

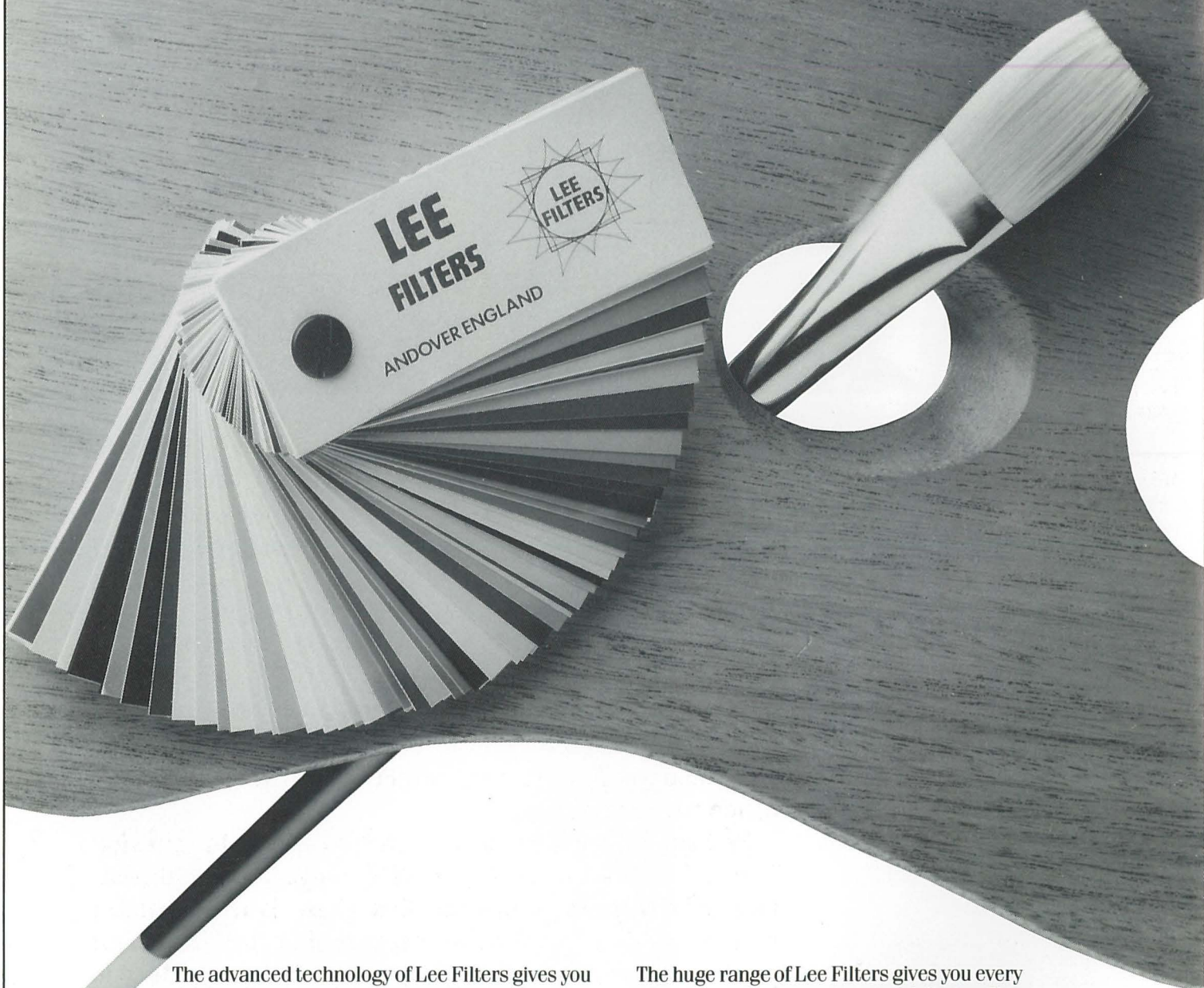
CUE

Technical Theatre Review 42

July/August 1986 £1.75



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Cover.

John Gunters sets and Sue Blanes costumes for *Porgy and Bess* at Glyndebourne are enthusiastically described on page 4. Add, says David Fingleton, a magnificent cast and chorus, the L.P.O. and Simon Rattle and you have one of the finest and moving productions I have seen in a long time.

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CUE

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IMAGINATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Any alive lighting manufacturer is envious of Varilite, sees the demise of TBA as only a short respite, and is relieved that Rosco have channelled their imagination towards peripherals.

— CUE 41

The respite has been short indeed. Tim Burnham rides again, his new stable is Arri (GB) Ltd and the phoenix is called *Imagination Technology*. A good name. It was Tim's *imagination* that challenged the traditional *technology* of the spotlight. Lighting designers have, for many years, enthused about low voltage, despaired about transformer weight and flirted with the idea of integral dimmers. It took a lighting designer turned manufacturer to show that these dreams could become reality. His prototype solved virtually everything except heat—to revolutionise stage lighting, the electronic transformer must be able to operate without a fan inside the spotlight.

Perhaps TBA tried to do too much too soon. Imagination Technology's relaunch of the TBA range will be phased. Our only surprise is that the first phase is to be control systems. This is presumably because they are the easiest product to bring quickly to the market. But surely the one product that the stage lighting market is not hungry for is more control system variants! Let us hope that Arri(GB) Ltd will not dissipate Tim Burnham's energy and imagination on controls. We have lots of these, thank you very much—its his Magic Lantern that we need and want!

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STAGE DESIGN

DAVID FINGLETON

One hit and a near miss at Glyndebourne □ Death on stilts at Covent Garden □ A visually magnificent *Mask of Orpheus* □ Design and lighting at their best on the Lyttelton and Barbican stages.

With their two new productions this season Glyndebourne Festival Opera scored, in terms of design, one near miss and one palpable hit. The hit was the first ever British staging of George Gershwin's great work *Porgy and Bess*, and what a success it was. *Porgy* was directed by Trevor Nunn, designed by John Gunter and Sue Blane, and was lit by David Hersey. Working with a truly magnificent cast and chorus, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, superbly conducted by Simon Rattle, this strong team presented one of the finest, most absorbing and moving productions of an opera that I have seen anywhere in a very long time.

Dorothy and Dubose Heyward's *Catfish Row* in South Carolina in the early days of this century was grippingly evoked on stage at Glyndebourne by John Gunter's essentially simple but totally convincing set. We saw three sides of a wooden shanty quadrangle, pillared, with a gallery upper floor, and a central rear archway leading to the seashore beyond. This set had a powerful sense of claustrophobia, and of abject, but not totally despairing poverty. It drew one firmly into the action from the outset and made one realise that something serious was taking place on stage, and that these were real people, leading real lives and facing real problems. *Porgy's* wretched dwelling was tucked in, stage left, and was skilfully set on an independent revolve that turned it outwards to reveal the sparse interior, with newspapers stuck randomly on the walls, and *Porgy's* handicrafts of matchbox miniature cathedrals. Wisely, *Porgy* himself had been allowed to abandon his goat-cart and walked around the stage on long twisted sticks, dragging his crippled leg most convincingly behind him. His pinstripe trousers, striped shirt, and tie, all worn and shabby, but clean and well cared-for, expressed the defiant dignity of the man. Indeed all of Sue Blane's splendidly intelligent costumes expressed the characters of their wearers, and the feeling that they belonged to their characters, rather than merely having been put on for the performance. *Bess's* transformation from scarlet-dressed floozy to nondescript girl in cotton smock was another fine achievement. David Hersey's wonderfully subtle lighting cast its habitual spell: that long, gradual fade-up as *Catfish Row* came to life after the curtain first rose will live long in my memory. My one reservation lay with



Catfish Row and Kittiwah Island from Gershwin's Porgy & Bess at Glyndebourne. Director Trevor Nunn, Designers John Gunter (sets), Sue Blane (costumes). Lighting by David Hersey, Photographs by Guy Gravett.





Fidelio at the Royal Opera House. Directed by Andrei Serban. Designs by Sally Jacobs, Lighting by Robert Bryan. Photos. Clive Barda & Donald Southern.



John Gunter's design for Act I of Verdi's Simon Boccanegra at Glyndebourne. Director Peter Hall, Lighting by David Hersey, Photo. Guy Gravett.

Gunter's setting for the picnic on Kittiwah Island. The two bare trees, hung with pathetically sparse fairy lights, and the sea beyond were fine, but unfortunately his original structure for Catfish Row remained on either side of the stage, screened by drops, which left little sense of the forest where Crown was hiding. That aside, this was as intelligent and successful stage design as one could wish to see. If only more people could now see it than at Glyndebourne this season and next: how splendid it would be if some enlightened impresario would risk giving Porgy a West End run. This production deserves it. Glyndebourne's other new production, of Verdi's *Simone Boccanegra*, was also designed by John Gunter and lit by David Hersey, though this

time directed by Sir Peter Hall. *Boccanegra* represented the first in Glyndebourne's projected Verdi series, with *La Traviata* planned for next season. It may have seemed a curious choice to start with for *Boccanegra* is a large-scale, even epic, sombre work, with a huge crowd scene at its central point. Nothing daunted, Hall and Gunter sought to make a positive advantage of Glyndebourne's narrow stage, though for some reason not profiting fully from its depth, in presenting a claustrophobic staging of the opera where darkness dominated. I had the impression that things were not working impeccably on the opening night, and certainly the heavy gauze in the Prologue almost totally obscured the faces, and thus the characters, of the singers behind it, making the action



problematical. After a clumsy change, things greatly improved with the Grimaldi Palace setting of the first act, unobscured by gauze and most imaginatively lit by Hersey. But even here the ugly grey flats that linked the palazzo to the townscape behind it were awkward, and contained an implausible doorway that made characters appear to enter from the rock-face: not up to Glyndebourne's, or Gunter's, habitually high standards. The great Council Chamber scene was strikingly conceived and succeeded in its claustrophobia, but the space was too shallow and thus created confusion. My general impression was of insufficient time spent on fully working out basically good ideas—not something one generally encounters at Glyndebourne. But I dare say that by the time *Boccanegra* takes the road on tour this autumn many of its problems will have been ironed out.

At least one could not quarrel with the basic premises of that production, as one did with the Royal Opera's disastrous new staging of Beethoven's *Fidelio* that closed Covent Garden's season, and Sir Colin Davis's regime there as Music Director, to a chorus of derision and dismay. It was all very well to waffle in the programme about *Fidelio*'s analogy with the works of William Blake, but the comic-strip production and designs of Andrei Serban and Sally Jacobs were simply unworthy of both Beethoven's

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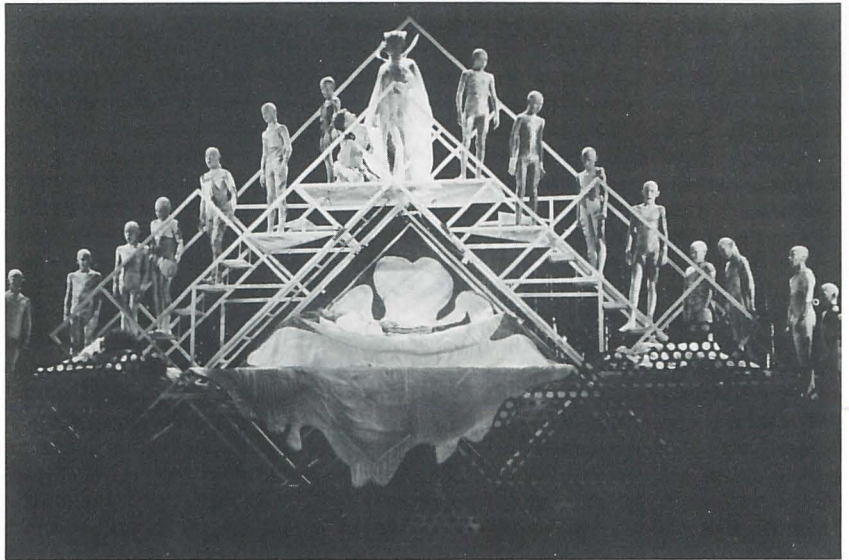
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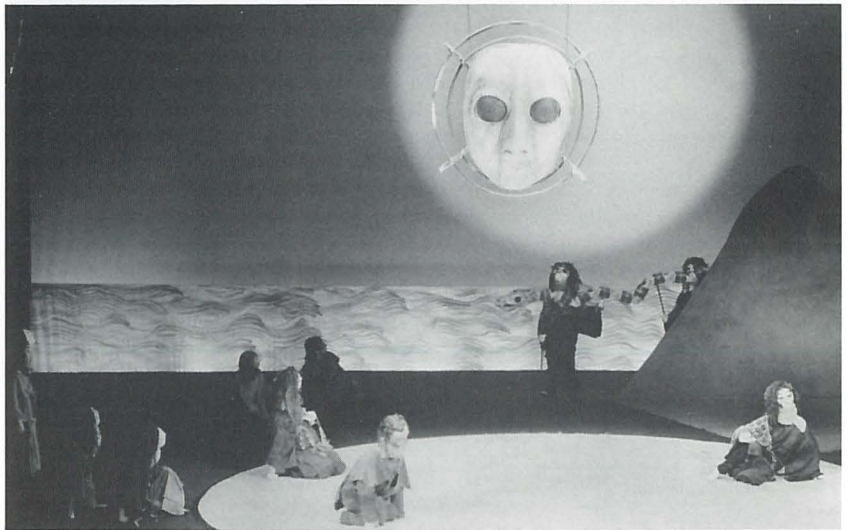
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single great opera and their own talents. This tatty and cluttered box staging, with suspended corpses and skeletons, gibbets, angels and other symbols flown indiscriminately in and out made for distraction of the audience and diminution of the work. The second act was even worse than the first. The dungeon was no more than a cage dumped stage left in the original box; Rocco and Fidelio descended to it by a noisy miners' lift, yet Pizarro strode on from the wings—how did he get there, one wondered. After Florestan's ill-achieved rescue we were treated to the Leonora No. 3 overture to accompany a truly awful children's ballet, performed before a vastly enlarged death mask of the composer. Finally came a staging of such travesty as to defy description—a sort of medieval religious pageant with suspended skeletons, cardboard cut-out angels, Fernando, the Governor, as Roman Emperor, on stilts, along with similarly stilted figures of the grim reaper and Death in black leotard with gold bones painted on it. What did the production team hope and expect to evoke other than mirthless guffaws? I gather that even by the end of its run there had been changes to this Fidelio; let us hope that by the time it is revived it will have been substantially reconsidered. Covent Garden's other late season new production was of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Christopher Renshaw's 1980 Aldeburgh Festival production, designed by Robin Don. This had looked fine at the Snape Maltings, but somehow both time and scale had diminished it on transfer to the much larger house six years later. Don's triangular metallic climbing frame and Meccano perforated clouds certainly remove the work from the twee fairyland aura that so often pervades it, and the frame itself enables the opera to work simultaneously on different levels. Moreover his stage picture is an arresting one with fairies and mortals, royals and mechanicals well defined by their costumes, though the psychedelic fairies have a modishness that now seems out of date, likewise the punk Puck. I was thus left with the uneasy feeling of a small-scale production writ large, a not-quite-new one rethought. If only Renshaw and Don had been given the chance to start again from scratch.

Whatever one's reactions to Harrison Birtwistle's music and Peter Zinovieff's libretto for *The Mask of Orpheus*, given its world premiere by English National Opera at the end of their Coliseum season—and I must confess that mine were largely negative—it looked magnificent. David Freeman's powerful, beautifully choreographed production had as its designer Jocelyn Herbert, with lighting by Andy Phillips. Ms Herbert is of course a veteran of those heady days when George Devine ran the Royal Court, and was virtually the first of our designers to risk throwing away conventional scenery and using space instead. More relevantly to this production, she had also designed Sir Peter Hall's production of *The Oresteia* at the National Theatre a few years ago, which also had



The Royal Opera's new production of Benjamin Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream by an all-British team, Roderick Brydon (conductor), Christopher Renshaw (producer), Robin Don (designer), John B. Read (lighting). Photo. Clive Barda.



Scenes from English National Opera's World Premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's The Mask of Orpheus at the London Coliseum. Designer, Jocelyn Herbert, Lighting by Andy Phillips. Photographs Zoe Dominic.





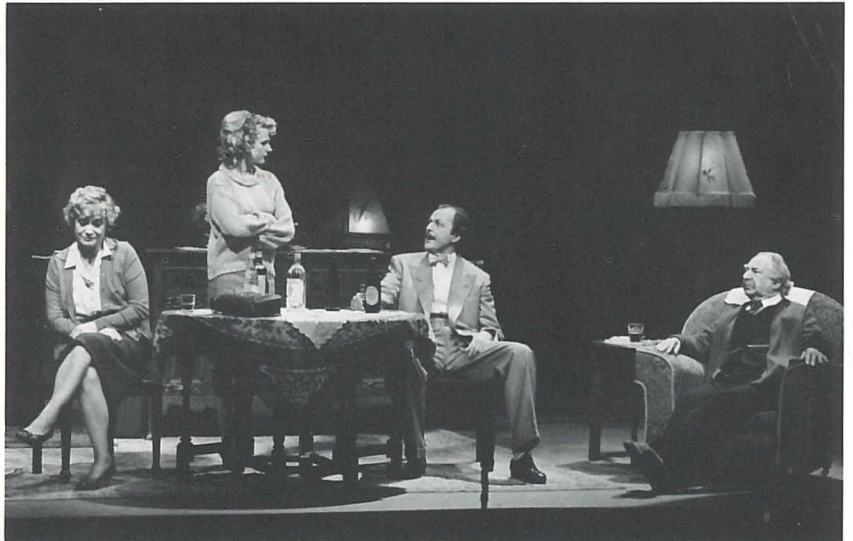
Dalliance at the Lyttelton Theatre, the Tom Stoppard version of Arthur Schnitzler's "Liebelei" directed by Peter Wood. Designer Carl Toms, Lighting by Robert Bryan. Photo: Zoe Dominic.

music by Birtwistle. As at the Royal Court Ms Herbert emptied the stage, and as at the National she used masks. The effect was stunning: an open stage with central circle; a vast sun projected upon the cyclorama; a river represented by a rippling swathe of blue cloth; rope ladders suspended from the flies for the descent to Hades; gloriously spare Greek costumes and head-dresses; and those magnificent masks—half masks for mortals, full masks for mimes, and huge puppet masks, supported above the heads of the performers, for the myths. Combined with Andy Phillips' precise and evocative lighting, the effect was gripping: a world entirely of its own and yet one to which we could relate, superb use of the stage, evocative, dramatic, atmospheric—a great stage designer working at full strength.

There has been nothing on this level in the 'straight' theatre recently, though at the National's Lyttelton auditorium there was much to be said for Carl Toms' designs for Tom Stoppard's reworking of Schnitzler's *Liebelei*, now retitled *Dalliance*, in Peter Wood's production. First came an archetypally Viennese fin de siècle set of bachelor chambers with just the right blend



Farrah design for The Danton Affair for RSC at the Barbican. Directed by Ron Daniels, costumes by Judith Bland. Lighting by Mick Hughes. Photographs Donald Cooper.



Martin John's set design for John Osborne's The Entertainer at the Shaftesbury Theatre. Photo: Mike Martin

of over-upholstered conventionality and dashing, fashionable touches in the pictures and ornaments. Then a garret lodging overlooking the railway, beautifully scaled and impressively detailed in its feeling of class and circumstance was followed by an instant and breathtaking shift of scene to the wings of a theatre during the dress rehearsal of an operetta, with stage hands playing stage hands manhandling flats away from us to give the operetta stage looking towards the tabs. This was design at its most polished. Further polished, well thought-out design came from Farrah, working once again for the Royal Shakespeare Company, in the Barbican for Ron Daniels' production of Pam Gems' *The Danton Affair*. His single basic setting, combined with skilful use of trucks, managed to cover every situation from The Committee of Public Safety, the Revolutionary Tribunal, the inside of the Luxembourg Palace, and the intimacy of

Danton's and Robespierre's own lodgings, in a stylised yet entirely credible way. The set had great atmosphere and great historical and dramatic strength, and was well supported by Judith Bland's clearly defined costumes and Mick Hughes' highly effective lighting. It was not on account of their efforts that the evening seemed endlessly protracted. Robin Lefevre's production and Martin Johns' designs for John Osborne's *The Entertainer* had originally been created for the Leicester Haymarket Theatre and the transfer to the vast, barn-like Shaftesbury Theatre was damaging both to their work and to the play. This production looked tatty in itself rather than evoking the tatty of Archie Rice, and if they could get the beer bottles, cigarette packets and newspapers right, why get the gin bottles and cigarette lighters wrong?



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Teatermuseet I Oslo

FRANCIS REID

The Scandinavian countries hold considerable riches for the theatric tourist. This Cue series has already featured the theatre museums of Copenhagen and Gothenburg plus the preserved eighteenth century stages at Drottningholm and Gripsholm. I am plotting to get myself to the collections in Helsinki and Bergen but meanwhile I can report on theatric memories to be savoured in Oslo.

The Teatermuseet is centrally situated in a building dating from 1641 which was originally the Town Hall where, it is believed, the first public performance in Oslo was given in 1667 by a company of travelling actors. Today's theatre museum occupies the first floor, restored to the period when the rooms were used for the ceremonies of freemasonry.

On the stairs the visitor passes an early patch panel and meets a selection of lights

including a horizon flood and a couple of primitive profile spots. These lights, dating from the 1930s, are some of the youngest exhibits in a collection that is centred around the nineteenth century **Christiana Theater** which nurtured a Norwegian dramatic tradition that was to be formalised by the building of the **Nationaltheater** in 1899 and the **Norske Teatret** in 1913.

Norwegian theatre traditions are relatively young. From 1380 to 1814 Norway was in union with Denmark and from 1814 to 1905 with Sweden. During these five centuries, Norway had no king or court of her own and there were no theatre loving nobility to encourage and finance the building of theatres or to support acting companies. With a small population, public theatres with regular performances could not be sustained even in Oslo and Bergen until the nineteenth century.

It was the Christiana Theatre which nurtured the national drama movement that matured in the 'golden age' of the 1880s and 1890s with the emergence of Bjornson and Ibsen, the latter having an enormous



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influence on the development of drama throughout the western nations. This Christiana Theatre was an 1837 rebuild of an earlier theatre of 1827 which burnt down in 1835. The museum has an interesting triptych of prints showing the burning theatre, the firemen and props being rescued on a sledge.



The new theatre was larger and more elegant than the original—for which there is a model reconstruction with a lift-off roof to the auditorium. A lot of material enables us to capture the feeling of the 1837 theatre. There are external elevations and internal sections, plus a model of the auditorium. Also some photographs, particularly a scenery fit-up of a new production in 1899 with a lot of watchers standing on the apron—life does not change!



Henrik Klausen as Peer Gynt in the premiere at the Christiana Theatre in 1876

The boxes on the apron were grilled with trellis-work and there is a print of Ibsen surreptitiously watching the first night of John Gabriel Borkmann. As usual it is the paintings that help us most to appreciate the atmosphere of the auditorium: artists inevitably include their personal response in their work and comparison of even just a pair of paintings creates a bridge of understanding that is deeper than their individual viewpoints.

Items from the Christiana theatre include Oscar II's chair from the royal box and the crown that surmounted it, while posters, admission tickets and all sorts of ephemera help to recreate this seminal theatre which was, regrettably, demolished in 1899 on the opening of the National Theatre for which it had created a tradition.

Other theatres in addition to the Christiana and National theatres are, of course, included in the displays—particularly the **Norske, Central, Chat Noir**, and **Nye**. And there is a section on the orchestras and their music, together with memories of opera productions when they were performed in other theatres before the creation of the **Norske Oper** in 1959. This includes a short keyboard conductor's piano and a Valkyrie costume with an exaggerated Victorian waistline suggestive of untypical casting.

A dressing room corner is used to display costume, wigs, haircurling tongs, etc in their proper setting. On the walls are photographs of actors in their dressing rooms. Another 'corner' is devoted to an

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There are vacancies for 25 participants.

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evocation of Bjornson's office with his desk, typewriter, chair, coat and walking stick. On the desk a journal listing performances lies open.

The pillared main hall of the museum serves as an auditorium for lectures, recitals and small concerts. Its walls are hung with framed portraits of actors and their costumes are displayed on stands.

A 'tree' illustrates the development of Oslo's theatres with branch thickness indicating importance while length measures longevity. Any healthy theatre tradition will combine short-lived minor theatres with enduring important ones, and so we get from this tree a clear picture of the theatrical history of Oslo.

Miscellaneous ephemera includes plates and jugs bearing actor's faces. In addition to

designs and photographs of old productions, there are a number of cartoons. Our attitude to the chiefs of institutions, including national theatres, does not change much across the ages — they are obvious fair game for the satirists.

There is a section on puppets, toy theatres and paper theatres — and the sort of item that always gladdens my heart in any theatre museum: an early auditorium vacuum cleaner.

But the international importance of this museum is inevitably Ibsen and I can confirm that one really gets a strong gut understanding of the circumstances surrounding the making and sustaining of the Ibsen Tradition.

and all countries in the EEC are required to co-operate to prepare and accept common standards. This process has been going on for many years.

Emphasis, at present, is to prevent any country imposing standards tougher than the EEC base. This will prevent manufacturers who comply with the EEC standard being denied access to markets by virtue of some specialised local requirement. Since the UK has very few legally enforceable conditions there will be little change in the availability of overseas hardware in this country. The change will be felt elsewhere where government import controls do enforce strict compliance with local national standards. In the near future all EEC countries aim to have a common standard so all European manufacturers will make equipment to this standard and offer a common high quality.

To BS or not to BS . . . ?

BOB ANDERSON

A new British Standard is being considered that might add considerably to the cost of new lighting equipment. Despite efforts by British television, film and theatre technicians, international pressures seem set to insist on safety standards well beyond those in current use and manufacturers will then have little choice other than to design to the new standards and to add the cost to the sale price.

The BSI

The organisation responsible for this state of affairs is the British Standards Institution.

The British Standards Institution is the British national body for devising and administering construction and performance standards for all types of technical equipment and also represents Britain on European and other international standards organisations. It has a large permanent staff, split between a secretariat who see that the standards get written and sold, and the technical division which tests products for compliance and awards the Kite Mark badge of approval. BSI is financed by money obtained from the government and from membership fees paid by manufacturers and other supporting organisations and also from the sale of standards and test house facilities.

The standards are devised by part-time committees composed of the representatives from all sorts of manufacturing, scientific, local government and professional bodies; all nominally unpaid volunteers, though, of course, mostly receiving generous salaries from their primary employer. Standards are usually first drafted by manufacturers claiming concern for the interests of the consumer but also, of course, to prevent less scrupulous rivals from stealing markets by

offering cut price alternatives with less than the agreed minimum trade standard of quality. The balance between collective commercial self interest and public good is held by the efforts of government, local government, academic body and user organisation representatives.

Standards have always been concerned with fitness for purpose and interchangeability. More recently, concern for safety has been emphasised to protect the user (and the manufacturer from claims by an injured user) both when using the product correctly and foreseeable modes of misuse.

Legal Position.

In Britain, it is unusual for there to be any direct legal requirement for manufacturers and importers to comply with British Standards. Parliament has generally felt unable to rely on the efforts of committees not under its direct control. British Standards have, however, been of great value for national and local government purchasing agents as baseline quality standards, and have also been used by many professional consultants and company buyers. Hence, in Britain, non-compliance has been a matter for civil action by the purchaser rather than a matter of criminal law.

Overseas, things have often been different and many countries have made compliance with the national standards specifications legally enforceable.

With manufacturers from all countries now seeking to sell on an international basis, the complications arising from trying to comply with each national standards system has led to a growing movement to agree standards acceptable in all countries. The EEC makes this a major point of policy

Entertainment Lighting.

How will this new approach affect the entertainment lighting industries?

For theatre, film and television lighting equipment there are three categories of standards to investigate.

First: cables, plugs and sockets.

BS 196 will remain in force to define the standard 13 amp plug system used in British homes and offices and BS 546 the 15 amp plug preferred by theatres in UK. Both remain essentially local standards outside the international movement.

BS 4343, the standard for the plugs now generally adopted by the television and film industries, will also continue, though known abroad under its IEC name — CEE17.

However, please note the important difference between BS 596 and the international standard CEE17 is that BS committees can change 596 if they think it necessary, but to change BS 4343 which is modelled on CEE17 requires elaborate international negotiation.

Electronic equipment; dimmers, control boards, sound and television equipment, computers etc. are also already mostly covered by internationally agreed technical standards relating to quality, safety, interference, connector types and interchangeability that have existed for many years and need not be expected to change significantly. Again, however, any change that is thought desirable will have to be agreed through the complex international consultative system.

Lighting equipment for entertainment (luminaires and lanterns) are a very different case. Abroad, national standards differed widely and caused a lot of trouble to exporters who had to devise special designs for each country. The UK only has standards for a few types of television and film spotlights (BS 4015.1966) and these have never been taken very seriously. When a draft international document did appear for comment it was ill prepared and superficial. This need not have mattered if proper committee procedures had been applied with consultation with all interested

parties. In the event, the international procedures were completed with little awareness from the user side of the lighting industry and those that were interested enough to contribute took the opportunity to insert a lot of hobby-horse clauses.

The New Standard.

The result, document 598-2-17, — Luminaires for Stage Lighting, Television and Film studios (outdoor and indoor), was published two years ago in 1984. This is but one of many parts of a comprehensive family of standards for all types of luminaires; IEC 598. The UK equivalent is BS4533.

In accordance with agreed procedures, each member country of the IEC voted on the document. Only Britain voted against. As a result Britain has not adopted the standard as a BS but has accepted responsibility to try to devise changes acceptable internationally so that unanimous approval is obtained and the revised document adopted.

Many countries have already accepted the IEC Standard and now use it.

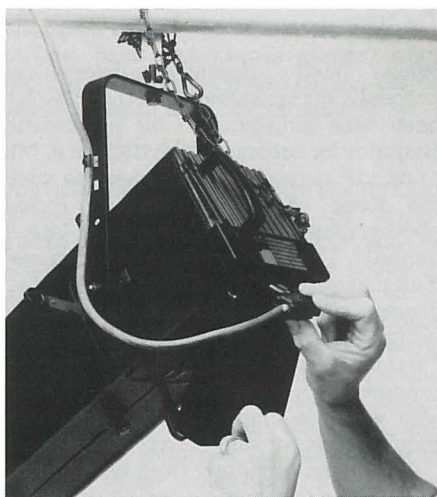
Requirements.

As presently published, the standard is defined to apply to all electric lighting luminaires intended for theatre, film or television lighting. There is no distinction made between fixed, portable, professional, or amateur use. (Although a separate document IEC 598.2.9; BS4533.102.9 already exists for photo and film luminaires for non-professional use).

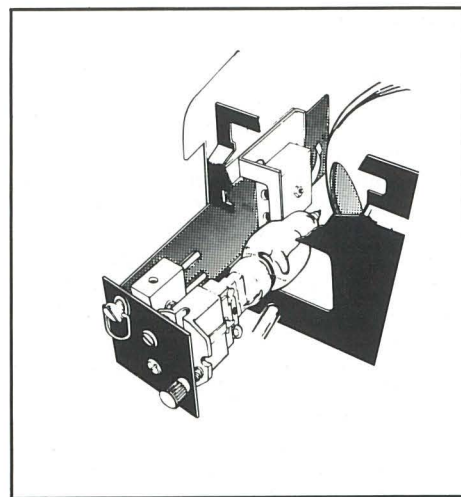
The document specifies that labels must be fitted giving maximum safe ambient temperature, maximum luminaire surface temperature, safe distances from adjacent flammable surfaces, a marking to show the top, limiting conditions of tilt, warnings to isolate from the electrical supply before opening and, if certain types of discharge lamps are used, a warning to wait for a specified number of seconds before opening the lantern.

Further clauses deal with electrical safety, risk of UV burn from discharge lamps, strength of hanging devices and the security of attachments.

A highly contentious clause requires that, for lamps of above 250 watts — "... it is not possible to insert a lamp into a live lampholder ...". This clause has been pressed for by those who see it as an essential protection against electric shock from the lampholder or finger burns resulting from inserting a quartz lamp into a live holder. However, other clauses are included that should give sufficient electrical safety and there does not seem to be any confirmation that finger burns are, in fact, a significant hazard. Of course, the provision can be met with little difficulty on many types of smaller spotlight. This is one reason why many manufacturers have produced stage spotlights recently with connector plugs designed to eject, or that have to be unplugged, before the lamp can be touched.



Access for re-lamping in this Strand spotlight is only possible with the power socket removed



The power plug is automatically isolated on removing the lamp tray for re-lamping on CCT spotlights

But the clause also applies to PAR cans, four circuit cyc-floods, compartment battens with 250 watt lamp (as used in the USA), film and TV multi PAR broads, 110 volt 10kW spotlights drawing 100 amps and hand held film lamps supplied from batteries. The question has still to be answered whether all types of film, TV and theatre luminaire can be redesigned to comply, and whether the user will willingly pay the extra cost.

A revision now under discussion suggests drawing the teeth of this clause by adding the sentence "This requirement does not apply to luminaires intended only for professional use" but also deletes the 250 watt limitation to further complicate the provision for the non-professional market.

Also to become mandatory, are provision of safety meshes to prevent fragments of hot lamp escaping to cause burns, or broken

pieces of lens or cover glass larger than 25mm falling onto audience, actor or musician and a non detachable, properly sized safety chain.

Results.

Undoubtedly, much good could come from this standard, provided it is properly drafted and contains provisions acceptable to the majority of conscientious potential users. If its requirements are unrealistic it will probably be ignored in the UK, though the manufacturers will not be able to avoid passing on some of the cost resulting from overseas application.

If you are concerned by any of the above, do you know who is representing your interest to get the final revisions properly debated at the BSI? The matter is not simple.

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Representation.

Two committees are concerned. First, the committee responsible for all standards within this group relating to luminaires for all applications is LGL/3/17. Members of this committee represent the Lighting Industries Federation, the Home Office, the Institution of Electrical Engineers, Department of Trade and Industry, and others. This committee is responsible for the international aspects of this family of standards and its experts know, or have access to, a great deal of information about the manufacture and use of lamps and lighting equipment.

The other committee is CPM/3, one of the cinematography family of committees, responsible for Theatre, Television and Film Studio equipment. Members of this committee include the ABTT, BEAMA, the BBC, the BFI, the BKSTS the CIBSE, the Fire Officers Association, the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association, the EETPU, the NIC, the RIBA, the Health and Safety Executive, the Lighting Industry Federation and representatives of several lighting equipment manufacturers. Until recently the GLC and the Home Office sent representatives.

Until recently CPM/3 has been working on a draft UK standard for luminaires but this has now ended because, as explained above, the UK is no longer free to impose its own standard now that the international document exists. This committee offers the specialist knowledge about entertainment industry requirements and practices that are not present on LGL/3/17. There have been several joint meetings of working parties from the two committees.

The Future.

What next? Recently, international proposals for amendments to IEC 598.2.17 have been circulated to all participating countries for comment. The UK met in May to decide its position. A proposal to widen the scope of the standard to include photographic studio lighting will not be opposed. The UK will support a recommendation to qualify the "access to live lamps" clause by exempting "equipment designed/intended for professional use" or "trained staff" – a rewording of the proposed international amendment. The UK also wants to clarify the wording of the requirements for safety mesh.

Views and proposals from other nations will also be forthcoming and all considered at a meeting at the end of this year. The UK delegate will be a member of the LGL/3 committee.

For UK users the eventual consequences are uncertain. There is little chance that there will be a direct legal requirement for compliance but the result may be the same. Manufacturers have to design to satisfy the requirements of those countries they wish to sell to where the new standard will be a legal necessity. It may not be attractive for them to make variants for the UK only. Many local government buyers automatically specify compliance with the appropriate BS, without knowing, or feeling the need to know, the precise details. Safety officers rightly query any departure from the BS norm that they have not had fully explained. Thus, whether wanted or not, a new British Standard applying to the theatre is bound to have effect and, where additional complexity is specified, will unavoidably increase the cost of the new equipment, though undoubtedly providing our industry with a higher standard of safety.

REIDING SHELF

I find myself increasingly fascinated by the creative processes leading towards a performance. A recent batch of books has given some insight into the creative agonies of the actor, and now Jonathan Miller analyses his director's dilemma in **SUBSEQUENT PERFORMANCES**. He describes his book as an assemblage of ideas, arguments and experiences. Much of the text is a discussion of the plays and operas that he has directed – a discussion in which, by thinking aloud, he shares the logical progression through which he discovered an appropriate style for a particular production. What he cannot share with his reader, because it is not logical and therefore is difficult to verbalise, is the gut theatrical intuition that transforms rational reasoning. Nevertheless there are fascinating glimpses of the directorial mind at work, and the pages are peppered with enough philosophic triggers to stimulate any reader's own intuition for a long time ahead.

Jonathan Miller is very concerned with the *afterlife* of any work of art and much of his book is concerned with the re-interpretation of a dramatic or music text by and for subsequent generations. Today's afterlife includes interpreting a work for performance in the newer media, and it is possibly his thinking on film and video that we now most urgently need to consider.

The author's distaste for institutionalised theatre comes through very strongly and so we all await with interest his announced assumption of the captaincy of the theatre that spawned our leading dramatic, operatic and balletic institutions – The Old Vic.

It is with considerable trepidation that I recommend **CARRY ON, UNDERSTUDIES**. But I do recommend it strongly. The problem is that I am male. That I also claim to be a Category II Feminist will carry little weight with author Michelene Wandor who can find sexism in the most innocent sentence. Category II (Bourgeois feminists or emancipationists) use the term 'actor' as if it were a generic term which includes 'actress' as part of its meaning; whereas Category III (Socialist Feminists) believe that "allowing the word 'actor' to be the 'norm' is to help perpetuate the unconscious assumption that the actress is some kind of secondary or divergent category." I am all for emancipation and I do very strongly believe that the theatre has led the way: for the past decade I have included the following statement in the prelims to my books.

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... the word 'actor' has been used to include all performers whether male or female; and in references to all personnel, the words 'he' and 'she' should be regarded as freely interchangeable. The world of theatre rejected discrimination of all kinds, including sex, long before such equality became either fashionable or a matter for legislation.

Perhaps this statement is a touch optimistic but surely the theatre has a better record for genuine equality than most other areas of life.

The extreme feminist future that Micheline Wandor seeks does seem to go beyond mere equality and into an area of positive discrimination where the heterosexual male is virtually disenfranchised. (She will be delighted that I feel threatened!) Like all extremists, Micheline Wandor does not promise a society with much fun. While her book inevitably lacks a total objectivity, it does constitute a good analytical record of (I quote the blurb) "the development of 'feminist' and 'gay' theatre in the context of the fringe theatre of the 1970s and 1980s". It also offers statistics to demonstrate inequality in the sexual division of labour in the theatre. But is this really as much the result of discriminatory tactics by men as the author would have us believe? Recommended as a record of an aspect of today's theatre and as a contribution to the debate about tomorrow's.

We have to thank Richard Leacroft for clarifying our understanding of the *Development of the English Playhouse*, and his *Theatre and Playhouse* has enriched our overview of western theatre architecture since the Greeks. This latter book was written jointly with his wife Helen who also collaborated on **THE THEATRE IN LEICESTERSHIRE**. By focussing on one particular county, the Leicestershire where the Leacrofts lived and worked, this new book, by its very concentration on local detail, presents a history that is far more universal than the title might suggest.

The core of all Leacroft's work lies in his conjectural reconstruction drawings. Given the painstaking research and accurate scaling behind the drawings, the element of conjecture is so soundly based that it can be considered more as serious science than as mere speculation. The twenty or so of these drawings are just part of the richness of illustrative images which include many photographs of the theatres in use and under demolition, plus drawings, playbills and associated printed ephemera of all kinds. The text, strongly factual and liberal in its quotes, builds an intriguing picture of the varying fortunes of this demanding mistress we call theatre, forever at the mercy of an audience susceptible to shifts in fashion and quick to respond to sensation and self-defeating hype.

This story of 'The Theatre in Leicestershire' takes us up to the 1960s. Its sequel will at least start with a success story – the Haymarket is a strong arm of our national theatre. Meanwhile this volume will be

cherished by all who savour the theatre of timber, paint and fibrous plaster, where there was not only a house curtain but one which released the smell of size.

Alexander Walker's definitive history of the British film industry in the sixties, **HOLLYWOOD ENGLAND**, and its sequel **NATIONAL HEROES** taking the story through the seventies and into the eighties, has now appeared in paperback. Film is the one performing art whose original productions we can still experience intact while studying the history of their conception and reception. We cannot, alas, view them under the same conditions as the audience they were made for. Normal viewing is now on the small home screen by courtesy of the television companies or the corner video shop. Even when we visit a cinema where the image is correctly scaled and viewed by a corporate audience, our response is inevitably coloured by the changes in social climate since the film was shot and first shown. Nevertheless when Alexander Walker writes about a major film there is a good chance that we have seen it or will see it. Oldies like me can remember seeing some of these films twenty five years ago and at regular intervals since. I personally respond mostly to snippets of acting although sometimes there are glimpses of the way we were – although more often they are of the way we would have liked to have been. (Increasingly they have become about the way we are glad we are not.)

Now, thanks to Alexander Walker, I know about the people who made these films and the money they made them with. Many of the problems are common to all the arts but in films the stakes tend to be bigger. The author has a very easy writing style and so I found these 800 tightly printed pages totally engrossing. Who will do an Alexander Walker on the rise of the subsidised theatre over the same period!

SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMATIC STRUCTURES is strictly for those with a genuine passion for the craft of playwriting, Anthony Brennan is no mere literary anatomist, dissecting the Bard for the benefit of students thumbing a lift along the weary road to examination success. The purpose of Brennan Analysis is not the revelation of common denominators in Shakespeare's approach to play construction. Greatness lies in the inspired departure from logic and the book probes the organisational details of small sections of a small selection of the plays. Much of the debate is concerned with rhythm, proportion and balance and so, in accord with the true purpose and spirit of research, may serve to stimulate the embryonic contemporary dramatist rather than just the historic commentator.

Every theatre library should have the magnificent new picture book of Kabuki.

Actually it is not so much a book, more a bound portfolio of 120 pages (25 × 36cm) in celebration not just of the art of **KABUKI** but also that of the colour printer. Half the book is dedicated to the leading group of eighteen traditional dramas. A concise plot summary for each play accompanies historic drawings and modern photographs. Comparison of the two emphasises the strength of the Kabuki performance tradition. A short section on Dance & Drama is followed by forty pages on Kabuki Design. This is particularly strong on make-up with multi-frame pictures of each step in the process. There are sections on costumes, on costumes accessories and much comparative material on the significance of the various colours and seasons. A splendid collection of stimulating images.

SUBSEQUENT PERFORMANCES. Jonathan Miller. Faber and Faber. £15 (UK).

CARRY ON, UNDERSTUDIES. Theatre and Sexual Politics. Micheline Wandor. Routledge & Kegan Paul. £5.95 (paperback) (UK).

THE THEATRE IN LEICESTERSHIRE. A History of Entertainment in the County from the 15th Century to the 1960s. Helen and Richard Leacroft. Leicestershire Libraries and Information Service (Thames Tower, Navigation Street, Leicester LE1 3TZ). £6.95 (+ 50p by post) (paperback).

HOLLYWOOD, ENGLAND. The British Film Industry in the Sixties. Alexander Walker. Harrap £7.95 (paperback) (UK). **NATIONAL HEROES.** British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties Alexander Walker. Harrap. £6.95 (paperback) (UK).

SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMATIC STRUCTURES. Anthony Brennan. Routledge & Kegan Paul. (£22.50) (UK).

KABUKI. Eighteen Traditional Dramas. Introduction by Kawatake Toshio. Photography by Iwata Akira. Translation by Helem Kay. Chronicle Books/Columbus Books. £16.95 (paperback) (UK).

EXPO 86

Vancouver Makes an Exhibition of Itself

RICHARD HARRIS

On board C.P. air flight 231 on route from Vancouver to Los Angeles on the last day of May, it was time to put some order into my thoughts on the exhibition which will, for another few months, dominate not only Vancouver but also the minds of ninety-nine per cent of the people of British Columbia.

Although not having the experience to compare all the recent international exhibitions with each other, my feeling is that Expo 86 probably holds more interest for theatre technical folk than most similar events over the last thirty years.

I suspect that this is because exhibition organisers are no longer prepared to risk drawing the public with simply a series of more or less static exhibits plus an adjacent funfair.

The original Great Exhibition, which sprung from the Prince Consort's loins in 1851, was the very first of these shindigs and I suspect as each new event has come along, so more and more showmanship has been employed. For example, I have a small guide book to the 1924 Wembley Exhibition which emphasises such delights as a statue of the then Prince of Wales carved in New Zealand butter.

Expo 86 is very definitely putting on a series of shows for its visitors. Take, for example, the Canada Pavilion. Although this is a little way away from the main exhibition site, being built on a harbour pier with — literally — ships alongside, there is not much dependence on static exhibits. It has, for example, the Imax 3D Cinema. This is, technically, I suppose about as far as film can go. The film is the largest commercial standard, 70mm, but the images are printed lengthwise on the film, which passes through the special projector sideways. This

means that each frame is three times the normal 70mm picture size or ten times the size of the standard 35mm image.

As this mammoth strip of film goes through the projector each frame is positioned on registration pins and held by a vacuum firmly against the rear element of the lens. The light — and this surprised me — is only a four kilowatt xenon, where I was expecting a good hundred amps of high intensity arc. According to the Imax press hand-out their shutter design passes thirty per cent more light than the conventional system, but even so the performance of modern lamps has become astonishing.

Even when projected on to a screen some five storeys high the picture retains tremendous sharpness and detail. Films for Imax are shot on Eastman 65mm negative, and printed on the 70mm stock.

The principal offering is a film taken from a small plane. The trouble for me was that the banking etc. was so realistic that one's body expected to be leaning 30° to one side or the other and, of course, it wasn't. Not good for the semi-circular canals.

At this point I must touch on one of the great problems with all large exhibitions. There is so much to see it is hard to concentrate on one's own particular interests. Visitor pressure constantly urges you onward and the result can be as exhausting as trying to drive at forty on a motorway. People may not actually hoot, but you are conscious of radiators in your rear view mirror. For example, to keep queuers for the Pavilion from boredom there are a series of small vertical show cases, about six feet tall and four feet wide, set in the wall beside which you wait. Each exhibit has an ear phone you can listen in to. I became very

interested in a Canadian lady poet of the nineteen twenties and thirties — there was her typewriter, her desk and photos of her home and family, while recordings, of her verse, read by the poetess, came through the ear piece. But there was not time. The queue moved one on and now not even the lady's name remains in my memory.

Having described a very large cinema, we now move to a very large theatre — the Expo Theatre itself.

This seats no less than 4,242 people, all under a diamond shaped roof. There are no side walls, so I cannot really accept the name theatre. Yes, I know all the proponents of Street Theatre and Drama Studios will descend on me, but my ideal 'theatre' is the Ambassadors — five hundred people of a like mind and similar prejudices gathered amid red velvet, white walls and gilded decorations — so there.

But the vast Expo auditorium is technically interesting. Because it mainly houses one nighters — big name singers and comedians are the staple — lighting and drapes must provide the settings.

And lighting there sure is. According to the Strand Lighting supply schedule there are some 500 PAR's on stage and 94 Lekos F.O.H. plus three 3k Xenon follow spots. Control is by a Light Palette TV2 running 474 CD80 dimmers. As an alternative control there is a Strand Mantrix board to accommodate acts who bring their own console operator to manually control their lighting.

The lighting bridges are of positively dizzying height and thus fairly breezy. This no doubt accounts for the three glass booths, each about the size of a good garden shed, which accommodate the follow spots.

The hydraulically operated lighting bars are controlled by a Hoffend Micro Commander memory system. Rather strangely, the actual desk is positioned in the wings, actors right, when I would have expected it to have shared the lighting control position in the centre of the auditorium.

The hydraulic pumps and accumulators for the flying system are an impressive sight. Hydraulic gear always has an air of engineering integrity about it, perhaps



because one is aware of the vast pressures within.

The Expo Theatre is a fan shaped rake and the Consultants, Leonard Auerbach and Associates, appear to me to have achieved perfect sightlines from every seat. The building is made of individually bolted together sections, douglas fir for the roof beams and cladding, concrete columns and steel gantrys, the idea being that at the end of the exhibition the theatre will be transported to a new site and re-erected.

This strikes me as an excellent scheme. Think of the waste of the demolition of the exciting Dome of Discovery when the Festival of Britain had run its course.

All over the site there are various smaller venues, many of which have a theatre content. For example, the Folklife Pavilion, which is actually a group of a dozen or so buildings in which various activities proliferate, includes a small theatre in which different ethnic groups, of which Canada nowadays has a rich diversity, dance, sing or play instruments. When I was there a cheerful Caribbean group were giving out. Although only a small theatre, seating capacity about two hundred, it was nevertheless equipped with a sound system. Why? Perhaps it was because the casual exhibition visitor is thought unlikely to make the effort of listening attentively to a play without it, or perhaps it was because next door to the theatre a gentlemen was cutting logs into various exotic shapes with a chain saw.

Among scheduled acts I gleaned from the 'forthcoming events' were Zheng Zheng Hua, the Blackfoot Club, Fiddlin Bill and His Country Kings and the Intuit Throat Singers - a diverse sounding melange indeed.

Another theatrical, venue is the Kodak Pacific Bowl, 3000 seats, this time in the open air, where the Mounties do their musical ride and a motorcycle team from China demonstrate the innate talent for survival of that ancient people.

This brings me to another more general point about the whole of the North American West Coast - the very strong influence of the Orient. Not only the China town section of most cities, but the Japanese restaurants which proliferate in Seattle, the Japanese shipping which throngs Vancouver Harbour and the general feeling, that the population don't look towards Europe so much as across the Pacific. One can feel further from home in these parts than in Sydney or Auckland.

What of the Expo site in general? First, the harbour side setting is magnificent, while the landward backdrop of snow capped mountains means that ones horizon is attractive for 360 degrees.

Transport around the site is available on one of those ubiquitous exhibition adjuncts, an overhead mono-rail.

Because Strand have been a major contractor on site, I was loaned a Canada Club membership ticket. This meant I was able to sit in uncrowded luxury in the front car of these trains, while the general public suffered a fair imitation of the London

underground to the rear. A great feeling of privilege, greatly enjoyed.

As a patriotic duty I visited the U.K. Pavilion. So So. The theme was transport - there was a mock-up cab of a British Rail 125 mph Inter-city and a selection of cars, including the only Rolls Royce I saw in the whole of Canada. Strange when two thousand miles south the Los Angeles street scene is constantly dignified by their presence. There was also a British - really London - Pub. Not bad. Shepherds Pie, Fish and Chips, etc. but expensive beer, I suppose because its barrels had come 6000 miles from Mortlake. I can't help feeling that tradition is the image of Britain Expo visitors wanted to see. It is highly unlikely that anyone in Canada is going to buy railway equipment from us, but many more than do might be encouraged to holiday here.

The Best Pavilion? Difficult. Externally the Hong Kong offering, with its supposed bamboo scaffolding surrounding it, all done in No.50 yellow, must come high. Internally I particularly liked the North West Territories pavilion, with its murals, picturing the nomadic life of the north, its representation of a mine and its Eskimo carvings. I suppose I enjoyed the feeling of being in real Canada. Externally also this is an attractive effort. It is shaped like an iceberg and covered in a reflective paint containing glass granules to make it glitter - and glitter most attractively it does.

There is much more to see on the Expo site - Highway 86, a four lane concrete road which emerges from the water of False Creek and ends 200 yards on in mid air. On it, frozen in time are bicycles, cars, a small

aircraft, a giant truck and even half a submarine. All except the submarine, which a discreet tap tells me is plaster, are genuine items all sprayed with a thick plastic paint of neutral grey to eliminate colour and texture and leave only form.

I noticed there was always an intrigued throng walking amongs the artefacts - if this is not too pompous a word for items ranging from a pair of running shoes to a '69 Ford Mustang.

Then there is the Air Canada Pavilion, with a 1937 aircraft outside, inside an audio visual creation of that year in which the company was founded.

And then there is Vancouver itself. Probably the World's most magnificently sited city. It is far enough away from any other metropolitan centre to avoid the talent suction that inevitably draws the brightest of Mancunians to London and the most original of Bostonians to New York.

If any Cue reader has never visited Canada, and the opportunity arises, they should seize it. Canada is a delightful half way house between the UK. and the U.S.

The shopping streets have W.H. Smith and Boots the Chemist and cafe tables offer H.P. Sauce. It is all rather like home with a North American standard of living.

As the mountains and pines of Northern California turned into the brown biscuit appearance of Los Angeles I thought forward to the sights to come - of an opera house seating 3,000 and costing eighty million dollars just being completed - of one T.V. studio with no less than three thousand Ianiro lanterns rigged - but that was all still in the future when I had thought through my Expo 86 experience.

The Flashlight ALC Dimmer and Fast Rig Lighting System

Reviewed by Steve Kemp in Haarlem

The heart of a good lighting rig is a reliable dimmer, so I took a look at Flashlight's new ALC Dimming System which has been designed specifically for touring. I also took a look at their new Fast Rig six bar lighting system which is not only compatible with their new dimmers, but with lighting systems supplied by the majority of European lighting supply companies.

Flashlight's new ALC Dimmer System is a robust and reliable touring dimmer which has been carefully thought out and planned in close cooperation with touring electricians in Holland.

The complete dimmer rack contains 24 x 5 kw dimmers arranged in four modules of 6 dimmers each. Every channel is protected via a circuit breaker rather than a fuse, much easier than changing fuses. Also, each channel is switchable from the dimmer without the control desk being connected, very useful for checking connections or patching, etc. Each channel

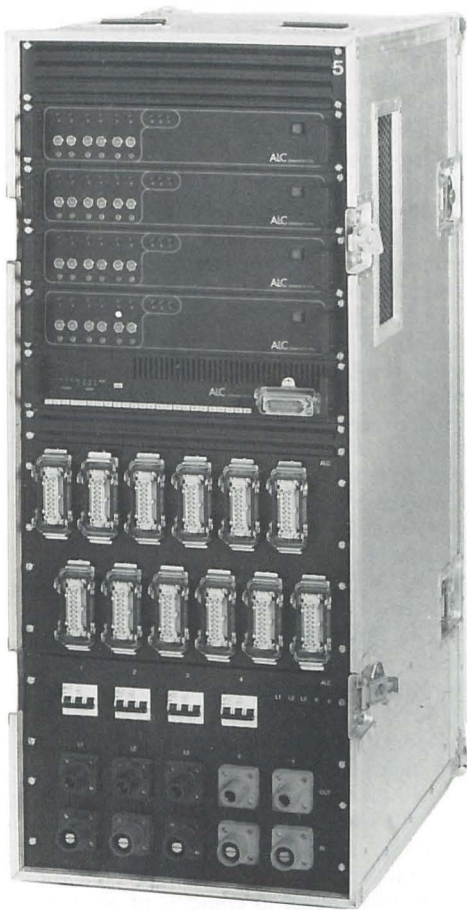
contains a control mimic which tells at a glance which channel is being used. There is also a load indicator, so it is possible to tell if a lamp is blown. The modules have 3 phase and earth indicators to show if the correct mains connection has been made.

The power connection is via 400 amp peak load Camlock connectors which of course can interlink with other ALC racks for larger installations.

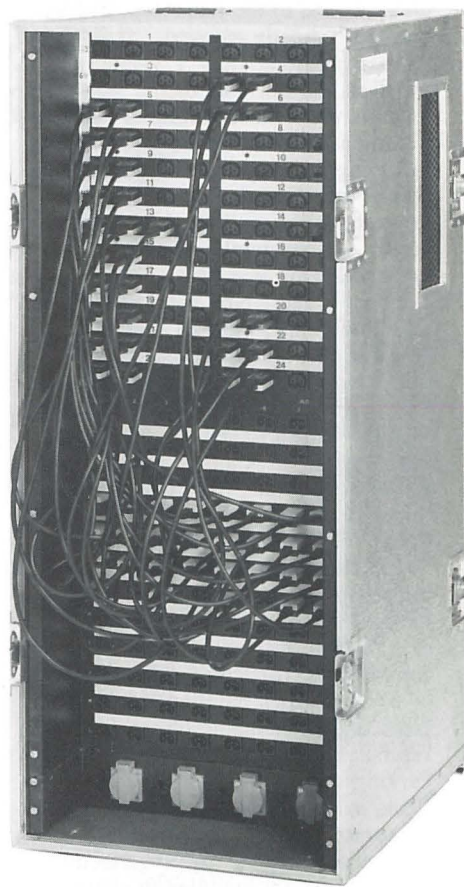
The racks have automatic or manually switched forced air cooling. This facility is particularly useful when working with large loads per channel as, for example, one would within a TV studio.

Control voltage is 0 to +10 volts, which means that 95% of control desk or lighting computers are compatible.

What makes this particular rack interesting is the patch system which is similar to the Avolite system and has been designed to control the 110 volt par lamp or leko but can also control 220 volt units as well.



The Flashlight Dimmer Rack showing the four 6-way dimmer modules and control unit. Rear view (right) shows the patchfield.



This is the way it works:—

Each channel has four outputs on the back of the dimmer module. The outputs are series coupled so that 110 volts appears rather than 220 volts. This enables the series pairing of lamps to take place at the dimmer rather than at the lamp. Any of these outputs can be connected via patchcord to the output side of the patchfield, which in turn, is connected to the multicore outlets and then, via multicore cables to the lamp. Therefore any dimmer output can be patched to any lamp output. If a 220 volt output is required, then a "shorting plug" is used to convert the 110 volt output to 220 volts. If special, low voltage, effects such as 28 volt Aero lamps are required, then four way series splitters can be utilised to connect any four aeros (total voltage 112 volts) to any other four aeros.

There is a total of 96 outputs from the dimmers (4 per dimmer) which can connect to 96 inputs on the lamp side of the patch field. All connectors used within the patching system are of the Europlug type.

The final output of the rack to the lantern is via 16 pin Harting multipin connectors. The final connection to the lamp is via either the Fast rig six bar system or via "breakouts" to normal 16 amp Shuko or 15 amp BESA connectors.

The great advantage of this system is that patching can be done in the workshop according to the lighting designer's plot and can stay patched for the duration of the tour. All that happens at the venue is the correctly

marked multicore cables are plugged into the correct outputs of dimmer rack and, Hey Presto—channel 1 is always channel 1, no matter what number of lamps that channel contains.

A useful added extra is provided at the bottom of the patch panel. There are four, individually fused 220 volt 16 amp Shuko or 15 amp BESA outlets to feed such items as smoke machines, pyrotechnics, special effects, worklights, electric toasters or the crew chief's electric razor!!

A DC control patch facility is also available and can be fitted to the customer's requirements.

The size of each complete rack is 125 × 53 × 94 cm and the weight is 120 kilos. Also, each rack is fully flight cased as standard.

The Fast Rig Six Bar System

The concept of four, six or eight lamp pre-rigged lighting bars connected by multicore cable to dimmers is not by any means new or original. In Holland various systems are used, developed mainly by the rock 'n roll side of the lighting industry since the early seventies to facilitate easy rigging on tour.

Flashlight's new system, however, has been planned in conjunction with the development of the ALC Dimming System and should be regarded as a complete system with its own design philosophy although it is 100% compatible with most European and UK rental systems and can be

used for any type of show — Rock 'n Roll, Theatre or Industrial.

The basis of the system is the internally wired "six bar" on which can be rigged up to six lamps. The six bars in turn can be hung on trusses, conventional theatre bars or anywhere required by the Lighting Designer. Each outlet on the bar has a maximum load of 2 kw. Connection to dimmer system is via 16 pin Harting multipin plugs and sockets and multicore cable. The wiring of plugs and multicores is compatible with all other "six bar" users standards.

The new Flashlight system contains two extra outlets per six bar which are connected by a 4 pin Harting outlet on the bar itself. These two extra outlets can be used for the connection of specials such as Aeros, Raylights or any other single fixtures, including special effects, that are not pre-rigged.

A new, custom built "Meat Rack" system has been developed for the transport of the pre-rigged six bars. Each Meat Rack contains a maximum of 6 six bars, a total of 36 pre-rigged lamps.

The philosophy of the Fast Rig System is to get the complete system up in the air as quickly as possible. This means doing as much pre-rigging, colouring and patching before the equipment ever leaves the workshop to allow the road crew as much time as possible when at the venue. In Holland, where "one night stand" touring is normal, very often in difficult venues such as sports halls or disused churches, this of course, becomes even more important.

However, the use of these systems does mean that the Lighting Designer must work within the constrictions of a system; it is not possible for him to put any lamp anywhere. The "look" of the show has to be planned around the many technical possibilities available to him. Use of this system involves a lot of homework; planning of what lamp, in what position, in what colour is connected to what dimmer is extremely important. The Chief Electrician has to use precise paperwork, has to be careful that every multicore cable connection to six bars and dimmers is labelled and correctly connected as per the lighting plot. This becomes apparent when he starts "patching" the system in the workshop.

But once all the planning is done and touring starts, everything becomes very simple — plug "A" goes to socket "A" exactly as the plot and it all goes together very quickly and efficiently.

A Spanish Mikado

MURRAY CLARK in Barcelona

Each summer, for about six weeks, Barcelona plays host to the exciting GREEK FESTIVAL. Concentrating mainly on music many of the presentations are held in the beautiful open air Theatr Greek a steeply banked auditorium built into the rocks of Mont Juic and after which the festival is named. The Festival having grown in recent years other events take place in the Placa de Rei, which is surely one of the most beautiful squares in the world, larger concerts are held in the huge Spanish Village complex also in Mont Juic, and other locations even include the hospital gardens!

This year visitors to the Festival included such diverse attractions as George Benson, Martha Graham's Dance Company, Miles Davis, Manu Dibango from the Camerouns and Kumbi Saleh from Ghana as well as the Teatro d'Arte from Italy with their musical comedy *Cinecitta*. The British contribution was by Toby Robertson with a production of *Coriolanus*.

The opening production for the season was in itself a unique and stimulating occasion. Not without interest to a visiting Brit., it was in fact the very first production of a Gilbert and Sullivan operatta anywhere in Spain – ever!

DAGOLL DAGOM, presented their very different version of *The Mikado* in Catalan with a cast of twelve and an orchestra of eighteen. The clever and witty translation was by Xavier Bru de Sala and the exciting musical arrangements were by Joan Vives who conducted the orchestra each night. Joan Vives also supervised the double album recording and produced the backing tape that is used for the accompaniment when Dagoll Dagom are on tour.

Very clever decor, beautiful costumes and an excellent sound design by young Jordi Bonet (using a radio microphone for each of the cast, all finely balanced against the unamplified orchestra) expertly suited the perfect natural acoustic of the auditorium and helped to make the evening quite perfect. Jordi supervised the mix from a Soundcraft 500 desk and fed the signal into ElectroVoice speakers. Radiomics were Seinheisser MKE 2 microphones with transmitters and the EM 1036 receiver system. It was not thought necessary to use a diversity system. The cast wore the tiny microphones in their wigs in current West End fashion. Frequencies were a problem but all performances took place without any disturbance from passing taxis! The main balance was carried out in the heart of the amphitheatre with a second sound technician backstage with the radio receivers etc to supervise the cast members and the

frequent change over of transmitters.

The company rehearses several months before setting out for an approximate two year tour of Spain. Rehearsals take place in their own studios and the cast wore copies of their final stage costume from very early days to accustom themselves to the complex Japanese style clothes. Make up was also often worn and a full replica of the set was built. A month before the opening performance a theatre was hired in Barcelona so that for four weeks full scale technical and dress rehearsals could be mounted. A luxury unknown in Great Britain.

Dagoll Dagom work principally in the Catalan language but play in Castelliano when appearing in Madrid and other parts of Spain. Performances are given, sometimes

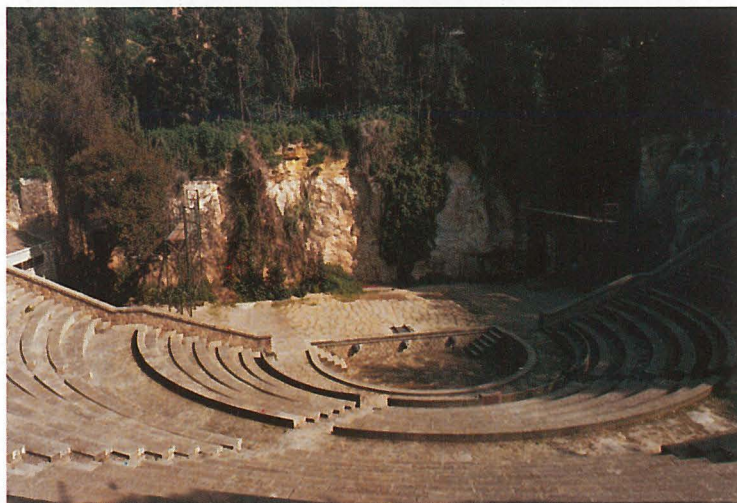
for a week or, on occasions, for a single night, in venues, indoor and outdoor, across the country and also in Spanish speaking countries overseas.

The setting is designed with the tour very much in consideration and the company take with them all the lighting, sound and technical equipment they need. The Cast cheerfully assist the crew in the set up and strike at each venue. Due to cost of touring a large orchestra playback is used for the orchestral accompaniment on tour although the original orchestra played live at Barcelona.

Dagoll Dagom was founded in 1973 by Joan Lluís Bozzo (who directed and conceived this current production), Anna Rosa Cisqueña, the present administrator



"Filled to the brim with girlish glee" – Dagoll Dagom's *Mikado* is Spain's first production of a Gilbert & Sullivan Opera.



Theatr Greek, Barcelona's open air theatre built into the rock of Mt. Juic.



The Flotats Company's Springs Awakening at the Catalan National Theatre. Settings by Serge Marzolff.

and Miquel Periel who plays the Mikado as well as Fun Ya Yao.

The operetta has been adapted for the carefully chosen cast of twelve all of whom have superb singing voices.

A lavish programme, record album and other merchandise accompany the production to ensure the maximum publicity and support for a very enjoyable evening indeed. Considerable space is given in the programme to photographs and biographies of all members of the cast and crew. No one is left out – unlike the majority of British theatre programmes which often give the impression that a complex show is solely the work of a Director or perhaps the Designer.

If there could be any criticism it must be of the lighting design which left much to be desired and failed to exploit the possibilities of the Director's imaginative use of the setting or reveal all the detail of the magnificent costumes and make up. The two operating electricians had a difficult time however as the Barcelona presentation was effected with the use of three control desks, all of the simple preset variety.

The Mikado visits Buenos Aires in August and will hopefully be seen in the UK next year at one of our theatre festivals. A Gilbert and Sullivan addict will find that this is a fresh and exciting presentation definitely not to be missed.

THE FLOTATS COMPANY has just completed a six month run of Wedekind's tragedy, *Springs Awakening* at the Catalan National Theatre, a recently converted cinema in the Ramblas. Directed by Josep Maria Flotats, who has for some time been a principal player with the Comedie Francaise, the production had a very distinct "French" style to it, and at times was, perhaps, a little too sombre.

The setting by Serge Marzolff depressingly captured the stuffy constricting world of Germanic, turn of the century, institutions, and brilliantly formed all the varied locations demanded by the eighteen scenes. Much use was made of the natural

sound of footsteps on the huge ceramic floor, as well as the swimming pool placed at the front of the stage. A clever, if somewhat Victorian, transformation to a graveyard at the end of play, skillfully used perspective design to the limit.

The mainly young cast were all superb, handling the very explicit sexual scenes with complete maturity. Lighting by Alain Poisson was sensitive to a degree of high perfection, marred only by an insistence on using fluorescent tubes to light the skylcloth, the flickering of which quite spoils the magic and drama of the final fade.

It was surprising, on a backstage visit after the performance, to discover just how minimal the lighting equipment had been to achieve such perfect results. The majority of the luminaires had been imported from France, from where a Colortran controller had also been purchased. The lighting operator was very pleased with it and felt it to be the perfect desk for his needs.

Sound, was again designed by Jordi Bonet, who made much use of direct play Compact Discs and was exactly right, capturing the production's mood perfectly with occasionally startling effect.

"El Despertar de la Primavera" will return in the autumn in repertoire with Flotats next production.

The third production seen on this visit was in total contrast to the previous two. A return visit to the SCALA BARCELONA to see *Magic Mon* was, as usual, an interesting experience, with its many technical effects and large and very attractive cast.

The Scala is now presenting its second production since being completely restored after much of the building was burnt down by terrorists some years ago. An opportunity has been seized in the rebuilding to add a rehearsal room, a conference centre, rooftop restaurant and art gallery to the many Scala facilities which already included a large discotheque. All these sections are served from the one kitchen complex and food travels all over the building on a

complex vertical and horizontal heated moving lift system.

The new production is a strange mixture of old and new without any cohesive style. New sequences devised by Ramon and Antonio Riba and choreographed by Christina Riba (with the assistance of Floid for one number), seem to lack the inventiveness of their earlier work.

The opening sequence is somewhat extraordinary. Without warning a rocket-ship transports us into the clouds where chiffon clad Ginger Roger Girls perform Night and Day before a storm breaks out, this is quickly followed by an excellent fan number presumably portraying the sun!

This and the subsequent inclusion of one of the Scala's first sequences of sixteen years ago, a gypsy fantasy, jarred with differences in choreographic style and the superior orchestral arrangement by Adolfo Waitzmann on the soundtrack.

Whisky Te a pastiche of an 'On Your Toes' style of presentation based on the prohibition days in New York was not improved by the introduction of several "Keystone Cops" rather than more realistically costumed police. The adagio however, danced by D'Valda and Sirico was superbly and excitingly performed and the Baross acrobatic dancers added their uniquely exciting stuntwork. The transformation from an ice cream parlor to drinking den was effective and amusing although the hydraulic flying system at the Scala slowed down the speed of the effect a little.

Other items in this long, very good value for money presentation included an ice adagio by The Toddis and a bizarre but clever giant tarantula sequence which reminded one of the Paris Alcazar shows in the early sixties. The Key Brothers contribute some pale copies of Siegfried and Roy illusions, embarrassingly presented and which are in sharp contrast to their own very excellent magic act.

Scala lighting has improved since the previous production but still leaves much to be desired. Better angles and coverage are evident but some extremely unsympathetic colours (particularly a vicious hard amber) are brought in to play from time to time. It is good to see some back lighting at last, even though the tightly packed grid prevents any lighting over the stage itself. A lot of parcans have appeared to add a much needed punch to the general brightness. Follow spotting and cueing is of a very high standard indeed. The latter is very impressive as a Thorn Q File is still in use!

The sound quality, for some reason, has deteriorated seriously with this new production. The JBL speakers are in a new position backing onto the proscenium. This gives sound operators a severe feedback problem when microphones are used on stage. The equalisation chosen for the music playback destroyed all forms of illusion that an orchestra might be present. The almost complete absence of brightness and a heavy gutsy bass and middle frequency range at times gave feelings of considerable discomfort.

The Scala mechanised flying machinery is

as usual used to excellent effect although proving to be cumbersomely slow in a couple of the transformation effects. The forestage lift is used continuously with great imagination and appears to work safely and well, sinking silently down three floors for scenery, ice tanks etc to be loaded onto it.

Decor is by an assortment of designers in an assortment of styles – some quite curious. The many boy and girl dancers in the company work very hard and appeared always fresh and vivacious despite the early hours of the morning (the first show starts at 11.30 and the second show usually ends at 3.30 a.m.!).

It was a treat to see the famous Scala fountains again, absent in the last production and as well as the giant tarantula the show was further enriched by two orang-utans, a poodle, one horse, an elephant and two minks.

A look at the technical facilities revealed clinically clean sound and lighting control booths with equipment looked after with great respect and care. Not a speck of dust, empty beer can or even an old crumpled magazine to be seen anywhere. Dressing room accommodation for the cast is still minimal but most of the costume changes take place backstage in the wings or in a huge lift that connects the stage to the dressing room floor that is actually above the auditorium ceiling. The dancers provide and support their own library of books, a TV and a cold drinks dispenser.

High up on the roof of the Scala are stables and animal accommodation for the tiger, horses and other animals. Apart from having one of the best pent house views in Barcelona the animals also enjoy the luxury of the elevator ride down to stage level.

There cannot be better value for money or a harder working company anywhere in Europe. Coupled with the excellent food and the comfortable ambience of the auditorium the Scala still provides a night to remember, with a spectacle superior to any at present in Paris although albeit in a very Spanish style. The visiting theatre engineer has an added bonus, in that, whilst sipping his champagne and enjoying the show, he can also appreciate the imaginative and complex stage machinery working well at each and every performance.

PRODUCT NEWS

Computer Technology Firmly at your Service

ADB's new control desk S20 has been creating quite a stir recently in Paris at SIEL '86, in Berlin at SHOWTECH and in Geilo at NOTT'86.

In this versatile, easy to use control ADB puts computer technology firmly at the service of theatres and with the price barrier removed it would seem that the operator's creative imagination is the only limit to realising this sophisticated system's full capability in performance. A colour monitor displays 5 different functions pages containing all the information necessary to control the system – channels and memories, cross-fades, playback masters, flashes and chasers.

The operational modes in use or available are clearly displayed on the monitor in bright colours with " bargraph " thermometers. The functions thus displayed can be accessed directly by pointing the mouse-controlled cursor. The S20 system is self-contained in a desk-top console which is multiplex linked to the dimmers.

More information from White Light, 57 Filmer Road, Fulham SW6. Tel: 01 731 3291. or ADB – Leuvensesteenweg 585, B-1930 Zaventem, Belgium.

Tempus 36 is also available as back-up and to give experience of manual working alongside the more advanced memory system.



Lucky sixth formers at Withenshaw



Mr. Robert Ely, Head of Drama at the Arden Sixth Form College, operating the Strand M24 memory lighting control system recently installed there. The reconstructed school hall is fitted with a full Strand lighting rig. The college offers a two year theatre technical course which covers lighting, sound, costume, wardrobe and stage management.

It is only sensible to train for theatre lighting on the type of equipment the students will find when they come to put their training to use, say Mr. Ely. A Strand



Imagination Technology

ARRI (GB) LTD are pleased to announce the formation of a new subsidiary company, IMAGINATION TECHNOLOGY LTD., which will carry on the activities of the TBA TECHNOLOGY division of Tim Burnham Associates Ltd.

The new company, which is based at ARRI's UK headquarters in Heston, near London's Heathrow Airport, will be run by ex TBA Managing Director Tim Burnham, and a small core of senior engineering staff from TBA has also been taken on board.

IMAGINATION TECHNOLOGY will be relaunching the TBA range of lighting control systems at Photokina in September, and shortly after plan to reintroduce the 65 SERIES range of 500/650 watt theatre luminaires.

When asked to comment, Tim Burnham said: "This is a tremendous opportunity to carry forward the work which began with so much promise at TBA. We are all absolutely delighted to have joined the ARRI family, and excellent progress has already been made to get our products back into the market."

Readers will remember that ARRI (GB) directors Derrick Ross and Paul Wild were until recently leading lights at the then Rank Strand, and one can only speculate that this new grouping will cause a major stir in the stage lighting industry.

For further information, call, write or telex: IMAGINATION TECHNOLOGY 7 Airlinks, Spitfire Way, Heston, Middlesex TW5 9NR Telephone: 01-573 1720 Telex: 916075 ARRI (GB)

COLOUR MUSIC!

STLD see CBSO get RDE Pop Lighting Treatment for HRH and BBC TV at NEC.

BOB ANDERSON

The Society of Television Lighting Directors had the unusual experience on June 25th of watching a top Pop lighting designer, Richard Dale, creating spectacular colour lighting effects for a performance of Ravel's 'Bolero' to be performed before Prince Charles at the National Exhibition Centre the following night and transmitted live on BBC television.

The STLD arrange meetings four or five times a year for members to see studios, equipment or other matters of interest in the general field of performance lighting. Occasionally meetings involve visits to TV organisations abroad and past highlights have been Florida for an American conference and Epcot, Cologne for the studios and Photokine, and Canada, Holland and Rome for a range of reasons including the sheer pleasure of the trips. The STLD is never unambitious. On this occasion the expectations were, of course, on a different plane. Birmingham, even the magnificence of BBC Pebble Mill studios, could not be thought of as an attraction in itself. The meeting therefore combined a look at some of the latest technology at Pebble Mill with a chance to watch the rehearsal of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at the National Exhibition Centre.

Birmingham lighting director Barry Chatfield hosted the stay at Pebble Mill. The familiar daylit foyer home of Pebble-Mill-at-One was dark and being re-equipped for a future programme series. The bar, fortunately, was in full working order. After drinks, refreshment and chat, parties toured technical areas to see some of the latest technical marvels. Computer graphics were, for me, the revelation. Not only can pictures and text be painted directly onto the screen in an infinity of subtle colours, any television picture either live off air or from the library can be captured and altered or incorporated into a totally new composite. Now, more than ever before, you cannot afford to believe what you see on the screen. The second stop was the lighting control room in the main studio to see the new Galaxy. Operating staff were ready and willing to talk about the system's strengths and weaknesses and, whether by happy coincidence or strategic planning we did not discover, the Strand Project Manager, Andy Collier, was with the STLD party and able to correct a few misunderstandings as well as learn a few home truths. Finally, in the

studio, representatives from Playlight, CCT and Lee Colortran demonstrated some of their latest luminaires and portable controls. Then the party transferred to the NEC.

Hall 7 at the NEC is about the same size as the Wembley Arena, about 120,000 sq. ft. and seats 6,000 people in concert layout. You have probably seen show jumping televised from there. When the horses depart the main floor is swept clean and filled with countless rows of seats and a flat floor facing the platform and on scaffold terraces along the back and sides. Lighting is industrial high pressure sodium floodlights or what you bring with you. For this event the BBC and the promoters had contracted Richard Dale of RDE to provide a Pop Concert type rig. Richard used some 600 PAR cans on trusses over the stage and more over the auditorium, rigged in the established Pop manner with self-climb chain hoists lashed to the roof steels. Rigging had lasted from 3am on Monday to 10pm, then paused to allow orchestra rehearsals on Tuesday morning, and was continuing with the final touches of focus and colour late Tuesday afternoon. Lighting control was by an Avolites Rolacue 60 way board with two 72 way Avolites dimmer racks. A separate 30 way board controlled the house lighting. Lighting effects had to include white light cover for the television cameras for the main part of the concert and a full battery of special effects for the final item. BBC Lighting Director Derek Price was responsible for the televised results and Richard Dale for the effect seen in the hall.

The camera rehearsal was scheduled for 1930 until 2200 and would be the first and last chance to see performers and lighting on camera before the performance. The lighting rig and focusing were substantially complete though a laser, earlier producing complex blue-green patterns in the air over the seating, was having trouble with its water-cooling system, to the distress of orchestra members sitting underneath. Panic arrangements were being made to find and fit spares.

Television rehearsals always look chaotic unless you can plug into talk-back. Without the producer's instructions everybody seems to be doing their own thing without any regard for anyone else. The orchestra rehearsed, stopping occasionally for the conductor, Simon Rattle, to shout messages to the TV control room through the micro-



phone system. Without the questions the answers made little sense. Sound, the audience PA system, cut in and out, presumably to test balances, and, incidentally, thereby demonstrated how well sound reinforcement can work when the aim is to assist hearing instead of to attack it. Lighting faded and altered as Richard and the hidden electronics control engineers agreed working limits. Continuing streams of water descended from the laser until it was eventually lowered for major surgery. Even watching the two monitors provided for lights and PA to see camera output, there was little chance to understand what the final programme would look like.

The fancy lighting effects were saved for the last work, the 'Bolero'. Anyone who knows this music will have no doubt that the only possible lighting theme is to follow the music with a long slow build from nearly nothing for the first few bars to ever more unbelievable visual crescendos as the music reaches the finale. From the rehearsal, it seemed that the needs of the viewer and cameras would prevent a minimum-light beginning. However, colour instead of white light was tested and would probably register over the close shots of the solo performers selected by the director and also be effective in this enormous hall. The crescendo, however, did everything that could be desired. Light levels did build, and build, and build, until obviously everything was at full and the music still had several bars to go. So, with all the experience of the pop world behind him, Richard brings in smoke, lots of smoke, and the ends of the centre truss begin to lower to form an enormous inverted Vee above the orchestra. Then, with five seconds still to go, the central ring of lights tilt vertically and begin to spin! then Blackout! or so I should expect.

Unfortunately I was not able to see the actual performance to find out what had been decided about the colour effects, whether the laser worked, and whether they got the critical timing of those last few bars precisely right.

Nevertheless, it was fascinating to experience the rehearsal and to see one more step towards the day when the top lighting designers will be able to move freely across the boundaries from stage to television and, perhaps, even to film.