

CUE

Technical Theatre Review 47

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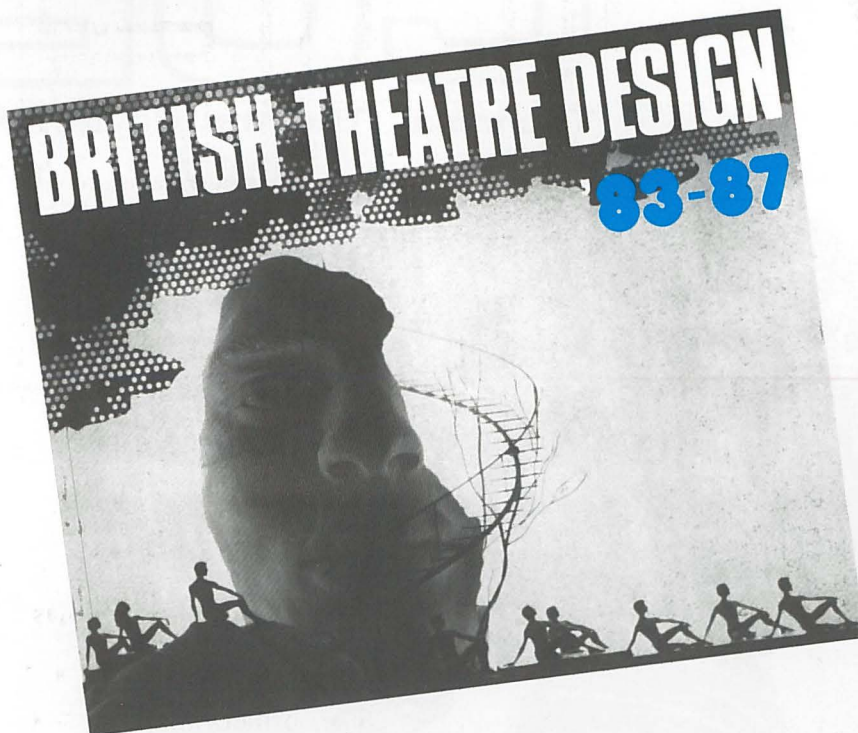
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Cover:

The 1619 costume drawing on our cover is from the album of ballet designs discovered in Germany in 1985 and purchased for the Theatre Museum by the V & A with the support of the National Art Collections Fund. These costume designs form the opening exhibition *The King's Pleasures* in the Gielgud Gallery of the Theatre Museum and are on display until August 2nd 1978.

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AN ASHCROFT LEVY?

Throughout history, the most consistent source of arts subsidy has been the artists themselves.

Today's writers, composers, painters and performers are protected from the levels of poverty that were the commonplace of earlier societies. Nevertheless, unless they command a star's commercial clout in the few areas of the arts which can attain a normal response to the pressures of market forces, the rewards rarely begin to approach anything like comparability with parallel activities outside the arts. Low rewards and lack of security are often held to be compensated for by job satisfaction. But the agony that is central to an artist's creativity can only offer job satisfaction to a masochist. Most people working in the arts are driven by that intangible motivator called vocation. Tempered by survival.

Many of yesterday's writers and composers still make their subsidy contribution through the saving of royalty payments on copyrights which have passed into the public domain. Paintings and manuscripts, frequently by artists who spent their lives on the threshold of survival, exchange ownership at ever increasing prices. But the arts rarely profit.

Dame Peggy Ashcroft, speaking at the opening of the Society of British Theatre Designers' Exhibition at Riverside Studios, offered an elegant solution to the problem of increasing arts funding without recourse to additional subsidy or sponsorship: **a transfer tax on the sale of all art whose copyright has entered the public domain.** The auction figures for works of art, derived from competitive bidding, are relative not absolute. A tax would not materially affect the buyers or sellers but it could sustain and develop the arts.

Let yesterday's art subsidise today's and thus provide a heritage for tomorrow. Cue welcomes the concept of an Ashcroft Levy.

Theatric Tourist FRANCIS REID welcomes the Covent Garden Opening of the Theatre Museum

The Theatric Tourist Trail has gained a new delight. Our Theatre Museum has opened in London. It was not an easy birth: no theatre production ever is, and the national arts purse is a reluctant midwife. But now, every day (except Monday) from coffee time to curtain time we can make contact with our theatre roots.

"Contact" is the essence of any museum. Many of the objects now displayed are very familiar: they are the essential illustrations of the history books, and the Theatre Museum during its extended gestation period within the V & A had an excellent record of publishing its treasures on postcards. But now we have sight of the originals. Inevitably they have to be secured behind glass but to be in the presence of, say, the Killigrew patent for Drury Lane or an Inigo Jones proscenium design for the Banqueting House, is to make the kind of contact that provides a window into an understanding of the fragile world of performances long past. This contact may be spiritual and emotional but it can provide the base for a more logical study of the facts of the past.

Any museum has two faces: its publicly assembled displays and its study collections. Theatre generates a particularly wide range of collectibles and only a tiny proportion of the Theatre Museum's vast riches can be displayed at any one time. Indeed the archive is so extensive that it cannot be accommodated within the museum and will be located in new premises now being prepared adjacent to the V & A's National Archive of Art and Design. Even so, many many desirable candidates for conservation, particularly in areas allied to design, technology and architecture, are so bulky that the Museum has to operate a highly selective policy of acquisition in relation to three dimensional objects. Nevertheless this is an Aladdin's cave for the researcher, with access available (by appointment) via the library and reading room within the Museum's Covent Garden building.

The museum is housed underneath the Transport Museum within the old Flower Market. A ground floor foyer on the corner of Russell and Wellington Streets gives access to the basement galleries. The Main Gallery presents a chronological landmark tour, and the Gielgud and Irving Galleries are for temporary exhibitions. The Beard Room houses a reference collection and there is a lecture theatre approached through a lower foyer where the museum's paintings are hung.

Space is very precious indeed and the underground galleries have been planned to use it effectively. The design represents something of a triumph over the complexities of adapting the structure of a nineteenth

century undercroft to conform with today's building regulations for public circulation. The subterranean location has made full air conditioning essential. Desirable though this is for conservation, many European theatre museums depend upon open windows during hotter summers than ours. Theatre buffs will visit under any conditions, but climatic control is a positive contribution to the general ambience that will attract the more casual playgoers in search of a wider understanding of the background to their pleasure.

Unlike the galleries below, the entrance foyer is naturally lit and lofty enough to accommodate a welcome from the gilded angel of the Spirit of Gaiety who once topped her vanished theatre in the Aldwych. The visitor can buy theatre tickets from Cecil Beaton's box office from the Duke of York's, acquire delights from shop's splendid postcard stock or refresh at the cafeteria located under a perch supporting a gleaming steaming grandmaster.

While sipping our preferred tippie (yes, it's licensed) at what could become a popular pre-show rendezvous point since the foyer is freely open from 6.30 to 8pm, we cannot but question, however, the use of this precious space. Perhaps on the rare occasions when the bandstand houses a concert of wind music from Ranelagh we may cease wondering why it takes the form of a landscape architect's folly. As we admire the plastered elephants of the double tiered box from Glasgow Palace, we might regret that such an expanse of wall alongside should be dedicated to a commissioned mural of a theatre interior when the Museum's treasures include so many back-



cloths which could perhaps be displayed in rotation.

It is, alas, all a bit too antiseptic. The box fronts, the grandmaster, Miss Gilded Gaiety and, particularly, the acoustic effects machines begin to create something of the right atmosphere in an area which so far misses its target of theatric magic.

Ramps lead below to the display spaces which have as their core the Main Gallery tracing the history of staged performance. This is a permanent exhibit, although some of the items will be changed from time to time in the interests of conservation. Such a chronological exhibition has to be based on significant objects and their choice is inevitably a matter for considerable debate. But as Curator Schouvaloff writes in April *Apollo* "Research shows that the average length of visit to a museum is between forty minutes and one hour. Three hundred objects in one hour means twelve seconds per object. What can anyone remember after looking at something for twelve seconds? Even 100 objects means only just over half a minute per object." A commitment to including drama, ballet, dance, circus, music hall, opera, mime, puppetry, rock and pop, highlights the difficulties of choice. So anyone wishing to play the game of suggesting what's missing must be prepared to nominate what they would leave out.



The Theatre Museum is housed in part of the old Flower Market in Covent Garden.

The logical me applauds the balance that has been struck. But I have old theatric bones and logic is therefore not one of my natural assets. So inevitably I hanker for a juxtaposed pile of the apparently insignificant, displayed in an atmosphere that embraces something of the tawdry escapist elegance of a provincial number two auditorium with a backstage ambience that includes the staleness of dressing room gin, boiled size in the scene dock and dust in the prop room. A Theatre Museum according to Victoria and Albert is a somewhat holier place. Until very recently, actors have always craved respectability and there must be a new hierarchy of rogues and vagabonds emerging in the great greenroom in the sky as they observe the selection of their particular ephemeral fragments for loving conservation, academic labelling and display with all the pomp accorded to a significant art treasure. And so while I hope that the permanent display will eventually become just a little less starstruck, just a little less London oriented and just a little bit more tatty, I shall be back there a lot and loving it all.

I shall be there for the quivers of sensual pleasure I get from the simple things in life like beholding Lilian Bayliss's desk. As I genuflect daily before the Winston print that hangs above my television set, I am an obvious sucker for items with labels such as "Apron reputedly worn by Polly Peachum on the opening night in 1728". And of course I shall be there for the changing exhibitions (initially on a six month overlapping cycle) in the Irving and Gielgud Galleries.

The initial exhibition in the Irving Gallery, appropriately titled **The Theatre Museum Unpacks** is of treasures from the costume collection. This exhibition explores an area of the museum's activities which are particularly relevant to the theatre of today and tomorrow. Sarah C. Woodcock and Philip Dyer in their introduction to a cherishable pack of a dozen quarto cards published in association with the exhibition write

"Theatre costumes are a fascinating mixture of the glamorous and the commonplace. The finest and most expensive fabrics are combined with the most mundane everyday objects, which achieve their own magic in the new context. Costumes of silk and satin or gold and silver tissue, beautifully embroidered and trimmed, hang alongside those made of scenic canvas, brushed nylon or parachute silk, decorated with pipe cleaners, rubber solution or metal bottle tops. Sometimes the decoration is an illusion, and when seen close up the rich encrusted fabrics are revealed to be masterpieces of the costume painter's art."

The quest for truth which was accompanied by the beginnings of state funding for British theatre resulted in many of the traditional illusory tricks of the costumier being discarded. Not only economic change but art's dependence upon transformation will surely stimulate a rediscovery in which this collection will be an invaluable primary source.

In the Gielgud Gallery, *The King's Pleasures* gives the Theatre Museum an appropriate coup for its opening. Shown for the first time are a collection of costume designs for the Court Ballet of Louis XIII, discovered as recently as 1985 in a private library in Germany and purchased for the Theatre Museum by the V & A with the support of the National Collections Fund. Like all good costume designs these drawings pleasure the senses as independent works of art unrelated to their functional origin. But these drawings and their annotations, often by several hands, are also an important source for our developing knowledge of renaissance theatre. Currently this gallery is the only section of the museum to offer musical support and I found it most helpful to my visual perception.

The Reference Collection in the Beard Room is an area which I am saving for future exploration. The graphic material is displayed on pull-out panels which allow a

lot to be mounted in a small area. A random check reveals delights which will accommodate both serious systematic students and browsing wandering tourists like me. (I am the despair of librarians, being allergic to catalogues and preferring to rummage among the stacks.)

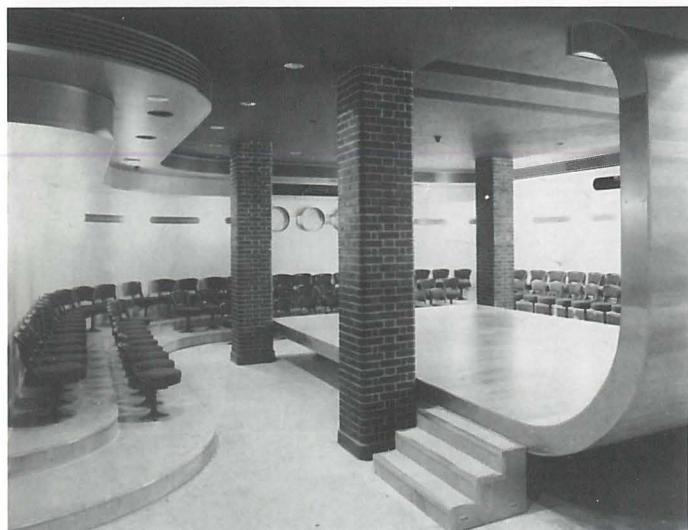
There is a lecture theatre which looks as if it may be unique in lacking a point of command. The smooth finishes and generally reverend air inhibited me from leaping upon the planks to attempt a projection of passion. But the seats are comfy.

I can't speak for the ladies but the gent's loo is stylishly tiled in Shakespearean memories.

The lower foyer acts as a generous crush bar to the lecture theatre. This foyer is done up in an Edwardian fashion which is perilously close to the 'brewer's brothel' style which has invaded too many saloons of public refreshment. Escapist Edwardian theatre baroque was more stylish than this. But it will doubtless improve with fading. The walls provide hanging space for the museum's painting collection, many of which are a delight even if viewing is impaired by particularly dominant reflections from their glazing.

Readers of Cue may feel that their specialised interests are not particularly well served. As theatre technology is big and heavy, it needs its own dedicated museum and there is a committed committee beaver-ing away, determined that the massive technological history of stage machinery and electrics (now stored in attics, cellars, garden sheds and under the beds of the faithful) will be collected in a suitable venue for specialist pilgrims.

A National Theatre Museum must serve those whose interests span the stage from the marginal to the besotted. Our Theatre Museum in Covent Garden has achieved this and now stands proudly as an indispensable highlight on the international theatric tourist trail.



The sponsored seats in the Studio Theatre are renovated historic originals from the Albert Hall.



The Museums paintings collection is displayed in the Lower Foyer adjacent to the Studio Theatre.

STAGE DESIGN

An abundance of talent at the Society of British Theatre Designers Exhibition

DAVID FINGLETON

If proof were needed, and it hardly is, of the current health of British stage design, one had only to visit the recent exhibition given by the Society of British Theatre Designers at Riverside Studios, to see it demonstrated. This is a four yearly event, intended to attract a gamut of work from which Britain's entry to the Prague Quadriennale may be chosen, and at the same time to demonstrate the present state of the art in this country. Four years ago there was a large and stimulating exhibition at the Round House, and this time round an even larger, even more stimulating, if possibly less carefully displayed, show at Riverside. Indeed there were so many exhibits — models, masks, costume designs, photographs — that within the crowded, rather labyrinthine lay-out of the exhibition it was possible at times to miss an exhibit altogether, and at other times to be unable fully to appreciate the quality of one, so closely juxtaposed was it

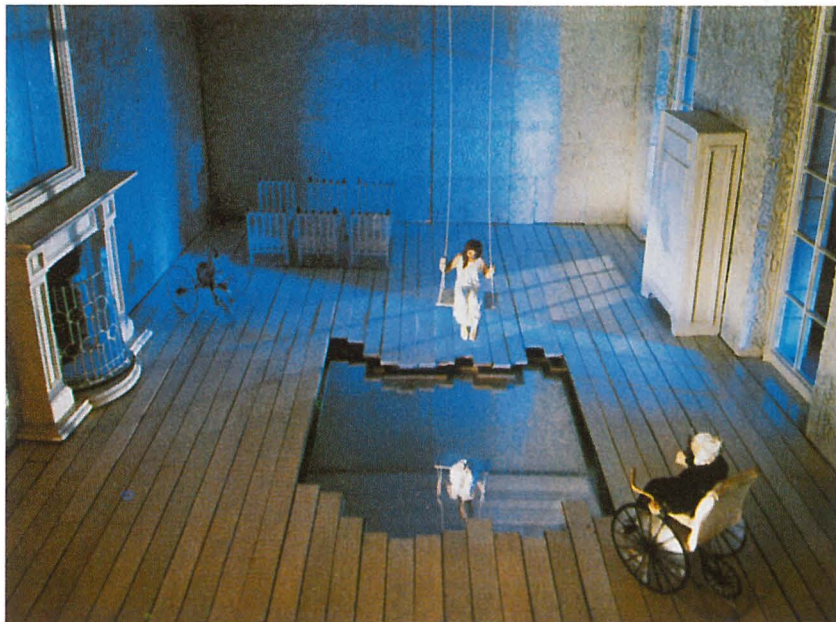
to another, totally different piece of work by another stage designer.

Despite this handicap, such was the abundance of work on show that one not only spent several stimulating hours browsing through the exhibits, but also was constantly surprised by yet another piece of work by a designer whose name one knew, but whose work one had not actually seen on stage. Part of the reason for this was the far-flung sources of the exhibits. Not just Robin Don's arresting and imaginative designs for Tippet's *Midsummer Marriage* in San Francisco, Tazeena Firth's work on Shostakovich's *Katerina Ismailova* in Göteborg, and Annena Stubbs' impressive costume designs for *Measure for Measure* at Norrköping, also in Sweden, but equally those that sprang from every corner of the British Isles. Once again the point was made that by no means all the major work in theatrical design is being done in London,

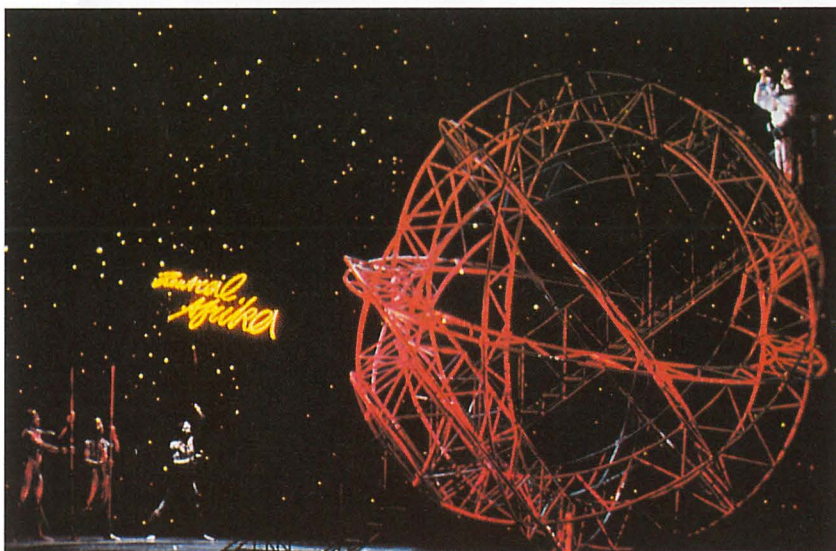
Stratford-on-Avon, and the largest provincial houses, but that up and down the country, in struggling reps and the smallest of fringe theatres, are designers, working often on almost invisible budgets, on proscenium stages, in the round, even in the open air, who are coming up with inventive, challenging and adventurous work. But it was equally heartening to note that where models or designs emanated from productions in our major subsidised or West End theatres, there too the designs had a heartening liveliness and readiness to break new ground. An exhibition that can display such models as Stafanos Lazaridis' for Dvorak's *Rusalka* and Busoni's *Dr Faust* for English National Opera, Ralph Koltai's for the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *Othello*, Alison Chitty's for *Martine* at the National Theatre, Roger Bourke's for Brian Friel's *Translations* at Theatre Clwyd in North Wales, and the Framework team's

Timothy O'Brien — Verdi's Otello, Royal Opera House, 1987





Stefanos Lazaridis — ENO's *Rusalka* at the London Coliseum



Maria Bjornson — Stockhausen's *Donnerstag aus Licht*, Royal Opera House. Photo' Clive Barda.



Liz da Costa and John Napier — Lloyd Webber's *Starlight Express*, Apollo, Victoria.

devastating assemblage for the production of Aristophanes' *The Birds* in Camden Lock, is exhibiting from strength.

As well as those already mentioned, models chosen for Prague include Don's for *Midsummer Marriage*, Firth's for *Katerina Ismailova*, Richard Hudson's for *Manon*, Robert Jones' for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead*, Timothy O'Brien's for the Royal Opera's production of *Samson*, Bob Crowley's for the RSC's excellent *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and Anthony Ward's for *Alice in Wonderland*. Among costume designs bound for Prague are Sue Blane's glorious ones for last year's Glyndebourne Festival Opera production of *Porgy and Bess*, Lez Brotherston's for Kurt Weill's *Silverlake* at this year's Camden Festival, Lindy Hemmings' for Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* at the National Theatre, John Napier's splendidly exuberant designs for Lloyd Webber's




Alison Chitty — Congreve's *She Stoops to Conquer*, Lyttelton Theatre.



Robin Don — Michael Tippett's *Midsummer Marriage*, San Francisco Opera



Bob Crowley — RSC's *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* at the Barbican.



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Starlight Express, Annena Stubbs' for Measure for Measure, and Marty Flood's fine work for Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* at the Oxford Playhouse.

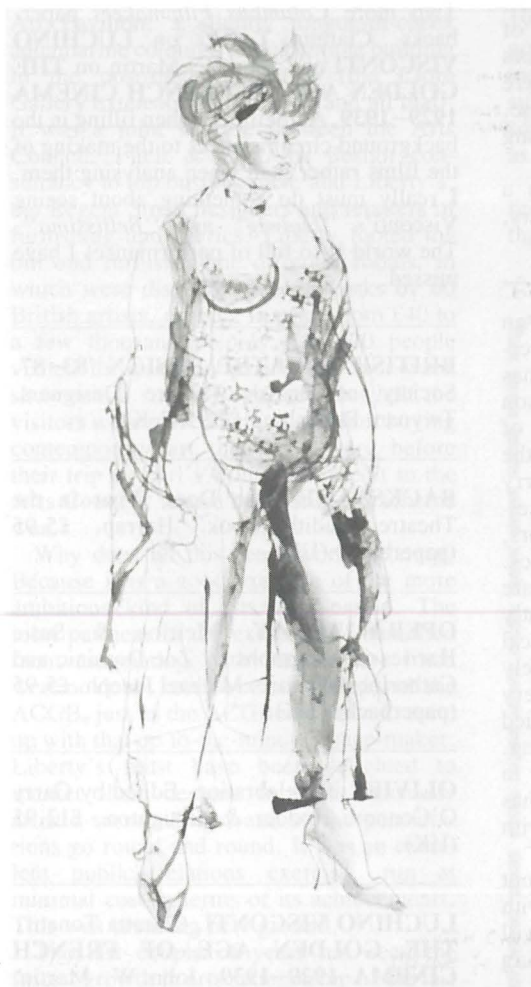
Sadly there is not room for everyone in Prague, and many striking and successful exhibits must be left behind. Even more-sadly, one of our foremost current designers, Maria Bjornson, only found time to submit a portfolio of striking colour photographs of her recent work, so that, in the absence of models or costume designs for the Royal Opera's production of Stockhausen's *Donnerstag aus Licht*, E.N.O.'s of *Carmen*, and *Phantom of the Opera*, her very powerful designs over the past four years will be unrepresented at Prague. She is not alone: this time round such eminent designers as Sally Jacobs, Jocelyn Herbert, and Yolanda Sonnabend will not be seen at Prague either. But it is undoubtedly a symptom of the good health of the profession as a whole that there were so many works, and so many exhibitors to choose from that designers of their distinction could not be included. These may be hard times for the arts, and it may be a truism to say that small budgets act as a great stimulus to imagination, but the fact remains that the British stage design profession is both a growing and an improving one. There is much creativity, and much courage, to be found, and I shall be surprised, and more than a little disappointed, if the Society of British Theatre Designers do not pick up some major prizes at Prague '87.



Ralph Koltai — RSC's Othello at the Barbican.
Photo Ivan Kynce.



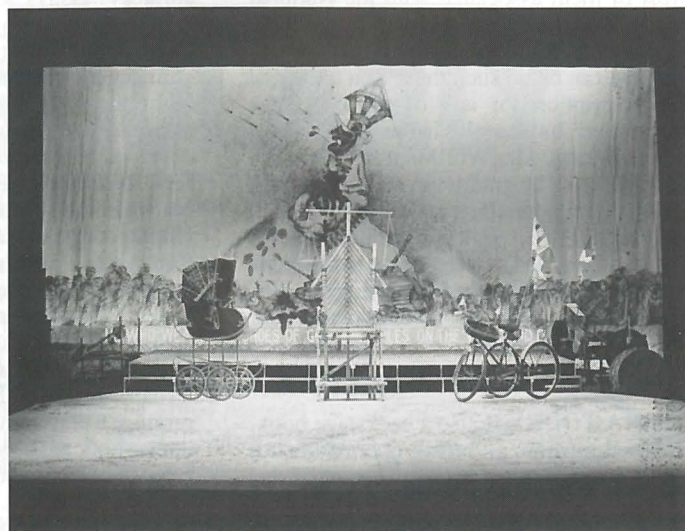
Tazeena Firth — Katerina Ismailova, Storan Teatern, Goteborg.



Annena Stubbs — Measure for Measure, Ostgotateatern, Norrköping, Sweden.



Timothy O'Brien — Handel's Samson, Royal Opera House.



Marty Flood — Brecht's Caucasian Chalk Circle, Oxford Playhouse

REIDing SHELF

Exhibitions, like productions, strut their hour upon our stage then vanish. Their afterlife is their influence on those who experienced them. All exhibition catalogues stimulate the recall of those who were there, but the good ones are important freestanding books in their own right. **BRITISH THEATRE DESIGN 1983-87** is not merely good to read, it is an indispensable reference to its subject. This is what our stages looked like in the mid 1980s.

The images are left to make their own visual statements. There is no attempt to analyse, no attempt to verbalise the visual thinking. Just two brief introductions (with translation into Russian, Czech and Japanese) – one by David Fingleton placing British designers in the context of the four years under review; the other by Timothy O'Brien succinctly explaining the contribution of the designer to the performance. "Beautiful though some of the designs may be, we believe that it is hard to evaluate them on their own", he says. And he is right. The book, like the exhibition is something to respond to directly, not through critical words. And so, while I do think I detect certain positive developments since the last exhibition (and its book *British Theatre Design 1979-83*) I will not attempt an analysis but will only emphasise that "British Theatre Design" has an essential place on the bookshelf of anyone who responds to the visual aspects of theatre.

Harrap sent Judith Cook **BACKSTAGE** to find out **WHO DOES WHAT IN THE THEATRE**. She interviewed fourteen specialists and edited their replies into a sequence of job "Tales". Stage and Production Managers, Designer, Lighting Designer, Sound Man (sic), Prop Maker, Wardrobe Mistress, Make-up Artist, Dresser, Composer, Voice Teacher, and directors of Dance, Fights and Casting. Most of them associated with the National or the RSC. A further chapter dissects the workings of Sheffield Crucible.

There can be no such thing as a universal job description for any of the backstage professions, but the tales in the book have an authentic ring. Mrs Worthington's sons and daughters will be grateful to Judith Cook for telling them something of what to expect. Her book is also gentle entertainment for us workers, and when we are all gone researchers will doubtless pore over each word in the hope of reconstructing our methods and attitudes.

OPERA TODAY is also a backstage book, focussed towards giving an opera audience some understanding of the structure of this great amalgam of all the arts – musical, dramatic and visual. However it could,

and probably should, also be regarded as advisable reading for anyone contemplating a career in theatre, whether or not they are initially attracted towards opera.

Meirion and Susie Harries have observed the complex creative processes of the opera house and talked to the specialists involved. Zoe Dominic and Catherine Ashmore have provided the photographs, most of them from the 1980s with but half-a-dozen previous and nothing more historic than a single Zeffirelli of 1956 – this has to be a record for an opera book! The publishers have been generous with paper quality and so we can enjoy the half-tones in these photographs with rather more pleasure than we have had to become accustomed to in many recent theatre books.

The book is laid out to follow the sequential process of mounting an opera, progressing from the administration's work in funding planning and casting, through musical and production rehearsals to the performance. En route we discover about singers, conductors, designers and all the musical and technical experts who are essential contributors to this complex art. I am not unfamiliar with the workings of opera houses and can testify that the authors seem to have done a pretty good job. There is, of course, the occasional mild surprise. Is the follow spot really "now the lighting designer's favoured toy"?

Congratulations to all concerned on a book which will equally interest the punters, the workers and the curious.

OLIVIER IN CELEBRATION is an enjoyable read. Possibly instructive, certainly entertaining. I don't think that it has brought me any closer to Olivier the person but it has clarified my understanding of Olivier the actor. And it records some of the nuances of a vanished theatrical age. Garry O'Connor has edited this volume of celebratory essays by a group of actors, friends, playwrights, directors and critics. Most of the twenty three contributors are eminent individualists with a sufficiently highly developed articulateness and critical awareness to ensure that the book rarely develops simple sycophancy except on very few occasions when it not only is justified but welcome because of impeccable timing. I find perception rather than sycophancy in Simon Callow's "every role he played has had to be re-invented by his successors, with only middling results so far".

Several of the essayists tantalize us about Olivier's enigmatic relationship with Tynan: perhaps the centuries ahead will produce a play about them that is as rivetting but as fictional as *Amadeus*.

Nose putty is a theme that links many of the contributions: Peter Ustinov strikes at the core of actor psychology when he says

"his predilection for putting on false noses very often resembling his own nose anyway, is a method of hiding and sheltering him". And John Mortimer neatly summarizes Olivier in relation to postwar theatre. "The criticism which used to be made of Olivier's acting was that it was so technically brilliant, so hugely daring and inventive, that is must, in some strange way, lack heart. These ideas, fashionable in the days of so-called 'method acting', arise from a plodding distrust of brilliance in the arts; anything really clever, it's thought, must be in some way insincere. That is, of course, rubbish."

Add Peggy Ashcroft, J.C. Trewin, Fabia Drake, Anthony Quale, Dilys Powell, Harry Andrews, Michael Billington, Sheridan Morley, Michael Caine, Christopher Fry, Peter Hall, Jonathan Miller, Derek Granger, Douglas Fairbanks Jr, Emyln Williams, Elaine Dundy, Angus McBean, Mark Amory and Melvyn Bragg ... with such a mix you have not a pudding but a soufflé. Anthony Sher does not write but draws a frontispiece which interrelates nineteen Olivier performances. This drawing is clearly Olivier, but has resonances of Sher. Perhaps inevitable when so many kingmakers would propose Sher as the heir apparent.

Two more *Columbus Filmmakers* paperbacks. Claretta Tonetti on **LUCHINO VISCONTI** and John W. Martin on **THE GOLDEN AGE OF FRENCH CINEMA 1929-1939**. At their best when filling in the background circumstances to the making of the films rather than when analysing them. I really must do something about seeing Visconti's "*Ludwig*" and "*Bellissima*". The world is so full of performances I have missed.

BRITISH THEATRE DESIGN '83-87. Society of British Theatre Designers. Twynam Publishing £7.95 (UK).

BACKSTAGE Who Does What in the Theatre. Judith Cook. Harrap. £5.95 (paperback) (UK).

OPERA TODAY. Meirion & Susie Harries. Photographs by Zoe Dominic and Catherine Ashmore. Michael Joseph. £5.95 (paperback) (UK).

OLIVIER in Celebration. Edited by Garry O'Connor. Hodder & Stoughton. £12.95 (UK).

LUCHINO VISCONTI. Claretta Tonetti. **THE GOLDEN AGE OF FRENCH CINEMA 1929-1939**. John W. Martin. Columbus Filmmakers Series. £5.95 (paperback) (UK).

ARTS SPONSORSHIP

ANTHONY McCALL

Can you imagine the Arts Council of Great Britain taking a stand at the Ideal Home Exhibition and inviting families to come and see its wares? Step this way, young woman, and see how the taxpayers' money is spent in setting up regional arts associations. Hey, you over there, you'd love our video movie on how the Contemporary Music Network is administered; it's got a great storyline and you see *everything*, yes, even in close-up. Or you, yes you. This is hilarious: come and take part in our chat show on a quango. It's called "Luke Rittner's Laugh-In" or, "Seeing is not Believing" — and people can't believe the things he gets them to say and do in public.

Well, the scenario is purely fictional, but the setting isn't. You may or may not have realized that the centrepiece of the 1986 Ideal Home Exhibition was the Living Art Pavilion, a slightly tongue-in-cheek aquamarine coloured Greek temple building in the post-modernist style (the Clore Gallery extension to the Tate, and all that). It was a joint venture between the Arts Council, Fitch & Co., the design consultancy to top businessmen, and Liberty's, the Regent Street designers and retailers of furnishing and fabrics. Liberty footed the bill and furnished the different rooms, in which were displayed recent works by 60 British artists, ranging in price from £40 to a few thousand pounds. 140,000 people visited the pavilion during the four-week show and a survey suggested that half the visitors were more likely to consider buying contemporary art than they were before their trip to Earl's Court. All credit to the Arts Council, whose brainchild the scheme was.

Why does all this seem worth relating? Because it is a good example of the more ambitious kind of arts sponsorship. The joint partners in the exercise all benefited from associating with each other; Fitch were no doubt keen to be associated with the ACGB, just as the ACGB was keen to team up with that up-to-the-minute image-maker; Liberty's must have been delighted to market their designs in such unusually artistic surroundings; and so the permutations go round and round. It was an excellent public relations exercise, run at minimal cost in terms of its achievements. This was breaking new ground.

The last couple of years has seen the fastest growth in arts sponsorship of the last decade, and we shall see later why it has taken off in this fashion and look at a few examples. For the moment it is interesting

to note that this growth in activity is reflected in the Arts Council's expanded marketing support for its client organisations, not to mention its higher profile image on behalf of arts patronage in this country (their 'Living Art' pavilion is an example). Even now, they are strengthening their marketing team, so Dylan Hammond, their ex-Saatchi marketing chief informs us.

So, too, are theatres as different as London's Almeida and the Barbican Centre, who have been looking for their own fund-raisers, or 'sponsorship managers', to use the jargon. Clearly such corporate salesmen can attract a good deal of extra cash, but why, one asks, has this new staff appointment become so universal?

Necessity is the mother of invention. Since there has been no growth in central government spending (in real terms) since 1979, and furthermore that the Thatcher government seeks to reduce local government spending as well, (they were formerly substantial contributors) the financial squeeze in the arts is running down human as well as financial resources.

Since sponsorship is now such a widely recognized necessity, it seems appropriate that there is to be an exhibition on the sub-

ject in September, at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre in London. Theatre companies and others seeking to attract sponsors may display their wares and use the chance to meet large numbers of potential marketing partners all under the same roof.

Why the sudden explosion, though, in arts sponsorship? "There is immense growth, especially in the regions, because financial cuts can only be made for so many years before companies cease to be economically viable", explains Barry Jackson, head of public relations at the Arts Council. "With the present government's aim of continuing funding below the level of inflation, the message is simple, I'm afraid. Sell yourselves and survive, or keep cutting back on your activities. There is no other source of funds in prospect."

The May issue of *Opera* magazine put it this way, in a special editorial: "The time for muddling through in our quaint British way will be past". And pinpointing the reason for this financial squeeze, the magazine quotes Harold Rosenthal, its late, great editor, on a Channel Four "Comment" programme in January: "There is no option but to seek funds elsewhere, as we are not even keeping up with inflation. This is, 'he concluded' the most philistine government since World War Two". Rosenthal was undeniably the post-war authority on opera in this country and was normally little given to commenting on such matters as these.

He is, of course, quite right. But the economic arguments for keeping the arts and their associated fields of leisure, publishing and recording healthy outweigh even the cultural ones, which themselves are convincing. In the absence, then, of a government with either a clear grasp of the economic realities of arts funding or a vision

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of how to keep them healthy in the future, financial security must be wooed in the competitive marketplace, probably through short-term partnerships dictated by the needs of industry and commerce's publicity campaigns. The name of the game is sponsorship.

The idea of sponsorship is not new. Classical concerts were being sponsored back in the sixties, but the concept didn't take off until the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts was launched in Bath. That was 1976. The money to run their tiny office came from industry and the word about arts sponsorship spread slowly. There are few precise figures available, but it is generally accepted that spending on sponsorship rose fifty-fold in the last 10 years, from £500,000 in 1976 to £25 million in 1986. Of that, £10 million has been raised in the last two years.

ABSA, as it is referred to in the "biz", launched its Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme (BSIS) in October 1984. In essence, the government offers to match pound for pound any new sponsor coming into the field of arts sponsorship. In addition, existing sponsors who expand their programme to more ambitious proportions will be supported by £1 for every £3 pounds added. (For more details, write to: ABSA, 2 Chester Street, London SW1X 7BB. Tel: 01-235 9781).

The BSIS scheme is run by ABSA on behalf of the government, which gives it a certain fashionable flavour-of-the-month quality that clearly goes down well in the business community. Britain's longstanding distrust, indeed unease, when confronted with matters artistic or intellectual, has not vanished overnight. Indeed, one may speculate as to whether our businessmen do not rank as greater philistines (in the

broadest sense) than those in the professions — doctors, solicitors, accountants. Whatever the case, the "Mozart factor" plays a decisive part, according to Barry Jackson.

The "Mozart factor" is the pecking order as regards sponsorship. Or to sound more showbizzy, the "popularity sweepstakes" of each type of activity. Way out in front is classical music, which mops up the largest proportion of the cash. This is followed by opera, fine art, theatre, dance and right at the bottom, anything contemporary, whatever the art form.

It is axiomatic that entertaining plays a large part in sponsorship. Why? one wonders cynically. Simple, when one realizes the motives behind the marketing or public relations decision to go for arts sponsorship. Apart from wishing to identify the insurance company with a particular theatre production, say, so that the public

can see how nice and dedicated to the arts these City sharks are, it is vital that the staff (who may get free or discounted tickets) and all manner of visitors can be taken to the show and, wait for it, *enjoy it*. For if they don't, or they cannot understand it, they may consider the company's money was badly spent. It would be comparable to taking your family on an outing they didn't enjoy: same problem. The "Mozart factor" is understandable, if unadventurous in what it reflects.

The secret is to match up the right profile of business to arts event. Example. Richard Branson's Virgin group decided to back the London Sinfonietta in a series of concerts. Both "partners" are involved in new music, admittedly of different sorts, but the match was close enough. And if Branson was looking to branch into new classical music, as opposed to rock, he could wish for no better marketing tool than this kind of carefully-targeted sponsorship.

More and more big companies are doing their own events management, as it's called, by themselves. Lloyds Bank, Sainsbury, Visa, Arthur Andersen the accountants, to name only a few. The *London Daily News*, Robert Maxwell's new challenge to the *London Evening Standard*, decided to sponsor a couple of Royal Opera House promenade performances of "La Boheme" on 9 and 12 June. But these were going to be different. Each live performance was relayed on to a big screen in the Covent Garden piazza, where 4,000 extra people were able to watch Placido Domingo and other star singers — free. The 20 ft high by 26½ ft wide screen claimed high definition, bright colour and best of all, novelty — a perfect sponsorship package for a London paper seeking to involve itself with the best of London cultural life.

Other popular sponsorship areas growing rapidly, just like the arts, are charities like Save the Children and environment groups like the World Wildlife Fund. They all share the need for extra cash and offer sponsors a vehicle with which to reach specific popular, or specialized groups of people — all of whom have a value to the marketing man, according to the Arts Council's Barry



An example of more ambitious sponsorship was last year's Family Festival Summer in the City organised by the Barbican Centre in association with Shell UK Ltd. Our picture shows 6-8 years old visitors taking part in a Clowning Workshop. Photograph: Clive N Totman

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Jackson. However, a strong selling point for the arts is the precise, specialized nature of arts events. With a few exceptions, most events are likely to appeal to a particular taste, or audience. For selling Mother's Pride bread, this might be quite inappropriate, but for appealing to would-be buyers of classical records, Alfa Romeos, Paris and Milan fashions and so forth, the audience should be very precise, or highly targeted, in their phrase. This is the essence of marketing — hence of arts sponsorship.

Another kind of financial partnership that can be encountered is the collaboration between central, regional and local arts funding bodies, who increasingly team up with say, development corporations, trades unions, the Manpower Services Commission, the Electricity Board and

so on. An illustration of this would be Liverpool's recent Festival of Comedy. Centred around the Albert Dock development, it included concerts by the Liverpool Philharmonic, poetry readings, political satire, jazz bands, African dancers, films and fire-eaters and a 'humourous' sculptor in residence. The sponsors were: Merseyside Development, Albert Dock Corporation, DER Television and Video Rental, other commercial sponsors, Merseyside Tourist Board and Merseyside Arts (the local regional arts association).

Arts sponsorship needs the same fine tuning on the part of the sponsored as it does of the sponsoring in order to succeed. And despite obstacles on both sides, largely conceptual ones, I believe, the momentum for growth is underway.

Cosmopolitan/C & A Dance Award

For the seventh year, Cosmopolitan magazine is holding its dance award, this time sponsored by C & A, the retail clothes shop. The £10,000 prize money goes towards a year's tuition fees and/or living allowance at a leading dance school.

This is an unusual example of sponsorship. It is only one of several Cosmo awards, including their "Women of Tomorrow Award", with winners in each

of 10 categories, where the arts also feature. The magazine follows an unwritten rule that readers will be encouraged to be achievers, whatever their field.

The dance award has gathered an excellent panel of judges: Michael Clark (dancer/choreographer), John Chesworth (ex-Ballet Rambert director), ballerina Margaret Barbieri (principal with Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet), Arlene Phillips (founder of Hot Gossip), and writer/broadcaster Jan Murray (also Cosmo's own dance editor). Sadler's Wells Theatre hosts the competition and Granada TV will be filming the event as part of a documentary about the award to be broadcast later this year. This shows how a magazine can promote the event initially and lend it credibility; then add the professional reputations of the judges to act as the attraction to draw young dancers; and have the whole thing wrapped up in the showbizzy glow that only television cameras can provide. And for £10,000 worth of prize money, C&A must consider this little enough to pay in return for such large helpings of publicity (the sort money can't buy — usually).

Past winners have included such as Paul Liburd, the 1985 winner, who is now at the London Contemporary Dance School. Entrants must apply from an accredited dance school and are expected to have reached a certain standard of technique. But the award is unusual for its involvement with students — a very under-sponsored area of the arts, since they are not yet professionals, or particularly good or much of an attraction — yet doubly valuable since it can be very difficult to obtain local authority grants to get into dance in the first place. It's seed money for tomorrow's stars. Bursaries are thus the more welcome for being so rare.

ARTS — NATIONAL PETITION

ANTHONY McCALL

Cue readers, namely those who are clued-up on what's new in the arts, will remember the birth of something called the National Lobby for the Arts back in the early eighties. In 1984, this became the National Campaign for the Arts, and by 1985, behold, a fully-fledged pressure group was in operation: a centre for research, public relations and marketing of the arts in Britain. Its founders, the Association of British Orchestras, was joined by five other professional organisations to add weight — and money — to the cost of running an arts lobby with a professional director, researcher and so forth. The new organisations represented the commercial and union interests of live entertainment and broadcasting: the Theatrical Management Association, Society of West End Theatre, Musicians' Union, Equity and the Broadcasting Entertainment Trades Alliance. What ever became of this new force?

It appears that the campaign has been fairly diligent. The funds to keep them going come from the TMA, Equity *et al*, as well member arts organisations like theatres, concert halls and companies not already represented. Exact sums are not mentioned, of course, but we gather some £7,000 is paid annually by the big groups and individual members pay an amount based on 10 pence per £1,000 of turnover. Not a lot, but enough to keep the campaign wheels turning.

That's all very nice, I hear you cry, but what about results? Well, the lobbying is getting through to politicians and media, though it's doubtful whether the arts case is yet seen as a vote-catcher or much of a scoop for news editors. On the other hand, salient facts are sinking in, namely that:

- * 180 million visits are made to arts venues every year — and the number is rising;
- * 4 out of 10 overseas visitors cite the arts as their main reason for coming to Britain — and they spend £250 million here;
- * 175,000 people are directly employed in the arts industry — so the arts are big business;
- * the arts pay £140 million VAT to the Exchequer every year — over half what they receive in government grants;
- * central and local government together spend less than £450 million on the arts — one-third of one per cent of all public expenditure.

(Sources: Arts Council, Policy Studies Institute, Parliamentary questions)

The campaign's director, Simon Crine, who comes from a lobbying background rather than the arts, can take credit for successfully putting the arts lobby across



A study in promotion for the Cosmopolitan/C&A Dance award. Photograph: Alessio Buccafusca.

as an all-party, independent voice. The number of parliamentary questions on arts subjects has shot up, from all sides of the House: proof that the issues are perceived in socio-economic terms and not as left or right-wing. The SDP and Liberal parties put forward a green paper on the arts last year; and the Labour and Conservative parties have 'arts manifestos', for the first time in this country!

Mark Fisher, the Labour spokesman for the arts, presided over a remarkable turnout of the hacks in late May, at the launch of his party's manifesto. It was well stage managed too: a cheery band piped everyone into Hammersmith's Riverside Studios (whose subsidy has had a hard time under the Tories). It seemed chic to be Labour again: John Mortimer, Harold Pinter, Glenda Jackson and other luminaries rubbed shoulders. Even chic-er to be Alliance, though, judging by their John Cleese, Ludovic Kennedy and similar top TV-rating personalities rallying to the cause. Who would have thought of the arts in such terms at the 1983 election?

Labour's 38-page document for their proposed Ministry of Arts and Media (and similar to the Alliance plans for reform) refers to: "declining resources, diminishing choices, vanishing talent and philistine policies". The new ministry would oversee vigorous, interventionist policies on the arts, crafts, fashion, design, libraries, museums, architecture, film, records, press, publishing and broadcasting development. The Arts Council would be upgraded to a National Arts Authority, with greater powers and greater funding for regional arts authorities. Scottish and Welsh arts councils would have autonomy.

However such proposals strike you, the notable fact is that Labour's recently-outlined plans are symptomatic of how politicians now recognise greater importance attaching to the arts than four years ago.

The National Campaign for the Arts launched a national petition recently, called 'I Vote for the Arts', which set out to collect signatures to be presented to the next

government this summer. Their researcher Phyllida Shaw told us that 650,000 campaign leaflets were sent out, of which 30,000 have so far been returned with signatures. Closing date is set for June and the petition will be presented with maximum showbusiness fuss and gimmickry in July, to attract wide media attention.

We extracted the following from the petition, which will cause smiles to appear on lined and worried faces of arts administrators, familiar with these arguments from way back: "Our theatres and orchestras, dance and opera companies, arts centres and cinemas, museums and galleries, artists and writers, deserve a better deal from politics. Most of all, they deserve an end to what an all-party Parliamentary Committee described as 'irresponsible underfunding of the arts'".

The tough tone of that statement has a new ring to it. Perhaps the message is not so familiar after all: it sounds more combative, less complaining than before. Remember Equity's and SWET's attempts back in the seventies to exempt theatre tickets from VAT, for example? Well, they decided they couldn't afford the time and expense of a full-time lobbying job — or war, rather. So they joined forces with the other arts organisations for their lobbying to be done properly and with a broader arts base.

And is it working? The answer is yes but no. Yes, because the arts lobby has successfully hit the campaign trail, especially in the run-up to the recent election period, taking its message to Cardiff, Manchester, Glasgow, London, plus other parts of the British Isles. In London, the all-party debate was in especially high profile, filling the National Film Theatre to capacity, and getting coverage on BBC radio's 'Kaleidoscope' and 'Today' programmes as well as Radio 2's 'Around Midnight'. Best of all though, was eight minutes on TV's 'Channel 4 news', where the three parties' arts spokesmen, Clement Freud (Alliance), Mark Fisher (Labour) and Richard Luce (Conservative) summarized their arguments as put forward earlier that day at the NFT. This was quite an achievement, not least

since it was the first time that Master Luce had been persuaded to take part in public debate in this way.

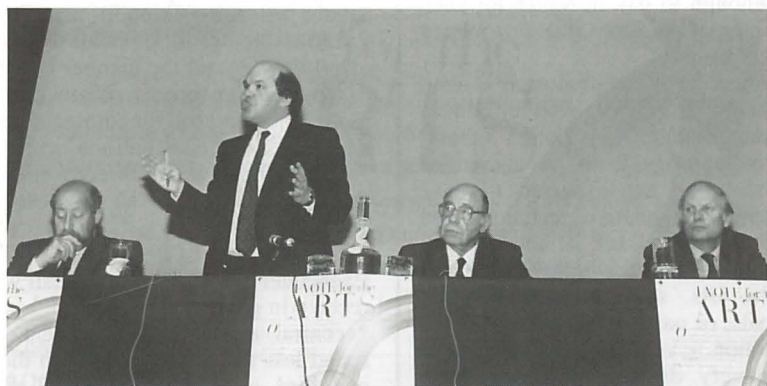
However, the answer is also no, because until this lobby achieves tangible results in improving the climate and attitude to central and local funding of arts facilities, there ain't much to shout about. So let's not be complacent, yet. Everyone who reads this, could ensure they sign the petition, for example, (see address at the end) and enquire what else they can do to put their weight behind the campaign in its closing stages. Got that?

It's a sobering thought when you think how universal lobbying is, not only in the UK, when respected PR firms such as Good Relations are hired by big business not only to put across their case to Parliament but often to persuade MPs to intercede for them in the corridors of power. Likewise in such places as Brussels and Washington. If business interests assign full-time lobbyists to fight against protectionism, to protect European industry from Japanese imports, or to assure the continued farmers' subsidies in the Common Market, one can rest assured that such activity is repaying the effort. The arts message may not yet be regarded as a priority area, but it seems to be going in the right direction.

For like such issues as conservation, urban renewal and training and re-training for the industries of tomorrow, the arts is on the fringe of politics as we know it. But it's moving towards the centre with growing momentum. Each new marketing strategy that brings in a new theatregoer, a new arts sponsor or joint venture between the mass media and live performances (eg. TV or video versions of these productions), brings us a step closer to broadening the appeal and the wider perception of the arts.

In truth, we are talking about that vast growth area called the leisure industry as much as we are about culture. One is a new concept, the other is as old as patronage itself. However, it is the failure to grasp that the new is increasingly entwined with the old that holds us back from understanding the new role of the arts in the modern world. Video tapes of a Mozart opera like Joseph Losey's *Don Giovanni* and the RPO's 'Hooked on Classics', to take two old but popular examples, or more recently, the film of *Amadeus* and its soundtrack recordings entitled 'Amadeus' and 'More Amadeus', challenge the traditional concepts of the arts. There are many other examples, of course. The point is, we are dealing less and less with so-called ivory towers and more and more about popularisation — even as regards new and experimental works.

Like today's world of the arts itself, the campaign for the arts is a process of education. We're not there yet, but we're getting closer.



Clement Freud, Mark Fisher and Richard Luce with Chairman Sir Kenneth Robinson at the all-party debate "I Vote for the Arts" at the National Film Theatre.

National Campaign for the Arts, Francis House, Francis Street, London SW1P 1DE. Tel: 01-828 4448.

CONTROL BOARD ALPHABET

Continuing Francis Reid's ABC for 1987

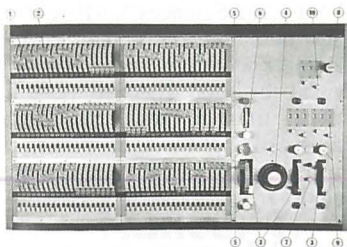


is for **Intensity** whose control is the fundamental purpose of any lighting board.

Independents were originally the circuits that did not conform to the colour wash groupings which were the basis of the shaft layout of most directly operated boards. In the more sophisticated of these boards, any circuit could be switched to be 'independent' of the main blackout contactors (qv). Grouping (qv) in early all-electric boards often consisted of a three-way switch offering off/main master/independent master. Today's independents are non-dimmable channels (sometimes even called *non-dims*) independent of the board's dimming and mastering networks, although their on/off switches may be mounted on the same control desk.

The memory revolution introduced the possibility of **infinite presetting** with no limit to the number of scenes that could be preset for a performance — and even for a repertoire season.

Having led the field in the 1960s in developing memory boards with digital logic, called **IDM/R** (Instant Dimmer Memory/Rocker), Strand (as they then were) took a decision which must have been based on marketing rather than technical grounds. They attempted a lever-per-channel board called **IDM/L** (Instant Dimmer Memory/Lever) which provided



IDM (Instant Dimmer Memory)

an exciting ride for its users. Even when the drum memory was whizzing sweetly and the crates of analogue to digital converters finely trimmed, there were still the hurdles of cumulative error on re-record, plus an interpretation of failsafe as "all channels to full" which might have been safe for TV but could be disastrous in a theatre, both for the show and for the maximum demand electricity tariff.

Dimmer **Inertia** was a useful feature of the electro-mechanical systems (see Console and C.D.). Once the dimmers had been moved they held that level until told to move again (even if the control cable from desk to dimmers was cut) whereas all-electric presetting of thyristor dimmers (qv) requires a current to be always present to hold a dimmer at its level. The computer logic of memory boards can simulate inertia with thyristor dimmers so that the operator need only be concerned with channels that move on a cue.

And lastly I is for **Intake** which is not a reference to the operator's capacity for refreshment but the room where the electricity supply enters the building and is metered, switched and fused.

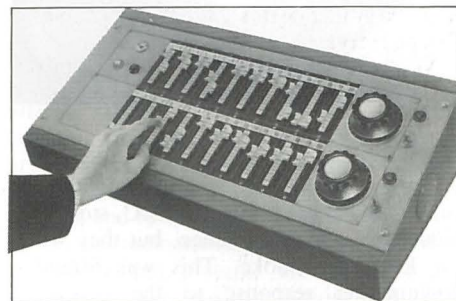


is for the **Junior 8**, the climax of low-cost (but high quality and reliability) resistance dimming. Eight circuits were paired to four dimmers with each circuit having a three-way switch offering off/through dimmer/independent full. The dimmers, switches, fuses, sockets and master blackout were integrally mounted in a unit which could be easily carried by one person. Plotting and operating the switching probably required a higher degree of concentration than any board before or since.



Junior 8 Resistance Dimmer

J.P. is for Junior Preset which was the first board to make the joys of thyristor dimming available to a mass market. Coded JP/2 or JP/3 according to the number of presets, each preset had a rotary knob master and there were no grouping facilities.



Junior Preset Thyristor Dimmer

Manual patching (qv) often used **Jack** plugs and sockets. These sockets were sometimes called **Jills**. (Patching became microprocessed around the time that such terminology became sensitive to allegations of sexism.)



is for **Kliegl**, one of the great surviving pioneers of American boards. (In 1974, and possibly later, director's desks in Kliegl offices were still referred to as their 'benches') **Kill** is a poetically incisive command for "switch off".



is for the light that is the reason for any board, and so the word appears in many board names. **Lightboard** is the ultimate in board naming and Richard Pilbrow bestowed it upon the National Theatre system which he devised with Strand in the mid-70s and which became the standard in many major international theatres, taking over the slot of DDM (qv). From Lightboard onwards, video displays and flexibility in forming playable groups became indispensable in every board.

Light Palette, a very evocative name for what a board is supposed to provide, was adopted by Century. The **Light Console** has been described under 'C'.

L.P. stands for Luminous Preset which used the microswitch in an internally illuminated presetting lever as the grouping selector. LP was transformed via a so simple but so elegant modification by Derek Gilbert into **Lightset**, the culmination of manual presetting — although almost immediately overtaken by the development of memory.



Lightboard

Being a choke dimmer, one might have supposed that the L and C in L.C. stood for inductance and capacitance, but they were for Leggett's Choke. This was Strand's downmarket response to the magnetic amplifier (qv) which, prior to the thyristor, dominated everywhere in Europe except Britain. LC's choke had a small transistor amplifier which reduced the control currents to practicable levels for presetting. The choke was, inevitably, so slow in acting that all channels had separate relay switching for blackouts. (Too hasty a return after blackout would produce a momentary picture of the previous state — an early, if unwanted, manifestation of memory!)

LC dimmers, like all choke and resistance dimmers were **load** sensitive. Although they had a tolerance either side of their



Lightset (Luminous Preset)

rating of about one-third (a 750 watt dimmer would look fairly happily at 500 and 1000 watts), smooth control of tightly lit dramas often required the addition of dummy loads. These were usually ancient spots and floods whose lightshow under the stage or in the fly was often rather more interesting than the performance.

And L, above all, is for the **levers** which we push and pull to work many boards. The old 'beer pump' lever gave a physical satisfaction that cannot quite be equalled by a miniature fader. And certainly not by a button. But then button pushing has been replaced by key stroking. Hardly physical, but potentially sensual.

(To be continued)

PRODUCT NEWS

BOB ANDERSON

It's an Electrosonic World

Company newspapers can reveal a lot about the policy behind the services and products that are the company's business, especially when the editor is a joint founder of the company and managing director. *Electrosonic World* is one such, being edited by Robert Simpson who was one of three partners who founded the business back in 1964. Enthusiasm, expertise and pioneering dedication to all things audio-visual shine from every page together with a surprisingly broad spread of products and worldwide representation. You know, of course, about the Electrosonic controllers for multi-screen slide presentation and about their Digidim dimmers, but did you know about their expertise with Laser Disc Video-walls and EPROM sound stores? If you don't and are interested, *Electrosonic World* No. 4 tells you about both the technology and application of these devices, and without excessive oversell. Copies are obtainable, free of charge, from Yvonne Hegarty, Electrosonic Ltd., 815 Woolwich Road, London SE7 8LT. Telephone 01-855 1101.

Incidentally, Bob Simpson, referring to my mention in Cue Number 45 of the B & B dimmer installation at St. Pauls Cathedral, tells me that there are now many Electrosonic dimmers in use there. Does anybody know if the old Strand system is still working?

Lee Again! (and again and . . .)

The Lee organisation publicity department never lets a month go by without issuing a press release on some news item from within John and Benny's extensive empire. This Product News, covering some four months, provides more than the usual share of Lee trumpet blowing.

Lee Filters have announced several new products since February as part of their race to keep abreast of the competition. The first are more normally used by film and TV lighting designers but might fill a gap in theatre. Lee 261 is a flame retardant polyester 'Tough Spun FR-Full'. I think this means that it is a plastic simulation of spun glass diffuser, ie: it is made up of a matt of diffusing filaments that scatter the light and partially obscure the main beam, an interesting property though difficult to use on stage. Four other versions offer diminishing degrees of spread and all come in rolls 25' x 4'. Cinema, you notice, has not bowed to metrication. The second product is a reflective scrim. This is a polyester laminate, black one side and silver the other, and pierced with numerous small holes so that it partially transmits or reflects light. Fixed on windows it can attenuate daylight to manageable levels for indoor filming without altering colour temperature, or it can be used in front of lamps when the

reflective surface limits temperature rise. This product is sold in rolls 54" wide and 22'3" long!

Of more interest for theatre technicians is the addition of seven new colours to the Lee polyester range. These, #192 Flesh Pink; #193 Rosy Amber; #194 Surprise Pink; #195 Zenith Blue; #196 True Blue; #197 Alice Blue; and #135 Deep Golden Amber, will be shown for the first time on the Lee stand at BKSTS 87 in Brighton in June.

Now more about automated lighting. In CUE 45 Product News I reported that Lee Colortran had developed a fully motorised Dual Source lantern for television and speculated who would be the first to risk an installation. Now, as predicted, Lee reveal that RTE in Dublin have installed 70 lanterns on motorised telescopes. Dermot O'Riordan, Manager of Electrical Services, at this major Irish studio, studied installations in West Germany and Denmark before deciding to go ahead. Installation, carried out by RTE staff, was completed between March and the end of September 1986 in normal maintenance time and a final two week period for final installation and commissioning. Lee Colortran report that Dermot O'Riordan says "the system is working excellently" and that he expects that "as operator familiarity grows over the coming months. Studio 2 will become a model of efficient use of lighting resources". If I get the chance, I hope to report in more detail about this installation and others recently commissioned by the BBC.

Finally, from Lee, the announcement (in a press release dated February) that "on Sunday March the 22nd. John and Benny will be receiving a Technical Achievement Award from the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences". (I never did have any faith in the sealed envelope routine!) This honour is in recognition of the achievement by Lee Electric (Lighting) Ltd., after a five year development programme, of light-weight flicker free electronic ballast gear for the whole range of HMI lamps from 200w to 12kW. This solution to a problem experienced only by cinematographers means that the HMI family of lamps can now be used with confidence that strobing between light pulsation and camera shutter can no longer produce flicker on the finished print and ruin hours of perhaps unrepeatable work. Congratulations to John and Benny and to the back room engineers who worked out the solution.

Strand Team Change

Still determined to run a team of exclusive distributors, Strand Lighting's general sales manager Russel Dunsire recently announced that Luff Light & Sound and Hugh

Leslie's L.H.S Ltd. have been appointed Strand distributors for London and the home counties. No doubt these new members of the Strand distributors 'Club' will be introducing themselves to their potential customers in the near future. Anyone in doubt about their proper contact is invited to contact Strand head office.

Strand also announce a recent success in the museum lighting business. Their Cardiff distributor, 'Light Relief' has used an M24 with ACT 6 dimmers to provide a dynamic range of lighting effects to accompany a ten minute commentary describing the world of two hundred million years ago. Dinosaur skeletons from China are the subject of the display and lighting changes are automatically synchronised with the commentary and music tape.



Dynamic lighting effects for Dinosaurs by Light Relief, Cardiff.

Leslie Hire & Sale

Issuing a Press Release in his own right, Hughie announces that L.H.S Ltd. have been appointed Official Major Distributor of Theatrical Pyrotechnics by Le Maître and that they are also distributors/stockists for D.H.A Gobos, Duraplug, Flamebar, F.H.S Scenery Fixings and L.L Curtain Track systems. London theatre people will know that L.H.S was started in December last year when Hugh left the Donmar organisation. His new business is in The Business Village, Broomhill Road, SW18 where old and new friends and customers will be made welcome.



CCT's new Silhouette 2000

New Hardware

Returning to products rather than marketing developments, CCT have provided photos of their new "Silhouette 2000" lamphouse and the "AVAB 211" memory control mentioned in our ABTT Trade Show report in CUE 46, and also of their "Command 2" 2x1.3kW desk top self contained dimmer packs intended for schools and drama rooms.



The latest AVAB 211 from CCT Theatre Lighting

Scintilla Technology, Southampton based manufacturers of Great West Lighting effects desks and dimmers, announce additions to their range of plug-together lighting control modules. They can now offer a 6 to 18 matrix extender and 6 channel sequencer.

Laser Power, a new company with three years experience at the London Laserium and run by J.P. Knowler from Marlborough, Wiltshire, offers equipment, and design and operating staff for laser shows for parties or product launches.

Talent '87

Finally, an item of news that is not about products or people already established in the entertainment world. Talent '87 is an international conference to be held between 9th and 12th. July at Ladbroke's Lodge Hotel in Basingstoke. Its subject is Creating Employment for Disabled People in the Arts. The conference, described as an encounter, is organised by the Bulmershe Resource Centre for the Handicapped, and wants to find ways to turn the abundant goodwill, always readily expressed, into positive action.

Contact Alfred Boom on Reading (0734) 664464 for details.

TRAINING

Who needs training? The whole of British industry, that's who. Every fresh set of official figures published shows Britain bumping along near the bottom of European or world tables that calculate the time and money each country invests in business training and re-training thereafter. The arts and leisure industries are no exception to the overall British picture. However, those seeking to take positive action will find organisations like the ABTT (Association of British Theatre Technicians) and the Arts Council, both in London, good places to begin their enquiries.

CUE draws readers attention to a good centrally-situated source of such training, the Leicester Polytechnic, where Christopher Maughan, heads the Arts Training Programme at the Polytechnic's School of Performing Arts. There are others, but a quick look at their programme may give some inspiration.

"Don't strain — get trained" says their publicity leaflet. Training makes us "more effective, more informed, more competitive". In fact, Leicester Polytechnic offers the only full-time honours BA degree course with an arts administration specialism in the UK. Finance, law, marketing, management and cultural theory are all studied in depth, and extensive practical experience is gained through management of the Polytechnic's Performance Centre and through secondments to organisations promoting the arts.

They run short courses, too. For three years they have been promoting the largest "portfolio" of short training courses for arts workers in the UK. Training advice and tailor-made training programmes are also offered to arts organisations. Of their current programme of courses, we have noticed three of particular interest. 'Sponsorship', a two-day course on 6-7 May, outlined this vital area; 'Front of House', a one-day course on 18 June (cost £20) will cover box office, catering and foyer staff to mention but a few of the aspects; and 'Financial Management', another one-day course on 4 July, (closed to further applicants, unfortunately) which investigates budgeting and monitoring income and expenditure with John Thewlis of North West Arts.

It is good to see long and short courses of this kind multiplying, especially when supported by reputable bodies such as East Midlands Arts and the Arts Council of Great Britain. We strongly advise enquiring about further information. Contact Christopher Maughan, Co-ordinator, Arts Training Programme, School of Performing Arts, Leicester Polytechnic, Scraptoft, Leicester LE7 9SU. Tel: 0533-431001 ext 247.



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VARI*LITE ENCORE

BOB ANDERSON

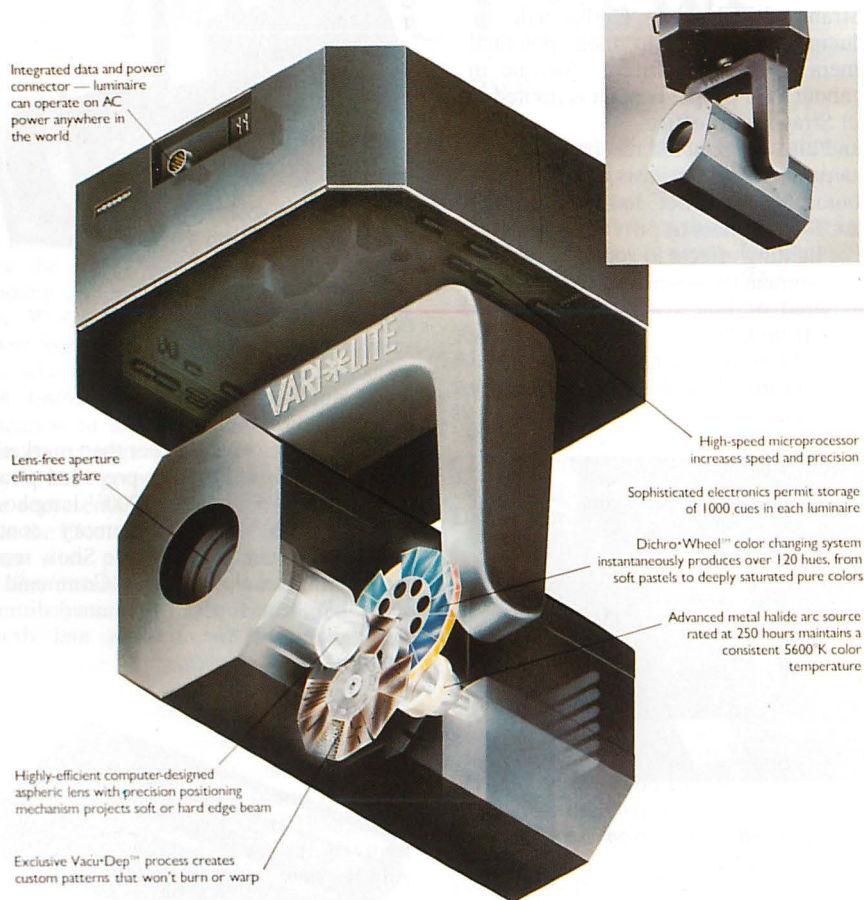
Back at the beginning of 1985 CUE 33 came out with a picture of a spotlight on the front cover; the only time that hardware has been thus honoured in the lifetime of this magazine, and it was accompanied by a rave review by Francis Reid on the inside pages. Of course it was no ordinary spotlight, Francis called it "something of a quantum leap in lighting technology" and he was really enthusing about a complete system of moving lights that had just burst on the British theatre world, Vari-lites. Now, after we have had over two years to get used to seeing these star performers in everything from big rock shows to Time and Phantom of the Opera, the company has launched new hardware remedying many of the problems of the first 'prototype' version and offering even more opportunity to stun and dazzle an audience with light. And, this time, the blanket of secrecy that covered the technical details of how the system worked has been lifted a little to confirm or confound the guesses so frequently made by expert and layman alike about the contents of the sealed black boxes so carefully guarded by the compulsory Vari-lite operator.

The series 100 system

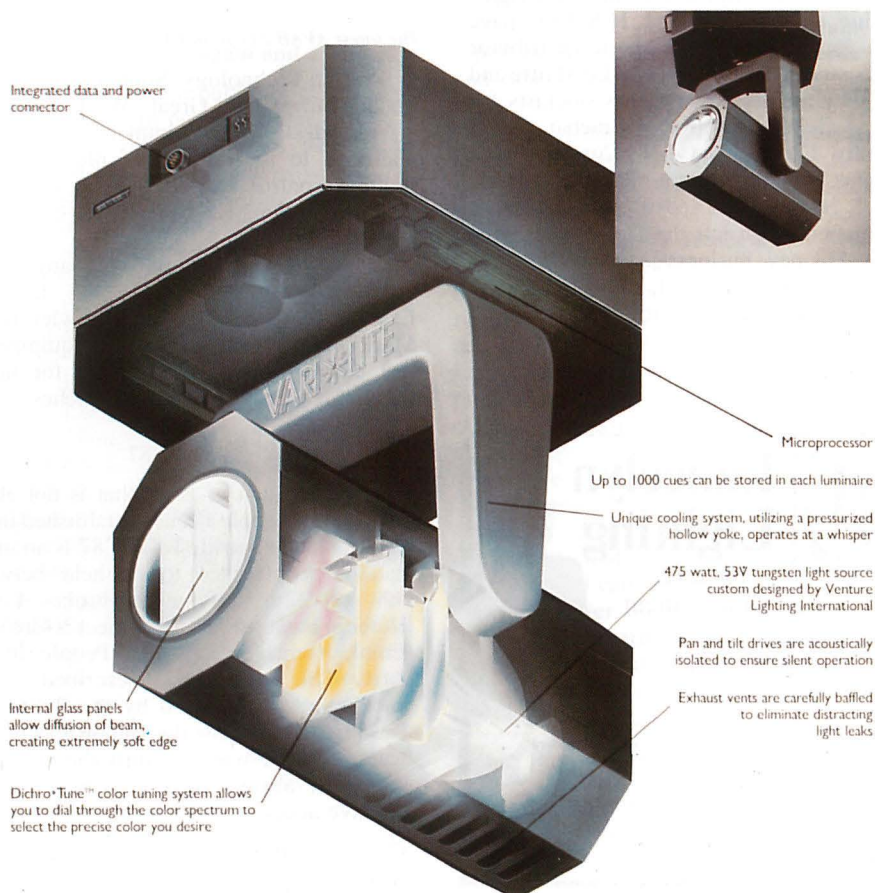
There was never much doubt about the motor drive. Servos and digital data transmission were buzz words that satisfied everybody as explanations of how the control desk obtained the speed and precision of movement of the lamphead that were the fundamental characteristic of the Vari-lite system. Already accustomed to the features of a modern dimmer memory system, the details of how this could be fitted into a tiny space on a hot spotlight were of interest only to the rarest back room boffin. The same could be said about the gobo changer and the dimmer. Careful observation made it clear that the gobos; a limited choice of fixed iris, multi-hole plate and slot effects; were standard pieces of punched tin mounted on a sort of internal colour wheel and rotated into the beam when required. The dimmer, necessarily a mechanical device because Vari-lite had to admit that 'undimable' high pressure mercury discharge lamps were used, also had to be a servo driven shutter of some sort.

The real puzzle was the colour change system. There was ready agreement that the brightness and intensity of colour and unlimited life could only be obtained by dichroic filters, then only just familiar as efficient, though expensive, colour correction filters for daylight filming, and on some special coloured PAR lamps. However,

VL2™ SPOT LUMINAIRE



VL3™ WASH LUMINAIRE



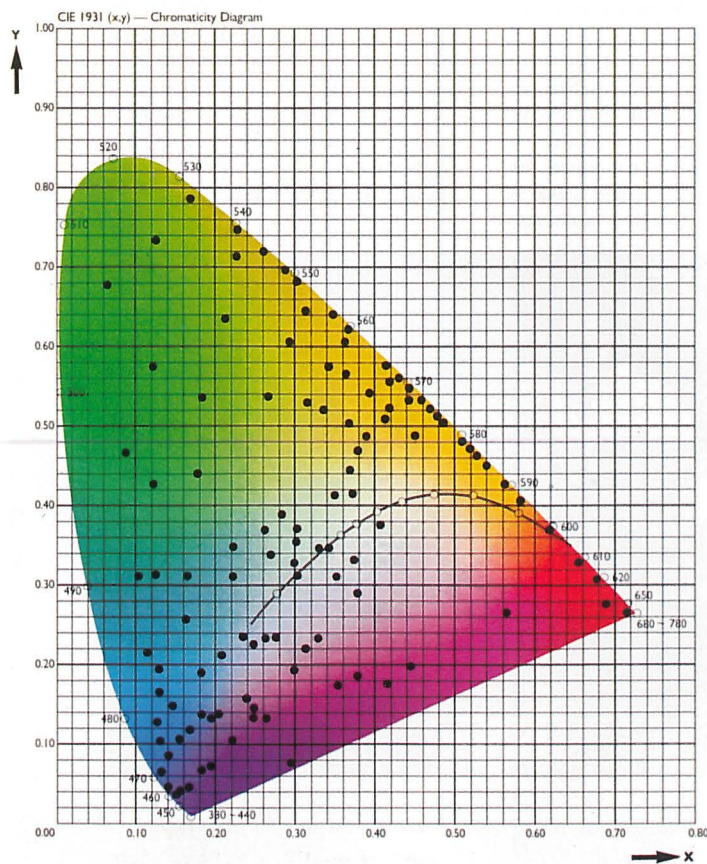
word got round that a three colour process was used and this confused many until close examination of the control desk showed that there were, in reality, two colour wheels optically in series in the beam, each with a range of colours chosen to work in subtractive combination. With eight filters on each disc sixty four variations were theoretically available, though white and a few unuseable combinations had to be taken into account leaving the sixty true colours offered in the advertising leaflets.

Once these facts had been sorted out, the technically curious could only marvel at the skill and expense which must have been needed to reach a working solution robust enough to perform in roadshow conditions and speculate on the arrival of imitators and new improved designs. The imitators appeared, though have not yet done much to dent the Vari-lite monopoly, and now Vari-lite themselves have launched Mark 2 and Mark 3 versions.

The Series 200 Systems

Vari-lite VL2 is the improved version of the original design. It still moves 360 degrees in pan and 270 degrees in tilt in a blink of the

Color control options on the Artisan control console are best illustrated on the chromaticity diagram. This diagram represents hue and saturation available within the color spectrum. Pure colors (hue) are depicted on the perimeter while saturation is viewed from the center outward. By rotating the Color and Saturation controls on the console, the operator is able to select the desired color.



• VL2 SPOT LUMINAIRE DISCRETE COLOR (5600°K SOURCE)

eye, but can now make the change as slowly as you like. Colour is again obtained from dichroic filters in a pair of colour wheels but 120 colours can now be obtained including many new shades in the pastel lavender and pink region. Time to change between any two colours is still little more than one tenth of a second. The new gobo system now offers nine standard patterns using a special process that deposits the design as heat reflecting metal on a glass base. This allows previously impossible designs such as a hollow ring of light to be projected without any risk of residual stencil links or mesh supporting the centre of the design being seen. Users' own designs can be made up and inserted in place of any of the standard set. The lamp, though still a metal arc, is now a 400 watt HMI type with an integral reflector giving 250 hours average life and improved beam intensity.

As well as these improvements, there are two innovations; an iris has been added to give continuous variation of beam diameter over a 5:1 range and focus can be adjusted to sharpen or soften the image.

To handle all these refinements, each lantern now has an on-board computer to receive and store instructions from the central console and to send data back reporting the status and position of all features. This difference simplifies the control links so that now, instead of transmitting new positional information for every adjustment to every lantern some sixteen times per second as was done on Mark I, all cues are sent before the perform-

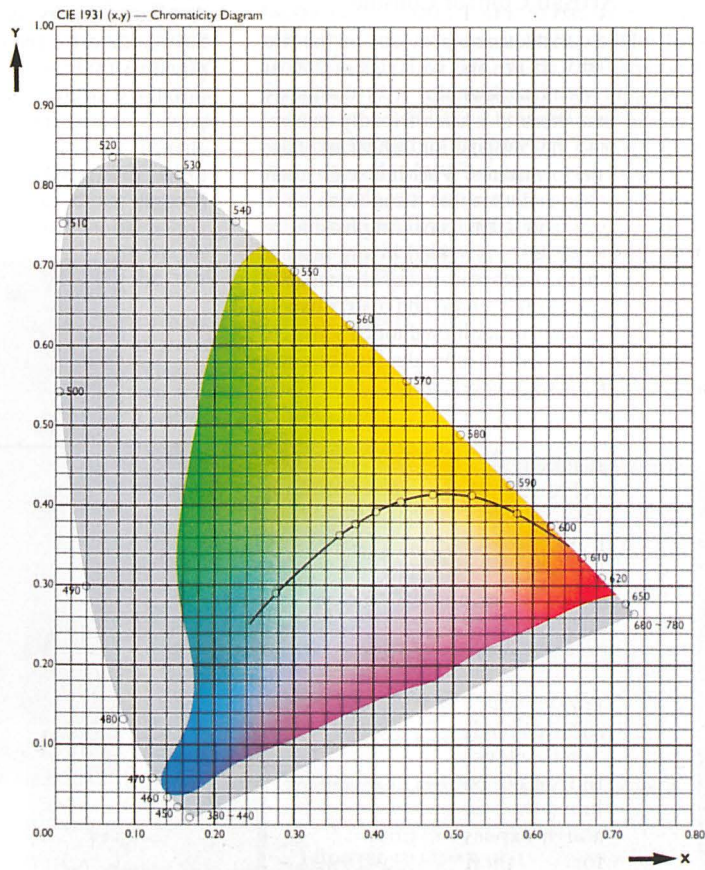
ance and stored and executed only when cue numbers are called. A fascinating parallel with human operating routines.

Vari-lite VL3 – The Wash Luminaire

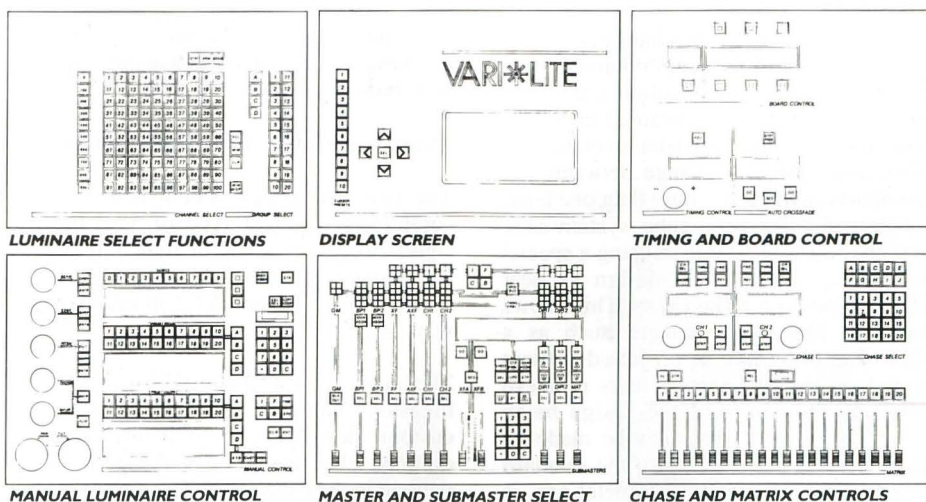
The new 200 series system now offers a completely different type of Vari-lite designed to give washes of light rather than hard edge spot beams. In fact Vari-lite 3 differs from VL1 and VL2 in nearly every way.

The lamp is now a 53 volt, 475 watt compact tungsten halogen incandescent source, custom designed for Vari-lite, and is dimmed electrically by varying the lamp voltage in the usual way. The dimmer, built into the lantern, is highly stabilized to avoid over-volting the lamp and to compensate for distribution losses and is, of course, computer controlled in the same way as the VL2.

The colour system, this time, is a three colour process using three sets of secondary dichroic filters in subtractive mode. Cyan, yellow and magenta filters are mounted edgewise to the beam from the lamp reflector and turn across the beam under servo control. With the filters edgewise on, nearly all the white light gets out of the lantern. With the filters turned across the beam all the colours are successively removed and there is virtually no output. At intermediate settings of the three filters the light is coloured and with the aid of the computer, any selection around the colour circle and from fully saturated to near white can be



VL3 WASH LUMINAIRE COLORS (3200°K SOURCE)



Artisan Control Console

chosen. And, again with the help of the computer, the colour can change smoothly on cue through any range of linking colours.

In front of the colour filters a fourth set of vanes can turn into or out of the beam to add diffusion to soften and spread even more the already soft edge beam.

The only common features of the VL2 and VL3 are the pan and tilt drives and on board computer system. Also common to the two new series 200 lanterns are self sensing power packs that automatically adjust to any of the world's power system voltages, and a five wire cabling system to distribute power and control instructions from the central console.

Artisan Control Console

With all the variables now provided on the two new types of Vari-lite and with rigs of 200 or more lanterns now possible, it is obviously essential that there is a user friendly control panel for both the composition/rehearsal phase and live performance. Vari-lite call their control Artisan and state that it can work up to 1000 lanterns and 1000 cues. Impossible to describe the facilities provided in any reasonable space here. Sufficient to say that manual adjustment, grouping, chase and matrix panels are provided with an additional touch sensitive display screen to call up individual instruments and to find out what is going on.

STLD/ALD Demonstration

The Series 200 Vari-lites are not all that new. They were developed in time for the opening of the 'Genesis' 1986-7 world tour which opened in the USA in late summer last year and which has since been to Australia and Japan. Now, at last, the tour and the lighting rig has come to England and Samuelson Vari-lite Europe Ltd. invited many members of the lighting world, including the STLD and ALD to a demonstration at Bray Studios, Windsor at the beginning of May. Here, the full rig, set up for rehearsal, was put through it's paces to a recording of the group's music.

It is an impressive rig with nearly 300 VL2 and VL3 Vari-lites on an octagonal truss system suspended on chain hoists driven from an Avolites memory system. Someone else will have to describe the performance, it would be pointless to draw any conclusions from a run through with an empty stage. Nevertheless, the power of the mass movement and colour change is still immense and the ability to produce a synchronised perfectly timed cue brought an occasional well earned gasp of appreciation from a hard bitten audience.

And they are much, much quieter when moving than the first version, but even so, 300 cooling fans can still make a lot of noise.

Individually, Vari-lites have a harder time. The VL2 looks no better than a standard profile for gobo projection and is peaky when at full flood and defocussed. The VL3 is said to compare with a PAR-Can but, judged when pointed at a cyc., its colour and brightness are too patchy for use in small numbers for the serious business of lighting actors. But put a group together and make them move and, of course, the comparison is stupid. They are Vari-lites and sometime, someone in theatre or television will show the way to use their special advantages for something beyond the synchronised accompaniment of popular beat music.

The problem of cost remains. It has been said that ten to twenty million dollars have been invested in the development so far. If this is true then the earnings from rentals since the first 1981 'Genesis' tour may not be unreasonably high and those who had the courage to risk investing in the idea can not be begrudged their profits. Vari-lite intend to continue their policy of rental only, with compulsory operator and full support because, as they say, that is their business and why should they provide their competition with the means to undercut the market? Vari-lite have also built a formidable hedge of patent and trademark protection to ward off mere copyists, so competitors able to finance a comparable development programme will have to find new ideas or ways to break through the lawyers paper fences.

So, it may still be a while before every panto hire list includes a call for half a dozen Vari-lites or Vari-lite look-alikes and perhaps we should be grateful. Leading edge technology, though stimulating when first experienced, is still a poor substitute for a good script and human talent.



The Vari-lite team hosting the Bray demonstration with second from right John Watt — chairman of the STLD.

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SCALE AND STYLE

Reflections on the 1987 Brighton Festival presentation of
Drottningholm on the stage and in the museum – plus curtain raiser

IAIN MACKINTOSH

A festival is an occasion for the exceptional, the unusual, the premiere 'for the first time on this or any other stage'. It is also an occasion for meaningful juxtaposition. This year Brighton director, Gavin Henderson, achieved a rare success in crowning his Festival with a unique double: two Mozart operas staged within original scenery magically transported from Drottningholm's 1766 court theatre to the Theatre Royal, Brighton together with a major theatre exhibition 'Set Before a King' which unfolded the Drottningholm story within three galleries of the Brighton Museum.

Brighton's Theatre Royal was a barely adequate substitute for Drottningholm itself and without the exhibition some might have wondered what the fuss was all about. Drottningholm is small (holding only 430 in continuous padded benches) but it has the quality shared only in Britain by our three Georgian theatres – Bristol (1766), Richmond (1788) and Bury St Edmunds (1819). All are at once intimate and heroic. In all the stage is as deep as the auditorium. In all the classical harmony of the architecture is in perfect pitch with the human body. Brighton is not in this league despite its fine pedigree having been built by C.J. Phipps in



The Drottningholm Court Theatre of 1766 with on stage a facsimile of a original eighteenth century park scene showing Drottningholm itself seen across Lake Malaren on the back cloth.

1866, three years after Bath. But Brighton was 'improved' and 'restored' in 1927 in the 'authentic' French neo-classical style and is today about as Regency as a box of Quality Street. One could not but wonder what future generations will make of the recently 'restored' Old Vic in the Waterloo Road. Perhaps that will merely evoke 'Berni Inn eighties' just as the decor of the Brighton Theatre Royal today suggests more 'transatlantic liner twenties' than it does a mid 19th century English theatre. Those who re-interpret the past when restoring old buildings age more rapidly than their models.

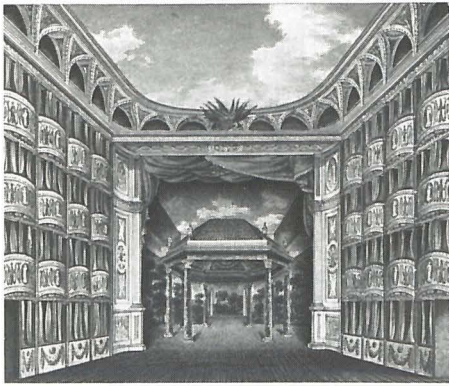
Such speculation was occasioned by the fact that at Brighton we had seen the real

thing across the road. This was no mere two dimensional photographic exhibition but an extraordinary evocation of Drottningholm itself complete with original scenery, costumes, furniture, paintings, stage designs and two magnificent full size facsimile back drops. Gavin Henderson had achieved the impossible in persuading Drottningholm to allow all this to leave Sweden for the first and probably only time.

The impossibility is best indicated by the fact that he had to do it twice. Last summer they agreed. At Christmas they changed their minds on conservation grounds that were not totally unreasonable. In early February the director of the Brighton Museum, Richard Marks, together with

Three images by William Hogarth of the first night of The Beggar's Opera at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1728 : first a sketch from life reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen in whose Windsor Castle collection is this chalk drawing; second, the first oil painting, also 1728, now in a private collection; and third, the grandiose final version commissioned by impresario John Rich in 1729, and now at the Yale center for British Art (there is a replica in the Tate Gallery).





The Opera House in the Haymarket, with flat floor laid over the pit for a masquerade in 1785, as it was in its smaller form before being doubled in size by Novoisoielski in 1791. Reproduced by permission of the University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

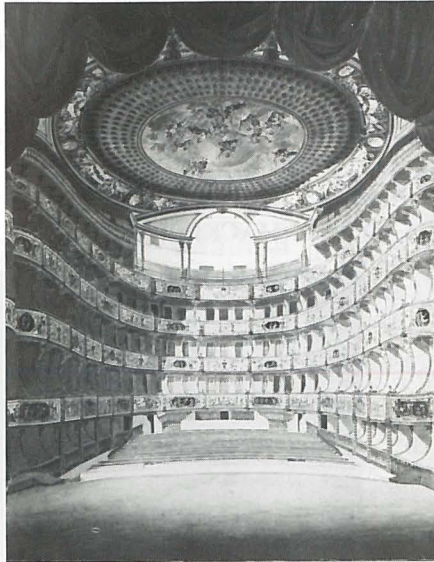
Gavin successfully entreated them to reconsider. Brighton and Britain are now deeply in debt to Drottningholm and their opera director, Per Forstramm and museum director, Ture Rangstrom. Brighton exhibition director, John Filkin, designer Michael Jones and graphics designer Nigel Cunningham then had less than twelve weeks to convert three galleries into an evocation of Drottningholm and place therein the 80 or so items they had glimpsed only over a hurried weekend visit.

To complicate matters further Gavin had also commissioned a curtain raiser, that is to say a second smaller exhibition "en parallele" of eighteenth century British



A baroque scene design, 1724, by John Devoto who is known to have worked at Covent Garden between 1723 and 1730. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

theatre which it was my job to conceive, collect and catalogue in collaboration with the ever helpful museum staff. It was, I suppose, no more difficult a commission than that to design the Wilde Theatre when he asked Levitt Bernstein and myself for Theatre Projects to design a 400 seat opera house for £400,000. (He got it some three years later for some £1.2 million which he begged and borrowed from somewhere — perhaps it is the impossibility of Gavin's



Michael Novoisoielski's Opera House of 1791 holding over 3000 in 179 boxes, pit and gallery. Watercolour by Biagio Rebecca reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen.

dreams which makes everyone strive to see him all right and generally succeeds in so doing.)

At first the request, as relayed by John Filkin, was for "a smallish display explaining the relation of Drottningholm to the context of eighteenth century theatre and opera". It then became an account of British theatre contemporary with the short life span of Drottningholm from 1766 to 1792. Finally what emerged was "An Extravagant and Irrational Entertainment — staging the opera in England 1632 to 1792".

1792. This was the date which finally triggered the idea for the curtain raiser. For the Swedes and for Drottningholm 1792 is a landmark: the assassination of King Gustav III at a masked ball in Stockholm the consequence of which inter alia was the closing down of Drottningholm to sleep undisturbed until rediscovered in 1921 by historian Agne Beijer. For England the significance is more elusive but theatrically speaking more profound.

Between 1791 and 1794 London's three Theatres Royal were all rebuilt at a massively increased scale — Covent Garden by Henry Holland in 1792, Drury Lane also by Holland in 1794 and the Opera House in the Haymarket by Novoisoielski in 1792 — while a short lived fourth, the Pantheon holding nearly 4000, was added. Swept away suddenly was the intimacy that London theatres had enjoyed for two centuries where audience and performer were partners in a shared experience. Ushered in were huge houses where the human figure was but a single element within a scenic frame of illusion where musicians, poets and performers strove to present cosmic themes with romantic fervour ever more heightened by the opportunity the new gas lighting gave to dim the lights in the audience. Exit the theatre that links Mozart to Shakespeare. Enter the bombast of the nineteenth century from which all but the modern musical is now

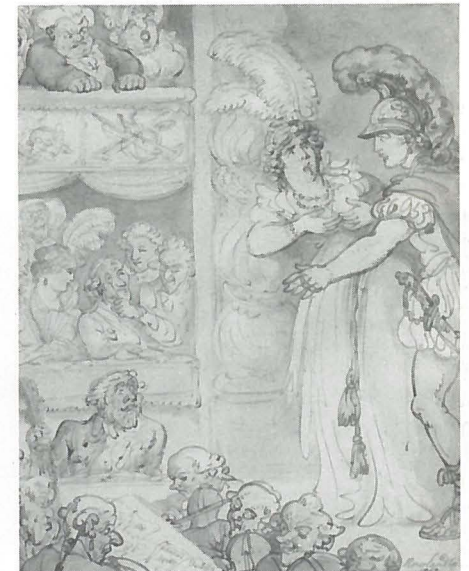
recovering. My curtain raiser would trace the staging of pre-romantic opera up to the 1790s when it was swamped in the new bigger and supposedly better theatres.

Perhaps Gustav III was shot at the right moment. Being very much a follower of fashion (or 'state of the art' to use the unfortunate American neologism), he might have espoused the new romanticism, torn down his delicate Drottningholm and erected something as vulgar as the vast theatres we got as part of that particular modern movement. Or perhaps not. It is said that at the time of his assassination he was preparing to invade France to reverse the French Revolution, an enterprise which might have gained him nothing more than a starring role opposite Madame Guillotine at the Place de la Concorde.

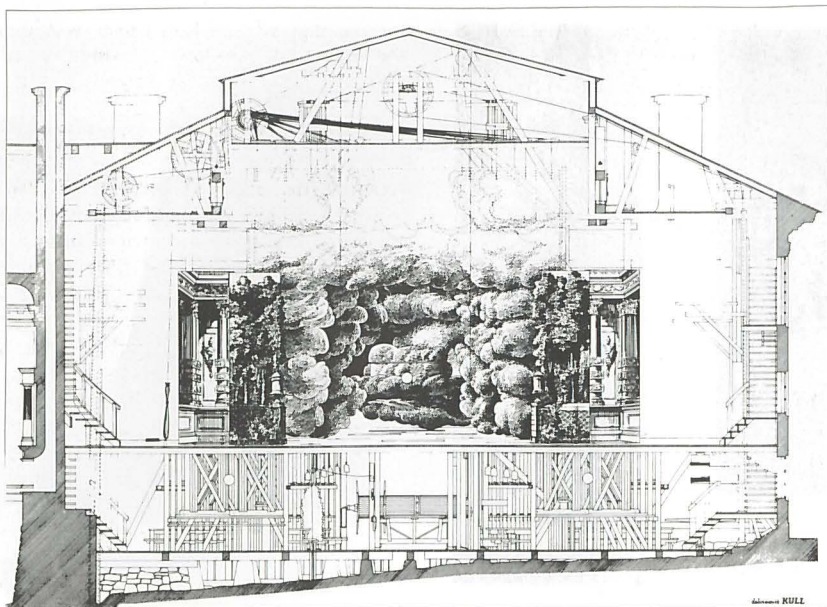
The start date for the curtain riser, 1632, was suggested by one of Inigo Jones triumphs of scene craft devised for King Charles I, 'Albion's Triumph', presented in the still surviving Banqueting House outside which Charles was to be executed. But unnatural death was not the only thing that Charles shared with Gustav: both played a central role in the productions staged at their own court theatres, Charles in non speaking parts to celebrate his own apotheosis and Gustav rather more seriously as opera librettist, as director and as leading actor alongside the best professionals.

A link more apparent at the exhibition was the similarity of the baroque perspective in the Italian manner so lavishly realised both by Inigo Jones and by Gustav's star designer, Louis Jean Desprez some century and a half later. Alas that while Sweden has its eighteenth century stage in full working order we have only sketches and a few ground plans, albeit detailed enough to enable the thrilling working model of Jones' 'Salamacida Spolia' to be made (for the 1972 Inigo Jones celebrations) and exhibited here at Brighton.

1632 and 1792 were to be the book ends, between a continuum of English stage



Thomas Rowlandson's view of opera in a small theatre; a watercolour now in a private collection which was the basis of the later satirical engraving of John Bull at the Italian Opera published in 1805.



Cross section of the Drottningholm stage through the first pair of wings. Drawing by Gustav Knoll reproduced by permission of the Drottningholm Theatre Museum Foundation.

design and opera house architecture. The first question might well be to ask is how long the shelf.

The answer is very short. At Brighton we gathered together just under 50 items and except in so far as only a few of the hundred or so of Inigo Jones designs were included it is correct to say that we showed all that is extant save for three designs for 'Arsinoe', designed for Drury Lane in 1705 by Sir James Thornhill, which were on show at the new Theatre Museum, the only collection off limits not unreasonable since they were otherwise engaged in opening their own show after a somewhat lengthy rehearsal period. Our items came from many sources: HM the Queen's Windsor Castle collection, the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth (for the Inigo Jones scene designs), Worcester College Oxford (for the Inigo Jones theatre designs), the British Museum, the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum collections other than that of the Theatre Museum), the University of Bristol's Theatre Collection and four important private collections including that of Mrs Allardyce Nicoll. All were unstinting in their generosity. It is just as well because in England there is so little that survives from the eighteenth century theatre and certainly no scenery. In Sweden there is an industrial warehouse crammed with original items from only 24 years work at one theatre!

Reviewing the remnants English romantic opera in this way does provide a new perspective. First there is the tendency of artists to exaggerate scale to make things look bigger than they were as if in anticipation of the excess that was to come. Hogarth's 'Beggars' Opera', the many images of which divide into three is a case in point. The final image is the picture in the Tate (in fact a copy of the picture at Yale University — at Brighton we showed the Blake engraving of the same) suggests that the first night was a great and glittering event with well dressed aristocrats on each side of a large stage and a crowd upstage of

beggars. There is even a key to identify the glitterati present. But the same artist's earlier picture shows what the first night at tiny Lincoln's Inn Fields was really like: acting area no bigger than the King's Head, the orchestra on stage upstage of the principals and the audience less well dressed and less interested in the show. And the third image, the sketch from Windsor Castle which Hogarth made actually in the theatre shows audience behind Polly, Lucy, Peachum and Lockit (all in the same pose in all three images) suggesting theatre in the round. The Tate picture was merely a piece of theatrical hype a la David Merrick which showed how the first night might have been had impresario John Rich already built the first Covent Garden which he did three years later, chiefly with the profits from the smash hit 'Beggars' Opera'.

Scruffiness at Lincoln's Inn Fields contrasted with grandeur at the Opera House in the Haymarket built by Vanburgh in 1707. But even there the work of Ricci and Devoto, triumphantly illustrated by superb baroque designs from the British Museum, was on a modest scale. The designs looked big but were in fact physically small. Such baroque effect only comes to life when the human figure is introduced and, as we saw at 'Don Giovanni' staged within Drottningholm's perspective scenery, the scale allows the humanity of the story to assert itself while the style sets the action apart in a formal framework inside which the artist's imagination can take flight. Get the scale wrong and the same style of design looks pompous and artificial: compare, if you will, the same opera, say 'Cosi Fan Tutte', authentically staged first at the 800 seat Glyndebourne and second at the 4000 seat plus Metropolitan Opera House New York.

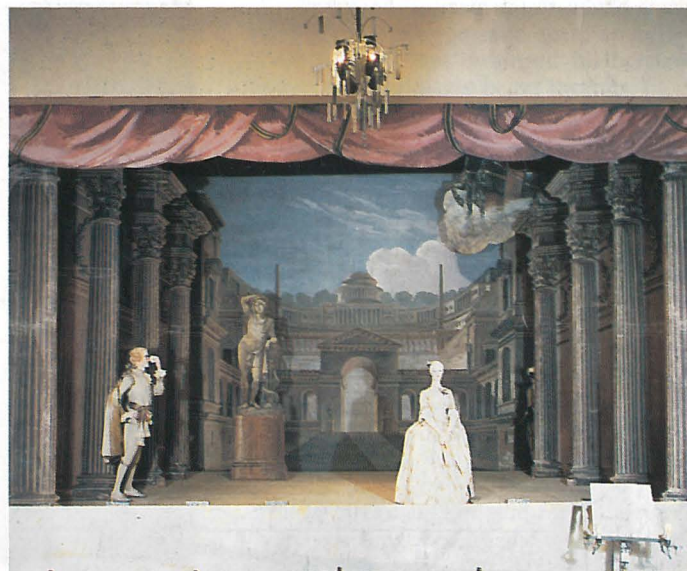
Centrepiece of the curtain riser was William Dawes' large satirical painting of 1765, 'The Downfall of Shakespeare on a Modern Stage'. Within the confines of mid Georgian Covent Garden (the Criterion

or Cottesloe size theatre Handel knew) Shakespeare lies slain by a beplumed tenor singing a duet with a soprano wearing a twenty foot diameter dress. The theatre is strangely translated: a punch and a satyr replace the figures of tragedy and comedy. 'Vox et praeterea nihil' replaces 'Vivitar ingenio' as the motto. On the proscenium arch are scales: on the left the tragic sceptre and crown prove lighter than musical instruments while on the right the works of Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher and Congreve are outweighed by 'pantomime' and 'my favourite song'. A dark skinned potentate in the stage box is having this incomprehensible entertainment explained to him. Behind the performer a Poussinesque backdrop is full of foreign allusions. It is an attitude echoed in Rowlandson's marvellous watercolour of opera singers in a small theatre and by a diary entry of one Syllas Neville, 24 February 1767 after a visit to the Opera: 'I can't say I was greatly entertained tho' the Music is very pleasing. There is something very absurd and truly characteristic of the present Age in supporting a set of people at an immense expense to perform in a language which very few understand'. However the rivalry between Shakespeare and opera depicted by Dawes took place in a small theatre equally suitable for either, a very different affair from the fight for audience when all the theatres were twice the size by 1794.

Of course much of the blame can be put on the pundits, the theatre consultants of the day who like theatre designers everywhere gave the client what he wanted: bigger capacities without telling them that by increasing the scale the magical balance of scale and style would be disturbed and more often than not the gross box office fall which usually led to higher prices for a greatly diluted theatre experience. Thus the section which gave me most pleasure was that which celebrated the arrival of the experts between 1762 and 1790. First came Count Francesco Algarotti who dedicated his English version to William Pitt stating that opera 'is an object not unworthy of a place in the attention of those who govern Kingdoms' (conservative party please note). In contrast were Pierre Patte (1782) and George Saunders (1790) who knew that everybody else had got it wrong and that theatres should be oval (Patte and correct as the enduring La Scala and Fenice show) or circular in their geometry (Saunders and false as the acoustic disaster of Wyatt at Drury Lane in 1812 and of Lasdun at the Olivier in 1976 illustrate). Patte proved his point with the first diagrams to show the all important side reflections while Saunders pirated the same engravings sans the reflections and said they were silly. A fourth, Gabrielle Dumont was admirably empirical and produced the first parallel of all the great theatres of Europe drawn to the same scale, a practice subsequently followed by Sachs and Leacroft. Chevalier Jean Georges Noverre, a professional ballet master, spoke for the professionals of all ages with his weary: 'J'a vu tous les theatres



Satirical painting, 1765, by William Dawes which is now in the collection of Mrs Maria Allardyce Nicoll. The theatre resembles Covent Garden but much is changed.



Theatrical centrepiece of the exhibition created by Brighton Museum designer Michael Jones using four pairs of original wing flats by French artist J D Dugourc (used at Drottningholm for *Iphigénie en Aulide* in 1783) and, as backcloth, a modern copy of *The Great Peristyle* by Jean Desprez. The ballet costumes on the figure are also reproductions.



Evocation by Michael Jones of a Drottningholm dressing room with original furniture in front of hand painted 18th century wallpaper reproduced in Brighton by hand for the exhibition.

de l'Italie, d'Allemagne, de l'Angleterre et de la France. De cette quantité d'édifices je n'en connais pas un dont les défauts ne surpassent pas les beautés.

The English section concluded with perspectives and plans of the monsters erected in the 1970s, sadly only the start of a sequence which includes all those now redundant movie palaces of the American twenties and which will surely find its pinnacle of proposterousness in the already under construction 3000 seat £300 million Opera de la Bastille in Paris which will outseat most of America and out mechanise the Germans resulting in a building best

suited for over presented pop shows.

The Drottningholm exhibition was less didactic and more imaginatively atmospheric. Designer Michael Jones opened with an empty room with a single exhibit, the backdrop 8m wide of Drottningholm itself seen across Lake Malaren. The other three walls were painted in bold scenic fashion to suggest the enchanted forest which protected this sleeping beauty from 1792 to 1921. Next a small picture gallery with good pictures by Pehr Hillestrom and an evocative peep show model of the theatre scene from the back row followed by a video room ('Cosi' for ever) and a wonderful reproduction of the prima donna's dressing room with original bed and furniture against the eighteenth century wallpaper — blueish greenery plus nightingales swirling against a cream background all of which Michael Jones had painstakingly painted by hand in Brighton. His final 'coup de theatre' was just that: a theatre. With supreme disregard of all logic and good sense a single gallery of the Brighton Museum had been miraculously transformed into the Drottningholm theatre, pilaster and boxes framing a proscenium beyond which stood four pairs of original eighteenth century perspective wings, some equally authentically clothed mannequins all leading up to a meticulous fascimile from the 1930s of Desprez's 'Great Peristyle' backdrop, a Piranesian riot of the baroque 8.1m wide and 6m high.

Design delights apart what enduring lessons? As an exercise in festival economics sheer sleight of hand, the Swedish visitors having spent even more in sending the stuff than the Brighton hosts in staging it so imaginatively. As a conjunction of

visual and theatre arts so often mooted for festivals but so rarely achieved, a triumph — Edinburgh please note. As an introduction to eighteenth century theatre an equal delight for enthusiast or layman. As an attitude to communicating the ephemeral art of theatre within a museum context a striking contrast to that adopted by the new Theatre Museum.

Inevitably I cannot conclude without chewing over the lesson all this seems to those who design modern theatres. If the proportions are pitched properly then a chamber sized house (with today's spacing holding 300 to 800) can convey equally effectively the grand gesture and the human confidence. The intimacy and reality of performance at this scale will read true on camera in a way a transmission from the Met or the Royal Opera House never can. In such large theatres the performer must choose between giving a stage performance, hopefully, which must project over 150 feet to the back of the gallery, and communicating in close up to the viewer through the lens. Inevitably he or she must choose the former to the detriment of the latter. Thus if today we choose to build echoing space on box office grounds then we will be creating theatre fit only for mindless musicals or *Aida* with elephants. For nearly 200 years the monster theatres have failed the arts they serve. Are things going to change? Perhaps they will when television fees favour Drottningholm scale theatres where the performance given to a smaller live audience and that for the camera are in synch with the result, that such marvellous Mozartian houses become financially feasible once again?