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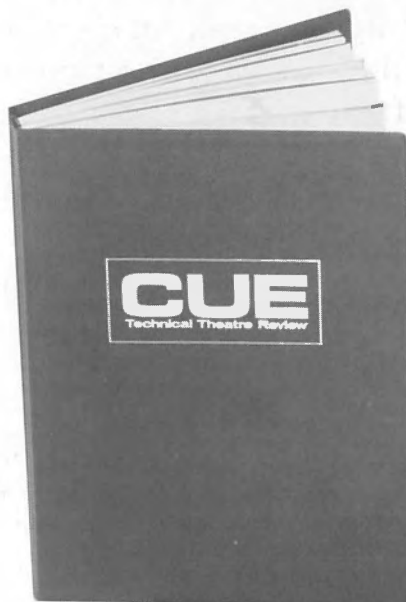
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Cover picture

The giants in *Das Rheingold*, a striking example of William Dudley's design skill for Wagner's "Ring Cycle" at Bayreuth this summer. David Fingleton describes his visit to the *Festspielhaus* on page 4 of this issue and some of the technical triumphs which made it work. Photograph by Siegfried Lauterwasser, copyright Festspielleitung, Bayreuth.

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Cue is an independent magazine published bi-monthly by Twynam Publishing Ltd.

Available on subscription
UK £10.50 per annum (6 issues)
Europe and Overseas £13.00

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CUE

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The Byte and the Chip

This is CUE 25, modestly celebrating its fourth birthday. An occasion not so much for looking back as a time for looking at what modern technology has done and will continue to do to improve theatre performances and prospects in the next decade.

Of course technology will continue to furnish us with ever more sophisticated computers with which to control not just our lighting and sound systems but the whole gamut of theatre craft. So who is going to control the computers. Will it be the designer as we know him, who must now learn the mysteries of computer programming, or will it be a computer buff desperately searching for more artistic expression between the digits 1–10.

The answer is important for theatre; it is probably a compromise between the two. Certainly our colleges and drama schools will need to take a good hard look at their teaching curricula if artistic standards are not to be diminished by a failure to familiarise our students with the byte and the chip.

STAGE DESIGN

DAVID FINGLETON finds some truly questing visual minds at work in Bayreuth, Edinburgh and London.

In staging Wagner's "Ring Cycle" at Bayreuth this summer director, Sir Peter Hall, and designer, William Dudley were undertaking an almost impossibly difficult assignment. For both it was their first "Ring", and they were producing from scratch four enormous operas in Wagner's own holy of holies, the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, in a rehearsal period of little over two months with an entirely unfamiliar stage crew. Moreover neither speak fluent German and thus many of their instructions had to be interpreted. Furthermore, the Hall/Dudley approach aimed to get back to Wagner's own stage directions and to interpret *The Ring* as naturalistically as possible.

Given such starting conditions my surprise was not that some ideas missed the mark or were imperfectly executed, but much more that so much was magnificently right and visually breath-taking. It also did not surprise me to learn from Dudley on returning to London that about 30% of his and Hall's ideas were either incompletely realised or never reached the stage at all; this as a combination of the restrictions of German fire and safety regulations, and the inability of the local stage crew to execute in the limited time available what was intended.

Nevertheless, Dudley's primary design concept, the mobile hydraulic platform, emphatically did reach the stage, and served the production magnificently. Technically designed by Mike Barnet, the hydraulics engineer who works for both the Royal Opera House and the National Theatre, this enormous platform weighing 8 tons resembles in plan a huge architect's drawing board. Fifteen metres in width, the platform has a travel backwards and forwards and up and down of ten metres and is suspended on two sets of wheeled "legs" running on railway lines, through which it could rotate a full 360 degrees. It is controlled by two operators sitting at a desk in the wings and was magnificently successful in taking us from earth to heaven and back again when required, even if it meant strapping Brünnhilde to its underside, head towards the audience, and then tipping her up and over to be ready to be awakened by Siegfried. That Hildegard Behrens in the role did this uncomplainingly and sang superbly is no small tribute to the work of the designers.

Other Dudley concepts that worked splendidly were first and foremost the huge water tank used for the Rhinemaidens at the beginning of the Cycle. This weighed 50 tons, had a water depth of 1 foot 8 inches, was eight metres in width and over eight metres up and down stage. The tank was placed at the stage level, but masked by scenery, and above it was suspended an enormous mirror angled at



Gotterdammerung — the final destruction of Valhalla. Director, Sir Peter Hall, Designer, William Dudley. Copyright photograph Festspielleitung, Bayreuth.



William Dudley's mobile hydraulic platform as used in *Die Walküre* Act 3.

45 degrees so as to give an entirely credible impression that the three naked Rhinemaidens were actually swimming in the Rhine before Alberich's gaze. It was a brilliant concept stunningly executed. So was Hunding's Hut in the first act of *Die Walküre* with its walls sliding silently up and away at the arrival of spring to leave the lovers surrounded by the forest. Mime's Forge at the beginning of *Siegfried*, the final destruction of Valhalla at the end *Gotter-*

dammerung, and the marvellous giants in *Das Rheingold*, for whom Dudley employed the sprung flexible stilts used by men working on air-conditioning installations above false ceilings in office buildings, were other examples of the designer's skills being used and realised at the highest level.

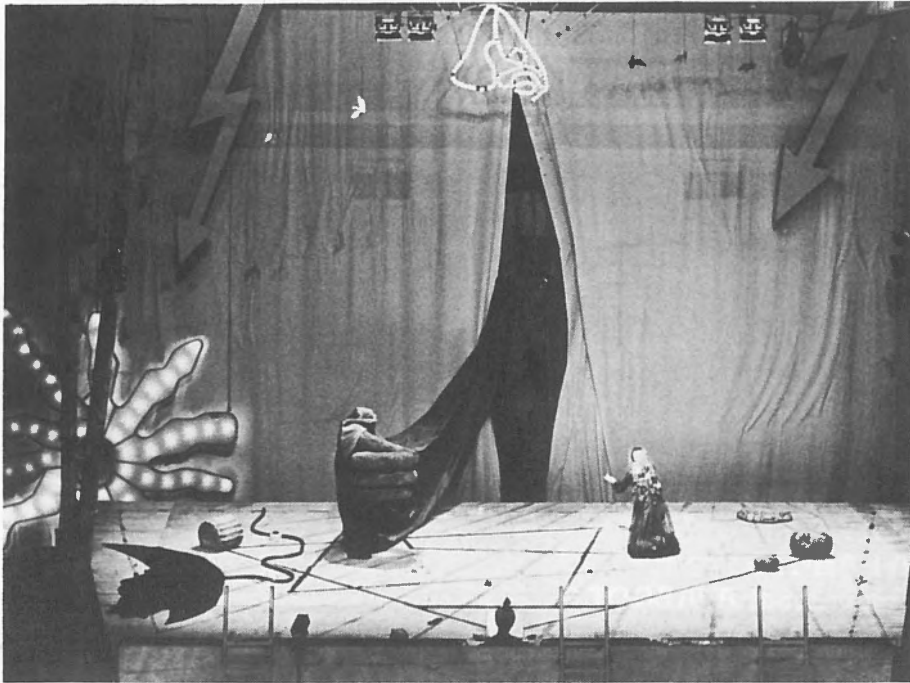
If other scenes were less successful, such as the second act of *Die Walküre* and the first act Gibichung Hall set for *Gotterdammerung* this is largely because they were in-



FRICKA (Doris Soffel) *Rheingold*. Costume: William Dudley. Photo: Wilhelm Rauh



GUTRUNE (Josephine Barstow) *Gotterdammerung*. Costume: William Dudley. Photo: Wilhelm Rauh



Achim Freyer's design for the Hamburg State Opera production *Die Zauberflöte* at Edinburgh Festival

complete: a splendid incentive to return to Bayreuth over the next few years to witness their completion. If I do so I will hope to discover that both the lighting and the use of a skrim throughout the Cycle will have been reconsidered. Dudley claims that the skrim is essential to permit the changes of air and atmosphere called for by the production, but I found it alienating and unwieldy and that it removed the naturalism at which his and Hall's concept aimed. The lighting, by

Manfred Voss the local expert, was dim and imperfectly realised. I could not help wondering what might have been achieved by such a lighting man as David Hersey whom I gathered it had originally been Hall and Dudley's plan to use.

But, taken overall, and despite the boos of blinkered locals and predictably pallid, or even hostile, reaction of some of the British press, I found this a compelling and fascinating staging of Wagner's Ring. It was

also remarkably true to Wagner, as could be seen by anyone who took the trouble to visit Wahnfried, his house in Bayreuth, where in the basement is exhibited a selection of set models going back to the earliest Bayreuth productions. Given the bonus of modern technology, the resemblance between this "English" Ring and those at the end of the nineteenth century was quite astonishing.

Back in Britain, and at the Edinburgh Festival I could only reflect on the good fortune of Hall and Dudley to have been working in the admirably equipped Festspielhaus in Bayreuth, rather than the miserably inadequate establishments that are forced to serve as opera houses in parsimonious and static Edinburgh. The Hamburg State Opera were visitors to the Festival for the fourth time since it began in 1947, and this time had to split their two productions between the pint-sized King's Theatre and the odious Playhouse, a grotesque cinema whose only advantage can be that it seats 3,000 people.

Of the productions brought the one which suffered most from its venue was Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* in the distinguished artist Achim Freyer's fascinating if controversial staging and which had to suffer the Playhouse's total unsuitability for the presentation of opera.

At the King's one noted that Margit Bardy's designs for the double bill of short operas by Zemlinsky, taken from short stories by Oscar Wilde, were well-organised and attractive, if clearly rather reduced by the narrowness of the stage, and that they succumbed to the contemporary fashion for up-dating the settings of operas to the time of their composition rather than that of the libretto. Whether turn of the century settings for stories of matrimonial mayhem in renaissance Italy and of the Dwarf given as a 12th birthday present to a spoilt Spanish Infanta were altogether apposite I beg leave to doubt, but they looked attractive and showed commendable colour sense. Achim Freyer's *Magic Flute* was of a different order. Written off as "junk" by some critics, this "nursery games" realisation, set in a tatty circus tent abounded in magic and mystery, had quite remarkable lighting, apparently inspired by amusement arcades, and some superb coups de théâtre which even the Playhouse was unable to destroy. Best of these perhaps was Sarastro's giant hand which "walked" across the stage to control the lesser mortals. This was the sort of production which demonstrated a truly questing visual mind — if only one could have seen it in its proper setting.

No space is left to do proper justice to two highly distinguished recent examples of British stage design in the London theatre. Suffice it to say that both Ralph Koltai's stylised and immensely elegant settings for the RSC's new production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* at the Barbican, and Carl Tom's masterly use of a revolve backed by projections on grey screens for John Osborne's *A Patriot for Me*, transferred from the Chichester Festival to Theatre Royal, Haymarket, both demonstrated why British stage design consistently does so well in Prague.

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The Oxford Playhouse

STEPHAN CHAMBERS AND
HARRY RITCHIE

The Appeal to save the Oxford Playhouse is about to reach its target of £250,000. The Playhouse has been rescued from closure and its future is secure – for a couple of years at least. Now that the Playhouse has been granted a little breathing space it seems as opportune a moment as any to ask an all too obvious question – why was such an appeal necessary in the first place?

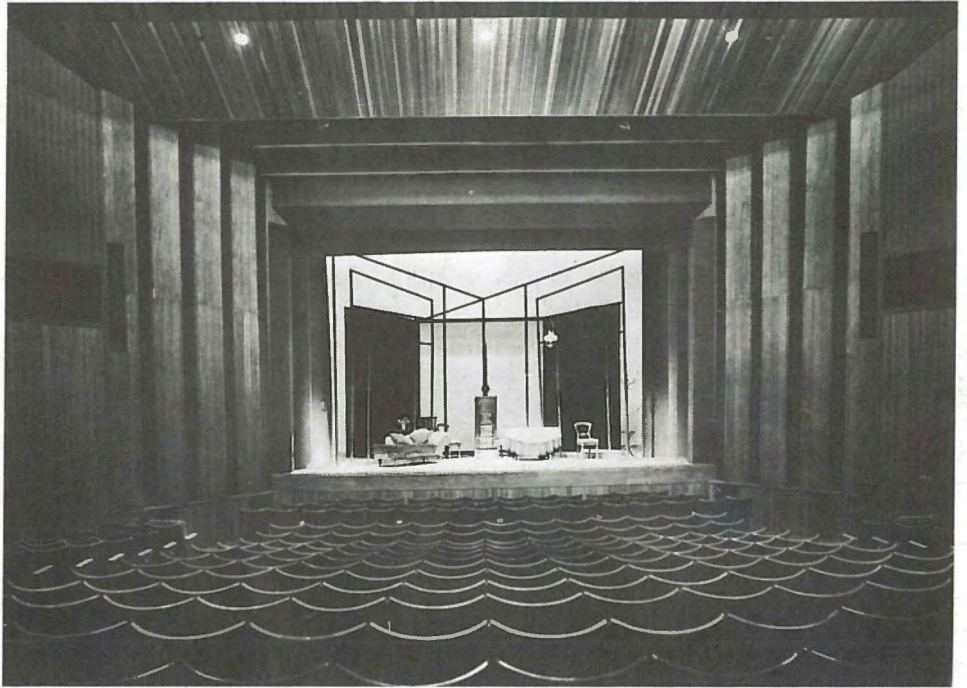
At first sight the Playhouse would appear to enjoy many advantages, not shared by other provincial set-ups. Oxford should provide a good theatre-going public. The catchment area spreads beyond the university and Oxford's prosperous middle-class to the affluent villages and towns of the Cotswolds and Thames Valley. The Playhouse itself is ideally situated in the centre of Oxford. In addition, the university funds the theatre to the tune of £80,000 per annum. The innocent inquirer would automatically assume that this is a privileged venue not prone to the hardships facing others. The opportunities for success so obviously exist.

Or so it seems. In this case every silver lining has a cloud. The peculiar and deep-rooted conflicts in the funding and ownership of the Playhouse have unfortunately led the Company and the Theatre to the brink of closure.

For the Oxford Playhouse is not one institution but two: the Playhouse Theatre is owned by the University and houses the Playhouse Company (which is funded by the Arts Council and the parsimonious local authority) for a maximum of twenty weeks in the year. Although the Company and the Theatre are supposed to share a general artistic policy, legally and financially these are two separate entities.

As a result the Playhouse Theatre has two conflicting commitments – to the demands of its university owners and to its need for box-office support. This town and gown problem is highlighted when the Playhouse loses its chance to cash in on peak term-time audiences because the venue has to be given over to student performances. (Local people tend to see the Playhouse as a kind of university club not a theatre for the town like the neighbouring Apollo. A sign of this was the paltry amount raised by individual contributions to the Playhouse Appeal).

The Playhouse Company has lost out on this arrangement, of course, being unable to build up a local identity and a local following. Paradoxically, the Oxford public also tends to take the Company's presence for granted, because the difference between the Theatre's and the Company's identity has not been publicised enough. People think



The Playhouse Theatre's auditorium showing bevelled ceiling which conceals lantern rigs.

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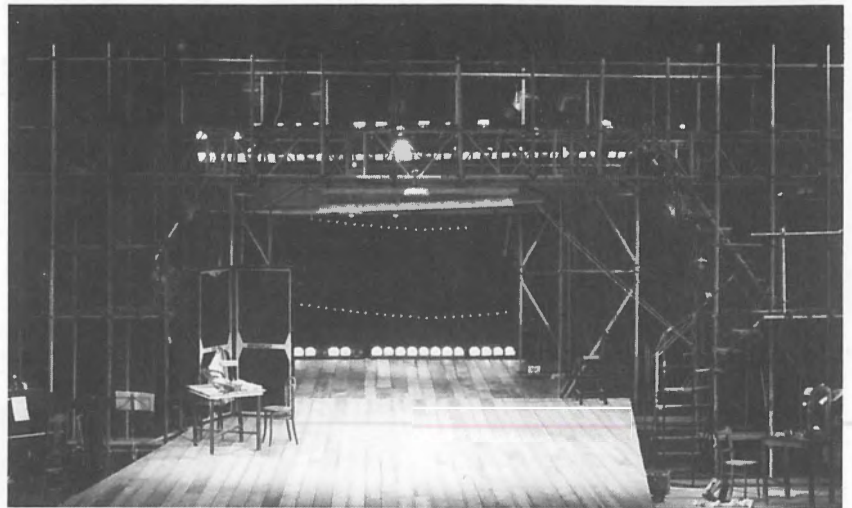
the Company is more or less permanently resident so its performances are rarely greeted with a sense of occasion. That promisingly enthusiastic and wealthy public prefers to enthuse and spend its money in Stratford or London.

Until two years ago these obstacles did not prevent the Theatre from breaking even. However, a 6% decline in attendance figures over the last two years has meant an annual deficit, even with a constant subsidy from the University. With the Grants Committee cutting the University's finances the Playhouse could no longer look to its guardian to cover its annual losses of £35,000. As Barry Sheppard, Administrator of the Theatre, is quick to point out, the university did not cut its basic support: "to its credit the university still thinks the theatre's a valuable contribution".

With this sympathetic attitude the university guaranteed to cover the deficit until July 1984, on condition that the Playhouse raised £250,000 to underwrite their losses for the next four years. Hence the Playhouse Appeal.

In its way the course of the Appeal is a variation on the Playhouse's familiar theme of external benevolence masking internal disappointment. Support came from wealthy institutions like the Rhodes Trust, the Sainsbury Trust, and individual colleges. However, the Playhouse's own effort at a moneyspinner came unstuck. The directors had hit on the idea of inviting Glenda Jackson to play *Mother Courage* in a charity performance. All seemed to be going well until the plan was scuppered by the National Theatre who own exclusive rights to the play and refused its performance.

True to form, the Playhouse has been saved largely by the generosity of other institutions. To survive in the future it will have to



Set for *Mephisto*, clearly showing the Playhouse thrust rake stage extended five rows into the auditorium.

learn to stand more successfully on its own two feet. Although there is financial pressure to go downmarket, Barry Sheppard hopes that viability will not mean having to change the artistic policy. But if the Playhouse is to remain committed to a classical repertoire and the support of new playwrights (like Doug Lucie, one-time writer-in-residence at the Playhouse), it will need to develop an immediately appealing programme. With this in mind, Barry Sheppard thinks that the transfer of successful London fringe productions - *Trafford Tanzi* for instance - "needs to be carefully looked at".

Sheppard's other hope to improve the Playhouse's situation is the St. Paul's Project - the conversion of a crumbling church nearby into a 250/300 seat theatre. This would allow more term-time productions while student drama takes over the Playhouse auditorium.

Another proposal has been Francis Warner's idea for a theatre to be built behind the Playhouse and linked to it by underground passage to share dressing rooms and workshops. This, however, seems to be more in the way of a pipe-dream rather than a viable project. Less spectacular, but of more practical and immediate benefit, is the recent establishment of a publicity department which is shared by both the Company and the Theatre. Perhaps this may create the local interest and enthusiasm which will be vital for the survival of both.

If funds from the Appeal can be made available it would be good to see money channelled through to the Playhouse's Technical Directors. At the moment Resident Technician Ray Cross says he is reasonably happy with the existing equipment but he and his colleagues would certainly benefit from investment.

As regards the theatre itself, development is necessarily restricted by the traditional structure of the auditorium. However, the fixed seating and proscenium arch format does accommodate a thrust rake stage which extends five rows into the auditorium. The thrust rake stage was used to fine effect in a recent run of *Mephisto*, and showed that there was scope for variety in production. One area in which money would be well spent is the present lighting-board (Strand 3Set 100Way). This can cause problems for visiting companies used to computerised lighting-boards who find fast get-ins difficult as a result.

After all, the basic challenge facing the Playhouse Theatre is to make the venue an attractive proposition - for visiting companies and the public alike. Future productions already planned include the Young Vic's *Real Inspector Hound* and the Playhouse Company in *Educating Rita* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. Ayckbourn's *Table Manners* is scheduled for the Christmas season and should prove a lucrative choice.

Better facilities, better marketing and publicity, better productions - the Playhouse needs all of these if it is to prosper in the future. The Appeal has given it the chance to overcome its problems. It is a chance the Playhouse simply must take.

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Puppet Theatre Lighting

GRENVILLE MIDDLETON

It seems to me that lighting for the puppet theatre is in its infancy, aptly described by the bard himself: "mewling and puking in the nurse's arms."

The puppet theatre, that is, where only puppets appear and no human form is present, can give the most wonderful opportunities for lighting, ranging from delicate pastel skies to violent thunder storms.

Puppet books usually devote an obligatory chapter on lighting which will help the uninitiated in the simple technical aspects, e.g. make use of an anglepoise etc. The book starts the aspiring puppet theatre designer thinking and within weeks he is looking at computer controlled boards etc. The books never say "Be aware of the sun", and so one sees booth after booth being set up at a fair or some such event in such a way as to end up with the sun glaring down at the audience and poor old Mr. Punch in the shadow. The colourful booth itself is beautifully backlit and makes a romantic evening picture but of course the would-be

impresario is busy making his audience frown and suffer throughout the performance.

Lighting is, in my opinion, one of the primary factors of the show, the others being music and the dialogue/plot. The puppets themselves are well down the list. In fact with lighting and music the presentation of a Wilfred Owen poem could well do without puppets at all.

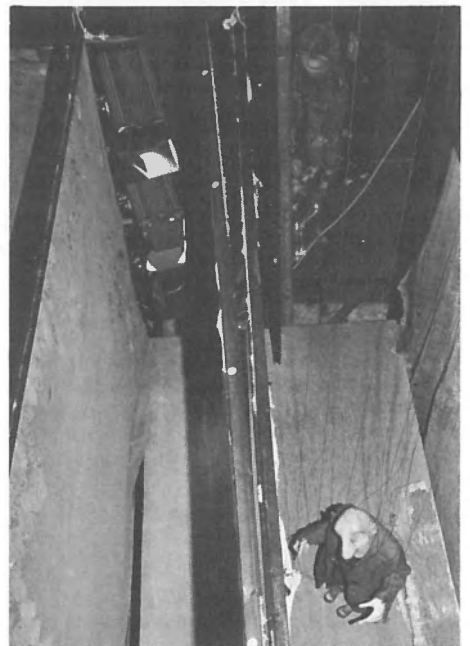
My own lighting is now entirely devoted to marionettes, having trained and worked as a lighting cameraman I have at last found a medium where I can have total control and not be subject to the director's whims.

It has become apparent to me, after touring and playing at the assorted venues available throughout the country, that the lighting design must begin from the moment the punter steps through the entrance into the foyer. Control of this aspect of the lighting is not possible without control of the venue itself.

To this end a Thames lighter was con-



Puppet in relation to Minuette Fresnels. Photographs by Steve Sharples.



Marionette stage showing depth & gauzes. Lamps on stage right.

verted into an intimate marionette theatre with raked seating for 50, stage area, foyer, bar, toilets etc.

I have found that equipment and facilities for lighting, be it film, stage, video, or exhibition, are usually determined by budget and availability; the barge proved no exception.

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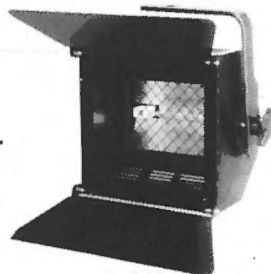
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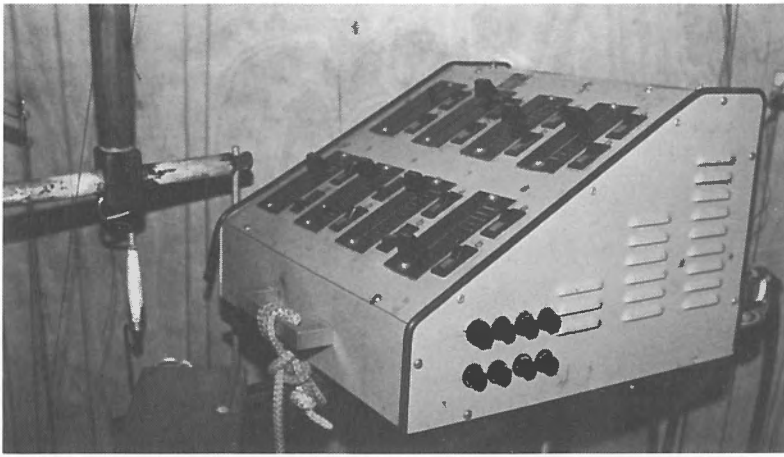
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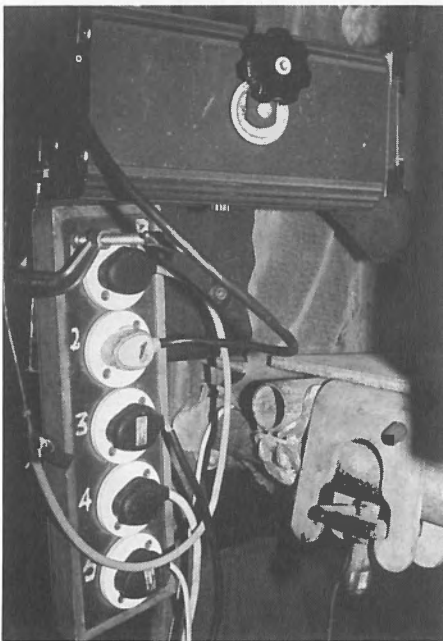
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The Puppet Theatre on its way through London.

ing sites is usually only a 13 amp point so every fraction of an amp is given to the stage. For lighting the entrance and foyer, oil lamps (the safest form for a steel vessel) were chosen. Because the use of oil lamps is legitimate on a boat, the lighting is given a great bonus in the wonderful contrast with what will be seen on the stage. The audience is made aware of the beauty of light, before the show even begins, who will deny that the light from an oil lamp is peaceful and even romantic.

Having passed through the foyer into the auditorium, electricity takes over, and again creative lighting is playing a part as the house and curtain dressing lights controlled on household dimmers continue the magic with a slow fadeout set to music.

The stage measures 7' x 4' with the cyc set back approximately 4'. The lighting equipment comprises 10 CTT Minuette fresnels and 2 profile spots together with 3 banks of white and coloured PAR 38 Floods. The whole is controlled by a small custom made dimmer board with 8 dimmers each with two outlets. One dimmer is capable of handling 1000 watts allowing 2 Minuettes to

be used per dimmer. Simplicity is the order of the day.

A stack of 4 Minuettes is mounted downstage right and left, plugged into dimmers 1 - 4. Each lamp is switched. The PAR 38s light the background and are usually plugged into dimmers 6 and 7, each colour on a different circuit. Dimmers 5 and 8 are used for floating spots either centre right and left or any other concealed position needed for some effect or other. Prolific use is made of gels, gauze etc.

The whole show is carefully choreographed to a pre-recorded tape. The lighting plot has to be learned by heart, there is no time for reading the sheets, as changes are executed whilst operating puppets.

There is now a continuous supply of new products on the market. Lamp heads are almost small enough for the traditional puppet theatre and various control desks are available but, alas until the puppet theatre can count on some measure of public subsidy there is small chance of its being able to afford the sort of made-to-measure equipment so badly needed, unless of course one of the lighting giants can spot an opportunity here

for putting their bread upon the waters.

John Blundall has written in this magazine: "In many parts of the world dance and the puppet theatre are the two major growth areas in theatrical expression".

Nineteenth-century marionettists with their transformation scenes set the pace for modern lighting; perhaps the twenty-first century will see puppet companies showing the way once again.

Moving pictures can be received on a postcard size receiver; surely these electronic achievements can be grabbed by lighting equipment designers. May I suggest that manufacturers attach a designer to a puppet company and I calculate that all stage lighting will benefit from the operation.

Film and video have yet to capture some of the more dramatic moods which are possible with puppets. Again, because the luminaires used are too big and because puppets do not like bigness they refuse to be moody. Even the old Mole-Richardson pup is too big.

Anyway, film and television people should leave puppets alone; they only use them for light banter thus diminishing themselves and the puppets. Forgive me, E.T. I know you are bigger than us all and the child of the film.

A rare opportunity

When you next go down to Monmouth make your way to Church Street and the Magic Lantern Theatre. There you may, if the fancy takes you, recapture and enjoy the sort of performances which astonished and amused our grandparents - Victorian magic lantern shows using the original hand-painted slides, lanterns and music of the period - a Victorian spectacular presented in the grand manner of those magnificent performances to be seen in London in 1870.

But just in case your only memory of a magic lantern show is one of those dreary Band of Hope promotions accompanied by static slides and punctuated by taps on the floor to call up the next horror picture, may we remind you that magic lantern pictures also moved in those days, anticipating the Maltese cross by many years and by many more years, the showing of colour pictures.

So for your delectation and divertisement as a Victorian Music Hall chairman might say and as Michael Bartley now says, "we offer Zoro-Aster's spectacular Magic Lantern Show including dissolving views, the splendid melodramatic story of Jane Conquest, a little Victorian phantasmagoria, ghosts, goblins, sorcerers. A visit to the Circus, a unique set of 'Robinson Crusoe' actually shown by the famous lanternist E. H. Wilkie at the Royal Polytechnic."

Give it a whirl, pay a visit when you're next in Monmouth - it's a real change from the box. The magic Lantern Theatre is in Church Street, Monmouth, Gwent. Bookings: Box Office telephone 0600 3146 or Keith Prowse, 01-636 8686.

REIDing Shelf

Cambridge is celebrating a centenary this year: the survival of the **FOOTLIGHTS**. I say 'survival' because I have discovered from reading Robert Hewison's commemorative history that, while continuity has never been broken, the Footlights Club is hardly in the league that I had always supposed it to be – a venerable institution carried onwards and upwards on a tide of tradition. But then, while a respect for tradition can generally be expected to produce movement in a generally forward direction, it takes positive reaction rather than simple pure action to create growth. And so successive post-war generations of footlit graduates have been able to emerge from what might have been the inhibiting shadows of immediate predecessors who were enabling the BBC to do for comedy what the Royal Court (and Sydney Newman at ABC TV) did for drama. I say 'post-war' because, apart from producing the Hulbert brothers and Davy Burnaby, the first 65 years or so of the Footlights leaves an impression of harmlessly decadent drink and drag in an atmosphere of smoky chauvinism. Whereas the more recent period that spawned, with a little help from Oxford, fringe to flying circus was in no way either harmless or decadent. Hewison, incidentally, is an Oxford man which relieves him from suspicion of cosy centennial congrats. He has produced a well-researched, fascinatingly illustrated (with lyrics as well as photographs) history of one of our leading drama schools.

THE GUYS AND DOLLS BOOK is no mere merchandiser's glossy souvenir paste-up of show photos, rehearsal moments, and biographies even unto the seventh associate producer. This is our National Theatre in association with one of our leading theatrical publishing houses. So we have Damon Runyon's 'The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown' as well as the full script of Frank Loesser's musical. The composer lyricist is analysed by no less than Caryl Brahms and Ned Sherrin. Director Richard Eyre reports on how the NT put it on, and Russell Davies reviews the result. Some photos of the Broadway and London originals plus stills of the movie. Only possible carp: pity they could not afford a paper that would respond to photographic half-tones in a more lively way. But all music theatre lovers will want to collect.

Anyone with ambitions to have a go at directing a musical should read (no, *must* read) Peter A. Spencer's **MUSICALS THE GUIDE TO AMATEUR PRODUCTION**. And not just amateurs: within these pages

the professional student will find a lot of universal truths about the nitty-grittys of making a musical show happen. And any advice that seems to be rather in the nature of a statement of the obvious should be studied with particular care – in my observation, it is on just such seemingly simple matters that many productions flounder. Mr Spencer covers his subject from choice of show through casting, rehearsals, technicals, first and subsequent nights, to the get-out. At each point we are told who should be doing what. Appendices include a typical constitution (rule book) for an operatic society, a list of the copyright owners of over five hundred musicals, and a comprehensive directory of where to buy or hire anything and everything from a complete set to a gobo.

If any single person can lay claim to being the founding father of *Director's Theatre*, then **MAX REINHARDT** must be a strong, perhaps the strongest, contender. Where other leading directors have concentrated upon working in a personal style based upon a conviction growing from a dramatic theory or deeper ideology, Reinhardt explored a wide range of production styles. He was a technical innovator. Yet, whether at work in the intimacy of his Berlin Kammerspiele, on the cyclorama-backed revolve of the Deutsches Theater, in huge arenas like Olympia or Grosses Schauspielhaus, or in the open air at Salzburg with every church bell awaiting his cue, there is evidence of his concern for the actor's interpretation of the script to communicate with the audience. His was a popular theatre – his son asked of Piscator and Brecht "whenever did they perform for the working class as Reinhardt did". And his productions were seen internationally: on a surprising scale for an era when the aeroplane had not yet become such a basic tool of the star director's trade. J. L. Stynan, in the latest volume in the 'Directors in Perspective' series, surveys Max Reinhardt's contribution to the development of theatre. Stynan has an easy style which uses contemporary comment and the prompt copies (Regiebucher) to bring the productions alive. A book full of goodies for anyone curious about theatre architecture and technology.

Peter Thomson serves **SHAKESPEARE'S THEATRE** in the same way. When reviewing an earlier volume on this period in the same *Theatre Production Studies* series – Michael Hattaway's 'Elizabethan Popular Theatre' in CUE 21 – I felt somewhat churlish at complaining about the obscurity of the literary style. And to be honest I felt

more than a little personally inadequate, experiencing a strong drop in confidence about my own abilities in literary comprehension. I contemplated a sabbatical, not just from reviewing but from writing of all kinds, so that I could enrol for some education. I even considered acquiring something more substantial than my 1932 New English Dictionary. But all this nonsense was soon drowned in a pint of ale and a marsh sunset. And now Peter Thomson has restored my faith in my ability to read, understand and enjoy an academic text. The core of the book is a reconstruction of the administrative and production techniques in use as the sixteenth century moved into the seventeenth. The evidence is thin and so the case must inevitably rest on a basis of creative speculation. But Thomson's logic has a sound ring of credibility whether he be analysing the effects of the plague and the puritans on the budget, the prop list for Macbeth, or the problems of transferring a production from outdoor Globe to indoor Blackfriars, to playing it for the Court or taking it on the road. Arts Administration then as now had a delicate task in satisfying both the establishment and the groundlings – with art inevitably subservient to money. History can be alternately comforting and depressing.

I do not doubt that analysing drama texts is a goodly exercise for the academically inclined youth of the parish with a passion for the performing arts. Vera Gottlieb shows how to do it in exemplary fashion in **CHEKHOV AND THE VAUDEVILLE**. However, I am somewhat relieved that my own introduction to Chekhov Vaudeville was Joan Littlewood's delicately funny and sad Theatre Workshop production (with music by Mahler) on the 1949 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

FOOTLIGHTS! A Hundred Years of Cambridge Comedy. Robert Hewison. With a preface by Eric Idle. Methuen. £8.95 (UK).

THE GUYS AND DOLLS BOOK. Frank Loesser, Joe Swerling, Abe Burrows, Damon Runyon, Caryl Brahms, Ned Sherrin, Russell Davies, Richard Eyre. With National Theatre production photographs by John Haynes. (Methuen in association with N.T.) £4.95 (UK).

MUSICALS. The Guide to Amateur Production. Peter A. Spencer. Line illustrations by George Prescott. John Murray. £9.50 (UK).

MAX REINHARDT. J. L. Stynan. Cambridge University Press (Directors in Perspective series). £17.50. £5.95 (Paperback) (UK).

SHAKESPEARE'S THEATRE. Peter Thomson. (Theatre Production Studies, General Editor: John Russell Brown). Routledge & Kegan Paul. £8.95 (UK).

CHEKHOV AND THE VAUDEVILLE. A Study of Chekhov's One-Act Plays. Vera Gottlieb. Cambridge University Press. £24 (UK).

Computer-supported Sound System at the Munich National Theatre

Acknowledgement is made to the publishers of *Buhnentechnische Rundschau* from which this article is reprinted.

In view of the continued advance in sound studio technique and the increasing use of electro-acoustic equipment in theatres, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich needed to create a sound studio installation geared to the requirements of the opera house. An installation was to be procured suitable not only for rehearsals and performances but also for multi-channel production work. The need to distribute and mix multiple sound-

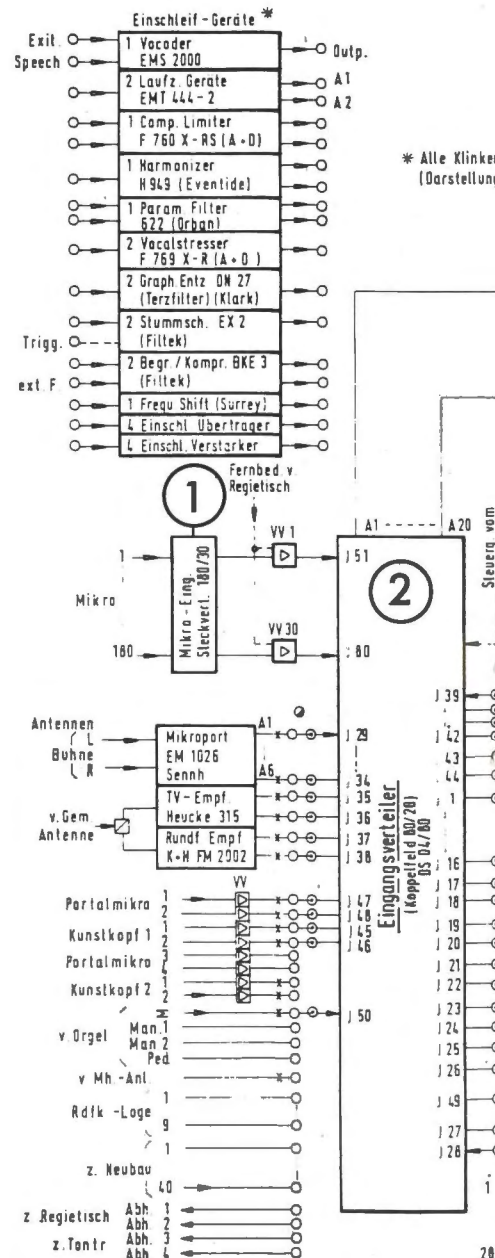
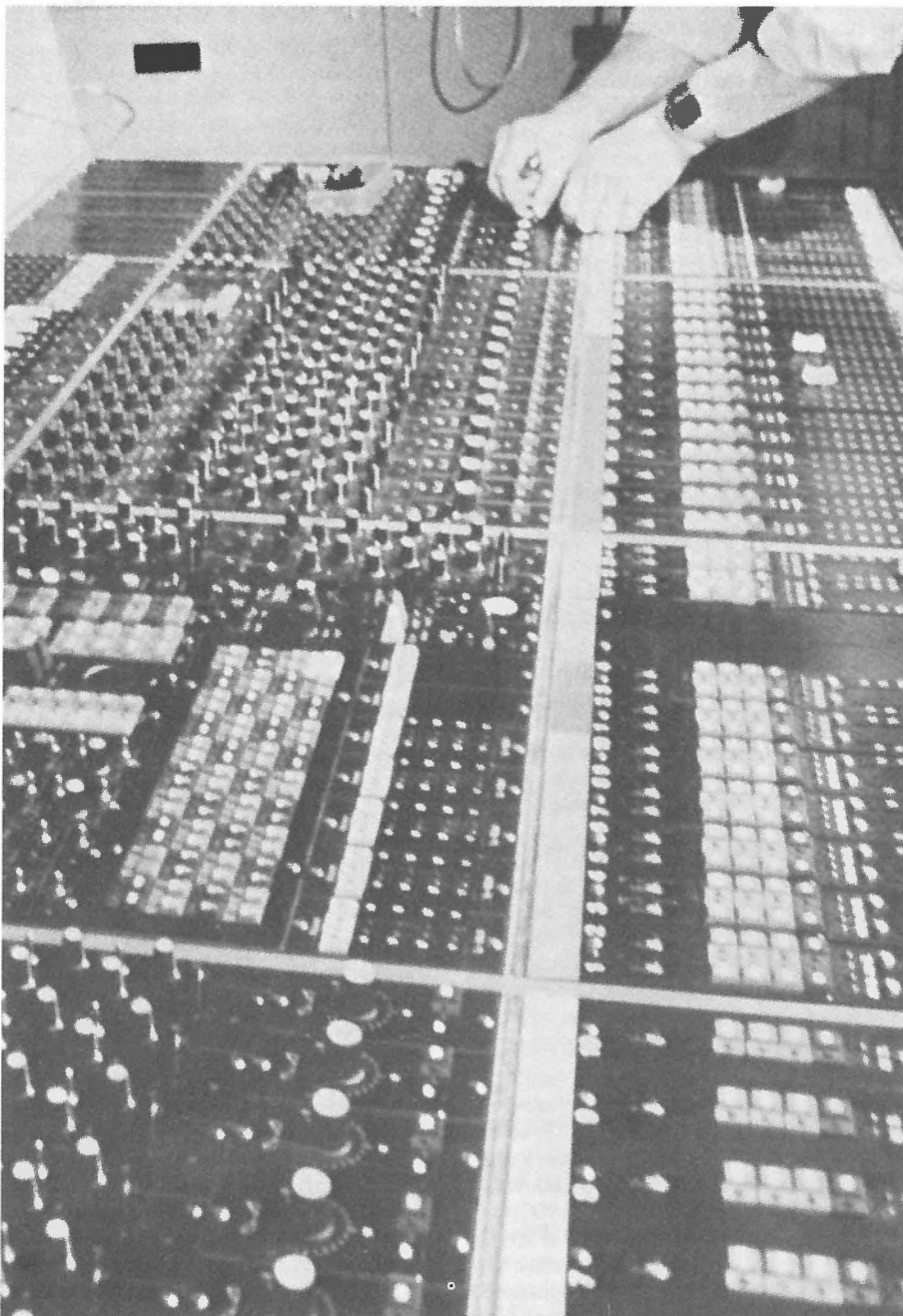
sources to multiple destinations led to considering the use of computer-supported systems. Such systems give not only reliable storage and filing but also quickly accessed data, required mainly for production work but valuable in rehearsal and performance as well.

The distinguishing features of the Bavarian State Opera's installation are described below. With the exception of some

few peripheral components ARD* specifications are observed throughout the installation.

□ 180 mumetal-screened microphone leads are connected at a patch-field (1) to 30 main circuits. Each microphone channel passes through a remote-controlled amplifier. The output of this amplifier, level +6dBm, is fed

* (Corporation of Public Broadcasting Institutions of Federal Republic of Germany)



to a computer-controlled routing matrix, (2) which is equipped with a further 50 inputs (line level $\pm 20\text{dB}$). The use of these 50 unspecified inputs is described later. The 20 outputs of this 80×20 matrix are connected, by a selector switch operated at the audio control panel (3), to 20 of this control panel's inputs. The remaining four inputs to the control panel are used for reverberation returns.

□ The control panel is equipped with static computer control of routing and with additional dynamic computer control for mix-down and balancing.

□ The control panel's outputs are connected to a further three computer-controlled routing devices – output distributor (4), modulation distributor (5) and 100V line distributor (6). The output distributor has a $20\text{-in} \times 40\text{-out}$ routing network for active loudspeakers. Another twenty outputs are fed to power amplifiers whose total output

of 2880W is routed *via* a computer-controlled 20-in \times 50-out relay distributor (6) to a 50×100 connector field (7) where the 100V line loudspeaker leads terminate. A 240W monitor amplifier is accessed at the jackfield.

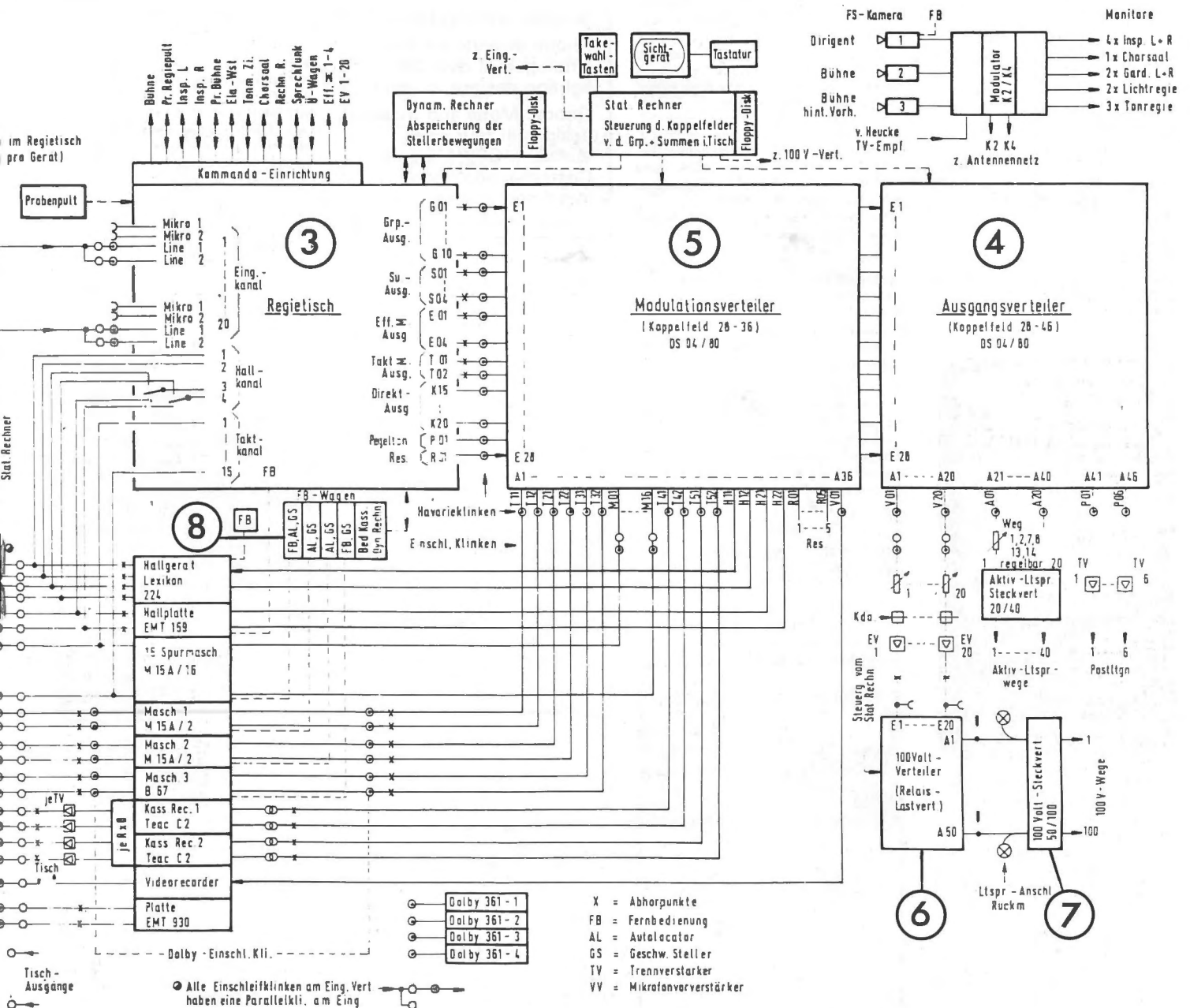
The computer-controlled modulation distributor (5) allows simultaneous connection of 16-track and all other recording machines, with 5 reserve outputs. The audio control panel has 24 inputs, 10 groups, 4 master outputs, 4 auxiliary outputs, a 16-channel sync mixing field, 2 sync outputs and six direct outputs which can be mixed with the group outputs for 16-track recording.

□ A stop-watch, displaying time and real time, is provided for mixing and production work. The modulation distributor outputs and the inputs of the 80×20 routing matrix all terminate at a jackfield for wiring set-ups. All inter-connection paths are symmetrically

wired. There is an eighteen-channel communications equipment with one radio link and one link to the stage communications. An up-to-date radio-microphone installation is also available.

□ Keyboard and display for the static computer is located opposite the control panel, within the sound engineer's reach. Left of the control panel is a mobile containing dynamic computer control, auto-locators, remote speed control and track selector for the 16-track recorder. In rehearsals, a 10-channel control desk can be operated from the auditorium, remotely controlling pre-selected functions of the audio-control panel.

A closed-circuit television equipment has two picture signals fed into its R.F. and video distribution systems. The video system can also display broadcast television programmes and an FM tuner is used for the sound channel of television broadcasts.



CUE

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The Manufacturers section is arranged in alphabetical order and gives the address, telephone number and broad categories of products manufactured by each company.

The Distributors section is not a list of official agents (although these are included) but a guide as to which products can be purchased from each distributor. The distributors in this section are arranged geographically by county and if a distributor appears in a county other than the one in which he is based this indicates that he serves this additional area.

The Hirers section is also arranged by county. Companies providing a nationwide service are listed under London. In addition to the address and telephone the name of the manager or contact is shown together with any services provided in addition to hire. Again companies listed in more than one area provide their services in these additional areas.

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| 103 Straw | Pale sunlight through window effect – warm winter effect |
| 104 Deep Amber | Mood effect on backings. Backlighting of floor and colour effect |
| 105 Orange | Mainly light entertainment, functions. Fire effect if used with 106, 166, 104 |
| 106 Primary Red | Strong red effect |
| 107 Light Rose | As for 104 |
| 109 Light Salmon | Interesting back lighting |
| 110 Middle Rose | Pleasing effects for theatrical lighting |
| 111 Dark Pink | Good for cycloramas |
| 113 Magenta | Very strong – used carefully for small areas on set |
| 115 Peacock Blue | Pleasing effect on sets, cyclorama cloths backlighting (ice rinks, galas, etc.) |
| 116 Medium Blue Green | Pleasing effects for theatrical lighting |
| 117 Steel Blue | Night effect used on sets – cycloramas |
| 118 Light Blue | Strong night effect |
| 119 Dark Blue | Mood effects – jazz clubs etc., back projection. Travelling matt blue |
| 120 Deep Blue | Pleasing effects for theatrical lighting |
| 121 Lee Green | Cycloramas |
| 122 Fern Green | Cycloramas – good for mood effect |
| 124 Dark Green | Cycloramas – good for back lighting |
| 126 Mauve | Cycloramas – good for back lighting |
| 127 Smokey Pink | Cycloramas – set lighting, disco's |
| 128 Bright Pink | Cycloramas – good for back lighting – strong effect |
| 130 Clear | Used in animation and projection work |
| 132 Medium Blue | Set lighting – travelling matt blue |
| 134 Golden Amber | Set lighting – amber with a touch of pink |
| 136 Pale Lavender | Set lighting – the subtlest of the lavenders |
| 137 Special Lavender | Set lighting – lavender with blue overtones |
| 138 Pale Green | Set lighting – less than half strength 121 |
| 139 Primary Green | Set lighting |
| 141 Bright Blue | Set lighting – slightly darker than 118 |
| 142 Pale Violet | Set lighting |
| 143 Pale Navy Blue | Set lighting – reduces intensity without too much blue |
| 144 No Colour Blue | Set lighting |
| 147 Apricot | Pleasing effects for theatrical lighting |
| 148 Bright Rose | Set lighting – half the strength of 113 |
| 151 Gold Tint | Pleasing effects for theatrical lighting |
| 152 Pale Gold | Set lighting – subtle warm effect |
| 153 Pale Salmon | Set lighting |
| 154 Pale Rose | Pleasing effects for theatrical lighting |
| 156 Chocolate | Cyclorama cloths – ¾ back for dark skin tones |
| 157 Pink | Dance sequences. (Useful for softening white costumes without affecting skin tones) |
| 158 Deep Orange | Fire effect – sun sets |
| 159 No Colour Straw | Warm effect – pale tones |
| 161 Slate Blue | Set lighting – a very cold blue |
| 162 Bastard Amber | Set lighting – half the strength of 152 |
| 164 Flame Red | Disco effect – developed for hell fire scenes |
| 165 Daylight Blue | Set lighting – keylight for moonlight effect |
| 166 Pale Red | Good for light entertainment |
| 170 Deep Lavender | Set lighting – disco's – theatres |
| 174 Dark Steel Blue | Set lighting – creates good moonlight shadows |
| 176 Loving Amber | Set lighting – pale pink enhances skin tones |
| 179 Chrome Orange | Combination of ½ CTO & double strength 104 |
| 180 Dark Lavender | Pleasing effects for theatrical lighting |
| 181 Congo Blue | Theatre and television effect lighting |
| 182 Light Red | Theatre and television effect lighting |
| 183 Moonlight Blue | Theatre and television effect lighting |
| 184 Cosmetic Peach | Pale tints complimentary to Key lighting |
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Between Cues

The thoughts of Walter Plinge

Messelated Plinge

It was as a nineteen-year-old student in the 'gods' at the first night of the 1950 Edinburgh Festival's *Ariadne auf Naxos* (original version, preceded by *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* – the Messel/Ebert/Beecham production) that I resolved to work at Glyndebourne. This took nine years but I arrived in time for Messel's last opera design – *Rosenkavalier*. So the Oliver Messel exhibition at the V & A was an afternoon of *déjà vu*, my reunion with the models being somewhat traumatic . . . but in the nicest possible way. The last act model was displayed without candelabra on the walls. I recall a wide-eyed Ebert, score in hand, explaining to the fire officer that he, Ebert, had no choice. "He was powerless in the hands of Hoffmansthal and Strauss – did they not insist that Baron Ochs extinguish a series of real flames with a linen napkin?" He sang phrases in German to emphasise the point. The fire officer was helpless. He agreed. Ebert had charm. And this was a time when

flats were still covered in canvas. Although this was the only new Messel production during my period, the repertoire for most of the 1960s was quite heavy messelated. And it was well into the decade before the permanent messelation was removed from the proscenium arch. (Messelated and messelation were regular words in the Glyndebourne staff vocabulary of the era.) I inherited Figaro, *Barbiere*, *Flute*, *Cenerentola*, *Entführung*, *Idomeneo* and *Ariadne*. Messel sets virtually lit themselves provided that the gel palette did not stray very far from 54 and 17 – the only lighting problems being caused by actor light falling upon perspective painting. His sets were very economical. Minimal structures acquiring depth from placing and paint. The Figaro sets are particularly worthy of close study for the way they meet the practical requirements of the opera in terms of such matters as space and entrances. But for me his finest work was *Entführung* and *Idomeneo*. They would stand revival – provided that there was a Charles Bravery to paint them.

Masking the sound

It is not often that I complain about a recorded sound level being too low! But 'up half a point' would have completed the atmosphere of the splendid **MASQUERADE** exhibition at the Museum of London. Admittedly the level of music was very critical since it was intended to work on the very threshold of the subconscious. But unfortunately the air conditioning was also operating at the same level. Does the varying contribution of the audience to the ambient noise level require fluid compensation? Perhaps a bit of loop circuitry? But I am quibbling about the icing on a really stylish exhibition which demonstrated just how elegant a form of drama therapy was the eighteenth-century masquerade.

Plays not so many parts



As I Like It, there are but five ages of man – who wants to remember soldiering and did anyone ever acknowledge being sans?

Pattern archaeology

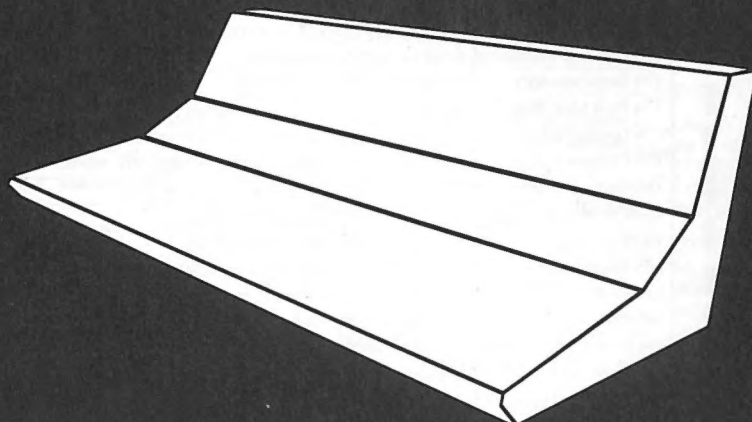
TABS has been running a correspondence on the early days of the pattern 263. Shall we have a CUE follow-up on the origins of the 264? Fred Bentham and Paul Weston, visiting Glyndebourne on switchboard business, produced a prototype which they wanted to test on a long throw. After a few moments of fun focusing, I found that my fingers were covered in red paint from handling the shutter knobs. I immediately placed an order: I think it must have been the spring of 1964.

Parting thought

We have reached CUE 25 and this is the 181st thought of Walter Plinge. His last. All this thinking has been a bit of a strain on the plingular brain. However, the current productivity nonsense means that more cues are being done by fewer people. As a result some people get no cues at all. So they have time to think. Thus Walter, who still has a cue sheet, can let his thinking slip into recession. However, if some idle thought does formulate from time to time, he may send an occasional despatch from Sabbatica – on a postcard. Meanwhile, thank you for listening.

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Music – Light – Space:

A PRODUCTION WITHOUT ACTORS

NETTA GELFMAN

I will never forget the day I first picked up the book, *Music and the Art of the Theater* by Adolph Appia. At the time I was studying stage design in Tel Aviv University's Faculty of Arts, and the book roused strong emotions in me.

This encounter with the work of Adolph Appia played a dominant role in shaping my development and the direction in which I am now moving. Later on, after I had actually designed lighting for both theatre and dance, I felt most enthralled when working with lighting design, finding the dynamic element in light. In the process of working with lighting, I was overwhelmed with the natural possibilities in light as a means of artistic expression. It revealed itself as a device rich in the power and capability of changing the space of the stage itself through its movement, while giving new meanings to the shapes existing there. I felt a strong desire to devote an entire work to *lighting alone*.

And so I found myself working on such a production – suddenly I was a sort of Lighting Director, creating a live theatrical performance to be presented before a live audience – but without “live” actors.

The source of this work which I staged was in the theories of Adolph Appia. He moved me, both as a human being – his life story and his personality – and as an artist, a revolutionary and a visionary man of the arts. From him I absorbed the belief that Light encompasses a potential to create emotion just as music does, that there is a strong bond between these fields of the arts – music and lighting. This concept brought me – through the bonds between music and space, of stage and dynamic lighting – to

attempt to create an Experience of Sensation for the audience. This was a real challenge, to create such a happening, a production that could stand on its own merits without any accompanying text, without any actors; the lighting itself was to be *the Dynamic Element*. I do not have such an opportunity in the usual lighting projects.

I adopted the term “choreography” when I set out on this conception. What a wonderful feeling, to have the full freedom of a creative artist!

I looked for the music for a long time since I was seeking the kind of music which would excite me and stimulate such a work as I envisioned. I was also searching for music which would give expression to my visual world – in its richness would exist along with possibilities of dramatic development. Yet it had to be a fairly short work, for a limited time period.

The first time I listened to the opening strains of Gustav Mahler's *The Farewell* from his “Song of the Earth”, I knew I had it! “The Farewell” is the final Lied in this suite; in itself it is a symphony for tenor or contra-alto and orchestra. The text is based on Hans Bethge's translation of the Chinese poetry anthology, *The Chinese Flute*, and Mahler freely adapted it for his music.

The Farewell is three times as long as the rest of the suite. I thought it could stand alone, although it is interrelated to the earlier part of this suite in his musical motifs and the philosophy of the text. I visualized it as the high point in the Mahler work. (Time duration is 30 minutes.)

Not only was it marvellous music, but it fulfilled my requirements since it provided the *presence of a human voice*. I did not intend to work out a “cold” and alienated production, just for the sake of an “Experiment”. I sought to create an *Experience*, direct contact with the audience, *something personal*, without the presence of actors, of human beings as a resource.

There was a warmth in the music; it opened a rich visual world with a dramatic story line and intriguing movement. This was the most important decision, the choice of the music, and it had great influence on the direction and development of the work.

I assigned equal weight to the music and the other elements in the work, the spatial, of the stage, and the lighting. I had *no* intention of “illustrating” the music; the music had the role of the Time Element, awakening sensations. Stage designing was accomplished through the music sparking, setting off the “action”. The stage design set the

conditions for the development within the duration of time, using the elements of Music and Light. The movement of light upon the stage would form the bond between the spatial element, the stage, the setting, and with the timing in the measures of the music. In binding the music, the stage area and lighting in this way, I strove to achieve an artistic production that would stand on its own merits, which would “happen” before the spectators. *The living quality of the light* was irreplaceable in this work.

A work like my Music – Light – Space, where neither actors nor dancers take the spotlight, has an added dimension of freedom in the choice of materials, of textures, shape and color. As a lighting designer I placed great import on working with a variety of materials, each responding differently to light, and especially such resources as had an intrinsic dynamic quality, like fabric which had the quality of changing, from opaque to transparent, depending upon the lighting.

In my first meeting with Eitan Levy, the stage designer, I played the music for him, and set out the points I considered crucial. It would be important to preserve the “box stage”; and to this end I had to deal with the problem of the audience and its angle of view, and especially since most of the viewers would *not* see the floor of the stage. Since we were well acquainted with the stage we would be working in Gilman Hall at the University of Tel Aviv, we knew the initial step was to a solution of lighting perspective, for the angle of viewing would be very dependent on the particular viewer's seat. Obviously the first priority was spatial dimensions on stage with potential and flexibility. As for the stage area itself, I sought to break up the vertical and horizontal “horizons” of the “box” in order to enrich my range of possibilities to deal with space. As for the three-dimensional elements which would be found within this space, I told Eitan the impressions I had received from the music: slabs of wood would form verticals, a metallic spiral with a rough texture, a “warm spot” growing and spreading . . . At the moment I first heard the music, I had essentially visualized my scenario in a general form. It was truly important to me that the maquette which the stage designer was to bring to our next meeting would give expression to this overall conception.

Anyway the starting point was the choice of materials, shapes, textures, and all their visual and sensory features, each with a *capacity for much change*. After working



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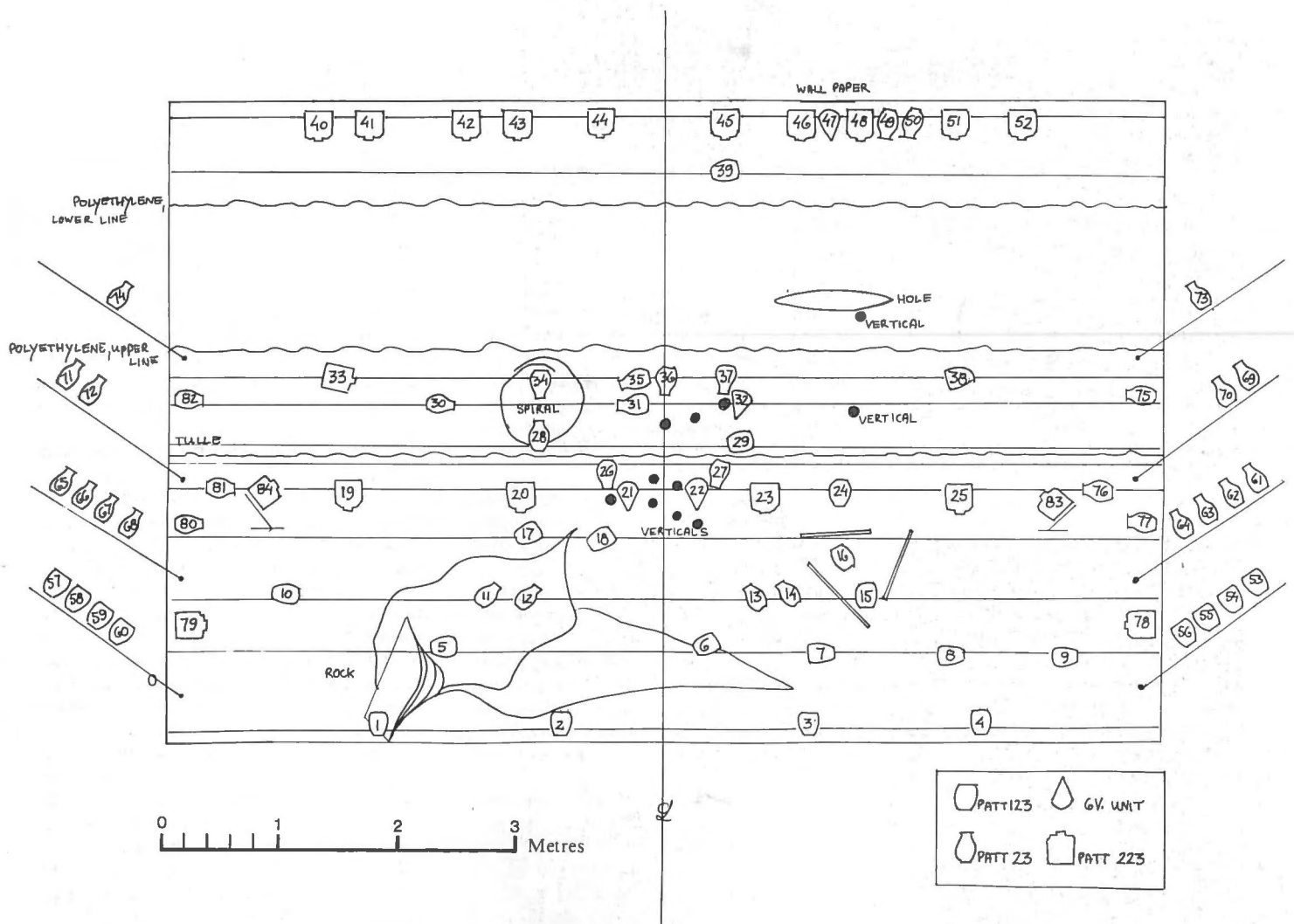
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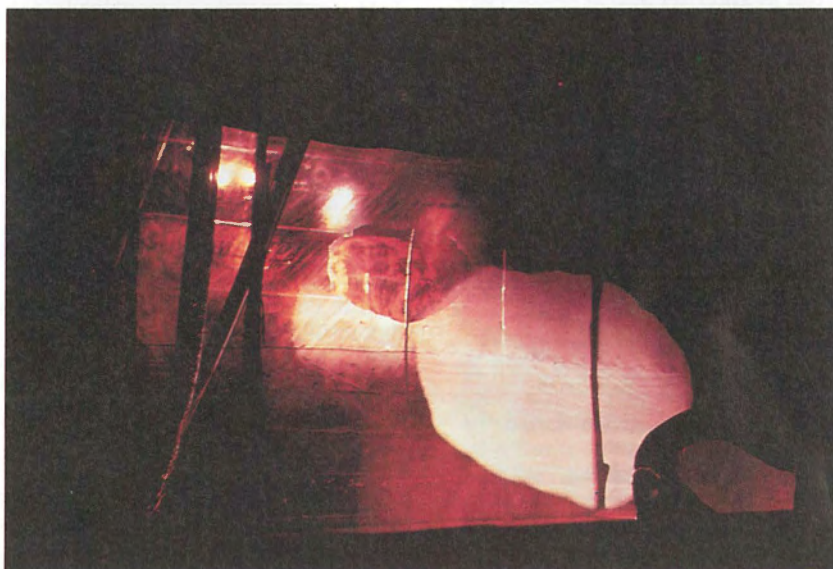
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| 1, 2 | Front Toplight D.S.R | 17 | 33 | Spiral - Diagonal Backlight | 41 |
| 3, 4 | Front Toplight D.S.L | 17 | 34 | Spiral - Toplight | 41 |
| 5 | Rock - Footlight (inside, transparent) | 32 | 35 | Spiral - Back Side Light | 17 |
| 6 | Wooden Boards - Path | 40 | 36, 37 | Verticals - Back Light | 40 |
| 7, 8, 9 | Rock - Side Light | 61 | 38 | Vertical - U.S.L Back Light | 45 |
| 10 | Rock - Back Side Light | 17 | 39 | Golden Wall Paper - Front Light (spot) | O.W. |
| 11-14 | Verticals - Shadows (+ Gobo) | 42 | 40, 42, 44, 46, 51 | Cyc Wash | 32 |
| 15 | Wooden Boards - Toplight | O.W. | 41, 43, 45, 48, 52 | Cyc Wash | 1 |
| 16 | Wooden Boards - Footlight | 56 | 47, 49 | Beam through hole | O.W. |
| 17, 18 | Verticals - Side Light | 56 | 50 | Beam through hole | 45 |
| 19, 20 | Back Light S.R | 43 | 53, 54, 57, 58 | X Light D.S. | 19 |
| 21, 22 | Verticals - Toplight (inside, transparent) | 32 | 55, 56, 59, 60 | X Light D.S. | 42 |
| 23 | Back Light S.L | 43 | 61, 62, 65, 66 | X Light C.S. | 32 |
| 24 | Wooden Boards - Back Light | 45 | 63, 64, 67, 68 | X Light C.S. | 42 |
| 25 | Back Light S.L | 43 | 69, 70, 71, 72 | Tulle-indirect X Light | 42 |
| 26, 27 | Verticals - Back Light (C.S) | 43 | 73, 74 | X Light U.S. | 42 |
| 28 | Spiral - Toplight | 40 | 75, 82 | X Light U.S. | 36 |
| 29 | Vertical U.S.L - Front Light | 56 | 76, 81 | Tulle-indirect X Light | 42 |
| 30, 31 | Spiral - Top Side Light | 40 | 77, 80 | X Light C.S. | 36 |
| 32 | Verticals - Toplight (inside, transparent) | 32 | 78, 79 | X Light D.S. | 36 |
| | | | 83, 84 | Diagonal Footlight D.S. | 56 |



The two dimensional element down stage left, and the thin vertical within the hole up stage left.



The back light on the vertical which placed within the hole — projecting the hole on the tulle.

through only two maquettes, we already felt we had found our stage!

We solved the problem of the angle of view for the stage floor with a carpenter's wooden construction of an incline in direct opposition to the angle of the audience-viewers; this

way everything the audience saw would float into the blackness of space, an infinite depth. *The rear wall of the stage* I wanted to be a screen, which could also function as a black drop, and yet become, at a specific point in time, a "cyclorama" or even transparent fabric. We took a huge sheet of translucent polyethylene, painted it black on its face with spray paint; then it was stretched at somewhat of a slant. That way it served the function of transparent cloth when I lit it from behind — as a "cyclorama" when lit from within, by a technique of connecting primers — and as a black backdrop, whenever it was not receiving direct lighting!

And there was a *hole*, 2 meters in diameter, cut into this slanted sheet of polyethylene in the left part, at stage left. A glittering golden splash of colour was visible through this hole, reflecting gilded wallpaper glued onto the far back stage wall (U.S.L.). Within the hole a single thin vertical was placed.

Another element was a length of black tulle at center stage, through which the effects I have been describing could be seen,

located in front of the polyethylene from the viewers' viewpoint. The tulle functioned as cloth; and when I lit it with indirect lighting from the sides, it became a screen of light.

A two-dimensional element was placed at downstage left, thin flat wooden boards, three in number and somewhat rounded in varying diameters of 1, 2 and 2.5 meters. They were partly coated with the same reflecting wallpaper that was visible through the hole, on the rear wall. The boards were left partly bare, untreated natural wood. They were set on stands at different heights of 1 and 1.5 meters, and were turned to face the viewers at different angles. This element served as a gilded spot, or spots, depending on whether it was receiving light overhead, top light; or it was a three-dimensional presence when it received footlighting in its center area.

There were other elements: a spiral behind the tulle at upstage right; a grouping of narrow boards at a vertical, at center stage, in front of the tulle. There was a counter-effect beside them, 2 hollowed verticals coated with the reflecting wallpaper; these, when lit from outside, gave the effect of cold metal, and lit from within seemed transparent and had the effect of a lightness. There was also a three-dimensional "rock" downstage right, a shape formed of cotton which could be made transparent by means of its interior lighting.

The project of plotting the lighting was the most complicated you can imagine, even though I approached it with a prepared scenario. I worked with two women operators, using two light boards for control. One board had 24 dimmers and three preset controls, with built-in crossfade, the second, six dimmers, and one preset . . .

I had to solve the problem of where to list the cues. Fortunately I found clear indicators in the musical score itself. We devoted five sessions to plotting, each concluding with a run-through of the part we had been working on. Obviously this was "anthill" work, very gruelling detail, and the operators had to develop an ear for the music and great musical awareness for the score. By the premiere performance, we had achieved an almost ideal situation, with the cue sheet already learned as a kind of a score. The operators could work the lighting by heart, with their eyes on the stage, since they had committed the CUE SHEET to memory!

I find myself frustrated since, as a lighting designer, I have no means of documenting my works; (even a video recording is not a complete solution!) and it is even more difficult to get the concepts across in a verbal description. I only hope that the photographs accompanying this article give some impressions and effects from this work!

On opening night, the work was received most enthusiastically by the spectators, the audience. The anxiety and great tensions I felt before the performance melted away with the final (and long-drawn-out . . .) fadeout. Then the spectators burst into stormy applause — even though not a single performer would come forth to take a bow . . .

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PRODUCT NEWS

A bunch of fives with lots of punch

At the Secombe Centre in Sutton, named after everyone's favourite Goon, CCT recently unveiled five completely new spotlights and a major update of their well-



known Silhouette spotlight system. The new spotlights include a 2000W Fresnel and 2000W Duo Pebble Convex and two similar spotlights at 1000W. Starlette is the family



name and the previously marketed 1000W Fresnel and Pebble Convex spotlights are withdrawn. Complete new extrusions have been designed for the Starlette range and the



new luminaires comply with the recently unveiled "Draft Specifications for Theatre Lighting Equipment".

The fifth new spotlight is a 500/650W non-zoom lens profile spotlight, a less-expensive companion to CCT's popular 650W zoom profile.

For more information, including photometrics, write to Eddie Hunter, CCT Theatre Lighting Ltd., Windsor House, 26 Willow Lane, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4NA.

Metal-working experts boost Kimpton Walker technical resources



Aiming at all sections of the set-building market from classic theatre to conference and TV commercials, Kimpton Walker have doubled staff and trebled workshop footage in two years.

Bringing in metal work expert Roger Hardwick was an important part of the expansion. His appointment as director has confirmed success in this area with metal working a big feature of the KW total service.

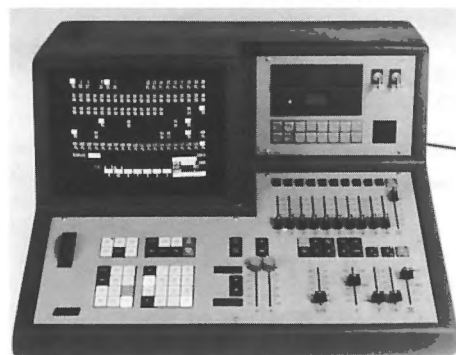
Charles Kimpton comments "The coming of steel as a highly versatile medium for theatrical designers has been a number one priority addition to our service we have been working to offer for many years. Roger Hardwick and his experienced team in-house has proved time and time again that innovation and production co-ordination is not only possible but essential to Production Managers."

Kimpton Walker's list of set-building projects for the theatre, TV and commercial conferences during the last two years reads like a telephone directory. To mention a few at random; there was John Napier's design for CATS in which every trick and transformation the machinery of a modern theatre is capable of pulling off was used successfully. Equipping those celebrated TV-AM studios was another triumph of engineering skill by which furniture props and scenery were designed to provide a variety of day-to-day

setting changes quickly and effortlessly. Today sophisticated stage techniques are more and more in demand for commercial presentations and product launches, a splendid example was the Peugeot launch for which they recreated a whole French street scene on stage in which family and car had to move about for real.

A good start for Microlite

With four major installations already under their belt Crosby Eurolight must be feeling extremely gratified at the reception given to their new Microlite computerised lighting board. It is by all accounts a most sophisticated and versatile control capable of an amazing variety of intricate fades, sequences and combination effects. There are five basic operating and visual sections starting with the EDITOR where programmes are composed and recorded; two PLAYBACK SYSTEMS including automatic or manual fading and two independent trick systems plus three programmable controllers and the general master; VISUAL DISPLAY is a high-resolution 12-inch CRT featuring dimmers, intensities, pre-set tracking, zero blanking and pre-set sheet display; library storage by MINI FLOPPY DISCS with capacity for nine complete pre-set programmes; BACK-UP is a computerised patch to ten independent submasters with general master and blackout through an individual computer system with battery back-up. Four models offer a choice of 64, 96, 120 or 256-way systems for operation with most existing dimmers.



MINILITE is a touring control from the same stable for 32- and 64-way systems. It features an external VDU and cassette storage as options. Front panel layout and facilities are identical to Microlite except that Minilite is contained in a flat touring case. Further information from Nick Mobsby at Crosby Eurolight, 58/60 Kingston Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3LZ.

Two workmanlike additions to the Tulla range

A new 1000W Fresnel and a 1000W Pebble Convex take their place in the Lito Spotlight range this month. Both feature a variable beam spread and both show evidence of sound design and manufacturing techniques in the pursuit of strength and light weight. Careful attention to safety is found in the automatic power disconnection when opening the lamp tray, a spring safety catch on colour frames and built-in safety-chain anchorage.

A four-leaf rotatable barn door and additional colour frame are optional extras.

Further details and performance data from Tulla Lighting Ltd., 5 Beckett Road, Andover, Hampshire.



New scenery brace by Lancelyn

This new tubular steel unit which is not adjustable is 2 metres long with the eye fitted at 1.9 metres high. It is not intended to replace the adjustable variety entirely but at £8.75 it provides a welcome alternative now that the cost of adjustable wooden braces is around £20.

Lancelyn are also producing a range of "instant scenery" flats manufactured from joinery grade redwood and supplied in knock-down form complete with all screw eyes, cleats, screws, glue, canvas, etc. The

initial range will have nine kits for 3-metre flats (some kits make two flats) and a complete "box set" kit at £525 with braces, weights and free tool kit. Individual flats are from £29.50.

Also new from Lancelyn are portable folding rostra in 25 sizes including ten preferred sizes which are available from stock.

Frames are assembled, except for the side of the hinges, on despatch. Prices from £35.

Further details from Lancelyn Lighting (Oxford), 102 Walton Street, Oxford.

Coat of many colours

Glamé, the shimmering, lightweight woven plastic material from Roscolab, is now available in a multi-coloured weave called Rainbow. Rainbow was first used in the new Los Angeles production of the Broadway hit, *Dream Girl*.

Glamé has long been used in theatres, discotheques, on television and for window displays for the stunning effect it can provide, whether used in wide shimmering curtains or backdrops, small spots of dazzle or spectacular costumes.

Woven from safe "self-extinguishing" plastic, Glamé is durable and exceedingly lightweight — 40 square feet weigh less than 2 lb. It does not spoil or mildew, resists tearing and doesn't become brittle with age. Under normal circumstances and with a little care, Glamé will last for years without losing any of its sparkle.

As well as the new Rainbow effect, Glamé is available in five other colours — silver, white, transparent, gold and silver/black — in rolls of 10 yards by 48 inches or 110-yard bolts.

Further technical information is available from Roscolab Ltd., 69-71 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PQ, Telephone 01-633 9220.

Good PR from CCT

"Profiles" would seem a happy choice of masthead for CCT's new house journal. The first issue is delightfully chatty and infor-

mative with just the right balance of domestic and product news to interest the customer as well as the growing CCT workforce. Good news for the customer is the announcement of a new home for CCT's Hire Division which opened last June at 28A Grafton Square, Clapham, SW4. As well as hire, a "cash and carry" retail shop will stock a wide selection of lighting products including lamps, colour filters and spares. Convenient hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday.

Just one more spotlight please

On the subject of house organs; the latest "Tabs" contains a splendid giveaway colour supplement "Lighting the Amateur Stage" by Francis Reid. It covers, step by step, the process of lighting from the first reading of the play to how to use the lanterns selected. Copies from Rank Strand, PO Box 51, Great West Road, Brentford, Middlesex.

LETTERS

Oliver Messel Exhibition

From Mr. Roger Pinkham

Dear Sir,

I doubt if anyone here would take exception to Charles Spencer's handsome review of our Oliver Messel exhibition (your July/August issue). However, I must take up his point that we have neglected Messel's film designing. That is not strictly correct. Although this is a museum of theatre, and in this case we were working from one collection (Lord Snowdon's), we felt that Messel's film participation must be represented but not principally by sketches and designs. The catalogue not only has an essay on Messel's film work (including some words by Thorold Dickinson), but publishes for the first time a detailed chronology of his realised and unrealised projects with stills and designs from four. On view is a costume (*The Private Life of Don Juan*), a head-dress (*Caesar and Cleopatra*), two plaster figures (*The Queen of Spades*), 8 designs for the unrealised *Arms and the Man*, 23 stills, including 6 from *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and surely, most important for a film designer, 10 minutes of video clips from, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *The Queen of Spades* and *Suddenly Last Summer*. It seemed to us best to show the actual product rather than sketches and studies for it. Thus, in one form or another we chose varied work from 6 of Messel's 8 films, and, in addition, from another not undertaken.

Yours sincerely,
ROGER PINKHAM
Selector and cataloguer, *Oliver Messel*
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Victoria and Albert Museum
London

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