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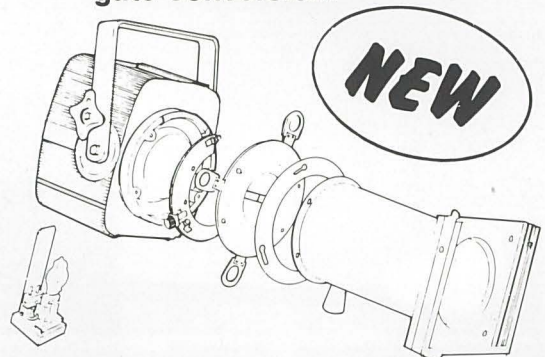
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This new and much enlarged edition of British Theatre Design (now 80 pages, 16 in full colour) is a beautifully illustrated and permanent record of the work of British designers during the last four years for theatres in this country and abroad.

The examples are taken from the fine collection on show at the National Design Exhibition at Riverside Studios in May 1987.

The designs chosen are for small stages as well as large, by new up-and-coming designers as well as the established names. An abundance of illustrations included are model designs, production photos and costume drawings by more than 75 designers.

Price **£7.95** (plus £1.30 postage and packing)

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Cover:
The first London professional revival of Noel Coward's *Bitter Sweet* since 1929. Staged by New Sadler's Wells Opera, producer Ian Judge, Designers Russell Craig and Deirdre Clancy, Lighting Nick Chelton.

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ASKING THE USER

Market Research is a relatively new concept for the theatre lighting industry. There was little point in analysing user requirement in any significant detail until technology had advanced to the point where it became possible to specify the operationally desirable rather than the mere technically possible.

But, with science developing the potential to be a true servant of art, it has become increasingly necessary for the scientists to ask the artists to specify their ideal palette. There must, of course, be a debate. The scientists still need to share their discoveries with the artists. The possible can be a powerful stimulant of the desirable. But does this debate need more structure?

Most discussions of a theatric kind are made in a climate of expediency. Consequently the operational philosophy of an articulate customer, waving a megabucks contract for a prestigious theatre, has been known to influence a whole generation of control systems. Any market research has tended to be of the empirical kind and carried out mainly at trade fairs. Method One (Me Too) is to check out what each competitor is doing and incorporate everything. Method Two (You Wanit, You Gotit) is to give equal credence to everyone who sits down at a control with the sole object of discovering what it will *not* do.

And so we note with considerable interest Rosco's recent attempt to channel customer feedback through a competition. As a result of their supergel competition, they should now have a clearer idea of how lightpersons rate such varied aspects of a filter range as heat resistance, palette width, csi/hmi correctors, international availability, price, etc. And know of any concensus about colour slots needing a gel.

This seems to Cue to be an admirable customer research method worthy of further exploration. But we would remind anyone contemplating such an exercise that, whereas few people are stimulated by a blank sheet of paper, nearly everyone likes to edit. Therefore an invitation to tick multiple choice preferences, rather than to make statements, may offer a question format more likely to elicit a sufficiently wide response for statistical analysis. And the prizes have to be appropriate and generous: Rosco has set the industry standard.

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STAGE DESIGN

DAVID FINGLETON

The *Bitter Sweet* revival by New Sadler's Wells Opera is a winner all the way More stylised staging for *Billy Budd* but still a profound operatic experience at the Coliseum Conjuring up the Deep South in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at the National's Lyttelton Making good use of the Olivier's revolve in *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore* Design and Lighting made *Hapgood* a pleasure to watch.

It is invariably rewarding when stage designers get things right. Noel Coward's operette, *Bitter Sweet*, had not had a London professional revival since its highly successful Drury Lane run, where it opened in 1929, until New Sadler's Wells Opera had the inspired idea of staging it this year. In Ian Judge's scrupulously accurate, lucid and sensitive production, designed with equal sensitivity and accuracy by Russell Craig and Deirdre Clancy, and impeccably lit by Nick Chelton, the result was a winner all the way. *Bitter Sweet* is not an easy show to stage, for it opens in an aristocratic London ballroom in 1929, moves almost instantly to a similar London setting in 1875, then on to a typical Viennese café five years later, before returning to the original Grosvenor Square ballroom, first in 1895 and finally in 1929 once again. To compound the designer's problems, there are almost instant time shifts across the decades to be achieved in those opening and closing scenes.

Russell Craig has managed all this magnificently within a single semi-circular set with a revolve and a glazed back, which either mirrors the action on stage or else shows the surrounding neighbourhood projected through its windows. This skilfully conceived and realised set is equally convincing as a ballroom both in the 'flapper' era of the late twenties and amongst the art nouveau of the end of the 19th century, and works equally well as a stuffily bourgeois, but indubitably louche, café in Vienna. This is achieved not just by the flexibility of the set itself, but likewise by Deirdre Clancy's admirably precise and splendidly attractive costumes, and by immaculately sure-handed use of furniture and props. In the opening scene the girls in their Charleston frocks are unmistakably of the twenties, yet within seconds are similarly indubitably bright young things from the Victorian era. The Viennese café is just as precise, with its dingy curtains just the right shade of brown, its brasswork and newspapers on wooden poles, and its resident 'hostesses' dressed just on the wrong side of good taste. Add to this Coward's marvellous score and touching scenario and you have an evening of unmitigated pleasure. NSW's *Bitter Sweet* is now on tour and can, and should, be seen at a variety of venues between now and June 5.

Benjamin Britten's first opera *Billy Budd*, based as it is on Herman Melville's story of unpleasant events on H.M.S. *Indomitable* in 1797, during the Napoleonic War, has up till now tended to receive explicitly

realistic, historically and nautically accurate stagings. However E.N.O.'s new production, seen recently at the Coliseum, offers a rather different approach. Directed by Tim Albery and designed by Tom Cairns



Tom Stoppard's new play *Hapgood* at the Aldwych. Designer: Carl Toms. Lighting: David Hersey. Photo: John Haynes.



ENO's new production of Britten's *Billy Budd* at the Coliseum. Designers: Anthony McDonald and Tom Cairns. Lighting: David Cunningham. Producer: Tim Albery. Conductor: David Atherton. Photo: Clive Barda.



'Tis a Pity She's a Whore at the Olivier. Costumes and settings by Sally Gardner and Roger Glossop. Director: Alan Ayckbourn. Lighting: Mick Hughes. Photo: Nobby Clark.

and Anthony McDonald, with lighting by David Cunningham, this Budd is presented on an angled stage, sloping about 15 degrees from left to right, where the shipboard ambience is largely stylised — no painstaking rigging — though given such occasional realistic appurtenances as mast and cannon. The crew below decks are shown in narrow red-lit 'cells', with the upper half of the set blocked off by a 'guillotine' — a device that owed not a little to Peter Stein's Berlin Schaubuhne production of O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*, seen last year at the National Theatre. By contrast Captain Vere's cabin was no more than a sloping strip of the upper stage, furnished with three chairs in line plus a door: altogether less convincing. Costumes for the officers remained constant, but those for the crew ranged from shabby peasant rags to full naval order for the encounter with the French. Vere himself, in the Prologue and Epilogue, was not shown as a retired Royal Naval officer in early 19th century dress, but as a stooping figure from a century or so later in scruffy flasher's mac and a moustache in the manner of E.M. Forster — the opera's joint librettist. Presumably the purpose of this was to remind us that the work's message is timeless and universal: if so it betrayed an unjustified lack of confidence in the intelligence of the audience. But this was nevertheless an absorbing production and one which, on its own terms, had been skilfully and thoughtfully designed. It made for an absorbing operatic experience.

In the theatre strong design is to be found at the National's Lyttelton Theatre in the



The opening Belgravia party scene in Noel Coward's *Bitter Sweet*, the new Sadler's Wells revival produced by Ian Judge. Designers, Russell Craig and Deirdre Clancy. Lighting by Nick Chelton. Photo: Shuhei Iwamoto.



Act 2. *Bitter Sweet*. Russell Craig's cafe setting amongst the art nouveau of the 19th century. Photo: Shuhei Iwamoto.



National Theatre production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at the Lyttelton Theatre. Director: Howard Davies. Designer: William Dudley. Lighting: Mark Henderson. Photo: John Haynes.

impressive revival of Tennessee William's *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*. William Dudley's huge Mississippi bedchamber in a house on a similarly vast plantation powerfully evokes the Deep South with its louvred blinds, large, lazy ceiling fan, heavy draperies and bamboo 'colonial' furniture. Costumes are equally accurate, both in period and social station, with Margaret's dress and lingerie, as much as Big Daddy's 'plantation' cream suit, and the children's party frocks precisely hitting the mark.

On the yet larger Olivier stage Roger Glossop's settings, Sally Gardner's attractive and skilfully socially graduated costumes, and Mick Hughes's highly impressive lighting are the best features of Alan Ayckbourn's rather weak production of John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*.

Certainly one would not want to go to it for a demonstration of the art of speaking Jacobean verse. But Glossop's fine, crenellated, multi-tier set is an inspired creation, making admirable use of the Olivier's revolve and offering immense depth and creation of atmosphere by use of close-up and long-shot. To have the lovers above, the plotters below, and the party going on beyond, seen through a corridor, was a remarkable achievement. I only wished that this highly inventive set could have been better constructed. Much of it, especially the steps, looked very cardboard, in contrast to the costumes whose materials were splendid; but we know how carefully the National Theatre has to watch its budgets.

At the Aldwych Theatre Tom Stoppard's

new play, *Hapgood*, has the benefit of masterly, lightweight, stylised designs by the highly experienced Carl Toms. Embracing seven different venues, from the opening Swimming Baths, to the underground — naturally — M15 office, to the Zoo with its pair of amorous giraffes, to the touch-line of a prep school rugby pitch, each setting precisely and powerfully makes its point with a maximum of economy and a minimum of distraction. The Toms' technique of highlighting a certain feature, such as a washbasin — or those giraffes — is totally assured and totally effective. Costumes are excellent too, and David Hersey's lighting is as skilful as ever. Whatever one's views of Stoppard's play, and mine are very much in favour, it is unquestionably a pleasure to watch.



Theatre Design Consultants

BOB ANDERSON

Consultancy, even in these hard times, provides an above average reward, to judge by the smart offices and the red BMW parked outside the JWA headquarters in Bookham in the Surrey countryside near Leatherhead.

Who's Who

JW is, of course, John Wyckham: war-time Fleet Air Arm pilot; then briefly actor and director; then famous stage and commercial lighting designer; founder member of the ABTT and the Society of Theatre Consultants and also during the 1950's and 1960's, stage manager and production manager with various leading companies and technical administrator for the RSC at Stratford and for the Sadlers Wells Opera and Ballet companies in London. Here began his involvement in the problems of building design and alteration, notably through being appointed ENO's technical mastermind for the move into the Coliseum — a move accomplished in an astonishing 8 ½ weeks. This naturally led to part time consultancy work while still at ENO and, inevitably, in 1970, to formation of a full-time practice.

The foremost of John's associates, and partner until his retirement last year, was Anthony Easterbrook. Like John, Tony's career in theatre started in the early 1950's leading through stage management, stage director, and production manager to company manager and general manager appointments. Also like John, Tony worked

at Sadlers Wells, first as company manager for the Ballet, then as stage director and production manager for the Opera. Then followed six years as General Manager for the National Theatre in those memorable years at the Old Vic. He joined JWA as a partner in 1974. After a period of bad health Tony retired from full time involvement with the firm last year but remains active as a part time consultant to JWA with involvement in several ongoing projects.

Third, in the company working from the Bookham office, is Len Greenwood. He began as a teacher of music and drama in the North of England, quickly followed by a period in professional theatre doing most jobs "from flyman to stage electrician and follow spot operator, to stage manager, to fit-up carpenter", culminating in seven years at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre as technical manager and production manager. Len joined JWA as Systems Design Engineer in 1979 and was appointed Associate in 1983. He has since worked on nearly every JWA job in nearly every capacity.

The other eleven associates are distinguished specialists who also work for other firms or their own practices. William Watson is a Chartered Designer with his own interior and theatre design practice. Dr. Frank Fahy is Reader in Engineering Acoustics at the University of Southampton. Jeff G. Charles is an acoustic consultant and partner with the Bickerdike Allen Partnership. Ken Dibble is an electroacoustic

consultant with his own practice, as also is Steve Jones. John Miller is an acoustic consultant and member of staff at Bickerdike Allen. Antoni Nosek is structural engineering consultant and a partner with Andrews Associates and Keith Henderson is also a structural engineering consultant and Associate with the same firm. Ronald David and George Willis are electrical engineers and partners in Davis Willis and Associates. David Eydmann is the M & E Services consultant and a director of J. Roger Preston & Partners Pte. Ltd., Singapore.

Finally, though as essential to the well being of the firm as are the principals, Barbara Lee provides the practice with office management and secretarial services.

This team has worked together for many years and has a notable string of successful theatre design and restoration projects to its credit.

Policy

JWA describe themselves as offering an Integrated Specialist Service for Architects and Organisations concerned with Planning, Design Redevelopment and Refurbishment, Administration and Management of Concert Halls, Theatres, Opera Houses, Multi-purpose Auditoria, Conference and Leisure Centres.

John stresses that his firm does not usually seek to provide purely architectural services.

The JWA view is that a theatre consultant

is as necessary on the design team for a theatre, concert hall or similar auditorium, as, for example, the structural engineer. Time saved on research can alone, JWA claim, frequently justify the consultant's fee. In addition, with specialist technical advice virtually on tap, the risk of expensive mistakes is considerably reduced. Aware of current trends in theatre practice, the experienced theatre design consultant can advise and assist the client (or the architect) in formulation of The Brief, and stand in for the future manager of the building who may not yet be appointed or is unable to take up office until the building is virtually complete. In this role the consultant must provide knowledgeable supervision of the commissioning of the building and its

equipment from the user's viewpoint and ensure that there is proper training for operating staff.

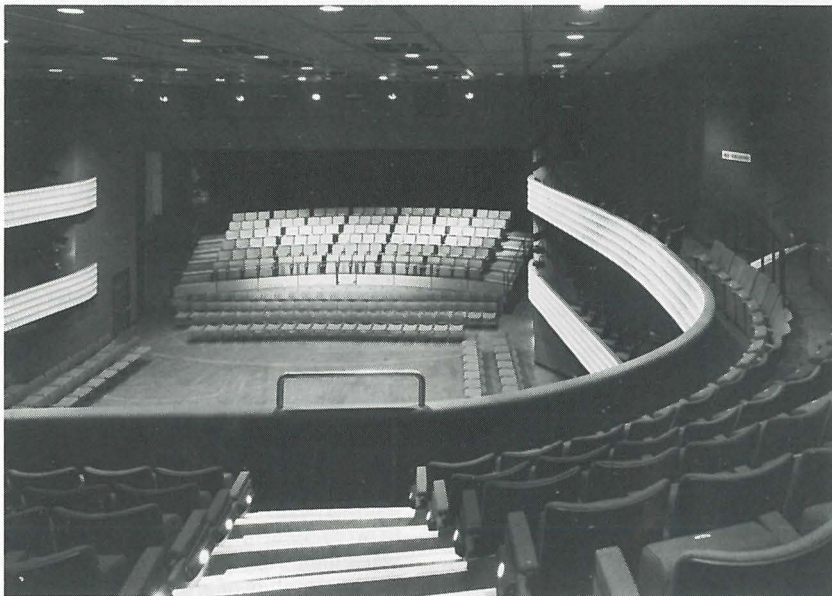
Administration and management advice are also seen as a major contribution to be provided by the Theatre Consultant. Indeed, the very design must depend on knowledge of the artistic or administrative policy to be adopted.

John bases his service on thirty eight years working experience in the entertainment industry plus the expertise of his professional associates. He is "extremely proud" of their "rather British record of never having adopted hard sell tactics" and asserts that virtually every first meeting for the project has been "at the invitation of either the potential client, a member of the

Design Team or an interested third party." His explanation is his belief that the success of a design emanates from "the chemistry of relationship" within the design team and that "to force oneself upon potential clients, just because they appear to be in need of a consultant, would be both arrogant and cavalier." In his experience the conscientious developer, planner or architect will acknowledge the need for assistance in this specialist field at an early stage, and ask for it! Even when the need is only appreciated much later, the JWA team believe they have the ability to tactfully steer the project through the veritable minefield of technical pitfalls which may be encountered en-route to the successful realisation of the brief.

On the subject of technology, John feels strongly that multi-million dollar high technology theatre buildings are all very well in their place – international opera houses for example – and the practice is always ready to help in designing and equipping them, but he emphasises that "in no way does a mass of expensive machinery (for instance) necessarily guarantee the quality of the end product – the performance!" and goes on to say that "much which is artistically excellent often can be produced with the smallest budgets." Particularly irritating him at the time of my visit was a report in ABTT News that Ralph Koltai had said in a lecture to the Royal Society of Arts –

"I am a firm believer in stages without permanent mechanical installations other than a flying system and the ability to cut holes in the stage floor to a void beneath. Complex technical equipment is the brainchild of theatre consultants who earn a living thinking it up and naively believe they are helping the designer to get ideas; when, of course, it is the other way round – first the idea then the device."

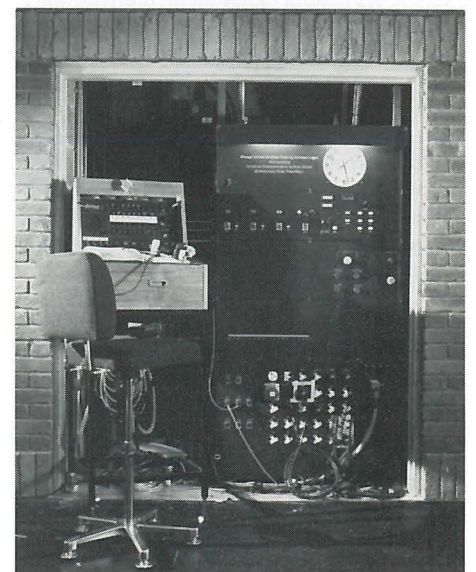


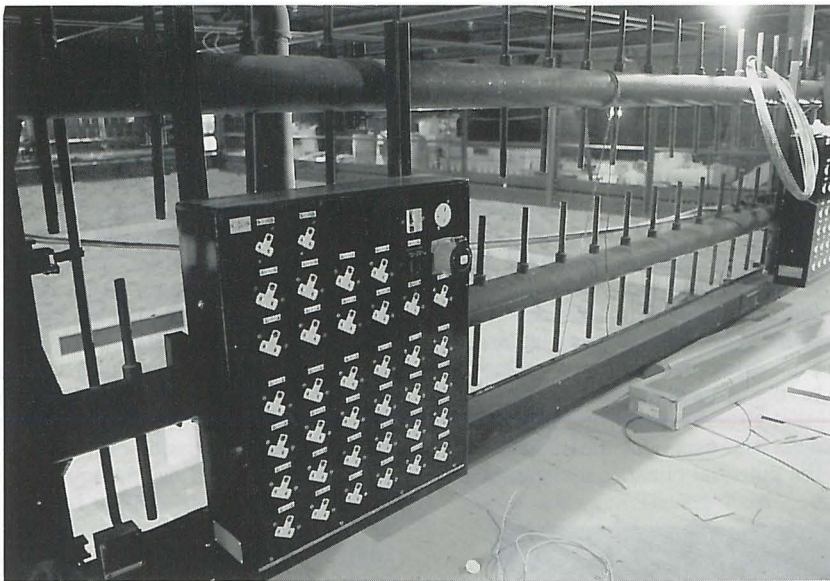
The Orchard Theatre, Dartford. Movable seating on stage and variable acoustic ceiling panels closed. Photo: Crispin Boyle.



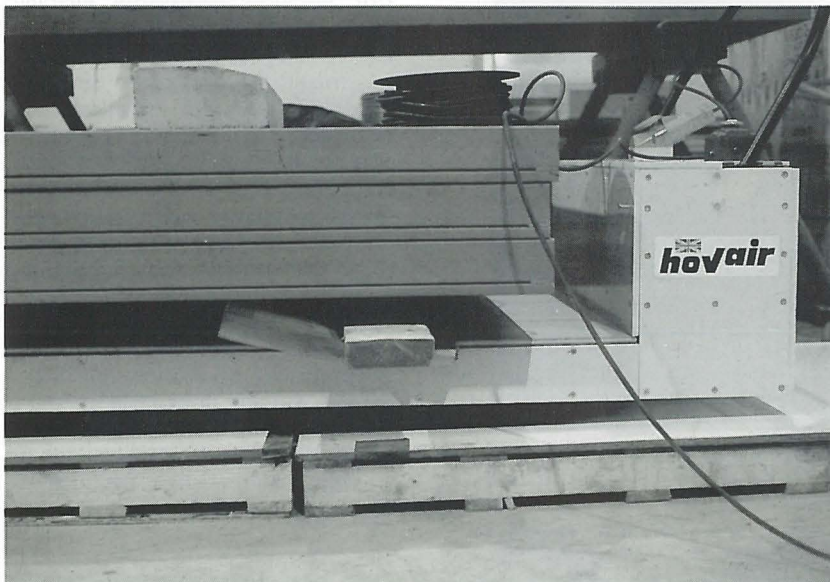
Control Room, Redhill seen from Lighting Desk end. Photo: Dennis Gilbert.

Prompt corner, Redhill. Co-ordinated SM controls. Photo: Dennis Gilbert.





The Orchard, Dartford. Fly gallery pin rail and socket box.



Air pallet on test successfully crossing 10cm. gap in lower rostra.

Johns's forthright agreement with Ralph's priorities and denial of the slur of naivety on reputable theatre consultants was impressively supported on behalf of the JWA practice by the quotations above taken from his brochure. And, from my own experience, although John is proud to have been among the earliest users of memory systems for lighting, I can confirm he is not easily impressed by the tricks, bells and whistles on many modern consoles.

Achievements

So, what are the achievements that the JWA practice take pride in?

Like other consultancies, his stock in trade includes many drawings and specifications for 'standard solutions' and these are used to explain to the design team, who are usually new to theatre work, the essential theatrical requirements and to suggest the detailing likely to be appropriate

for the theatre in question. However, the JWA team see it as the responsibility of others, usually the successful contractor, to undertake fabrication designs, whilst strictly observing the essential parameters that John and his associates write into their operational specifications.

Technically, they like straightforward counterweight flying at close centres with a clear grid, though if justifiable, they will specify power assistance for a proportion of the lines to save on manpower. They seek reliability and a commitment to good maintenance service from manufacturers of high tech lighting and sound systems. They devised continuous dip troughs to route cables tidily to wherever they are needed up or down stage. They specify unified prompt corner panels, again to be tidy and to reduce the risk of error resulting from unstructured confusion. They improved the design of lighting ladders. They devised economical,

easy to erect and dismantle, concert shells. They persuaded air pallet designers until they found a manufacturer that could produce a unit that could cross 10mm gaps without grounding, and then devised a comprehensive palletisation system that moves all the stalls seating for a 1400 seat auditorium in Kuwait across elevators without need for masking tape or temporary cover sheets.

Jobs

As would be expected from a practice that has been active for over 18 years and involved in over 250 commissions, the list of jobs completed makes impressive reading. Redevelopment of the Oxford Playhouse and conversion of the Coliseum from a cinema to become the home of the English National Opera started the ball rolling in the 1960's. The MacRobert Centre in Scotland and Theatre Clwyd in Wales, both new University theatres, came in early '70s; followed by conversion of the Glasgow Theatre Royal for opera and the redevelopment of the Grand Opera House in Belfast; then more new theatres – The Eden Court in Inverness, The Orchard in Dartford and the Festival Theatre at Pitlochry in the late '70s. In the present decade there has been the redevelopment of the Palace Theatre in Manchester and the Hippodrome in Birmingham, smaller redevelopment projects in Epsom, Sutton, Groningen, Canterbury, Enniskillen, Southampton and Newcastle and new work in Jersey, Redhill, Hong Kong, Kuwait and Korea.

The Kuwait scheme is of particular interest in that it represented the rare chance to work to a brief where the client said he wanted the very best, and meant it! JWA has a private policy of always listening carefully to the client to find out what sort of theatre and facilities they think they want, but to agree to the brief only if the JWA team think it makes sense. If it doesn't then John, like many others in his position, feels an obligation to seek more rational instructions. This can be politically difficult when, for example, a client in a poor country with little appreciation of western theatre asks, probably for reasons of national pride, for it's first theatre to be designed as a full international specification opera house. However, in the case of the Kuwait Conference Centre, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Works knew it wanted a top quality conference centre finished to the highest standards for the forthcoming Pan-Islamic Summit Conference, knew that a conference hall could be provided with full theatrical staging facilities without too many compromises and, of course, had the money to pay the bills. JWA were among many contributing to this nineteen month international fast-track project and contributed major ideas for the multi-lift auditorium, moveable air-pad seating and conference furniture and, of course, full 'international standard' stage facilities. Details of the design and the equipment supplied to this 'Best in the World' specification by the Austrian Wagner Biro company must, unfortunately, be reported elsewhere.

All these are projects involving the full technical design service from the consultancy. There have also been very many feasibility studies, management reports and technical co-ordination commissions. One of the most important of these being the on-going responsibility as technical co-ordinators acting on behalf of the Royal Opera and Ballet companies for the Royal Opera House Covent Garden redevelopment.

Overseas

A notable feature of the job list is that the practice has been increasingly successful in obtaining overseas work in recent years. Indeed, John has made considerable effort, particularly in the Arab world, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea, to promote the British concept of theatre, both as to building design and performance technique. He is clear that the future success of his practice must come from overseas and is quietly proud of the contribution already made to the invisible export trade.

John Wyckham believes in offering his clients his personal attention from major points of principle through to the finest detail, though, of course, he is as aware as any of the necessity for delegation to trained and trusted assistants. His full time team is now well below the one time peak of ten, but he says his ideal size would be six to a maximum of eight staff. His new premises, occupied only last year after previously working from much more cramped offices in Epsom, give plenty of room for expansion when the need arises and offer comfortable conference space, easy parking and good access by rail from London. His list of current jobs is in good shape with commissions in Edinburgh, Harrow, Berwick-upon-Tweed and for Covent Garden and overseas in Holland, Egypt, Malta, Greece, Kuwait, Hong Kong and Korea. And, although not yet saying much in public about his plans, he is deeply interested in providing training for theatre technicians in the countries where he has helped to provide new theatres.

He seems to be well justified in viewing the future with optimistic confidence.

REIDing SHELF

The **BRITISH THEATRE DIRECTORY** has occupied a prime position on my desk since its first annual edition. That was a long time ago, although I can remember what life was like in the gap that it filled. The sixteenth and latest edition follows the traditional format and thank goodness it does. We regular users know just where to find the information that we need. Mostly telephone numbers and addresses or 'is old what's it still at Bogland Civic Empire . . . what is his name anyway . . . and is their back wall really as oblique as we remember . . . oh, look they've bought a new board . . . but oh dear me, still the same old foh of ten assorted'.

Expansion of the 1987-88 edition's title to *The Original British Theatre Directory* suggests the arrival of a competitor and, yes, 1988 marks the debut of the **BRITISH PERFORMING ARTS YEARBOOK**. It is a lot thicker and substantially cheaper, but less likely to withstand the physical strain of a full year's constant consultation. How does it score?

Well, the technical information in its venue section seems certainly to be more comprehensive and possibly more up-to-date. The first of these is probably the result of being new and having to think hard about the questions to be asked, and the second because each venue had to sit down and answer a questionnaire rather than run a checking eye over a previous entry. It also seems to have more detail in some sections such as Producing Managements and Orchestras. Indeed my overall impression is that the new Performing Arts Yearbook is the stronger in detail while the original Theatre Directory is more comprehensive. (It is to the comprehensive one that you must look for an entry on Cue or any other theatre publication.)

Is there a best buy? No. Any theatre organisation of consequence needs both. But if you can afford only one (and it is difficult to see how any organisation or free-lancing individual could function without at least one of these helpbooks), go for a bookshop browse. My hunch is that the new yearbook has the edge for those who live by getting the show on, while the original directory is the key one for those in the funding industry.

The **DONMAR REFERENCE MANUAL** is in a class of its own. There are no competitors and it is indispensable for anyone involved with performance technology. This is the Third Edition and it is even better than the predecessors which earned such an enthusiastic welcome on this Cue shelf. It remains the only comprehensive source we can turn to for information on all the serendipity of the stage: everything from that single piece of ironmongery which few of us

can name to a comprehensive inventory for making the most unlikely space into the stage of our dreams.

The Manual has always been a particularly useful information source for non-lighting hardware but, now that Donmar have widened their horizons from tied to free house, its pages hold considerably increased interest for lightpersons working at all scales. We are all pretty familiar with the Strand range because of their size and the comprehensive nature of their literature. So it is very useful to have so much of the best of the other manufacturers gathered together and so succinctly summarised.

The Donmar Reference Manual is a key text book for students of all ages, including me: how I wish it had been around when I started in the business.

Landladies are one of the more entertaining aspects of theatre folklore, certainly in retrospect if not always on a Thursday afternoon in January. In the days when Devizes had its Palace, I and my wife (a pregnant wardrobe mistress) were driven to seek warmth in the public gallery of the Assize Court. The *Lord's Taverners*, a charitable group of cricketers and acting cricketers, have put together an entertaining little volume of *Tales from the Green Room* called **THEATRICAL DIGS**. This title allows the anthology to include a few tales on subjects other than landladies, but it is at its best in the stories of life with 'Ma' that evoke an older style of touring lemon puddings, sanitation, chastity patrols, prints of The Monarch of the Glen and notices to the effect that all foreign coins placed in the gas meter will be prosecuted. And where did these ladies get their three watt bulbs!

THE ORIGINAL BRITISH THEATRE DIRECTORY 1987-88 16th edition. Editor: Ann Holland. Richmond House Publishing Company. £17.95 (UK).

BRITISH PERFORMING ARTS YEARBOOK 1988 1st edition. Editor: Sheena Barbour. Rhinegold Publishing. £13.95 (UK).

DONMAR REFERENCE MANUAL 3rd edition. Editors: Ian B. Albery & James Bishop. Donmar Ltd. £3 (UK) (paperback).

THEATRICAL DIGS Tales from the Green Room. Illustrations by members of The Lord's Taverners' Company. David & Charles. £5.95.

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A Chromatic Diversion in C or D

FRED BENTHAM

Looking through last year's Francis Reid "Control Board Alphabet" (CUE 45 thru 50) one item stuck out and demanded some 'peter-wrighting' on my part — Delicolor. What was the story of this D entry which could have appeared under C for Chromolux, Colour Selector, Chromon or even Cripps, Sir Stafford. Let us take a larger look at the Delicolor photo used in the Reid Alphabet. This unusual looking control board was in fact installed in the Rex Theatre Wilmslow, Lancs. As can be seen, it is dominated by seven great dials; in addition there are 26 normal manual levers. All can be mechanically interlocked to a decidedly small grand-master handle. The board would have been about 8ft by 8ft. And as the resistance dimmers were mounted directly behind, it would have required a lot of space. It was made by W.J. Furse of Nottingham to the designs of R. Gillespie Williams its inventor. For the cheapest form of control in those now distant days, we all had to use slider-dimmers and these are to be seen in another photo below. Three dials on a top panel and a skirt of sliders below. In this example the dials used an "auto-selective system" to drive their dimmers remotely. The high cost of which would be offset by the sliders for the rest of the circuits. Obviously in this control board some circuits rated top treatment while others were relegated to a lower class. It may appear even odder if I point out that the circuits operated by grovelling on the floor were the spots etc and those at piano nobile level were the battens and footlights.

I have an impression that in these days of strong competition, there is some envy of Strand Electric's stage lighting monopoly in decades long gone by. That notion of "monopoly" is nonsense and the firm's position was by no means impregnable. The strange tale of Delicolor is a good example and as one of the leading actors, albeit at that time frustratingly stuck in a sanatorium bed at Midhurst, I shall now leak the tale in some detail.

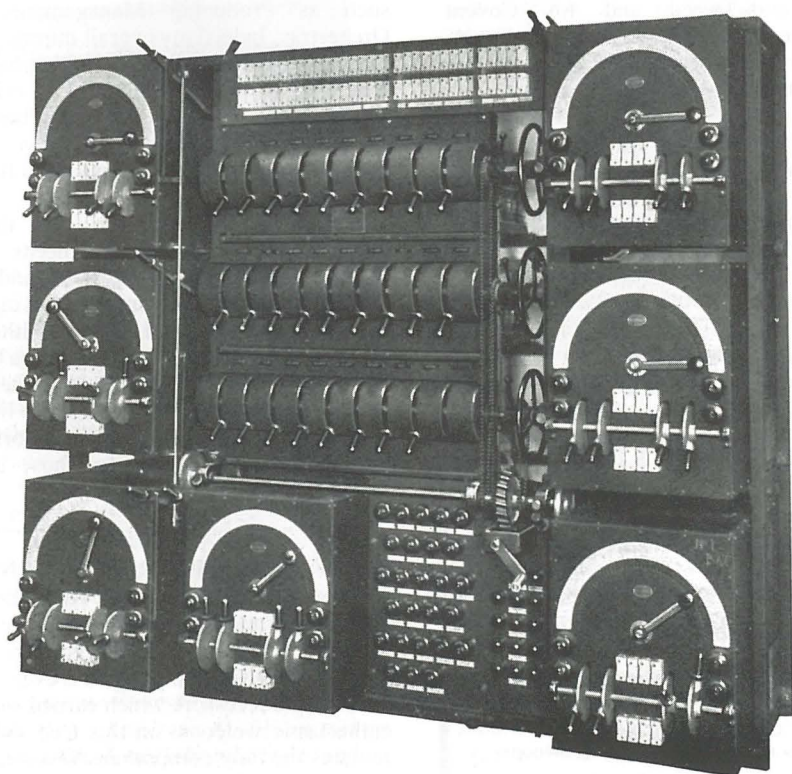
It was the year 1946 when the press started using its strictly rationed newsprint to announce a sensational "innovation" which "will mean to the theatre what Technicolor means to the cinema. Lighting effects of the most elaborate kind can be controlled by the chief theatre electrician as a conductor controls his orchestra. By the simple method of turning a small dial, comparable to a control board in broadcasting, it is capable of the most delicate gradation in 51 shades. . . . "A smaller version can be 'toured' thus cutting out the headaches caused by the obsolete lighting systems in some provincial theatres.

. . . "The invention has been bought by the Americans and a half-million dollar campaign has been launched to popularise it." and so on for 49 lines with a large bold head "DIAL AMBER". And this in the highly respected News Chronicle of April 11th. One way and another the Delicolor got a remarkable amount of publicity, particularly through its use in a Jack Hulbert-Bobby Howes revue "Here Come the Boys" at the Saville theatre and during its pre-London dates. Hulbert appeared to worship the Delicolor and Gillespie Williams did the lighting for his show. All of which made some top people in Strand unhappy indeed. To them W.J. Furse had struck gold, and my contemporary file on this subject shows their concern was echoed by our Dublin and Glasgow branches, though significantly not to the same extent by Percy Corry in Manchester.

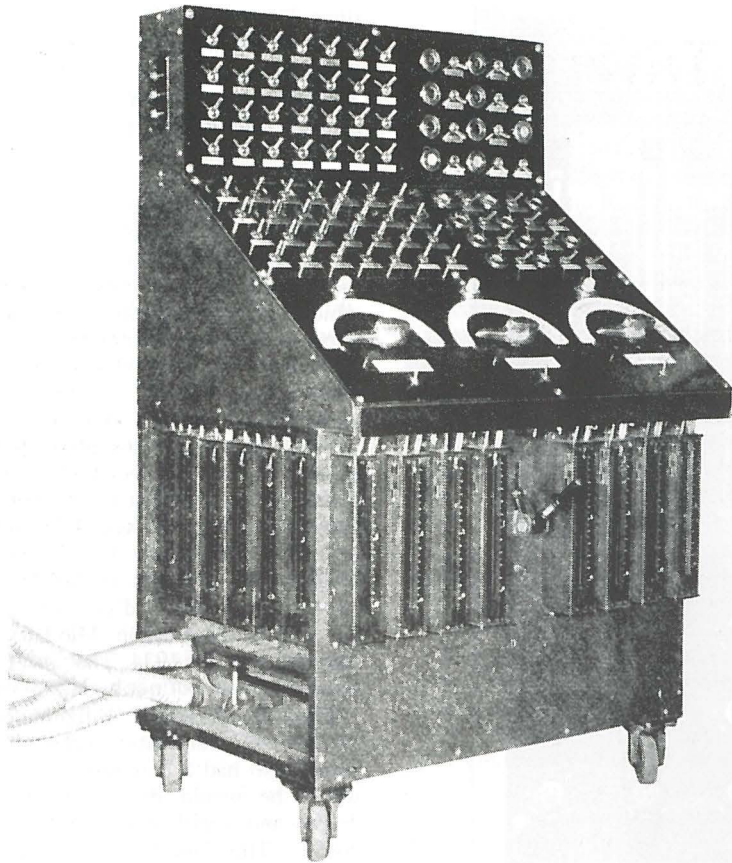
On the front page of a Delicolor leaflet dated July 1946 there is a close-up of Hulbert and Williams with one of the units in the Saville. Under this in red lettering "The American Theatre Expert, Mr. David Murray, says of Delicolor; It is the greatest thing in the theatre world since Talking Pictures" Inside in addition to Wilmslow's

installation there is a 4-dial 6-lever one at the Central Pier Blackpool plus 2-way and 1-way portables. This last is 32" high x 24" wide x 44" deep "Maximum load 3kW per Colour, total 12kW." All these Delicolors used mechanical cam action to move the dimmers to appropriate preset positions. I think permanent installations were few in number; but the existence of portables for temporary work and touring caused the word Delicolor to turn up and attract attention more often than otherwise would have been the case.

Copies of a 15-page report dated 28th February 1946 and signed F.P. Bentham still exist. Written from my Midhurst bed it begins "When I was asked to explain why I don't believe in the Delicolor as a theatre control, I found it extremely difficult to know where to begin. To me the Delicolor as a theatre control is just crazy, and in consequence it was like being asked to prove black is not white; one of those things that is so obvious that the brain refuses to make the effort." What followed was not a tirade but an attempt at reasoned analysis of the Delicolor and its operation in *theatre* stage lighting. Even now I have to say I have never seen a Delicolor in the metal; but



The Delicolour switchboard in the Rex Theatre, Wilmslow.



The Auto-selective control system

would like to do so if anyone knows of a workable survivor. What fascinates me is the friction the cam-action and mechanical interlocking must have represented. Imagine turning that little master handle for a cue affecting virtually the whole board? The key word is Delicolor; a motor-driven Auto-Selective colour system is quite another matter. Williams attracted attention with that around 1933, while he was with the lighting firm of Holophane in London.

Holophane had been one of Strand's competitors in the 1930s but never in *theatre*, their 'Williams Dept.' went in for cinemas. Even there they tended to do 'owner-managed' cinemas, inevitably somewhat smaller than those of the big circuits. For example, Gaumonts or Basil Davis consultant jobs were usually Strand Electric and Paramounts or Major Bell consultant ones were Major Equipment. Stage lighting was basically colour lighting and this had, whatever the scale of house, a way of straying out into the auditorium. It would be concealed lighting from behind cornices and laylights. Part of this, particularly in the proscenium area, would use three primary circuits (Red, Blue & Green) for mixing from dimmers. Often there would be separate dimmer boards backstage and out-front in the projection room. Alternatively the FOH colour lighting could be entrusted to an automatic dimmer with raise & lower push-buttons. In this case instead of remaining steady, as with normal house-lights, they would go into a colour-mixing cycle. The earlier automatics were

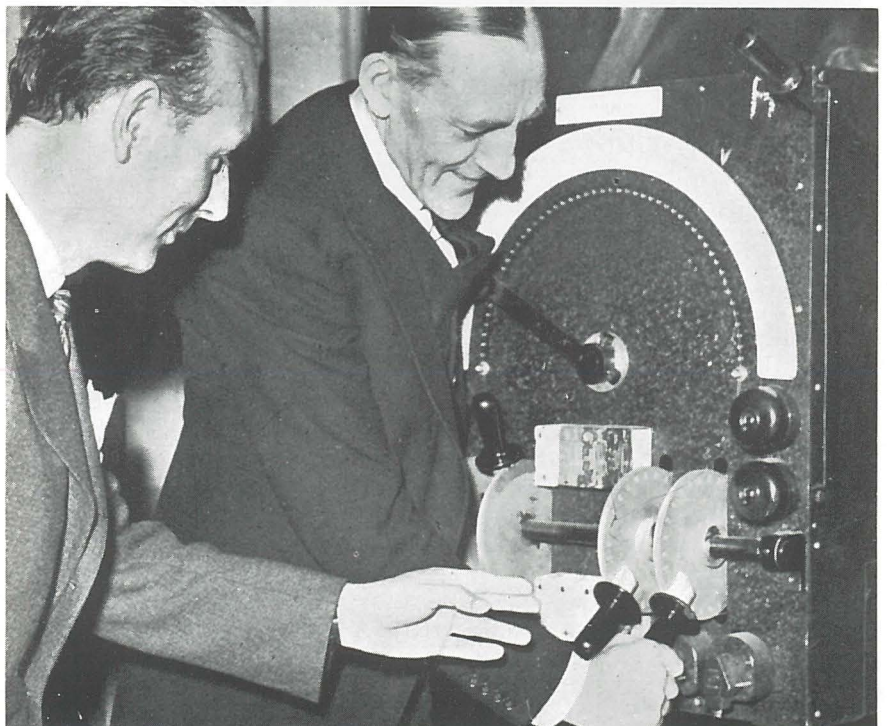
based on a motor mechanically linked to drive three dimmers set at one third travel behind each other and gave crude results. Apart from the fact that colours never got fully mixed this way, chance might ordain

that a romantic fade-out on the screen be followed by a fire red auditorium.

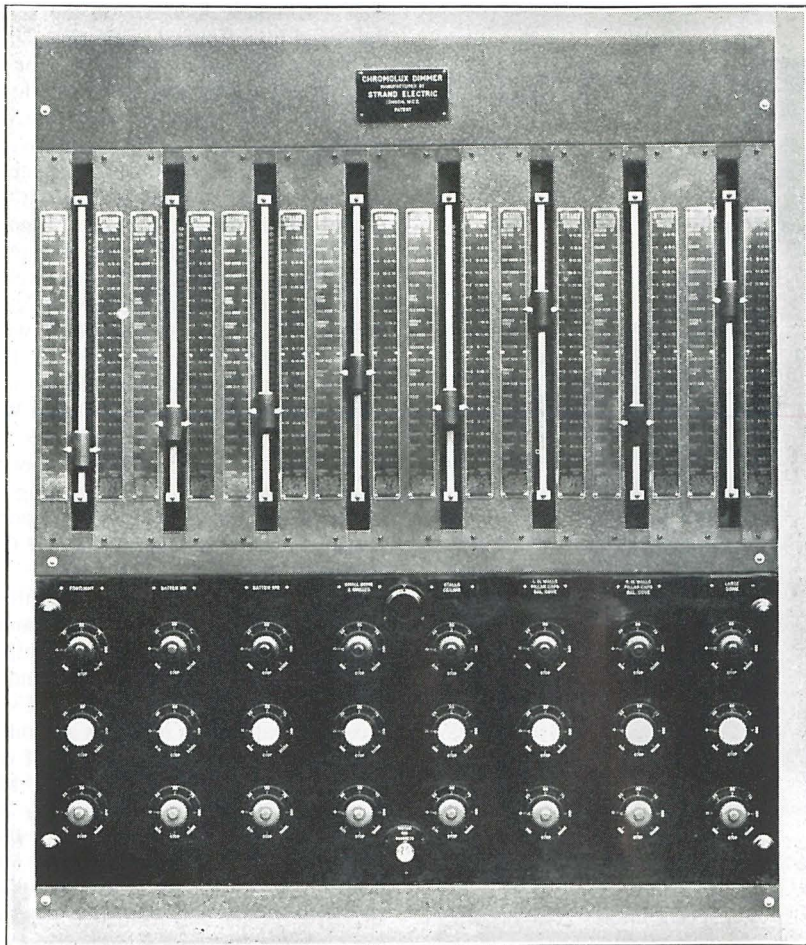
Two enthusiasts, Williams (for Holophane) and a youthful Bentham (for Basil Davis at GEC) aimed at more sophisticated results. My own obsession with the possibilities of location, intensity, colour & contrast in lighting an auditorium can be gleaned from the 1932 article "Light as an Art" in *The Builder* and the resulting 1938/9 Colour Music Hall which were dealt with in some detail in CUE No.17. I don't think Williams was concerned with the psychological reactions to his lighting changes but rather with getting a large variety of pleasant or pretty effects. What he did know was that the average cinema projectionist was not going to be good at or interested in mixing colour lighting during interludes and intervals. His big opportunity came in 1929 with the Richmond Cinema Surrey.

A full page Holophane advert in the April 1930 *Cinema Construction*, for example, is headlined "New Era in Showmanship, THE FILM WORLD STAGGERED" and below is a photograph of a control panel with 18 small indicator dials in threes and one large one, plus some switches & pilots. I wonder who made it for Holophane, Mickelwright? Just above this photo a robotic head stares sternly at the reader with the words "The Control with a Brain". We are told "The touch of a switch Provides Beauty-Mystery and Romance 1050 Lighting Changes (in stage & auditorium) 100% Automatic". The Richmond Cinema, in my opinion, was the only one to make a success of the craze for the atmospheric type of

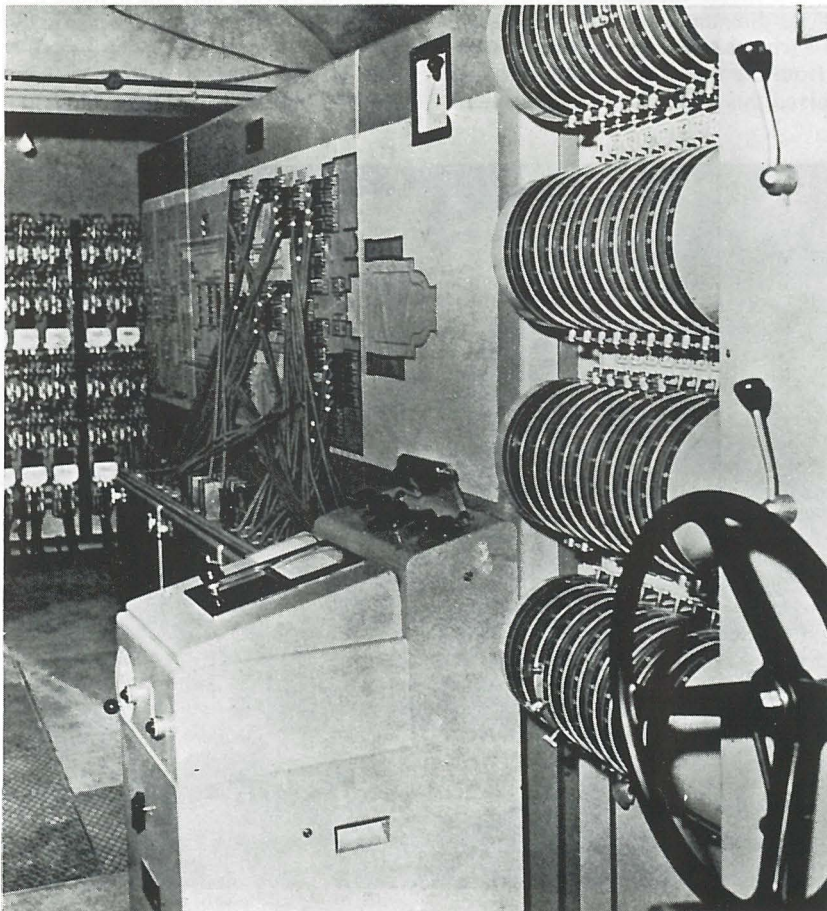
* of Alperton, a switchboard manufacturer for several firms other than Strand.



Jack Hulbert with a Delicolour dial



The Chromolux in Greens Playhouse, Dundee.



Chromon in Palace of Versailles

cinema which had hit this country at that time. The Astorias in Brixton and Finsbury Park did not work. Was the success of the Richmond due to the Holophane lighting? The answer has to be Yes; but one must add *because the architects were Leathart & Granger*. This and the fact that the auditorium was not as large as those Astorias provided the opportunity for the ceiling lighting to achieve the necessary *cyclorama* effect. Julian Leathart dubbed the atmospherics "outside-in cinemas" which was exactly what they had to be. An unbroken ceiling resembling a lit backcloth stretched overhead with perhaps a few clouds projected on it, as in most examples, was not good enough. As far as I know this was Leathart's only outside-in and in any case he did but a select few cinemas. His Sheen Cinema, built at much the same time and not far away, allowed Holophane to use the same effects but in an architectural ambience of a series of art-deco ceiling coves. Plain walls and coves had to await the 500-seater Curzon Mayfair (Burnet, Tate & Lorne) in 1934. That also had much colour lighting but not by Holophane.

Thus far Gillespie Williams was concerned with automatic cycles; but Holophane also had a demonstration theatre in which he would do colour changes on drapes and a girl in non-erotic clothes & poses. This must have vexed L.G. Applebee, whose dept. was most affected by any Holophane success and he would have added to the pressure on the Strand directors to have a theatre. This they did as soon as the works left Floral Street and space was available; hence a job for me in June 1932. Easy primary colour-mixing for lighting cues instead of cycles gave Williams the idea of dial a colour. At this point things get rather hazy; even Williams own book[‡] does not give a date or a place for the first installation of his Auto-Selective system of colour mixing.

A reason for the sotto voce treatment of his own pre-war remote control invention in his book may have been the fact that he was now pushing his mechanical version, Delicolor, as something sensational from Furse for theatre; any kind of super cinema boom being unlikely. That part of his "Dimmers and Lighting Control Equipment" chapter makes curious reading. It is perhaps not surprising that all the mention my lighting controls get is "many types of apparatus in existence, ranging from a control panel, taking the form of a console very similar to that of a cinema organ, to that of a portable control desk." He does not even make it clear that it was that console which was the "control equipment located in the auditorium at the Palladium Theatre, London." Never mind, he didn't get a mention in my Pitman book "Stage Lighting" of 1950; but as my in-house report of Feb. 1946 makes clear I never saw a role for that kind of control in theatre. Cinema was another matter and the moment has come to fill in a gap in history. Strand Electric did,

[‡]Technique of Stage Lighting by R. Gillespie Williams: Pitman 1947.

once upon a time, have a colour-preset control and it was called the Chromolux. It appeared in the brand new Jan. 1936 catalogue and had been launched with full page adverts headed "Two Unique Achievements" (The Console and the Chromolux) back in the July 1935 "Cinematograph Times" and the like.

Moving dimmers to preset levels using motors in order to 'dial' a colour without too great a cost was not easy in the mid-thirties; but when asked to think about it I found myself able to produce a simple circuit literally overnight. The following morning I set off from home proudly to display my genius to Jim (H.O.) Jordan at Strand's Gunnersbury works. Whereupon Jim produced an identical circuit from under his blotting pad, as he had also been asked to see what he could do. Simultaneous invention; the key to this circuit was the usual pair of Mansell patent electro-magnetic clutches joined together by a series of travel limit switches *one* of which was always *open* and two at any preset intermediate stop.

Using slider dimmers with studs instead of resistance wire and a scale of colours instead of numbers alongside, away we went. A two-way 6 dimmer Chromolux went into our demonstration theatre. Soon Strand had an installation of 24-dimmers & 8-selectors in Greens Playhouse Dundee to put with that, as three pages in the brand new bound catalogue of 1936. Others were ordered, maybe supplied, when suddenly Strand Electric found itself with a summons for infringement of the Williams/Holophane patents. Jim and Fred were themselves cast legally as "innocent infringers" presumably because they had only been obeying orders and certainly had not seen the patents they now had to study. We didn't think much of them as our circuit was so much simpler. For example, our provision of one switch to stop the motor allowed a complete new cue to be preset ahead of the lighting in use — something that was to become familiar indeed in the 1950s. Strand briefed Sir Stafford Cripps KC and we found ourselves seated in chambers opposite the, even then, formidable public figure. I still can recall my awe at the skill he displayed in getting into this arcane world of apparatus and its application. I was myself sorry at the time that it never came to court. I know now that Holophane and Strand were wise not to fight on. The solution was easy, we would supply this equipment to Holophane but withdraw all our publicity & literature about it immediately.

A long delayed result of that action for me has been the immense difficulty in locating the third page (83) of the 1936 catalogue. Much to my surprise the copy in my own archive has had the Dundee page removed. Mentally I could visualise the page, with its Chromolux panel photo, I had composed over fifty years ago; but that would not be good enough for an article in CUE. I had to have evidence. A phone call to James Laws was a sensible next step; but all three Chromolux pages were not in the copy in his archive. Could MI5 have been involved? Even though the Dundee Ford factory to be

or not to be was very much the question as I wrote this article, it seemed improbable; but one never can tell what will be done in the name of Security these days! It takes a lot to put J.Laws off an ancient scent and after thought he declared that Merlin Sheppard of Tunbridge Wells had a copy. This the latter denied until I told him Laws said he did; whereupon he said that if *he* said he had then he had and knew exactly where it would be. Sure enough within seconds Sheppard was back at the phone with it and what is more it was complete with pages 81, 82 & 83. Thus it came about that I have a photocopy before me as I type these words. The Dundee Chromolux controlled footlight & two battens on stage; and in the auditorium — Small Dome & Grilles, Stalls ceiling, LH walls & Balcony cove, RH walls & Balcony cove, and Large Dome — total 24 dimmers in all. Its caption reads; "The top panel gives pre-set colour effects at the hands of an unskilled operator. The lower dark panel gives independent control for the skilled operator."

Censorship of pages 81, 2 & 3 set the author of the catalogue (myself) a problem of three pages to fill for the reprint. Page 81 was therefore occupied by a close-up of the 1934 Opera House control in action, with one of our two Ally Pally TV 1936 Grand-Masters in its studio. The Dundee page was filled by giving the Light Console which had followed, an extra page. But it is the filling of page 82 which is of real interest. A panel with three rows of twelve small rotary knobs heads a page devoted to "Strand Remote Control". This "remarkable achievement of Strand Electric . . . and so on resulted in "a preset control panel whereby the dimmers can be preset to stop accurately at the positions shown on the dial. Furthermore a second dial presets the

time taken by the dimmer to arrive at that position. Thus the intensity and time taken by each circuit to arrive at that intensity can be preset. Meanwhile a common motor rotates at a constant speed in the same direction." This latter was achieved by an impulse generator in conjunction with the Mansell clutch, as in the Light Console at that time. What the third knob per circuit was for is not stated. So where was the remote position control panel in the photograph installed?

The answer is simple: it was in Dundee. I had the picture cropped to remove all trace of colour-presetting and wrote the thing up as a remote preset board for those who would prefer that to my console. A rather late thought has occurred to me; I could have said that the third knobs were for preset colour-filter change! Strand never got an enquiry for this hastily created system so it did not get drawn; anyway before long there were real battles to be fought and any dimmer-presetting capabilities we at Strand possessed were diverted on a large scale to cyclorama effects for early flight-simulator trainers.** Looking back it would have been easy to have used those third row knobs to preset 4-colours & white since installations of magnetic filter-change had been a common feature on circle fronts of theatres, like the Palladium, right through the 1930s. This gets us neatly back to the 1947 colour-mixing crusade and "Here Come the Boys". Even that show could not get away with just battens & floats however colourful in intent. The Robert Nesbitt style of layout with punchy pageants & acting-areas had become de-riguer for spectacle, especially after "Gangway" in 1941. As

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ARCH AND ARENA

Actors and directors conditioned to the proscenium arch are nowadays faced with different forms of staging. JOHN BOUD considers the background.

To begin with a conclusion: the essential feature of any playhouse is the geometrical relationship of actor and audience; the main division in design is between multiple-view and single-view forms of staging.

The theatre our grandfathers knew, one that survives appropriately in pantomime and melodrama, is the high Victorian playhouse of wings and borders, of scenic illusion, of the fourth wall. Allardyce Nicoll, in 'The Development of the Theatre', traces through the history of the Western theatre a trend towards ever-increasing realism, and this is in precise parallel to the slow change from multiple-view to single-view which culminated in the commercial theatre of the early years of this century. In the playhouse, it is obviously not physically possible for each member of the audience to have exactly the same viewpoint, but that along the centre-line of the stalls was taken as the ideal (this was what the director had at rehearsals) and the view from other seats was a better or worse approximation to it. Places at the end of the rows were less desirable than those near the middle.

When new media appeared — first the cinema, then television — the eye of the camera was the single view par excellence, one that the theatre could not rival. As a direct result the sort of realism achievable made that in the playhouse pale by comparison, and ambitions in the theatre turned to impressionism, alienation, and the rest — all forms of non-realism.

Inescapably associated with this was the rejection of the proscenium arch. Early theorists thought that the significant distinction was that between the 'open' stage and the 'closed'. I would argue that this had no more than a minor relevance. What really mattered was the angular spread of the audience, which is the key to recognising a playhouse as either in the multiple-view tradition or that of single-view.

If I put great emphasis on this separation, it is because confusion about it has existed longer than the records which reveal it.

Even in Egypt — where, not for the last time, it is difficult to separate dramatic performances from religious rituals — 'productions were staged' either within the temple or in processional progress outside it. For the former, the positive division of the rectangular interior into audience/congregation space and actor/priest space gave (even if there were no proscenium arch) end-staging. When the ritual became ambulatory, as it did outside, pauses along the way enabled the minor celebrants largely to encircle the major — theatre in the round.

Greek drama is thought to have grown from processions in honour of Dionysus. As

they came to a temporary halt, the crowd gathered — as the features of the ground would allow — around the central group. At its heart were the chief figures in the ceremonial, surrounded by lesser servants of the god. When the built playhouse appeared, the three categories remained as principals, chorus, and audience. The climax of the procession was reached at its temple destination, and the final parts of the 'drama' were played out by the main figures seen against a background of steps or columns, while the middle-status participants were more-or-less surrounded by the onlookers. The first consciously-designed playhouse tried to fix this arrangement, that is to provide end-staging for the principals and arena form for the chorus.

This confusion of the two approaches — multiple-view and single-view — has to some extent been with us since classical times. If you wish to explore it, it is an interesting exercise to trace it through medieval pageants, Shakespeare's playhouse, Restoration theatre, and so on. Two guide-lines emerge: first, he who designs a

playhouse needs to make up his mind which convention applies, and second, even if the basic architectural design is muddled, he who directs, acts, or deals with the production design must settle on which tradition he is to embrace.

You may object at this point: the argument may be sound intellectually, but are the techniques, in practice, so different? The answer has to be 'Yes, they are'.

End-staging is pictorial — however much or little this characteristic is exploited. Pictorial in the sense that what is seen beyond the actor is scenery; his background belongs to the other world 'across the footlights'. Beyond a certain angular spread of audience, not only do the viewpoints of its members become multiple, but what some onlookers see beyond the performer are others of their own kind; they see auditorium.

With end-staging it is possible, as a principle, to avoid masking; beyond a certain angular spread of audience, it is not. There are differences in production design, in lighting technique, in optimum audience-size, in props, make-up, and the rest. But think just of the central issue of how actors are placed on the stage.

End-staging never loses consciousness of the direction of the audience. Two characters talking to each other rarely face each other squarely; instead they cheat around towards the front (for there is a 'front' to cheat round towards). It is

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considered brave, if not foolhardy, to face upstage. In arena-staging, the extreme case of multiple-view, actors do — or should — look directly at each other (not doing so has similar implications of familiarity, embarrassment, or whatever to looking upstage on an end-stage). What corresponds to the 'at rest' norm of straight towards an end-stage audience is the gaze directed towards the centre of the acting area. Reversing this — i.e. looking outward over the audience — is seen as artificial, with some of the implications of looking upstage in the opposing tradition.

This is clearly no more than a sketch. But it shows, I hope, the possibility of developing a body of principle, an approach to the two extremes of arch and arena. What happens between them?

Once again, let me advance my conclusion, dogmatic as it may seem. It is that angular spreads of audience from the complete circle of 360 degrees down to, say, 120 degrees are multiple-view forms; that spreads from the minimum up to, say, 60 degrees may be taken as single-view; and that spreads close to a right-angle (say from 30° below it to 30° above) fall into a dangerous no-man's-land where the conventions are confused. And those conventions are not merely different but in many ways directly opposed.

All this, you may say, has been an attack in a roundabout way on the right-angled stage. I would certainly admit that doubt about this angular spread is one implication of the theory I have proposed.

So what about the National's Olivier? What indeed!

Before the National Theatre was established, Olivier had a trial run as director at Chichester. Gossip — independently confirmed — had it that he was unhappy with its stage. My belief is that this was due to its being too large (like the theatre in total). This discontent however became associated with the half-circle form.

The choice of architect for the National fell on one with super-star status but little theatre experience, so a large advisory committee was set up, with — guess who — Olivier in the chair. And when the doubtful separation of 'closed stage' and 'open stage' was developed, the latter emerged as one with a right-angled spread of audience.

The disproof of the pudding appears in the fact that direction and management have

never been able to make up their collective mind about the formal implications of the Olivier house. 'Open' as opposed to 'closed' it may be, but is it outward-looking end-staging or inward-looking multiple-view? Does masking matter, and if it does how do you avoid getting actors in straight lines? (Dame Edith's comment once at rehearsal was 'I can't say the words — all our mouths are in a row'.)

The techniques adopted in practice seem arbitrary, although they probably depend on the previous experience of the director of the individual production. But final confirmation of management confusion came in seat-pricing policy. Originally, prices depended simply on distance, as logically follows from the multiple-view tradition

('all directions are equal'). But after some years, seats in the middle of a row became more expensive than those at the ends (and my impression is that the critics have always been seated on the centre aisle).

If I began with a conclusion, let me finish with a question or two. Would you expect an authority on medieval history to be well informed about Gladstone? Or an expert on Oriental ceramics to know about English water colours? They might, of course, but the only general answer is 'not necessarily'. Conditions in the modern theatre mean that directors, actors, and designers with exclusively end-stage experience are often thrust into a playhouse outside this tradition.

The position is one where — at the least — thought and guidance are necessary.

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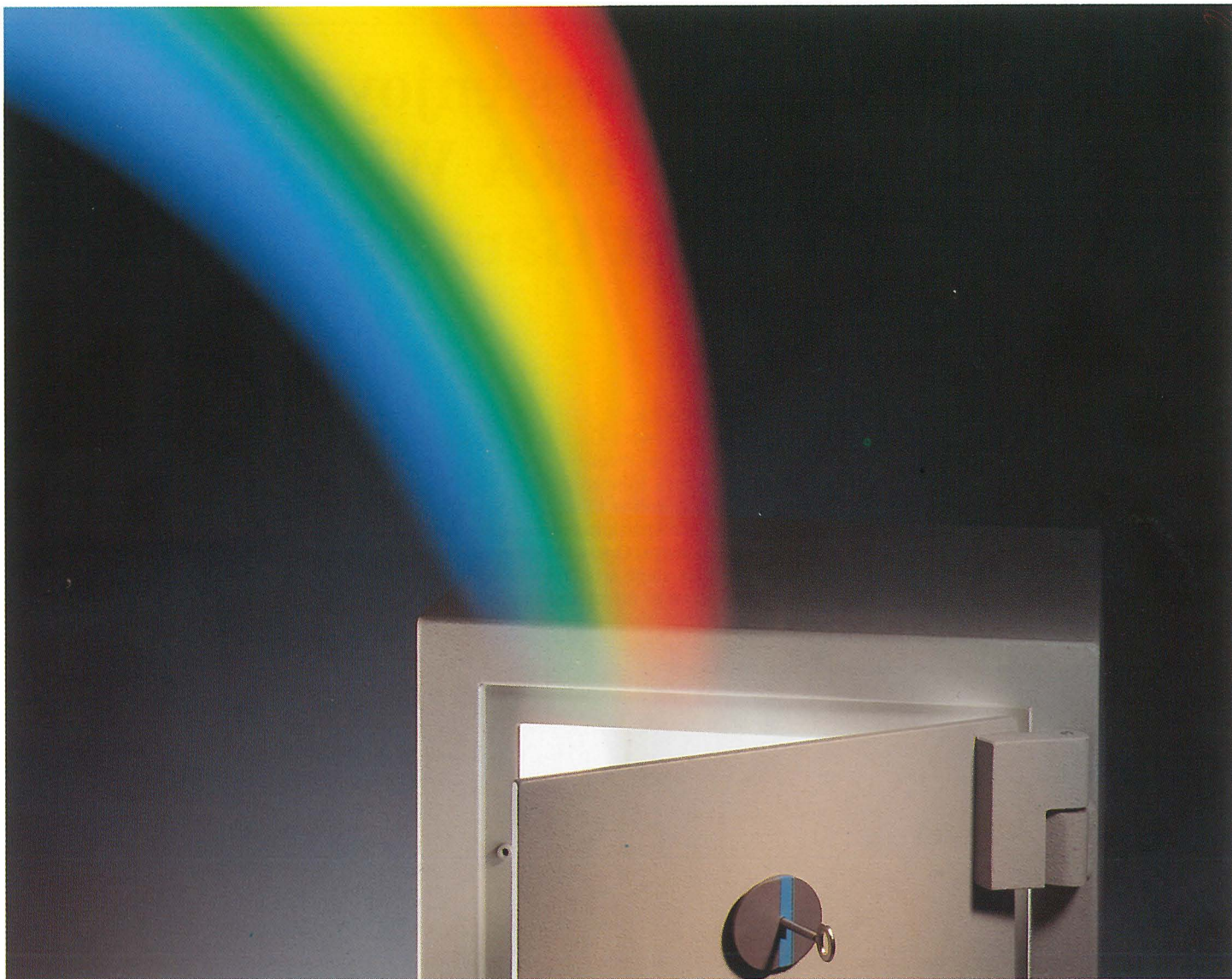
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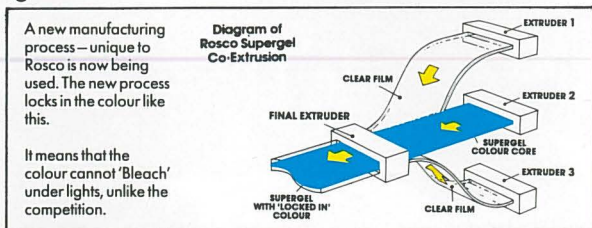
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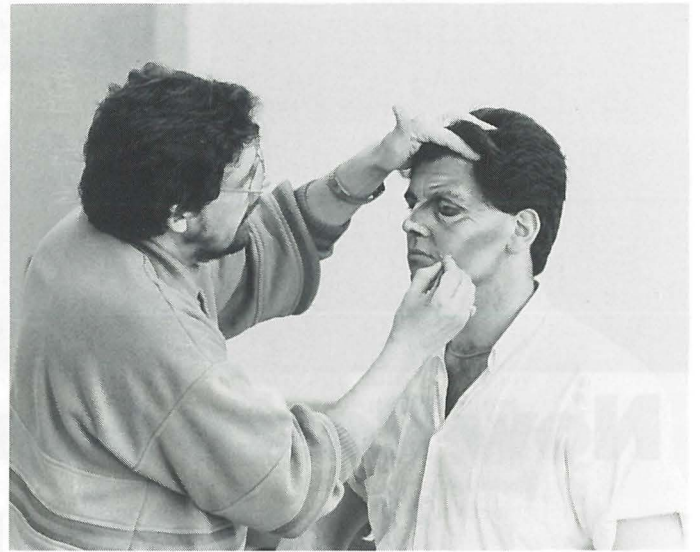
actual performances.

February at Covent Garden saw the first “Practical Opera Weeked” organised by the Royal Opera Education Unit under its co-ordinator Caroline Clarke. 80 amateurs aged 17–65 participated and were instructed by Royal Opera House specialists in all the back stage arts. Principal singers were also there to direct and rehearse with

the amateurs which then concluded with performances of 5 scenes from Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin in the Opera Rehearsal Studios. Donald Southern’s photographs give an excellent idea of the scope and practical nature of this first “Practical Opera Weekend.”



Costume Design and Making.



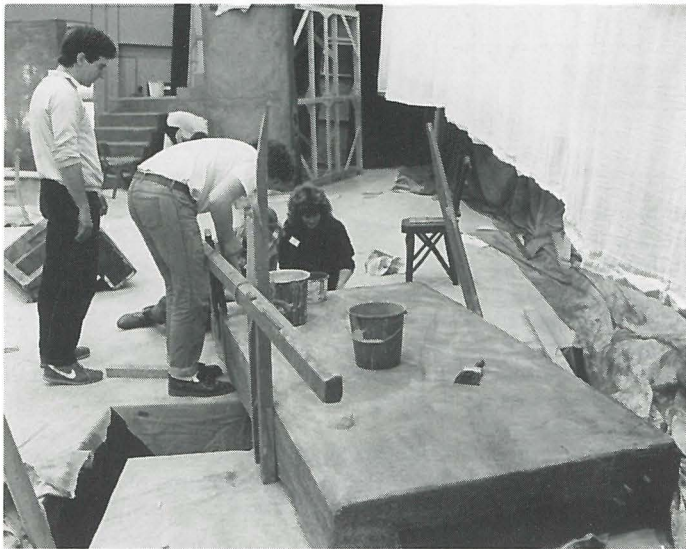
Make-up Creation with Ron Freeman (Wigmaker).



Set Design and Model Making under Colin Maxwell (Head of the Model Room).



Set Design.



Scenery Construction supervised by Caroline Clarke (Organiser of the weekend).



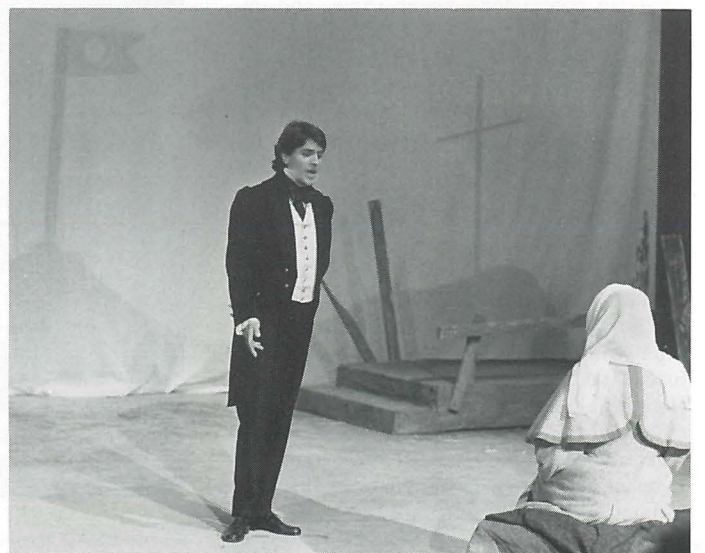
Laying the stage before the performance.



Rehearsing the Duel scene with amateurs are, Richard Gregson (Producer), and two Royal Opera principal artists. John Mancord (Eugene Onegin) and Robin Leggate (Lensky).



Robin Leggate (Principal Tenor with the Royal Opera) sings with an amateur Tatyana.



Principal Soloist John Mancord (Eugene Onegin) on the set.

RECORDING HISTORY

Many are the saloon bars and committee rooms where resolutions have been made to reward tomorrow's historians with an audio tape archive of today's theatre technology. However the pressures of getting today's shows in, on, up and out have prevented any individual or organisation taking systematic action. There are, of course, some splendid snippets around: occasionally the result of a conscious decision to record a meeting, but more often the result of a tape left running by accident.

Particularly lamentable, and something many of us feel guilty about because we so often planned it but never got around to actually doing it, is that Joe Davis was never systematically taped. Joe himself often discussed the need for taping but, characteristically, he was thinking not of himself but of the need to record other key people, particularly the great Master Carpenters.

However March 1st 1988 could turn out to be something of a red letter day for Theatre Archaeology. Peter Roberts and Alexander Schouvaloff arranged for Harry Pegg and Tom Povey to reminisce in the theatre at the Theatre Museum, with tape decks running. The evening was dedicated to the memory of Joe Davis by Chairman Peter Roberts who adroitly nudged the memories of the speakers and sought the occasional clarification. The audience included students as well as a posse of technicians who had worked with the speakers.

Both Harry Pegg and Tom Povey are now retired: Harry from the Piccadilly and Tom from the Prince of Wales. In addition to residencies in London's West End, their careers, which spanned a period of much change in staging techniques, included spells in contractor's scene shops and on tour. The evening ranged from touring sets by train to life in Coles scenic shops — although we were reminded that scenic contracting is a relatively recent way of getting west end shows built. Both Harry and Tom were familiar with an era when the stage was cleared between performances for trestles to be set up for a theatre's master carpenter and his team to build the next show.

But that was at a time when a stage could still be completely cleared during the day. A time when all scenery was constructed for instant setting and striking, and could be packed flat in the wings. Even huge staircases were designed to collapse in this way, whereas today they are built solid and need to be transported in their own pantechonicon. This gives Harry Pegg cause to wonder (as does the expenditure of £40,000 to dig a

hole under a stage in order to install special hydraulics for one production).

Which points to the real importance of such an evening of thought stimulating reminiscence. Theatre history can be a self-sustaining source of lots of interest and fun. But there is also a deeper purpose: *to look forward first look back*. This evening at the Theatre Museum was very positive on both counts: may it be the first of many such recording sessions.

FRANCIS REID

CCT
THEATRE LIGHTING LTD
and
LEE COLORTRAN LTD

The management of CCT Theatre Lighting Limited, ("CCT") and Lee Colortran Limited, confirm that they have had exploratory discussions on the possible acquisition of CCT by Lee Colortran Limited.

However, owing to material improvements in the trading position of CCT, these discussions have now been suspended.

ROSCO COMPETITION

Edinburgh Lighting Designer **MARTIN PALMER** was the winner of the Rosco Supergel Competition in which the prize was a trip to the USITT Conference in Anaheim, California. The Competition, advertised in CUE 50, was open to all colour filter users who were invited to suggest and describe (a) uses of any four colours additional to those in the *Supergel Guide*, (b) two subtractive combinations of filters used in the same frame and (c) two additive combinations of light from overlaid sources. Entrants were also asked to help Rosco by ranking their priority for such aspects of colour filters as heat stability, international availability, price, palette, etc.

All entries remained anonymous during discussion by the judging panel of Andrew Bridge, David Hersey, Francis Reid and John A Williams who were unanimous in their choice of winner. The standard of entries was high and Rosco are pleased with the information they have gathered. Michael Hall at Rosco will, of course, always be delighted to hear from anyone who may have missed the competition but has ideas for new colours or for uses that might be incorporated in future editions of the Rosco Supergel Guide.

F.R.



Martin Palmer (centre) the competition winner