is no coincidence that many of us find the experience of a performance on a fit-up stage in a barn, warehouse or railway shed so much more rewarding than attending a show in a gleaming brick box

with every technical sophistication. If one believes in the Brechtian tradition of modern theatre, or the Shakespearean tradition for that matter, economy of means visibly expressed is what distinguishes the live theatre from the technical trickery of film or television.

While I am arguing for simplicity of staging and quality of space as paramount, I would not wish to give the impression that all normal practical considerations are abandoned. Of course the seats should be reasonably comfortable and the theatre neither too stuffy nor too cold. Backstage and Front-of-House accommodation must be provided to a greater or lesser extent, and the demands of the Fire Officer satisfied. These are the elements which any competent architect should be able to organise, but beware of those who say there is no money left for a characterful theatre, and all you can afford is an empty box. I believe that relatively inexpensive ways and means do exist to achieve a worthwhile result, even when money is short, as I hope the following two buildings for which I have been responsible will illustrate.

I will deal briefly with the Tricycle first, and with the Edward Alleyn Hall at greater length because it is probably more typical of the problems which readers may experience.

The Tricycle Theatre

The Tricycle Theatre is the permanent home of the Wakefield Tricycle Company, a small-scale professional drama company, who are in some ways typical of the wealth of fringe companies who emerged from the sixties, and have now come of age, with established reputations but limited resources, and now want and deserve better

facilities than the pubs and church halls they have performed in hitherto. The new theatre presents the company's own productions as well as hosting other shows seeking a London venue. It is a conversion of an existing 1920s Dance Hall building.

The company required a 200 seat auditorium, primarily with an endstage, which would give them similarly intimate conditions to the much smaller spaces in which they had performed before, together with ancillary public, administrative and backstage accommodation.

The building was found in late 1978, and after some negotiation design proposals were prepared in the summer of 1979. The auditorium itself was to be within the main hall, a high-vaulted room approximately 60 feet x 40 feet with a small existing proscenium stage at one end. It was conceived that the theatre should take the form of a courtyard with two layers of galleries surrounding three sides of a central pit. This was a form I had been working on previously with Iain Mackintosh of Theatre Projects, but here it was reduced to a scale almost exactly that of the delightful Georgian Theatre in Richmond, Yorkshire, giving great intimacy.

I was particularly interested in the potential of this form to lend itself to a simple post and beam construction, which could be built with common materials and could relatively easily be altered or taken down altogether. Just as Shakespeare moved the Globe to Bankside and rebuilt it using small lengths of timber, so would we do in a contemporary material, steel scaffolding, and the company's own staff would build it themselves, making considerable savings over conventional building methods. The structure is entirely independent and free-standing, built off the existing floor, and



Tricycle Theatre. Architect: Tim Foster. Photograph by Steve Stephens

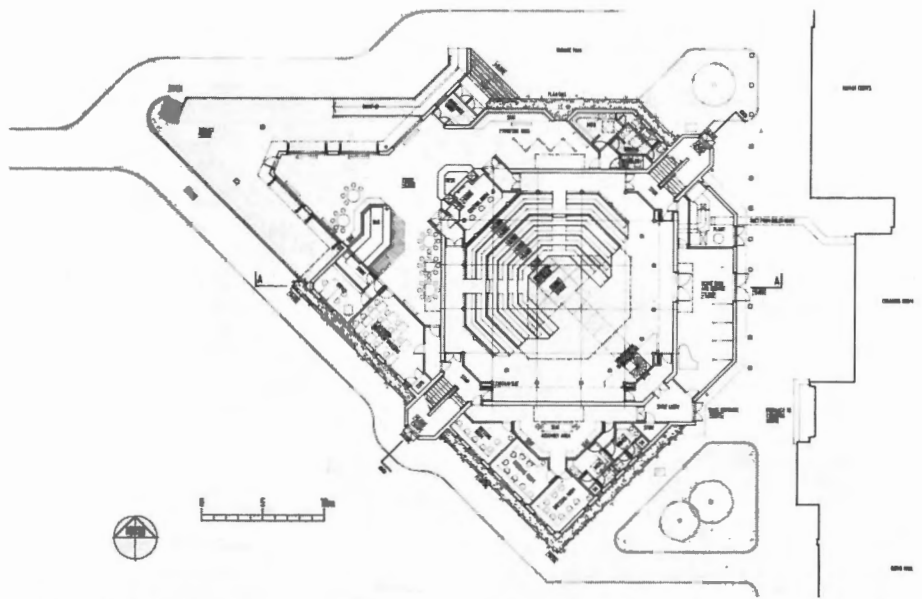
carrying its own stairs and lighting suspension trusses. Floor decks, rostra, seats and balustrade panels are all attached in a simple way allowing the whole thing to be assembled by semi-skilled labour in a short space of time. The entire theatre structure, including house lighting, seating etc, cost only £40,000 and took two and a half months to build.

Another benefit of this approach to construction was that it allowed the company greater flexibility in the face of the exigencies of fund raising, which was going on in parallel with the building process. The first parcel of money raised was committed to essential work to the fabric of the building, fire precautions, new wiring and ventilation installations etc, which had to be completed before the building could open to the public. This work began before the auditorium as a separate contract, worth £85,000. It was always envisaged that if the worst came to the worst the building could open with a temporary theatre, and the final structure be inserted later when funds became available. Fortunately this did not happen and all the work was completed in a period of four months and the theatre opened on time in September 1980.

This is an example of the way in which the building process itself, as well as the design, can be manipulated to achieve value for money. Speed of design and construction is very important if a fixed budget is not to be eroded by inflation.

Dulwich College Theatre

The Edward Alleyn Hall at Dulwich College is a rather different story in most respects. The client, an old and famous public school, required a new building, primarily for theatre use but with an element of the multi-purpose about it. At that time plays were performed in the school swimming baths, which meant boarding over the pool for four months of every year, and at the same time, the floor area thus created was used for examinations. The new building would therefore liberate the swimming pool for year-round use, but in so doing had to accommodate the exams too. Hopefully it would also create a more appropriate ambience for theatre than the tiles and glass of the baths (with an impossible acoustic).

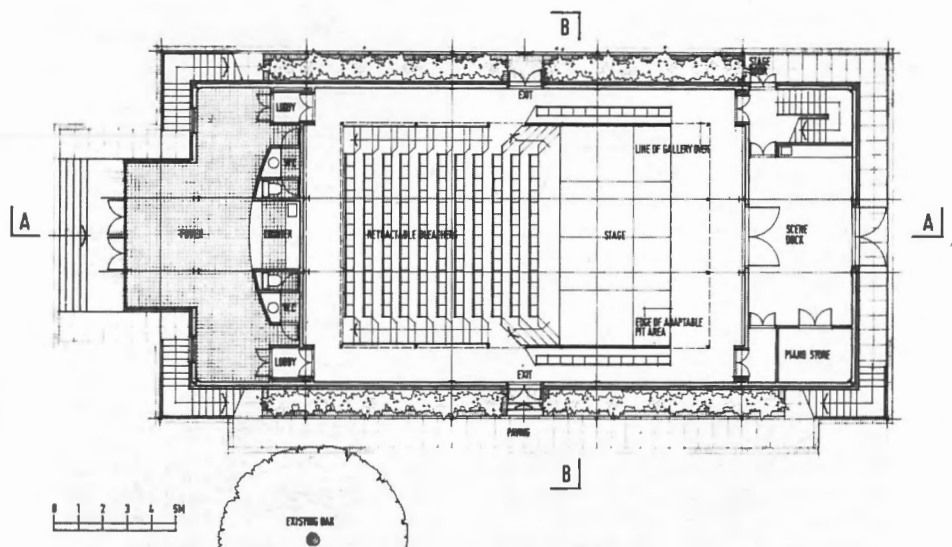
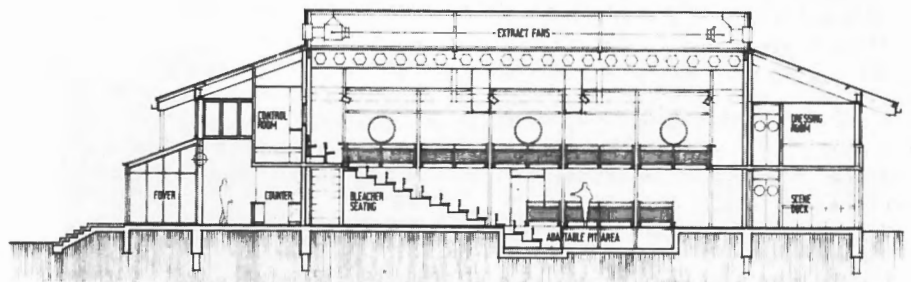


Original scheme for an octagonal auditorium which for reasons of cost was not proceeded with.

The original brief for the building was that it should not only be a prestigious school theatre, but also capable of acting as an arts centre to the surrounding area, in much the same way that the Christ's Hospital School theatre at Horsham does. A building was designed to meet these requirements in which an octagonal auditorium with a pitched roof rose out of irregularly planned single storey accommodation grouped around it (see illustration above) and which formed a promontory between the two main areas of playing fields to either side. Sadly it was soon recog-

nised that these proposals were going to be too expensive and that sights would have to be lowered.

In June 1979 we prepared proposals for a building which was to cost half as much as the previous one. To make savings of this sort the design has to be re-thought from scratch and some major compromises made. It was decided that the principles embodied in the auditorium of the first scheme, namely its primarily open-stage character, its flexibility, and its seating capacity (approximately 300) should be retained, although its shape would change,



Dulwich College Theatre. Ground floor plan and long section. Architect: Tim Foster.

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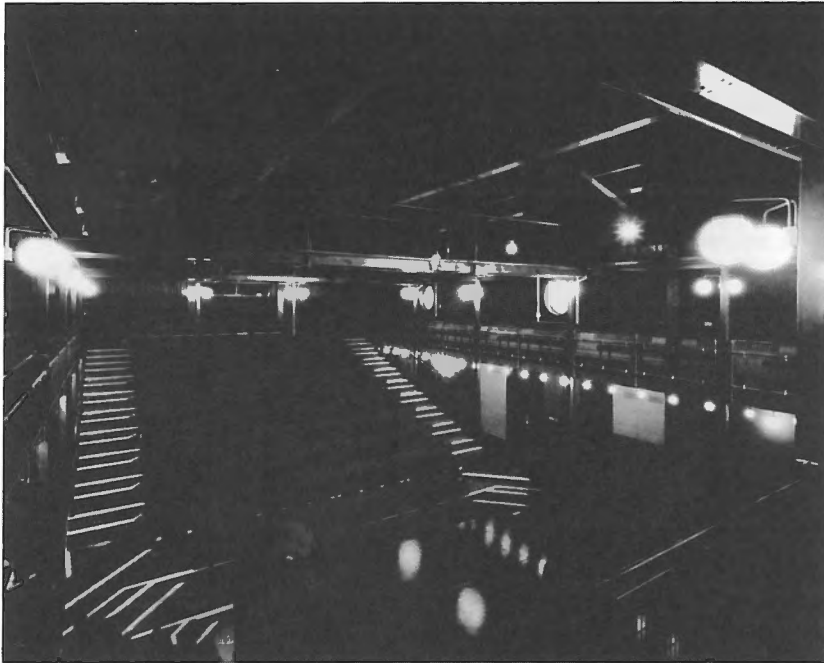
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Dulwich College Theatre seen from the playing fields and below showing the auditorium viewed from stage. Photographs by Martin Charles by courtesy Architects' Journal.

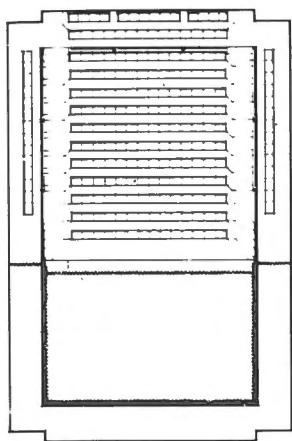


and that the major cuts in accommodation would happen in the front-of-house and backstage areas. This is a building in the context of a much larger campus, so certain activities can justifiably overflow elsewhere. The new building has dressing rooms for only about eight persons, enough for a small professional company perhaps, but the building is immediately adjacent to the existing changing rooms, into which the casts of thousands who tend to be involved in school plays can overflow with the possibility of a covered link between the two. Likewise additional lavatory and social spaces exist nearby to augment the modest foyer provision. In reality the foyer has proved to be adequate for most occasions although it was originally envisaged that it would be possible to extend it outwards if the need arose.

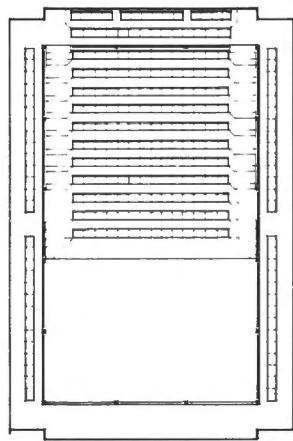
The auditorium is a rectangular courtyard space, with a gallery at first floor level running around all four sides. The flexibility of seating layouts and the ability to create a completely flat floor is achieved through the combination of a retractable bleacher seating unit, and a sunken pit area containing seating and staging rostra. Two rows of seats step down into the pit on three sides of a thrust stage form. The backs of the seats fold down and may then be covered with floor panels which span over them. By inserting the panels at the sides of the stage a wide end stage is created, and by adding the front panels and retracting the bleachers under the rear gallery the flat floor is formed. This arrangement gives a considerable choice of layouts (see opposite page) and because the seats around the stage are under the floor solves the storage problem normally associated with schemes where seats or rostra have to be removed. The surrounding gallery can be used either for seating or partly as a technical area, depending upon which stage form is in use.

The image of the building is derived partly from its playing field location, making reference to both the 1920's cricket pavilion nearby and the magnificent Victorian pile of the Main School, and partly from the need for it to identify itself as a theatre with an imagery which is 'dramatic' and can be read as something which is clearly not just another classroom or science block. I felt it was important that, although theatre is now a respectable part of the curriculum, the building should be seen by the pupils as a place of pleasure and entertainment.

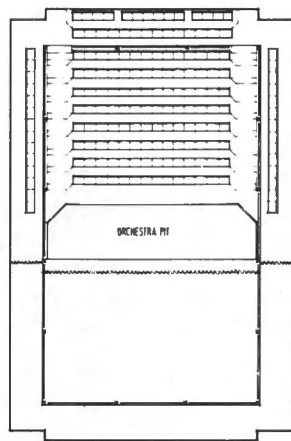
The foyers face towards the main school and burst out of the brick box of the building into a glass lean-to, which opens them to the playing fields, making them clearly visible, particularly at night. The galleries inside the theatre are repeated externally on the sides of the building with outside staircases leading up to them. These fulfil a number of functions. They reduce the volume of the building as a whole by placing the escape routes outside it, they provide access from backstage to the control room and front-of-house, protected by the large overhang of the roof, and they also act as places from which games on the playing fields can be viewed, replacing the function of the terrace in the larger scheme.



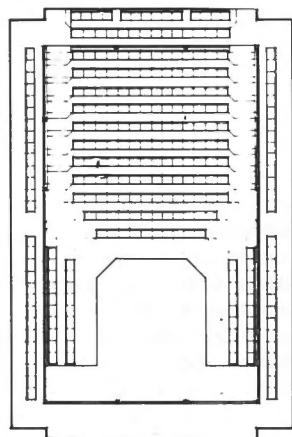
Scenic End Stage:
Capacity 210 adults



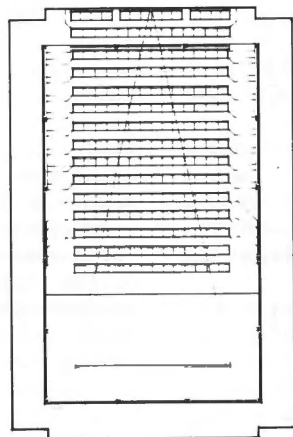
Non-scenic End Stage:
Capacity 260 adults



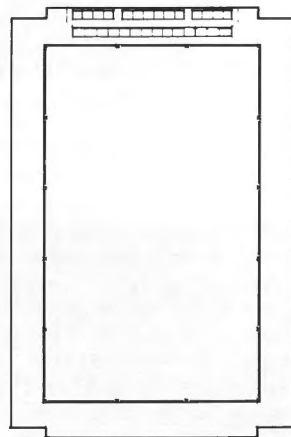
End Stage with Orchestra Pit:
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Thrust Stage:
Capacity 290 adults



Cinema/Lectures:
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I would like to say a word about colours in auditoria, which relates to both the buildings I have described. I see no virtue in the notion that the architecture should be painted black so that it disappears. Firstly in theatre of this scale the stage lighting alone will give considerable illumination to the rest of the space and the architecture will not disappear. Secondly where the stage is open and may often be used with little or no scenery the architecture should extend around and behind it, and to some extent becomes the scenery itself. Therefore while very light colours should be avoided I believe colour can be used to emphasise the articulation of the room and make it theatrical. In low cost schemes where the materials are often very basic, paint should be exploited to the full.

The Edward Alleyn Hall was completed in the summer of 1981 at a cost of £420,000, and receives incredibly intensive use for productions, large and small, lectures, concerts, assemblies, teaching and examinations.

Tricycle Theatre:

Architect: Tim Foster

Theatre Consultant: Theatre Projects

Seating capacity: 197

Cost: £125,000 excluding client's own fitting out (1980)

Edward Alleyn Hall:

Architect: Tim Foster

Theatre Consultant: Theatre Projects

Seating capacity: 210-290 depending on layout

Cost: £420,000 (1981)

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CHERISHING MOZART

FRANCIS REID tours the Salzburg memorials to the master of music theatre.

Salzburg is perhaps more of a mecca for the music theatre tourist than for the purist who prefers drama unimproved by music. (Said he, flaunting his personal theatric prejudice!)

However if Salzburg's debt is primarily to Mozart, the city has strong dramatic associations with Max Reinhardt whose *Everyman* stage is still erected annually beside the cathedral steps down which legend has it that Mozart was kicked by his archbishop. If Mozart's standard of social behaviour is accurately portrayed in Schaffer's *Amadeus*, then perhaps one can understand the actions of an archbishop with but a pre-Freudian education. There is a Max Reinhardt archive in Salzburg but its exhibition rooms at the Schloss Arenberg were devoted mainly to music theatre last summer – a celebration of rehearsal and backstage photographs, with some props, of previous Festivals. And a fascinating display it was for little me, visiting a Salzburg Festival at last, after more than thirty years of distant but constant contact through radio, gramophone, critical comment and hearsay.

My only previous visit was a chilly November overnight in 1961 when I took in a routine but charming operetta at the cosy red and white *Landestheater* which provides the city with its daily opera, drama and dance while the various festival performances (famous Summer, Karajan Easter and January Mozart) ebb and flow through the complex of Festival Theatres that nestle at and into the base of the castle-clad mountain which dominates the city.

But the motivation of my 1961 visit was to tour the technical facilities of the recently

completed *Festspielhaus*. I was on a shopping expedition for new Glyndebourne lighting, and there was time only for the briefest whisk around the Mozart Museum before catching the train to the next operatic city on my itinerary. (Whether it was Vienna or Munich is now beyond the direction recall cells in my cranium, but someday I will exhume all the notes of that trip from the score of filing boxes marked *Boards Historical* which include nearly a quarter-century's accumulation of information destined to become a book before too long.)

My 1982 trip was another hasty visit of stopover proportions but, in addition to a magic *Zauberflöte* and a Mozarteum Matinee, there was time for a goodly wallow in the collections of Mozartiana. The most evocative of the Salzburg museums is *Mozart's Geburtshaus*, a mediaeval building where his birth in 1756 was one of the more recent events. The Mozart's third-floor flat was their home for the first 17 years of W.A.'s life. It became a museum in 1880, housing items including those which the antecedents of the International Foundation Mozarteum had received from his widow and sons in 1840. The museum now occupies three floors of the house. The third floor, the original family rooms, contain what I suppose should be referred to as *relics*. Yet that is an inelegant word for items like the piano which he used for all the performances of his last ten years; or the clavichord with a pasted-on note from his widow confirming that this was the instrument on which the *Magic Flute*, *Clemenza di Tito* and the *Requiem* were among the works composed in five months.

The paintings are all familiar to anyone who has read Mozart books, or indeed studied the illustrated articles in programmes produced by most opera houses. There are scores, books and other print in addition to many items of personal family ephemera from buttons and hair through rings and prayer books to 'English plaster in envelop, brought by Mozart from London, 1765'. The authenticity of some of these items is presumably subject to debate of virtually insoluble complexity, but they add up to an atmosphere of highly-charged emotional ambience for anyone to whom Mozart's music is daily bread.

For the purely theatre historian, however, the major interest lies in the floor below the Mozarts' flat. Here there are

models of designs for productions of the operas, including 3-dimensional reconstructions from 2-dimensional paintings. The guide book claims around one hundred models. I did not count them, but I could have spent days and days assessing the various visual responses to the musical requirements made by the eyes and ears of some two centuries of interpretation of works which still arguably represent the summit of mankind's achievement in the realm of music theatre.

The collection naturally includes several of the more relatively recent Festival productions but my own particular excitements were a bunch of past *Magic Flutes* – perhaps because I was in Salzburg to see the current *Flute*. These include the famous Berlin Schinkel production, familiar from many books both on the composer and on set design. Also a Cuvilliestheater production of the same year, 1818. This includes a fully modelled proscenium zone of that theatre: particularly interesting for one who had just arrived from Munich (see CUE 19). And there is a *Queen of the Night* set against a big starry cyclorama designed by Hasait, the great cyc lighting originator.

The remaining floor is available for special exhibitions. Last summer's *Alla Turca* was a celebration of that opera, located and percussioned in Turkey, known to those who labour in opera houses as 'Entführung' or as 'Seraglio'. Scores, designs, photographs and props. And several gorgeous prints of the Vienna Hoftheater where the first performance took place.

The other Mozart residence in Salzburg is the *Tanzmeister' House* which was the home from which he set out on extensive travels between the ages of 17 and 25. This building was partially destroyed by a twentieth-century bomb, but the music room is now restored to house a collection of early music instruments and printed scores.

The *Mozarteum* is primarily interesting for purely musical rather than theatrical memories of Mozart. However, its garden provides a site for an artefact of inescapable emotional impact – the *Magic Flute Summerhouse*. It was in *Das Zauberflötenhäuschen* that Mozart composed the *Magic Flute* in 1791, the last year of his life. After a period of some 80 years including use as a rabbit house by a Viennese poultry dealer, it was moved to Salzburg in 1873. After a couple of other sitings, it was dismantled in 1950 and subjected to what is described as



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'a thorough scientific process of preservation' and re-erected in the gardens of the Mozarteum where it can be visited.

The Festival Theatres complex contains three stages. The *Grosse Festspielhaus* of 1961 is a 2370 seater with a stage that has not only a full complement of elevators and sliding wagons but a proscenium arch that is variable between 46 ft and 100 ft. Stage depth extends 215 ft at its deepest, with a projection dock blasted out of the mountain. The original festival theatre of 1928 has been rebuilt to form a 1350-seat *Kleines Festspielhaus* which shares with the *Felsenreitschule* a splendid foyer adapted from the former winter riding school. This was originally built for jousting and riding displays in 1694, with three galleries of 93 boxes cut into the walls of an old quarry. Reinhardt used it for performances in 1926 and it has subsequently been improved as a theatre until it is now Salzburg's particularly unique contribution to world theatre architecture – Walter Plinge's illustrated enthusiasm for it can be found on the back page of CUE 19. Outside the July-August period of the summer festival, there are daily tours of the three-theatre complex.

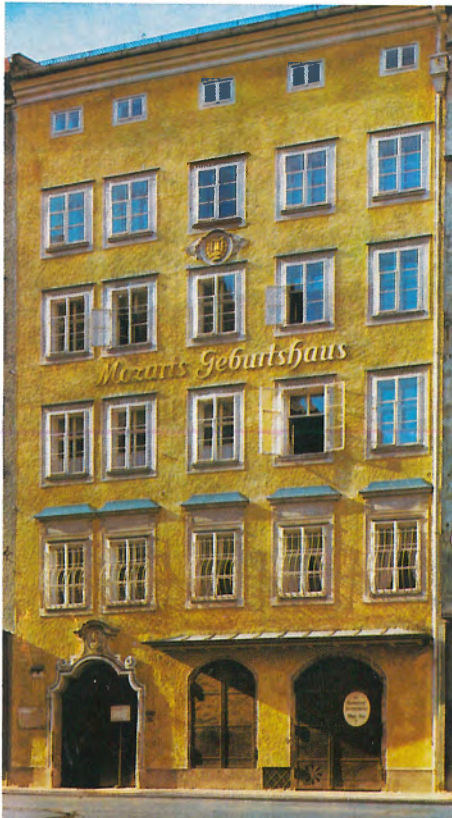
Salzburg is a city with theatric interest at every turn of a tourist's progress. Not to be missed are the famed *Marionettentheater*, the Residenz, the Cathedral or St Peter's. To say nothing of the pure theatricality of the city as an environment both in terms of architecture and location. And a few miles further along the road is Hellbrun – but that's another theatric story.



Salzburg's Landestheater, where opera, operetta, drama and dance are performed all year round. The Festival Theatre complex includes three auditoria for festival performances.



The Summer-house where Mozart composed *The Magic Flute* in Vienna. Now situated in the garden of the Salzburg Mozarteum.



Mozart's Birthplace: now a museum.



Mozart's *Entführung/Seraglio* at the Marionette Theatre.

Letters to the Editor

The Editor,
CUE Magazine

From Mr Derek Sugden

Sir,
I always enjoy reading Francis Reid, but particularly after he has been to Bayreuth. So far, I have failed in my annual battle with the box office computer but have my fingers crossed for the Solti-Hall 'Ring' this year.

The seating at Snape was inspired by the Bayreuth cane chairs but certainly not copied. We were having great difficulty in finding or designing the right sort of chair when finalising the design for Snape Concert Hall and it was Richard Butt of the BBC who suggested that we might think about cane seating similar to that at Bayreuth. I wrote to Wolfgang Wagner and he was extremely helpful with sending photographs and dimensioned sketches. He also assured us about their robustness, finishing his letter by saying that the only ones which had been replaced when Bayreuth re-opened after the War were those "damaged by the American Occupation Forces"! I understand the seating has now been replaced but up until recently the original cane chairs of 1876 were still in use. The only similarity with the Snape chairs was the use of cane, both the form and construction of the chairs are very different.

Following my article on "Theatre Acoustics" in CUE July/August 1982 I was very interested in Francis Reid's reference to my reporting of Professor Lothar Cremer's view about the "acoustic luck" due to King Ludwig II of Bavaria's insistence on the introduction of boxes on the rear wall of the theatre. I think it is important that Cremer's observations should be read within the context of the paper he gave on "Different Distributions of the Audience" at Heriot-Watt University in 1974. This can be read in 'Auditorium Acoustics' edited by Robert Mackenzie and published by Applied Science Publishers Limited, London. A very important paper for all those interested in the development of the auditorium.

I also welcomed Francis Reid's reference to Semper of Dresden fame and the influence he had on the design of the Festpielhaus. Everyone talks about composers, conductors and musicians, often overlooking the influence of architects and designers on the development of the auditoria where they perform. This year I have enjoyed reading "Bayreuth - The Early Years", edited by Robert Hertford and enjoyed especially the contrasts between the Central European seriousness of the music critic Hanslick and the scholarly but 'tongue in cheek' observations of George Bernard Shaw but I especially enjoyed the introduction which whets my appetite, and I would hope Francis Reid's, for a well-researched book on

Semper and the other architects who created this Great Opera House.

Perhaps Francis Reid will be able to find time amongst his many articles to produce this very important book one day.

DEREK SUGDEN

¶ After Snape seeking information from Bayreuth, it would have been rather appropriate if Bayreuth had studied the Snape seats when planning their own seating. I would much rather have a long sit at Snape than at Bayreuth, and that is a physical response although I much prefer the operas of Benjamin Britten to those of Richard Wagner. FR.

From Mr. Bob Herbert

Dear Walter,

In Issue No. 21 (Jan/Feb) you enthused over a 'gobo of lighting designers'.

Surely the object of such nonce words is to be witty, and where is the wit in this example?

Might I suggest that a better collective noun, and one that enshrines an historic term, would be a 'bunch' of lighting designers. If you don't like that, how about a 'circuit' or a 'batten' of the blighters? I think you were overly taken with the exotic sound of the word 'gobo' without bothering about its inherent imagery which really has no connotations of collection.

I enjoy your column. So does me old Yankee mate George Spelvin.

BOB HERBERT
The University of New England
Armidale, N.S.W. 2351
Australia

¶ That American word *bunch* may have crossed the Pacific but it got properly sunk in the Atlantic. Ayckbourn saw his lighting designers in a bar and, certainly to this plingular eye, *gobo* conjures up just the right texture for a collection of designers, glasses in hand, with the contents gradually producing a hazy ambience. WP.

From Mr. John S. Wheeler

Dear Sir,

For some time I have been disappointed with the quality of the sound at London musicals and Pirates at Drury Lane was no exception. I was therefore very interested to read the article by Philip Clifford in your last issue.

I now realise that my disappointment has not been caused, at least in one case, by lack of care or equipment. Could it be that modern musicals do not intend to present the human voice to the audience but rather the electronically processed voice as heard on records? Do directors and sound technicians think that audiences like it that way or is it the artists, recruited from television or recording studio who demand it?

In addition to making the sound too loud it also destroys the directional information. At Pirates I sat in the centre of the fourth row of the upper circle and the sound seemed to come from a point above the centre of the proscenium. Regardless of whether the actors faced up-stage or down or whether they stood left or right of the stage, the sound still came from the same place at the same intensity. So we could hear every word, which as Mr Clifford says is very important in this operetta, but we were sometimes left wondering who was saying them.

As I said at the beginning, I frequently find that the sound is the most disappointing feature of London musicals. I have only singled out Pirates because of the coincidence of seeing the production a few weeks before you published the article by Mr Clifford.

JOHN S. WHEELER
Sutton Passeys
8 Sandmartin Lane
Norton
Stockton-on-Tees
Cleveland TS20 1LP

'A Joyous Preface to the Games'

This is Robert J. Fitzpatrick, Director of the Los Angeles Olympic Arts Festival announcing their forthcoming Festival and the Royal Opera's part in it. It also marks the first visit of the Royal Opera to the United States.

The Los Angeles Olympic Organising Committee will be presenting the Royal Opera in conjunction with the Music Center Opera Association with the assistance of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association.

Sir John Tooley, General Director of the Royal Opera says about the visit "The Company will perform three opera productions in July 1984 in Los Angeles - three performances of Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, as the Company's British contribution to the Olympic Arts Festival, four performances of a new production of Puccini's *Turandot* and four performances of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*."

"*Turandot* will have its première in Los Angeles before opening the 1984-85 Covent Garden Season in London," Sir John said. "It is the first time the Royal Opera has ever premiered a production abroad."

Sir Colin Davis will conduct the three operas. All performances will be at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in the Music Center, Los Angeles.

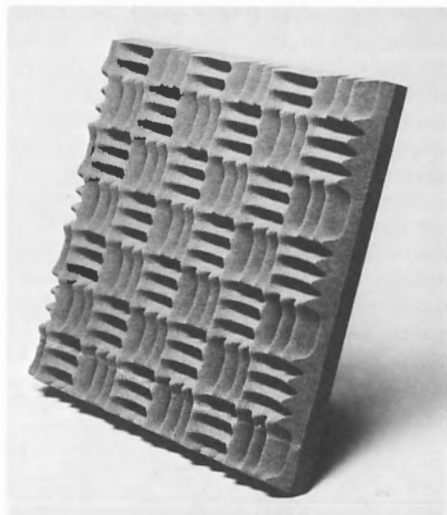
The Royal Opera's visit to the Olympic Arts Festival will be sponsored in part by Midland Bank of London, Crocker Bank of California, with additional financial support from the British Council, the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, The Music Center Opera Association and the American Friends of Covent Garden.

The Olympic Arts Festival is being produced by the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee with substantial support from the Times Mirror Company. The LAOOC Cultural Affairs Department is greatly assisted in the planning of the Olympic Arts Festival by the Cultural and Fine Arts Advisory Commission.

PRODUCT NEWS

New composition acoustic tiles

Good fire resistance and efficient sound absorption are of course the indispensable qualities of an acoustic tile, and Canford's new Illsonic acoustic foam possesses both in full measure. But you'll also want to know that they're made in 500 mm squares and 90 mm thick in five colours, that they are simplicity itself to install and finally that they are available from stock at Canford Audio, Stargate Works, Ryton, Tyne & Wear, NE40 3EX.



A thoughtfully designed lighting desk from Zero 88

The Eclipse multi-purpose lighting desk, first seen at the Frankfurt Music Fair, is being released in this country by Zero 88. This versatile 2 preset desk comprises five master panels — grand master, level memory, programmable chaser, switch memory and cartridge effects panel. Each panel has its own microprocessor and battery backup. The system is designed for assembly in groups of 12, from 24 to 96 channels. Careful thought has been given to the shape of the desk so that everything is within comfortable reach of a seated operator. Further information from Zero 88 Lighting Ltd., Hart Road, St. Albans, Herts.



Introducing Rosco videokits

Lighting conditions in the television studio or sound stage are generally controllable. But most film and video is shot outside the studio in the real world, and here the lighting must achieve a consistency while controlling a constantly changing environment.

Based on experience of working with cinematographers and lighting directors around the world, Rosco has developed a range of filter kits for film and video lighting. These kits will deal with the most frequently encountered lighting situations in controlled lighting environments or on location.

The *Tungsten Correction Kit* contains five 10" x 12" sheets of different materials to raise the Kelvin temperature of tungsten light sources. These materials are used in film and television productions when the basic source of light is daylight and additional fill or key light is generated by tungsten sources.

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In the *Creative Colour Kit* there are ten colour filters chosen from the range of over three hundred colours which Rosco produces for theatre, film and television lighting. Each of the 10" x 12" sheets is deep-dyed on a heat resistant base and is ideal for the light used in most video productions.

There are also two *Reflector Packs*, each with a single 18 sq. ft. sheet of light-weight reflector material. *Roscopack W* combines a silver or 'hard' reflector surface on one side and a matt white or 'soft' reflector surface on the other. *Roscopack D* has the same 'hard' reflector surface on one side, but the other surface is blue, to allow tungsten light to be reflected as nominal daylight.

For full details of the kits contact Roscolab Ltd, 69-71 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PQ, telephone 01-633 9220.

Bradford and Preston Two wins for BOCS

Space-Time Systems announce two more large orders for their computerised theatre box-office management system (BOCS) totalling £300,000.

The City of Bradford wanted a system which could deal with ticket sales and accommodate some fairly complicated patterns such as subscription concerts as well as the now familiar BOCS auditorium sales plan. The system will be used for other management information, stock control, and as a key marketing tool.

Phase One of the BOCS installation will go live in July 1983. This will serve the 1600-seat Alhambra which is Bradford's national touring theatre and the 2000-seat concert hall in the City Centre, the St. George's Hall.

The next phase at Bradford is due for completion in the autumn and will involve the linking of all of Bradford's theatres, halls and leisure centres.

The second order is from Preston Borough Council where "particular emphasis was placed on the system being user friendly", explained Vin Sumner, Preston's Entertainments Director.

The BOCS system comprising dual PDP/11s 23+ will be installed in the Guildhall Entertainments Centre which houses the 800-seat touring theatre, the Charter Theatre, and the multi-configuration Grand Hall. This is an exciting entertainments venue which converts from an exhibition hall, to a hall seating 2000, to a concert hall with seating and some standing space for promenaders!

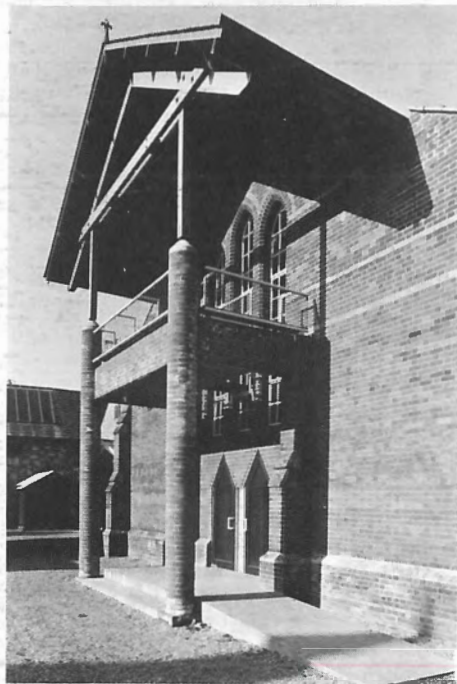
Further information from Mr. Tom Pate, Space-Time Systems, 73-75 Endell Street, London, WC2H 9AJ.

Between Cues

The thoughts of Walter Plinge

Focus of Entry

There can be no disagreement that the hub of any theatre is the stage. But what follows next in importance? The bar? How about the front door? Should not the entrance be a point of primary focus in the design of any building? And should not a theatre's door be boldly positive with more than a hint of come hither? The Barbican design team would probably disagree: if there is a dramatic point of entry to the City of London's house of performance, then it is certainly not the one that I pass through. Converting a Victorian school gym into a theatre at Winchester, Edward Cullinan has built a portico and got it right. Just right. He had to. Any architect, contributing to an environment that is the result of centuries of harmonious building, bears special responsibility on behalf of his own generation. From whichever angle it is viewed, Cullinan's door is bold in its statement, yet totally sympathetic to both surrounding structures and to the sky — as well as to the theatre to which it gives entry.



More bad language

If prioritisation (CUE 21, this page) is bad language, how about DIARISATION! Or, in the admisspeak of Hi Fli chairpersons, *Shall we diarise?*

Productivity marches on

Productivity is the great tragedy of our age. The promise of technology was more wealth produced by the same number of

people. The reality is the same wealth produced by less people. The theatre industry's version is smaller cast plays produced by more administrators. Since productivity is, in effect, a euphemism for unemployment, the television industry is holding its mirror up to nature by making redundancy a daily sub-plot. (Mrs Plinge points out that this helps to prepare society for the inevitable — as did the Victorian novelists' preoccupation with death.) For true theatrical productivity we must look to Samuel Phelps. In his *Henry V*, forty soldiers marched behind a high ground row — each carrying, strapped to his body, a pair of wickerwork dummies in armour with heads by Madame Tussaud.

Warming the cools

Long, long before I ever met Joe Davis, he taught me something absolutely fundamental about lighting design. I learned it from him by observing cause and effect during my normal theatregoing. In this case the cause was the colours I could see in the foh spots and the effect was that of these colours upon the actors' faces. The message was that predominantly cool blue scenes require a discreet warm additive to enhance the plasticity of these faces. That this is still not universally understood became apparent during a recent comedy with an extended blue-lit scene. It was excellently written and acted, and so we audience laughed abundantly in all the funny places. But following the nuances of eyes, teeth, nostrils and cheekbones was rather a strain. How much easier for actors and audience if some warm tones had been added to the general wash of not-so-pale cool tints.

Toilet training

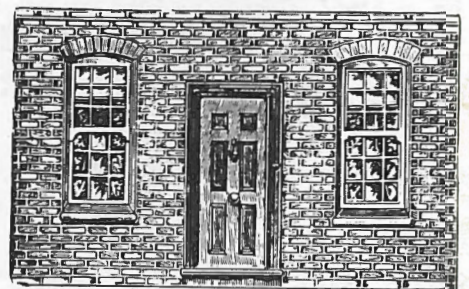
Among my received knowledge there are a number of items that I have always been fully prepared to accept without the confirmation of research. One such example is the tradition whereby stage carpenters, in the days of outdoor toilets, fitted a line and cleat in lieu of a door lock so that junior could start learning basic stagecraft from an early age — well, from as soon as he could sit. I suppose they fit pin-hinges now. Perhaps with a hammer to straighten the bent pins.

Scenography by lithography

If a scene is shabby in portions, judicious handling of curtains and hangings, pictures and ornaments, combined with clever placing of furniture will deceive an audience to the extent of the shabbiness being ignored. This is not an Arts Council direc-

tive to its recession-hit clients, but an extract from *French's Catalogue of Scenery* published in an undated year when a backcloth could be assembled from twenty-five sheets of quad crown paper, lithographed in full colour, for the outlay of one pound, seventeen shillings and sixpence. Calico for mounting this scene cost one pound and sixteen shillings. Those of more affluent means or doubting that *a paperhanger or billposter will render the necessary aid* could buy ready-mounted on linen, together with one roller and one batten for the vast but inclusive sum of six pounds. Would it not perhaps be rather fun for someone to design a production in the style of this catalogue? It's all there, listed and illustrated — oak chambers, panelled drawing rooms and tree wings with enough subtle variations in foliage to make the average gobo look like a fragment of redundant colander. There is even a printed pillared proscenium of classical intent, infinitely variable both as to the horizontal and the vertical, with optional pale blue tabs lithographed on strong paper representing puffed light blue satin. But do please remember *when picking cushion covers, be careful to consider the frocks ladies in the play will wear.*

HOUSE PIECE.



This can be purchased in any size. It is not kept mounted. The brickwork will also be found very useful for making garden walls.

	s.	d.
Brickwork, 40 in. by 30 in., per sheet	1	6
Street Door, comprising 3 sheets, 7 ft. by 3 ft.	3	6
Street Window, comprising 2 sheets, 6½ ft. by 2½ ft.	2	6
Sky Paper, 40 in. by 30 in., per sheet	1	6

Rehearsal relationships

Do not on any account miss *Noises Off*, currently at the Savoy but surely destined for saturation staging including tours to all those parts that the regional theatre network does not reach. Michael Frayn uses a play within a play framework to construct a farce with impeccable technique in the highest traditions of what is arguably the drama's most difficult genre. Absolutely no knowledge of backstage life is required to understand and appreciate the play. However, for the insider there is the most deliciously funny, most accurate and most penetratingly understanding portrayal I can remember of the rehearsal relationships both between the actors, and with the directors, stage managers, and objects that these actors tolerate as adjuncts to their performances.