

STRANDLIGHT

· THE · INTERNATIONAL · JOURNAL · OF · STRAND · LIGHTING ·

Further Expansion by Strand Lighting

"Strand Lighting has agreed to acquire Quartzcolor Ianiro SpA of Rome, the world's leading manufacturer of television and film studio lighting products.

Strand has been the worldwide distributor of Quartzcolor Ianiro products for several years, and this acquisition will ensure that Strand Lighting will continue to provide the studio lighting market with top

quality products and after sales service".

This was the text of the announcement from The Rank Organisation headquarters on October 6th last.

Everyone in the world of television lighting knows - and admires - the Quartzcolor range. And when controlled by Light Palette, Galaxy or Gemini, there is the perfect T.V. lighting package. Obviously, we are prejudiced. But we are

only confirming the opinion, reinforced by customer choice, of studios from Beijing to Burbank and from Mainz to Manchester. ■



Phil O'Donnell is appointed Managing Director of Strand Lighting Asia

Phil O'Donnell has had a very successful career in Strand Lighting - formerly Strand Century - in North America. He joined the company as a draughtsman with a background in theatrical engineering. Within a year he was promoted to become a Field Service Engineer, then Design Supervisor, then Project Manager and finally he became Vice President of Operations.

While fulfilling this role he held overall responsibility for Strand Lighting's largest ever contract, the supply of the entertainment lighting for the Expo '86 exhibition at Vancouver, as described in our last issue.

Strand Lighting Asia covers all our far eastern and Australasian market areas, consistently some of our company's most important territories.

See the article on page 2 for Phil's description of the large studio project we are supplying in Beijing. ■

IBC 86



The International Broadcasting Convention was held in Brighton, on England's south coast for four days this September. Strand Lighting were among the many exhibitors from all over the world. We showed Galaxy, plus a range of luminaires on our stand, and had an exhibit in the exterior section on the promenade.

(A) Ian Haddon, Film and T.V. equipment Sales Manager with the Shaula* 575w open face HMI. There is an optional fresnel lens available. The Shaula has a separate ballast unit.

(B) The Quartzcolor Mobile Light Module.* The Sirio 12kW HMI on a fully articulated hydraulic arm is powered by a 15kW generator.

(C) The hand held controller.

(D) Joe Thornley, Product Manager, displays an Iadi* cyclorama unit. The Iadi accepts up to a 1kW linear lamp. It is also offered in a three lantern package complete with reflective barn door panels, dichroic filters, glass diffusers, wire safety guard and a range of scrims.

* Products for world markets.



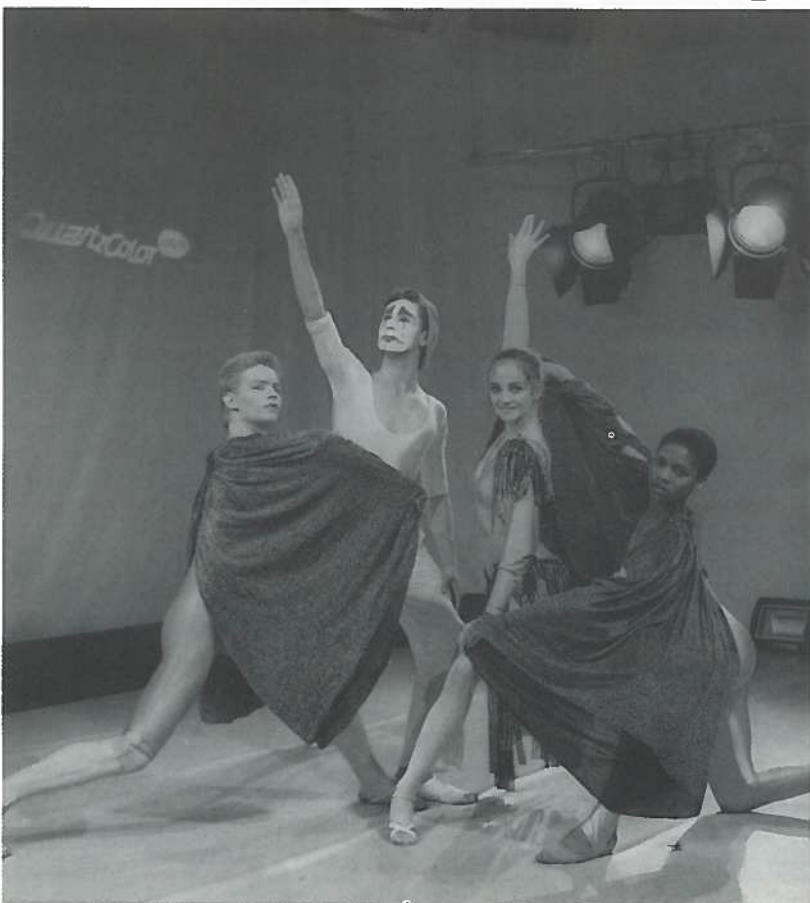
A Ballet to launch a lighting system



The Showchanger ParScan.

When Strand Lighting decided to introduce Showchangers - the remote memory controlled lanterns and colour changers - in Europe the Photokina exhibition at Cologne was an obvious choice, following up the highly successful U.K. launch at the London A.B.T.T. Show.

After all, the idea of memorised programmed movement of light is a new dimension in theatre lighting. Over the last ten years there has been a good deal of movement of lighting in the pop world but we are offering something rather different. The system has a memory, or can be operated from a Light Palette, Galaxy or Gemini Memory, so we were looking for something to display what the system could do, and to give the idea of the subtlety of the effects that Showchangers can offer. Of course, they can do all the pop stuff that we have all seen to the point of tedium on a thousand televised gigs. Thus when Andy Collier, of



Photograph by Joe Thornley

The Showchanger Par 6-1 Scroller.



Strand Lighting, was introduced to Ross McKim of Moving Visions, who is also a director of the Ballet Rambert School, an idea was born.

The Company, of four young dancers, have been touring in the U.K. taking dance to arts centres and small theatres as well as undertaking a tour of several cathedrals.

"Seeking for Light" was the highly appropriate title of the fifteen minute dance programme that drew the crowd twice daily to our stand at Photokina. Actually, they even came in time to see the company limbering up. ■



The Iris Scroller



The Mini Universal Dimmer

The new Environ 5 Amp Mini Universal Dimmer.* Ideal for any application calling for a compact professional quality dimmer with uncomplicated control facilities at a competitive price. Each dimmer is fitted with a rotary controller which can be removed if control from a remote panel is required. (The Environ Outstation range - Slider fader, Take Control etc.). The dimmer electronics employs hard-firing thyristors, making the unit "universal" in its application for tungsten, fluorescent, or low-voltage loads. A switched "Line Fixed" terminal provides an output for tube heaters in the case of fluorescent loads. The Environ Mini Universal has been installed in Lecture Rooms, Hospitals, Bars and Restaurants as well as in smaller theatre situations.

* 220/240 volt areas only. ■

FROM THE EDITOR

Well, we seem to have made it with Strandlight! The comments that have come back to us have been complimentary. Our thanks.

But such is the link between Strand Lighting and its customers that politeness probably stops a good deal of critical comment. So, if you have any opinions as to how we could make our magazine more acceptable to you, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We will be very pleased to hear from you.

Richard Harris - U.K.
Susan Dandridge - U.S.
Phil O'Donnell - Asia.

Reviews of Books of Interest to our Readers

I am contacting publishers to see if we can arrange to review books on theatre and television technical topics.

We have plenty of experts on our staff in both the U.K. and the U.S. who can bring their special knowledge into play. I hope this can be a useful feature in keeping readers up to date on what is being published on their particular interests.

Miss Liberty Unavoidably Delayed

Well, actually, it is Bill Klage's article about his mammoth lighting project for the recent hundredth anniversary celebrations that has been delayed. Bill rang me from Hollywood and explained that he currently has so many lighting projects on hand all over America that time just caught up with him. But we will

definitely have what promises to be a particularly interesting article in our next issue.

We are looking forward to it. Bill!

T.V. Lighting Designers - Please let's hear from you!

It is an odd fact of editorial life that while theatre people are usually happy to tell us about their triumphs and their troubles, television L.D.s remain a mystery wrapped in an enigma. And yet, especially in drama, such superb lighting can be seen on our home screens. I remember the beautiful lighting in "The Brontes" on Yorkshire TV about five years ago as one example. I feel I can single this out because Bob Gray of Y.T.V. has now retired! But that is just one example. I believe our readers would very much welcome more from the studio front. Please let us hear from you, L.D's.

Loading Up

You can read - and see - elsewhere in the issue all about the very fine installation of a Galaxy and lighting we have supplied to the Mchat Theatre just off Moscow's Red Square.



As a mark of congratulation to Alan Luxford who looks after Eastern Europe for Strand, the editorial Pentax caught him putting in the ceremonial final lantern of the shipment.

Filters for health

No - the Editor has not joined a smokers rear guard - I am referring to a form of alternative medicine that involves the use of Strand Colour Filters.

Jan Davidson - on the right - and Karen Edwards are the founders of Rainbow Centre 4, operating from premises in Northwood, one of London's more desirable suburbs.

They apply a theory of health by coloured light. There is a whole philosophy behind the Rainbow Centres, of which there are a number up and down the U.K., but the practical side of their system is based on the belief that coloured light has an effect on emotional and physical well being.

Certainly Strandlight readers who may well regularly light comedy scenes with open white and amber, romantic duets with No. 36 and orphans of the storm in steel blue are not going to dispute the emotional impact of coloured lights. But

Jan and Karen go further. They believe that specific malfunctionings of our bodies can be helped by being exposed to coloured light. The actual colour tint is exact, and must be that prescribed for the condition, so a wide choice of tints is necessary.

The Editor attended the opening of a new Rainbow Centre recently. I must admit that I left less sceptical than when I arrived. As Jan pointed out it is now accepted that the food we eat and the air we breathe have a definite effect on our well being - why should the colour of the light that falls on us not also have its effect?

After studying the Editor fairly closely and with some head shaking I rather gathered that my case required a fairly hefty dose of No 5 orange. Before readers rush out for get-well cards they can relax - I am already feeling better.



Strand Controls for Chinese TV

New Beijing Studio Complex has Lightboard, Galaxy, Duet and M24

By Phil O'Donnell, Managing Director, Strand Lighting Asia.



Left to Right: (1) Jimmy Cheung of Strand (2) Wang Chun Yu (Director, Lighting Dept.) (3) Madam Zhiang Min (Lighting Designer/Engineer) (4) Vito Kowalchuk of Strand (5) Marvin Altman, President, Strand Lighting (6) Lin Jin Yun (Dept. Chief Engineer) (7) Soong Yu Sang (Director, Production Dept.)

The CCTV* complex, in China's capital city, Beijing, is the largest television studio facility in China, and it's not nearly complete yet. Entirely a new construction project, it's a showpiece for Chinese broadcasting, and a clear indication of their commitment to supplying the technical means to satisfy China's fast growing broadcasting requirements.

Although not yet on the level of advanced studio operations and programming found in some other countries, they are learning quickly. The operations people have made a point to visit network facilities in the U.S.A. and other parts of the world, and they envisage their operation ultimately encompassing the scope of the places they have studied. Many different types of technical broadcast equipment are being sourced through Hong Kong, and along with them a tremendous amount of training is taking place.

Programming at this time is mostly news, sports, some locally produced drama, and imported films (by use of Rank Cintel Telecine equipment). This range is sure to broaden as experience is gained at producing shows and more technical facilities with trained personnel to support them come on line.

Phase 1 of the project is complete with 4 studios installed and fully operational. There are two Galaxy and two Duet systems. The 360 way Galaxy controls 360 MCM dimmers in a 600 square metre studio. The other Galaxy controls 120 MCM dimmers. Both Duet systems are 60 way. With the exception of special effect and cyclorama luminaires provided by Strand, the lighting and motorized rigging equipment are of local manufacture.

We are in the process now of making deliveries of equipment for Phase 2 of the project. This encompasses six studios,

including the largest studio in China, 1000 square metres. This studio will have a 600 way Lightboard XP, and CD-80 dimmers. There will also be two 400 square metre studios each with a Gemini, one 250 square metre studio with an M24 and two 100 square metre studios each with a Tempus 24 2G, all will have CD-80 dimmers. Installation will begin in October and this entire part of the project will be complete by next spring.

Beijing is not the only city in China where we have equipment, although we expect that not too far in the future other major cities will follow their lead with their own studio complexes. In Teinjin, we have installed a 360 way Galaxy, and two Geminis. In Inner Mongolia we have a 300 way Galaxy and two Geminis.

*China Central Television

Letters to the Editor

Training for Lighting

Laugavegur 24B
101 Reykjavik
ICELAND

Dear Sir,

I am a recipient and regular reader of your magazine. While browsing through one of your journals recently, it occurred to me that perhaps you could supply me with some information which I never seem to have at my fingertips.

I am a freelance theatre lighting designer permanently based here in Iceland and I am frequently asked by enthusiastic beginners where they can study lighting design. My answers are far from exhaustive and I was wondering whether you could help me. Could you tell me where I can get a list of what courses are available in the United Kingdom with a brief description of the courses, entry requirements etc?

I realize that this is a rather unorthodox request, but I would be grateful for any advice you can give me. Thanking you for your informative journal,

Yours sincerely,

DAVID L. WALTERS

I receive so many letters on the lines of this one that I thought I would offer a public reply!

I believe that everywhere, quite properly, the approach to lighting design is through the role of theatre electrician, whether professional or amateur. One must know one's tools before attempting creative work.

Here in the U.K. I know of two professional courses, the first is at Arden College, near Manchester. The second is at Paddington College, London, leading to a City & Guilds Certificate. I understand that both sandwich courses and pre-entry full time courses are offered. The Association of British Theatre Technicians, of 4-7 Great Pulteney Street, London, W1R 3DF, have some booklets available dealing with the London based courses.

The U.S. equivalent body to the A.B.T.T. is the United States Institute of Theater Technology, 330 West 42nd Street, Suite 1702, New York, NY 10036, who could probably provide information on the many university theatre technical courses available in America.

I am afraid my knowledge of any systems of formal training in other countries is virtually nil, but a morning visit to the local professional theatre is probably the best source of information. Some practising theatre electricians of my acquaintance do have 'views' on theoretical training, so young hopefuls should approach with caution.

New Brentford Sales Counter

Many South of England readers will remember our previous sales counter at Brentford. It was originally designed to be something of an endurance test to locate. Graham Kerr and his team lurked behind an anonymous and nearly invisible small side door. Any notice board would have made the finding too easy.

Well, there has been a small revolution. An illuminated sign now beams forth its message for all to read. Glass doors enable callers to check that the sign is not another Strand initiative test, and that our products really are on sale within.

Luxurious carpeting and even the decadence of comfortable chairs await the caller.

All this has caused quite a deal of in-house head shaking. But do come and see, whether you need a new lamp for your 1958 Patt 23 or an M24 memory system, or just want to tap Graham's store of technical know-how, you will be most welcome.

A last point - drive right in. There's plenty of parking space!



At the recent opening, Graham Kerr, Counter Manager, flanked by Steve and Len James of James Electrical Film and T.V. Hire.



The new Brentford Sales Counter. Note the gobo tree projection.

Peter the Great by Vittorio Storaro

Adapted from the original Italian

Light into Northern Russia – electronically controlled

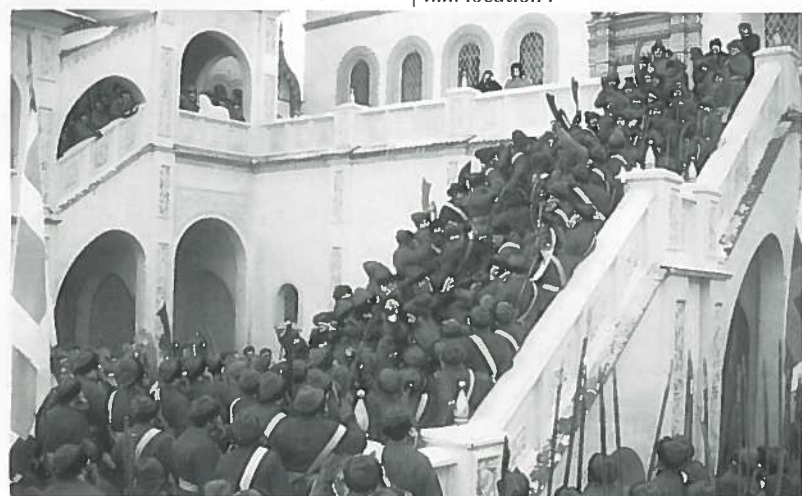
A famous cinematographer – as far as we know the only one to use theatre type dimmers and controls – describes shooting a major project in Russia. The author has used his skills in "Apocalypse Now", "Last Tango In Paris" and "1900" as well as other famous films. He is currently in China shooting "The Last Emperor" starring Peter O'Toole.

Light is never still in the natural world. Sunset passes into evening, night into day and light into shadow.

As my years as a lighting cameraman passed I became more and more determined to capture the natural effects of light on film. I had tried, with equipment available to me earlier, to record these changes during the course of a sequence.



"For the first time ever – an A.M.C. on a film location".



but it was rarely possible in a single shot.

I first put my ideas into practice while working on Francis Coppola's "One From The Heart". The story line needed just what I had been seeking – constantly changing light, concealing and revealing the emotions of the characters.

Curiously, the control of lights, individually and in groups, which is standard practice in the theatre has seldom been used in filming. The idea of using this type of lighting became my great enthusiasm. "One From The Heart", which was filmed entirely in the studio, was the point at which the lighting art of theatre, television and film all came together.

On my next assignment, "Wagner", when I had to go back to a traditional D.C. system it caused me constant suffering. Having enjoyed one burst of lighting freedom, to return to the old ways was like having chains rivetted on my ankles!

I began to design in my mind a truly mobile, weather proof system for either studio or location.

While filming "Ladyhawke" at Cinecittà I was able to persuade others of the value of my ideas. My brief use of a modern electronic desk showed me that the change from D.C. to A.C. only needed the right opportunity to become accepted. What was needed now was a producer ready to make the investment.

Then, like a long awaited comet, the chance came.

I was offered "Peter the Great", a project conceived by Lawrence Shiller and directed by Martin Chomski, an NBC production in collaboration with Sovin Films, to be shot in Russia.

The visual concept for the production allowed me carte blanche to choose both my crew and my equipment.

Peter the Great was the Tsar who opened up Russia to Western influence in the eighteenth century. The film was to be in four periods. The first to be based pictorially on traditional Russia with its icons and great churches with their glistening gold domes, the era of Peter's youth.

The second was to show by sequences of selective chromatic saturation the age of chivalry representing Peter at the height of his physical strength.

The third was to show the impact on Peter of the West, pictorially based on Dutch painting with its light, shade and perspective, while the fourth dealt with the coming of western influence to Russia.

We finally settled on one mobile package of dimmers, and a separate alternator. We prepared a lighting plot for



each location with the luminaires numbered and radio communication to the console operator who had a monitor screen repeating the image seen by the camera. The operator controlled groups or single lanterns in the accepted theatre manner.

A spin off was that many cable sizes could be reduced while lamp and gel life was extended.

Our enormous caravan of cinematic equipment first took us to the blazing summer sun of Bulkhara, then to the colourful autumn and snowy winter of Suzdal. We filmed in the great icy cathedrals of Zagorg. We filmed in Moscow, where we lit long sections of the Kremlin walls with lighting towers as high as the walls themselves. In the ancient city of Suzdal we created a world of late seventeenth century villages, foundries and palaces around the historic monasteries.

We overcame ice encrusted lamps, cables made rigid by cold and the slow run up to synchronisation speed of our cameras, plus film stock which became fragile from low temperature crystallisation. We had to use special mist proofing on our lenses.

Spring came suddenly as we filmed in the palaces re-created in wonderful detail in the Gorky studios.

Here our Strand A.M.C. desk, Tempus and M.C.M. dimmers really came into their own, saving us tremendous amounts of time when setting up and balancing our lighting.

We finally proved that the console system allows greater creativity in lighting, because it places light itself under the direct control of our hands. ■



"From the First Transmission – Strand and T.V."

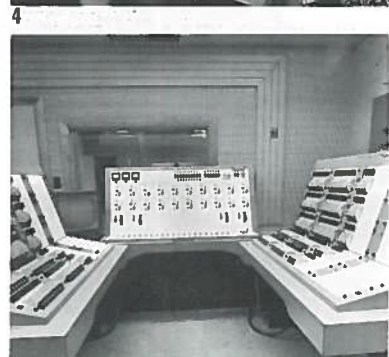


1 On the front of Alexandra Palace, the former exhibition building on a hill a few miles north of London, one can see one of the blue plaques which commemorate famous London sites. This one records the inauguration of the world's first high definition television system which began transmission from here on November 2nd, 1936.

From the very first studio lighting was controllable, so a Strand Grand Master became the world's very first television studio lighting control. Fifty years later, almost to the day, a Gemini will be commissioned in the B.B.C. Leeds studio.

I have picked a few photographs from the fifty years which I thought might be of interest.

(1) A Sixties jest. At King Street we held a TV meeting for all friends in the industry every year. Traditionally Fred Bentham and his team enlivened each meeting with a visual joke set on the demonstration theatre stage. This was their idea of the probable lighting for Her Majesty's traditional Christmas Day message from Sandringham. These Brutes actually had Pat 23's inside.



2 (2) November 1986. A new Gemini at the BBC Leeds studio.

3 (3) 1955. The young Paul Weston – still with Strand – in the control room of Studio 3, the first studio commissioned at Television Centre, the BBC's London Studio complex.

4 (4) 1956. C.D.T.V. Hamburg.

5 (5) Mid Sixties. T.V.7, C.B.C. Toronto.

"The Words and the Music"

The Editor visits two leading and very different theatres and two leading and not totally different memory systems.

"The Words"

— lighting by Gemini in the Haymarket

As a symbol of top class English commercial theatre, summing up all that the phrase "West End" means, consider the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket.

First, the building itself. Designed by John Nash, whose talent ranged from the superb Regents Park terraces to the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, this theatre is an example of restrained early nineteenth century elegance outside, while the interior is opulent, but in the most perfect of aristocratic taste.

Even the stage door is beautifully designed. The timber steps which lead from the stage door lobby down to the stage itself have each stair tread fixed by brass screws set in the proper brass cups.

Probably every true star of the theatre must have appeared here over the years.

To suit these high standards a Gemini system was chosen.

One reason for choosing this installation from the many Geminis in use is because I believe it to be the only board in London still on a perch. Every other theatre I can think of has moved its control F.O.H.

The view from the perch at the Theatre Royal is actually not too bad. The operator literally has his back to the wall — the proscenium wall, that is — with a reasonably large window in front of him giving a fair view of the acting area, while a kind of leper's squint to his left gives observation of the fore stage.

I asked Ian Payne, currently the Haymarket's Gemini virtuoso, for his comment on the system. He was very polite, but I got the impression that he wouldn't mind a little more to do on the board. An irreconcilable systems designers quandary is that if all the facilities are provided to handle a heavy show's hundred plus lighting cues easily, then running a ten cue straight play will obviously be somewhat less than taxing.

It is really the debate all over again about whether one would prefer to drive a steam loco, with all the skill and experience which is needed to get the best from it, or to settle for the reliability, increased speed and convenience of a diesel.

Unless humanity decides, against all previous experience, to make its homes in caves again ever more theatres around

the world will settle for the tremendous facilities of Gemini, Galaxy and Light Palette, while casting the odd sentimental glance back to a Light Console or even a Grand Master.

The Theatre Royal Gemini technical details

(The system was supplied through Donmar Limited, Strand Lighting agents).

180 Channels
230 Memories
1 Channel Control
2 Playbacks
1 Memory Control
1 Output Control
8 Sub Masters
1 Colour Monitor Selection Control
(allowing the operator to select the display on the monitor screen to be either the output store, any sub master, any memory, the "next memory" in a playback sequence, Memory list or the



Ian Payne at the Haymarket Gemini.



All that the West End means. The Theatre Royal, Haymarket.

"The Music"

— lighting by Galaxy in the London Coliseum, St. Martin's Lane

Or, to be more accurate, one should say the Music and the Words, as this famous theatre is the home of English National Opera. And what a home it is. Built to Frank Matcham's design by Sir Oswald Stoll, the Coliseum opened its doors to its two thousand plus audience on Decem-

proportional dimmer to channel patch. In this system, which has the "Effects" option, the monitor can display the set-up routine.)

- 1 Electronic back up panel, independently powered.
- 1 Effects Panel

(This allows up to 99 effects to be recorded and played back, either manually or as part of a cue. These include Chase, Flash, Flicker and Audio. The Lightning effect provides random bursts of pulses of variable duration. Up to 10 effects can be run at the same time.)

- 1 Floppy Disc library storage unit.



The London Coliseum, home of the English National Opera and of a Galaxy Premier.

The Miniature Matcham



The Editor visits Wakefield's Opera House to see a theatre now restored — just in the nick of time.

The Wakefield Opera House was opened in 1894. Frank Matcham, that indefatigable architect of so many of Britain's Victorian and Edwardian theatres, was commissioned by a Mr. Sherwood, who already owned an existing theatre on the same site. This building must have been in a very sorry state indeed, as it was condemned in spite of the said Mr. Sherwood being on the council.

I trust the Editorial Pentax gives a reasonable impression of the Opera House, although one strange feature of the auditorium interior will not be too obvious. The stalls have a five foot high dado of six by three black glazed tiles round the walls, giving an effect curiously at odds with the typically late Victorian decor, now fully restored complete with

floral painted panels on the circle front and a richly decorated ceiling. Apparently, though, this sombre if practical finish was as per the original. Perhaps to retain this feature is true restoration gone slightly too far.

Originally a thousand people could be seated, but modern standards of safety and comfort have reduced this figure to five hundred and thirty. The original undivided benches have been retained in the gallery.

The history of the theatre has been a fairly standard one, although untypically it remained in the ownership of the founding Sherwood family right up to 1947. It was then taken over by Essoldo, the Newcastle based cinema company, although they continued at first to run the Opera House as a live theatre. This went



Mike Boyd at the Wakefield Gemini.

on up to 1954, when the closing offering was a melange entitled "Too Hot for Paris". The posters, one of which has been discovered by Mike Boyd now the Technical Manager and my informant on the Opera House, features a blank space in the middle marked "Photo Banned by the Lord Chamberlain". I doubt if this stratagem inveigled very many of even

the most lubricious Wakefieldians through the doors, even in the comparative innocence of 1954.

Then followed a period as a cinema, which was extremely successful. This was because when Twentieth Century Fox introduced Cinemascope they insisted that exhibitors should instal not only the anamorphic lenses and the 2.55 to 1 ratio screen, but also the four track stereophonic magnetic sound system with its auditorium speakers.

The large cinema circuits all demurred because of the cost of about four to five thousand pounds for each cinema, so Fox released their early Cinemascope blockbusters through independent exhibitors wherever a town had one who would make the investment. In the case of Wakefield Essoldo were delighted to oblige and enjoyed six or seven years of prosperity as a result.

Eventually, of course, the film companies and the big circuits made up their differences and the original full Cinemascope system fell out of use.

The story continued to its typical next phase — Bingo.

This undemanding pursuit was responsible for many an architectural upheaval up and down the country. At Wakefield a new mezzanine floor, since removed as part of the recent renovation, was built over the scene dock and actually over the stage itself to provide extra catering facilities. Fortunately no-one bothered to remove the timber grid and fly gallery. To aid the gaiety of the "eyes down" brigade the whole auditorium was painted in a tasteful shade of tangerine, picked out in purple.

The poor old theatre must have seemed very near the end at this point.

Then followed a few years "dark" for the Opera House, although fortunately the building was always maintained and kept weather proof.

In 1981 a new era began. The Wakefield Theatre Trust was formed with the objective of taking over the Opera House and opening it again as a live theatre.

After vigorous fund raising the curtain went up on the fully restored theatre on the 16th of March of this year. Anyone who has had anything to do with similar projects will have some idea of the local enthusiasm and effort that must have been deployed to achieve this result.

One nice touch is that a small refreshment area, open directly to the public as well as to audiences, has been formed in what were originally two lock-up shops

on the corner of the theatre. This has been named "The Matcham".

The architects for the project were the T.A.C.P. Partnership of Liverpool, Jo Parker being the job architect.

Strand Lighting provided the whole of the stage lighting installation.

Control:
180 way Gemini with disc unit (108 Permus dimmers fitted).

Luminaires:
18 Harmony 15 x 28 Profiles
2 Harmony 22 x 40 Profiles
30 Harmony Fresnels
4 Harmony Prism Convexes
8 Coda 500w four compartment cyc. lights.



Miniature Matcham, well restored and Strand lit. Not a ghost on stage, but a rehearsing dancer.

ber 24th 1904. From the date, this must have been for a pantomime. It would have to have been a spectacular production indeed to compete with the auditorium's architecture. I first entered this most impressive theatre during an unhappy period when it was used as a cinema. I wanted to see what the auditorium was like! Precisely five other stalls patrons watched Laurence Harvey in some concoction about Grimms Fairy Tales. The building was the more entertaining.

Nowadays the Coliseum regularly fills to capacity, such is the current enthusiasm for opera, and the reputation of the company.



Graham May at the Coliseum Galaxy. He insisted on removing one ashtray, one copy of the 'Sun' and three coffee cups - all empty to work - before the Editorial Pentax went to work.

In August 1985 the English National Opera decided that they needed to update and expand their lighting control. Expansion was to be from 240 to 360 channels. At the same time a complete back stage re-wire was to be undertaken.

How long do you suppose was set aside for this little exercise? Three months would not be unreasonable. The actual time allowed was two weeks! In the event, the new Galaxy Premier was delivered on August the 11th and the dress rehearsal of Jonathan Miller's production of Rigoletto was on August 23rd.

I invite any reader who has ever lit an amateur production of "Murder at the Vicarage" or who has had a contractor re-wire his house, to join me in sheer admiration. I was told - "We love operas with an overture - it gives us time for focusing".

I asked the obvious question, "Why Galaxy?" The answer fell into two parts. The first, although there was too much courtesy to your Editor to even hint at the phrase, amounted to "Better the Devil you know!"

Strand installed an M.S.R. system about eighteen years ago, and an M.M.S. about ten years ago.

The second part of the reply covered the evaluation they had made of the opposition. As readers will know, our publication limits itself to discussing our own products, so I am afraid that as far as the fascinating comments that were made, largely based on E.N.O.'s world wide touring experience, the Editorial

lips must remain sealed.

But I can reveal that reliability and the level of service support was a very large factor. To quote - "If something *should* go badly wrong, then even Brenford is too far away!"

So there they are, two first class theatres. One all Regency classical discipline, one all Edwardian exuberance. One devoted to the spoken word and one to 'music drama'. In fact, the only physical common property I can think of is the use of current Strand Lighting memory systems.

My Coliseum control room photo shows the distinguished profile of Graham May in the operating mode.

There are two untypical aspects of this picture. First, the stand-by panel is shown open, as if there was a dire emergency in progress, and second, nothing I could do would persuade the lighting team that the odd coffee cup, brimming ashtray and popular tabloid would give a more life like atmosphere for the Editorial Pentax.

For real Switchboard enthusiasts, I have asked Andy Collier, Control Systems Product Manager, to give a detailed story of the Coliseum Galaxy Premier.

Without doubt, the installation at the London Coliseum taxed every aspect of the Galaxy Premier's modular, custom design principles. To begin with, the control panels are housed in a framework of specially selected oak veneer to match the surrounding desk furniture.* The complement of control panels - channel control, theatre playback, memory and output, preset masters and special effects - occupy an unusual size 3 1/4 pod.

In choosing the Premier version of Galaxy 2, the London Coliseum acquired not only the latest features and facilities the most sophisticated Strand board had to offer, but also the ability to expand the system in future without difficulty. For at the heart of a Premier system lies the powerful communications processor: a four-layer microprocessor circuit card that shares some of the load of the executive processor. This additional power enables the new Theatre Playback module to control every attribute of a six-part simultaneous fade: wait and split delay times; split fade times; stop, reverse and instant; and manual control.

As if the auto follow-on feature of the Theatre Playback is not sufficient, the Premier system at the Coliseum also boasts the revolutionary Learn Profile facility. Developed primarily for the action-packed excitement of multipart cues, Learn Profile records and later recreates the exact progress of any selected memory within a fade. So, if the practical gas mantles need to flicker when they are lit, or if there is to be a pause or two in that cyc. change, run the fade manually and with Learn Profile, and Galaxy will copy every movement. If this seems as though the most basic ideal of Galaxy's operating philosophy has been shattered, and that the machine has at last taken over completely from the

operator, fear not, because at all times the timing of the profiled fade may be stopped, reversed, speeded up or slowed down.

All Premier versions of Galaxy are supplied with two colour monitors and an Alpha Numeric keyboard, and this system is no exception. Although Galaxy can address up to four separate monitor screens (with an astoundingly rapid refresh time) the two screens at the Coliseum show the operators a running cue list - including a detailed description of the inner workings of the six 'fade controllers' residing beneath the Theatre Playback panel - in addition to the usual screen of selected channel level information, and system status displays.

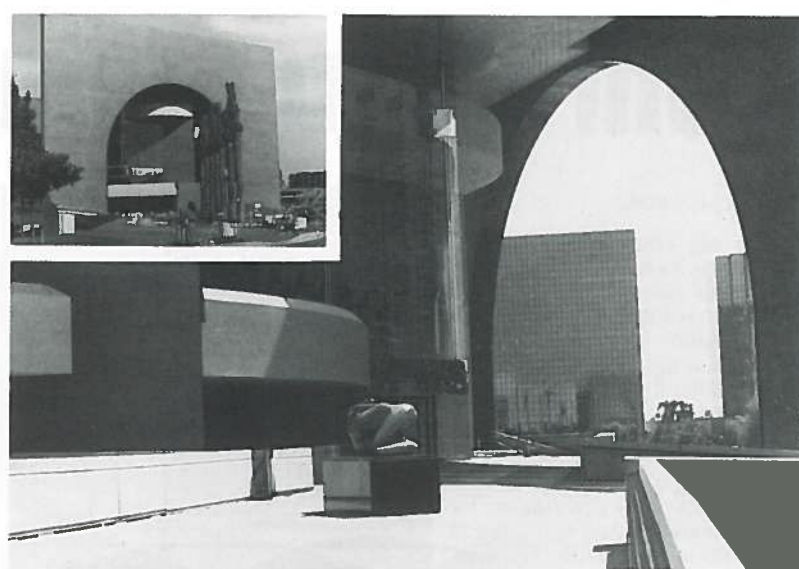
The reference to 'operators', plural, is no mistake, as the Galaxy system provides simultaneous access to all its control functions. What this means at the Coliseum is that during a lighting rehearsal two board operators programme the show: one manipulates the Channel Control to set the lighting cues, make any adjustments, and record the states, whilst the other enters fade times, fade types, waits, delays, links, and textural prompts via the keyboard. Both actions take place simultaneously (by courtesy of the Alpha keyboard 'window' superimposed on the output screen), and result in a dramatic increase in efficiency during the plotting period.

The Coliseum chose a dual-disc drive floppy disc system to provide library storage of their lighting plots. The double disc unit may be used to copy discs for added security, as well as providing a back-up in case one disc unit fails.

Another option included in the system is the Memory Backup control, a powerful secondary memory control which is constantly watching the output of the main desk. Every half a second or so, the backup processor copies the current stage state into its own output store, which is also connected directly to the dimmers. In the event of any failure in the Galaxy the Backup system is fully prepared and takes over by reproducing the exact stage state at the time of failure, whilst loading the next twenty memories from the show disc into its own memory. As each memory is transferred to the stage from the back-up playback section, another memory is automatically loaded from disc to replace it.

Looking to the immediate future, the Galaxy 2 Premier system at the London Coliseum is equipped with all the hardware to benefit from any further developments with ease. For example, the latest version of software (version J) supports the new Programmable Effects panel, and when the time comes, the Galaxy may be easily extended to include the new control. And there was even some space to add a feature or two suggested by the Coliseum yes, we really do listen to our customers!

*Your Editor can remember the days when Strand systems were offered in either 'Bankers Mahogany' or 'Methodist Oak'!



Orange County Performing Arts Center

A Hypothetical opening night -

by R. Craig Wolf

The first thing that strikes us is how pleasant it is to be able to park our car in the center's adjoining structure which provides parking for up to 2000 automobiles. Walking up one flight of steps to an open, bridge-like ramp we get our first glimpse of this view of the monumental facade towering over our heads. From the street below it looked like a massive arch through which is presented the multi-level lobby and the impressive sculpture which lives there; but from this angle it takes on a totally different aspect - a more welcoming, but no less impressive invitation to enter. Proceeding along the walkway one can't help but feel that indeed a very special event is about to take place. Passing the Henry Moore sculpture strategically placed to welcome visitors from both the street below as well as from the auto parking structure, we see the lobby entrance but have to wait for the full visual effect until crossing the threshold. Only then does the grandeur of this entrance hall really register its full impact. We have a quick cocktail before being seated and then head for the auditorium and the long-anticipated concert. Our wait at the entrance doors seems unusually long, but soon enough we move into the auditorium proper - and then it happens. It's awfully hard to explain: people accustomed to attending dance at Lincoln Center, concerts at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, and theatre at Stratford stop dead in their tracks and stare with jaws hanging open.

I have the exciting assignment of covering the opening of The Orange County Performing Arts Centre in the near future, however, because the editorial deadline for this issue of Strandlight is due my report will be in two parts. I put in a call to fellow lighting designer Tom Ruzika who (as the Editor wrote in the last issue) is working on the

Performing Arts Center project and suggested a long-planned lunch as well as a possible tour of the Center. At the time, Tom was working on final check-out of the Strand systems and more or less patiently waiting for riggers to finish assembly and hanging of the monumental lobby sculpture (tentatively referred to as "the bird" by those in the know) so that he could finally focus the lighting devoted to the sculpture. I arrived a bit early in order to get some good exterior pictures of the wonderful facade of the Centre in early-afternoon sunlight and then was joined by Tom. Several stories and a pleasant lunch later, I knew that the only major problem encountered with the Palette II and Environ II lighting control systems were a couple of crossed wires which were currently being taken care of by field service specialists Otto Alvarado. The facility is dimmer-per-circuit and has over 600 dimmers; the grid is over 100 feet high; the stage is huge; the rigging system is counterweight on 6" centers with a pin rail; and it's an all-Strand installation. Tom's assistant on the project, Nancy Hood, was kind enough to take me on a walking tour while Tom met with two of the numerous people involved with a project of this scope. We took a look at the dressing spaces and I was particularly impressed with the several rehearsal rooms (thank goodness someone is finally paying attention to rehearsal space); one of which is a "black box" equipped with its own grid and soon a Lightboard M. The others are wonderful dance spaces with good wooden floors and mirrors. The black box has a floor which is identical to that of the main stage and moveable wall panels to adjust the acoustics of the space. Needless to say, I was impressed and am looking forward to the real opening - more to follow on that event.

Strand lights "The Phantom of the Opera"



1. Andy Bridge, Lighting Designer of Phantom of the Opera.

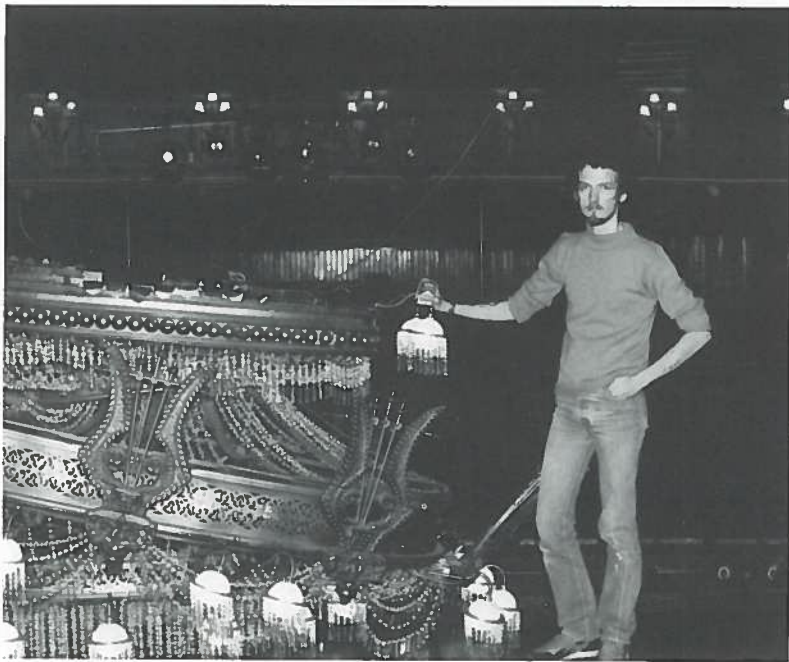
Current advance bookings confirm the success of Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest musical, "The Phantom of the Opera" at Her Majesty's Theatre in London's Haymarket.

Quite apart from the music and the book, the show is a real eye popper for anyone interested in theatre technicalities.

The production designer, Maria Bjornson and the lighting designer, Andrew Bridge, have truly wrought most wonderfully.

The main lighting rig is all Strand, incorporating a hundred Lekos and fifty Harmonys, all controlled by a Galaxy. And a very busy little Galaxy it is too. 250 cues on 292 dimmers sound to your Editor rather like a record for a single show.

I was shown round the lighting rig by



John McBride, Chief Electrician, with 'the flying dimmer room'.

L.D. Andrew Bridge and John McBride, the chief who has the responsibility of seeing that it all actually happens seven times a week.

The lighting practicals are particularly impressive. When the Phantom rows his craft across the underground lake

beneath the opera house dry ice provides a surface hugging mist. Through the mist rise, on cue via a hundred tiny trap doors, serried ranks of flickering candles. The realistic flicker is provided by tiny p.c.b.'s controlling each lamp individually so that they do not flicker in unison. The final

touch to this one effect among so many is that the translucent bodies of the candles each has its own non flickering lamp so that they register with the audience as candles rather than simply as points of light. Around the re-created opera house proscenium the best reproduction gas mantles I have ever seen give their wavering glow. These and the candles are by Action Lighting.

If you are, as the French say, "of a certain age", you may remember Claude Rains taking his hack saw to the chain supporting the auditorium chandelier in the forties film of the Phantom of the Opera. Well, the chandelier falls at Her Majestys too, but in a very controlled way and fully approved by the Westminster City Council. The designers did not want the complexity of a fast unwinding mains lead, nor would the fall of a darkened chandelier have been effective. Sealed lead-acid 12V, batteries and on-board dimmers were the very effective answer. The technical staff refer to this as 'the flying dimmer room'!

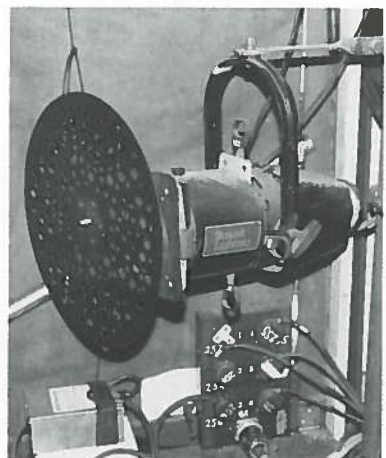
There is lighting from photo flash guns, and pyrotechnics galore - in fact a feast of theatricality of the very best kind.

Robert Luff Theatrical Hire of South London provided the whole of the stage lighting.

The use of 240V Lekos is another sign that our world wide product range is what the market wants. Andrew Bridge cheered the Editor by particularly

praising the Lekos locking mechanism. He next minute rather appalled said Editor by remarking that to avoid any possible shutter movement when relamping during a long run they bent the shutter handles through 90°!

For all of us who appreciate stage lighting and stage craft, and that must be every Strandlight reader, 'Phantom' has a great deal to offer. And should your partner not share your own technical enthusiasm, then there is a most excellent show to enjoy just for its own sake.



Adding to the flickering candle light. "I like Lekos because they lock off so firmly".

From Swan upon Avon to Stoke-on-Trent

By Frederick Bentham

For once my critical faculties were knocked aside. As soon as I entered, the Swan had me charmed, this is exactly what a courtyard theatre should be – a timber structure standing within the confining walls but, especially as those walls antedate it by 107 years, not appearing to be a part of them. They now register as an interesting encompassing surround of warm 'limewashed' brick perfectly setting off the fine timberwork which make this space, a real theatre for actors and audience. And who better to advise the RSC on this than the RSC itself. Above in the steeply pitched roof is another attractive space, the rehearsal room. The woodwork and the view from the windows is not to be missed. Yet, very properly, that view does not draw the eye and distract from the main purpose of the space. They are for going up to and taking a look outside at moments of relaxation during rehearsal.

The 200th Galaxy

As the editor dealt with the Swan and its lighting control in the Summer issue of STRANDLIGHT it is not for me to say more: except to confess that it was the latter, the 200th Galaxy which got me there. We few, we happy band of brothers were there to celebrate that fact in the best Strand tradition, after a brief explanatory intro we were free to see for ourselves, linger where our interests lay and to drink, to buffet and in my case perchance to dream – of Strand's sixty glorious years at sunny (Yes, it did shine that day!) Stratford-upon-Avon.

When the old theatre of 1879 got burnt down in March 1926 there was not only the G.B.S. telegram but one from L. G. Applebee, a famous figure from Strand's past. Reading about the fire in his Daily Telegraph in the train on the way to work, he immediately sent off a telegram offering all possible assistance. It is intriguing to note that he fully expected that the show would go on somewhere or other and open on April 23rd by tradition Shakespeare's birthday. And so it did: the local cinema of 1912 was turned into a theatre by building a real stage extension to the rear of the screen platform. This tale of five weeks and two days, for that was all the time it took, has been told in detail elsewhere*. Strand supplied the lighting but precisely what is not on record. However when the new theatre by Elizabeth Scott opened exactly six years later it had a 56-way Grand Master manual board stage left. The cinema then reverted to its real role and survived until 1983.



Inside the New Victoria Theatre, rehearsal in progress.

In 1951 a new installation went in with a 144-way Thyatron Preset control in what had been the Royal box centre circle out-front. And here it was that the 240-way DDM memory control (the first to use software, and my last system) took over in 1972 and a Galaxy ten years later. During this time the 1000 seats of 1932 have been increased to 1500. The Swan has 440 seats around a deep thrust stage of the type made familiar by Tyrone Guthrie in Stratford Ontario and in Minneapolis, and his stages really did thrust.

At Stoke-on-Trent we have a purpose built theatre in the round of 600 seats.

The New Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

As at Stratford this theatre at Stoke, the New Victoria, was preceded by a sojourn in a converted cinema: but of four times the duration. The Victoria cinema of 1914 became a theatre in the round for twenty-four years. The pioneer in the operation was the late Stephen Joseph who begat,



"A very distinctive brick building with a touch of Japan about the roof line". The New Victoria Theatre.



Paul W. Jones at the Gemini.

so to speak, two other enthusiasts for the form, Alan Ayckbourn and Peter Cheeseman. Their respective parishes have been and are Scarborough and Stoke-on-Trent. After many years temporary existence in the Library the former achieved a permanent home by converting a school building very effectively in 1978. The latter has had to wait longer but it is purpose built inside and out. Stephen Joseph died in 1967 but had talked about such a building project somewhere in the same area to the then very young ABTT's London International Conference of 1961. He stressed that "it was to be a theatre in the round, and that this form had aroused widespread, and often vicious opposition in this country." Twenty-five years later there has been no hedging of the £3-million cost by making this theatre adaptable to other forms: nor, it must be remarked, has there been as in the case of the Swan an anon American benefactor!

The visitor comes upon the new theatre rather than espies it from afar. There it is, a very distinctive brick building with a touch of Japan about the roof line, among

trees and natural habitat just off a very ordinary kind of road. The reader must not run away with the idea of a stately home set among parkland. What park there is mainly serves as car park; but care has been taken that this does not mean acres of bare asphalt when not much occupied during the day. It is to be a small woodland nature reserve within the town. There is a term known to computer buffs and the like – user friendly. This is the right term for the new theatre outside and throughout the inside including especially the 'backstage'.

The building has that suggestion of the Arts & Crafts movement revival in its use of materials which was first seen in the 1979 Wolsey Theatre Ipswich. It even manages to make shuttered-concrete look warm and approachable rather than stern and aloof. Indeed the contrast between the inner structural auditorium drum wall and the brickwork of the octagonal outer wall and elsewhere is so striking that I found myself going up to it to find out what the arras-like texture really was!

The public enter at ground level a large space with box office, coffee bar, bar, cloakroom etc. Stairs centre lead up to a foyer & exhibition area on the floor above with another bar and a self-service restaurant. From this area members of the audience enter the auditorium to descend to take their seats in the seven curved steeply raked rows of stalls or to ascend to the two row balcony above. This balcony does not make its presence strongly felt and in consequence need not be used for performances attracting smaller audiences than the full 605 capacity of the house. The front of the balcony is graced by some of the very early Patt.23 spots which go right back to Stephen Joseph's touring days. Restored as working antiques it was something I appreciated for Stephen was particularly enthusiastic about them when first introduced over thirty years ago. Overhead there is a lighting bridge structure, carrying today's more usual array.

The Gemini lighting control, dimmer room and sound and lighting workshops are all grouped together at balcony level. The main workshops, rehearsal room etc occupy a bungalow wing in the outback. A splendid practical area, with nature flourishing just outside the windows, which can be regarded as an extension at the level of the stage and 'backstage' on the ground floor of the main building. The rehearsal room holds the key to the success of any theatre in the round, for there strongly marked out on the floor is the stage area exactly corresponding to

that in the theatre itself. It looks small indeed; but it is a reminder of Peter Cheeseman's own words after some years in the previous theatre – "we have on occasion been troubled by the problem of making the acting area smaller but never of making it bigger". F.P.B.

*By James Sargent of the RSC in Sightline Vol. 17 No.2 publ. ABTT.

Some eight weeks after the New Victoria opened I called, to deploy the Editorial Pentax to illustrate Fred Bentham's article and to see how the theatre staff were settling in.

After a morning of fiddling with apertures and shutter speeds and forgetting which lens I was using, I met Peter Cheeseman in the bar for a midday pint.

I asked him what his thoughts were after two months of operations.

Basically he, and his team, are extremely happy with their theatre. Especially with its really beautiful location, as described by Fred. The views from the dressing room windows must refresh the actors souls and must be practically unique. The central atrium at the heart of the technical area works very well in practise. At coffee break time the lighting staff can be certain to meet the actors and the wardrobe people to meet the scenic group. A kind of informal daily conference where anything can be raised. A few technical running in problems have arisen. For example, the Local Fire Brigade were currently making daily visits in response to an over eager alarm system, but nothing too serious. The ticket office has turned out to be a little small while the archive room, where material is gathered for the local documentary productions which are a speciality of the New Victoria is kept, looks as though it will most definitely be too small.

Peter Cheeseman came up with one rather interesting thought during our chat. "What on earth is the point of having a Stage manager to cue sound and electricians?"

"The level of staff who nowadays work in theatre don't need telling when it is their cue. They are following the play and are perfectly capable of doing their own job properly. The whole notion of cueing the technical staff is a sort of old fashioned hang over from the days when staff were often disinterested part timers." An interesting thought!

Readers opinion welcome.

Our Finest Galaxy Installation Yet

Every company during its history has some jobs of which it is especially proud. Sometimes this pride is the result of the location – the Light Palette in the New Metropolitan Opera in New York's Lincoln Centre is an obvious example – while sometimes it is because the equipment itself is allowed by a generous budget to be as up to date and as totally comprehensive as we can make it. The M.M.S. supplied to Glyndebourne Opera some ten years ago is an example of a

project in this category.

Now, in September 1986, we have just completed manufacture of a particularly generously specified Galaxy for the Mchat Theatre, just off Moscow's Red Square. This theatre presents both classic and modern drama. The new stage lighting installation, entirely supplied by Strand, is part of a complete theatre re-furbishment which, back stage, really amounts to a rebuild.

This Galaxy is a 320 channel system with 380 dimmers – 260 5kW, 60 10kW plus 60 spare dimmers for future expansion. There is a geographic push button mimic, a stalls control and a 320

channel four pre-set manual system working in tandem with the Galaxy. This allows visiting companies to operate their own lighting plots without using the memory system.

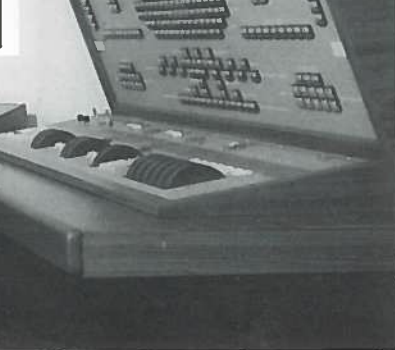
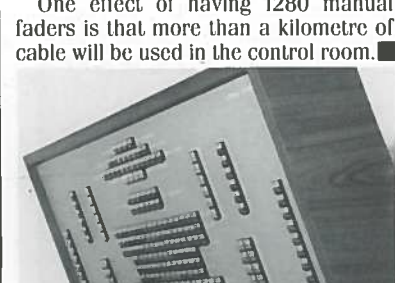
Surprisingly the client chose English language displays for the three VDUs (C.R.T.'s). Perhaps English is becoming the international language of theatre just as it has become the international language of film?

The lighting rig includes Cadenza PCs and Profiles plus Solo follow spots. Two hundred 2kW units in all, complete with full recommended spares and accessories.

One effect of having 1280 manual faders is that more than a kilometre of cable will be used in the control room. ■



The geographic push button mimic and the stalls control.



The Mchat Theatre Moscow Galaxy set up for final testing at Brentford before packing. Note the 320 channel four pre-set manual desk for visiting companies not used to memory system operation. Over a kilometre of control cable will be needed in the control room.

Selling Strand Lighting

I thought it would be interesting to tell readers about two members of our company who, while they operate six thousand miles apart, supply similar goods to customers who have exactly the same needs. I chose one of them with the longest service of anyone on the sales team, and the other a recent entrant.

Bob Schiller of Los Angeles, U.S.A. – 36 years service



Don't be fooled by the casual attire and laid-back look, Bob Schiller doesn't know the meaning of the word "relax" and attacks his responsibilities as Western Regional Sales Manager with a vengeance and energy level that won't quit. After more than 36 years with Strand, he continues to personify the kind of dedication and loyalty that is every

company president's dream.

Bob never worked for any other employer! He started in 1950 as a lab assistant under the famous designer and teacher, Stanley McCandless.

In reminiscing about those "early days", Bob talks about staying at the office late at night, assigned to oversee the janitorial crew. He also talks about pounding the pavement in Brooklyn during his stint as a salesman. A turning point was his transfer from the then headquarters in New York to California to become operation's manager.

Bob gradually moved up through the ranks, gaining experience in almost every facet of the company's operation. In the process, he earned the respect and high regard of his colleagues, despite the tendency to drive them to drink with periodic demands for more service than support staff could provide.

To what does Bob attribute his success?

A combination of factors, of course, not the least of which is his solid product knowledge along with an understanding of the various markets for which those products were designed. Whether it be a TV station, Motion Picture Studio, Performing Arts Center or Church, Schiller can relate to the players who will ultimately decide on whether to specify and or purchase Strand equipment. What influences them is not only product quality and cost, but the tenacity, integrity, and all-round class act of Schiller's involvement. "I give the same attention to a customer if the potential order is \$2,500 or \$250,000", claims Bob when asked to explain his outstanding reputation in the industry.

Opera in an Ice Rink

by Bill Williams and Mark Nitychoruk

Bill Williams is a Theatre Consultant and Lighting Designer working out of Winnipeg, Canada. He has been actively involved as a lighting designer for theatre, opera and dance across Canada for more than fifteen years. He is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada.

Mark Nitychoruk is currently employed by Westsun Media in Winnipeg, Canada as a Sales Consultant. Mark has previously been involved in The Canadian dance scene, most notably as Stage Manager with Contemporary Dancers Canada and as Technical Director for the Toronto Dance Theatre.

One of the most ambitious theatrical projects ever mounted in Canada was recently staged at Vancouver's Pacific National Exhibition Coliseum. The renowned Italian opera company, La Scala, was invited to present the North American debut of the Verdi's opera "I Lombardi". The six performances were a climax to the Expo '86 World Festival, a series of artistic events held in conjunction with Expo '86. Since a properly equipped theatre, with a large enough seating capacity, was unavailable, the Expo production staff, along with San Francisco based FM Productions, the technical genius behind the Los Angeles Olympics Opening and Closing Ceremonies and the Liberty Weekend Celebrations, designed a complete 6500 seat opera house within the 16,000 seat Coliseum, home of the National Hockey League Vancouver Canucks.

Under the guidance of Expo '86 staff members Ann Farris Darling, Don Finlayson, and Frank Brannen, the project was set into motion in the spring of 1986. FM Productions, under the direction of David Prothero and Ed Stewart, were made responsible for all preliminary drawings and technical specifications for all facets of the project. The theatrical rigging for this project was supplied by Westsun Media of Winnipeg, Canada, while the Strand Lighting luminaires and control were contracted through Vancouver's Westsun Lighting.

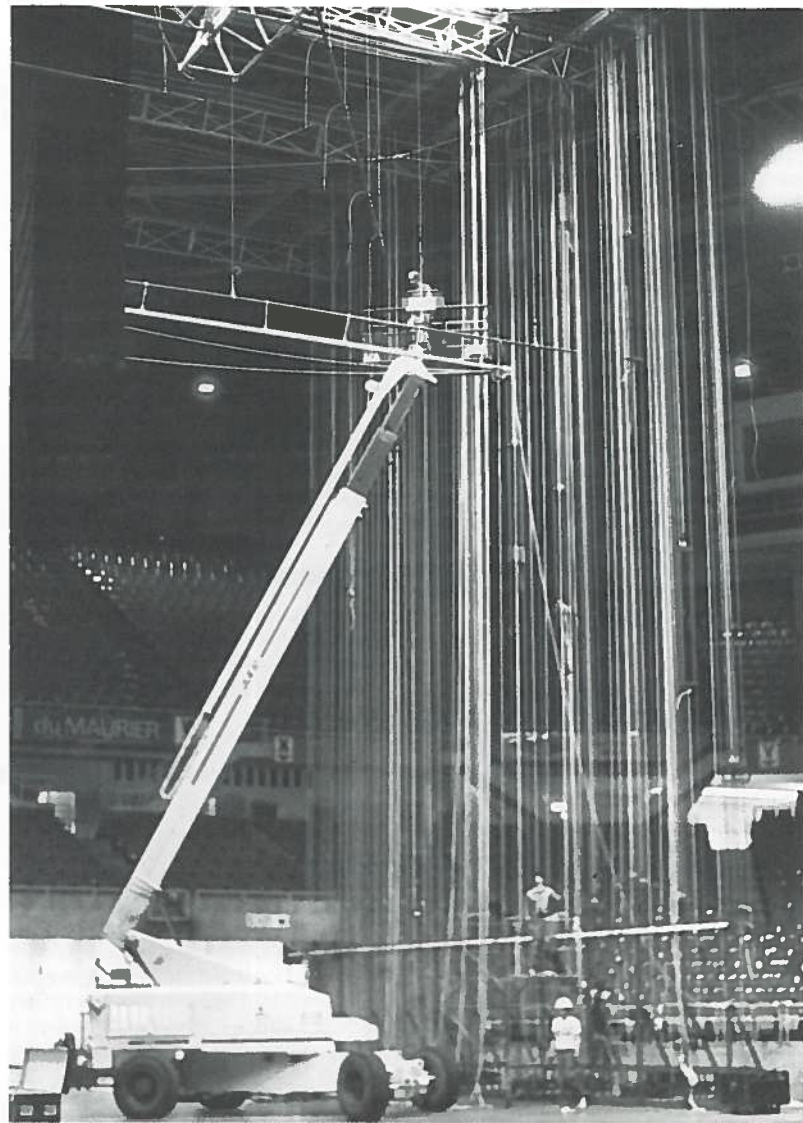
The rigging system specification called for a "portable fly system" containing a total of 27 working line sets, 16 dead hung pipes, and 32 working hemp spot lines. A complete pinrail and locking rail system were to be provided, as well as a complete 65 foot long FOH lighting truss and complete FOH carry off masking. This specification entailed the use of 16 motorised chain hoists, 450 feet of truss, 650 feet of aluminum I-beam, 6 1/2 miles of wire rope, 2 miles of manila rope, 1 mile of steel pipe, and 25 tons of ballast.

The project was tendered throughout North America, and was awarded to the Winnipeg firm of Westsun Media Limited, in late June. Under the leadership of project managers Doug Kiddell and Bill Williams, the complete rigging system was designed, engineered, fabricated, and shipped to the site in Vancouver in less than one month, ready for installation beginning July 21. The Toronto firm of Joel Theatrical Rigging supplied and installed various counterweight system components.

When the equipment arrived in Vancouver, shipped in two 45 foot tractor trailers, a local I.A.T.S.E. crew of approximately 30 began the installation. The first portion of the set-up, from July 21 to August 3, was dedicated to assembling and flying the grid system to approximately 68 feet above the arena floor, as well as installing all system pipes and the locking rail. On August 3, due to a prior booking in the Coliseum, the arena had to be vacated with no rigging components left on the arena floor. The motors were attached to the entire locking rail and it was flown to a height of approximately 30 feet.

On August 13, the set-up resumed. It was during this period, from August 13 to 24, that the locking rail was flown back in, and the remaining components were installed. Under direct supervision of the Italian crews, the 11 containers of scenery, props, and costumes were unpacked, with the scenery being installed on the counterweight system pipes.

It was also during this time period that all other vendors and contractors commenced their installation. This included a raked stage 120 feet wide by 64 feet deep,



a complete sound system engineered by Los Angeles based Pro-Media, all auditorium masking and drapes, the video projection system, the adjacent production and dressing room facilities, as well as the Strand Lighting luminaires and control, provided by Westsun Lighting in Vancouver.

The lighting system was a hybrid, based on the fundamentals of opera lighting and rock and roll touring. The onstage lighting was comprised of over 200 6 x 9 and 6 x 12 Strand Lighting ellipsoidals, 243 2 and 3 circuit Iris cyc. lights, and 7 1200 and 2500 watt Quartzcolor Sirio HMI fresnels complete with servo controlled dowers. The entire system was controlled by a Strand Lighting Mini Light Palette, supplied by Canadian Staging Projects in Toronto. A back-up Mini Light Palette, supplied as a courtesy by Strand Lighting, remained unused during the entire rehearsal and performance schedule. The followspot operators, using Ultra Arc short throw HTI's, enjoyed a measure of comfort

during these performances, being strapped into modified racing car seats attached to the 65 ft FOH truss.

When the Opening Night curtain closed August 24, the sold out performance drew rave reviews for not only the performance, but for the technical production as well. Even the critics, usually not ones to carry on about technical matters, had this to say: "Hockey Coliseum Transformed Into Stunning Opera House"; "the transition (to an opera house) is total... and noteworthy".

After the final sold out performance September 4, the crews were again called in, this time to strike the show; a process that took just 60 hours.

Although the La Scala project was massive in nature, it was highly successful from all points of view. It remains to be seen, however, whether this success opens a whole new world of production possibilities, or if it will be several years before North America again experiences such a large scale conversion of an arena into an opera house.

Video Review



Gail Hardman

'Shaftesbury Avenue'

Pixel Picture Company Ltd.
Director Gail Hardman
1 Hour Video Price £19.95 + 55p post (U.K.) £4.05 (abroad).

There is one centenary celebration this year that cannot pass unnoticed in the pages of a Strand journal, the celebration of a hundred years of theatre in London's famous Shaftesbury Avenue.

The Pixel Picture Company has captured the vitality of the Avenue in a souvenir video to mark the centennial year. The programme, introduced by Sian Phillips, takes us to the Apollo, Lyric, Globe, Palace, Queens and Shaftesbury theatres to meet the hidden talent of the theatre. Interviews with the representatives of the backstage "underworld" will enrich the knowledge of any theatre goer; from the daily routine of the wardrobe department to the wide ranging responsibilities of the Master Carpenter.

Producers, production managers, dressers, stage managers, electricians, all have their say, and that's not to forget the theatre cat!

An hour's documentary may seem too long for a school drama period. However, the programme is divided into separate 'Acts' and any one of which can be taken as an episode to be discussed by a class.

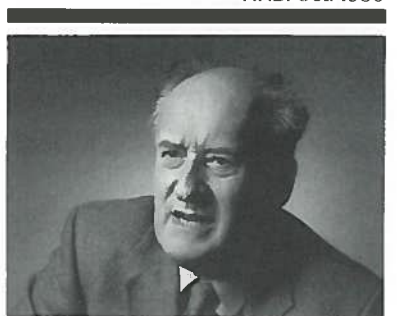
The video is available in VHS and Beta formats in PAL and VHS in NTSC from: Mayfair Marketing
Downs Court Business Centre
29 The Downs
Altrincham
Cheshire WA14 2QD
U.K.

Andy Collier

Gerd Ohlmer



Gerd Ohlmer, whose sudden death we regret to announce, was the man who more than anyone else introduced Strand lighting to Germany. On his own initiative he began taking sheets of Cinemoid and Patt. 23 spots around theatres in his VW Beetle in the early Fifties. He soon became Strand's official agent and in 1966 founded Strand Electric Hessenbruch GmbH and moved it to Wolfenbüttel in 1968. He remained Managing Director until he retired in 1975. He had a marvellous hospitable and friendly personality and appreciation for all the arts especially theatre, ballet and opera. Gerd will be greatly missed.
F.P.B. Oct. 1986



Is this someone else's copy of "Strandlight" you are reading?

If so, why don't you have your own personal free copy?

All you need do is write to your local Strand Lighting office, agent or dealer and they will be pleased to put you on the free mailing list. Alternatively write to me, Richard Harris, Strandlight Magazine, P.O. Box 51, Great West Road, Brentford, Middlesex. TW8 9HR, England.

Bob's management style is to give his sales representatives the freedom to "do their thing" without ever letting them forget to keep on top of each pending sales possibility. Renowned for his trouble-shooting skills, the reps (and headquarters team) turn to him for guidance and intervention. In that process, he plays a variety of roles such as psychiatrist, actor, juggler and negotiator. The phone invariably starts ringing at 7.00 a.m. and normally continues through the evening hours. The weekends aren't much of an exception, although the caller just may get one of three different messages on his answering machine. And you can be sure the call will be returned promptly.

After watching the frenzied activity of Bob interacting with his reps, a visitor at his home queried, "When do you have time for your family?". "But they are my family," was his quiet response.

Terry Abbs of Leicester, England - 18 months service



As Terry does not yet have a long term story to tell with Strand, I arranged to spend a day with him on his territory to give readers an idea of the life of "Selling Strand Lighting":

5.30 a.m.

The Editorial barouche steals through a dark and hardly wakeful Surrey en route to Leicester. Terry Abbs' home town. A mile out the naughty thought intrudes - while I work why should others sleep? A short horn blast relieves the evil impulse.

7.25 a.m.

The Post House Hotel, Leicester. The rendezvous. Two eggs, one rasher and a tomato* later Terry arrives in a laden estate car and off we go.

We have a two hour journey to Burton-on-Trent, our first appointment, so Terry tells me something of his life story. An apprentice electrician, he harkened to the siren song of show business. I would describe his next ten years as spent in the world of music. He describes them as being a rock and roll gypsy. Then came work as a buyer for Selfridges, followed by a spell in the family motor "pre-sale preparation" business. Incidentally his immaculate 80,000 mile plus Carlton (The English Chevrolet) testifies that the family lessons were well learned.

Then one day it happened. A customer not only suggested a sales career but offered Terry a job. The way was open, the course was set. The course that on October 6th took us to Burton-on-Trent.

10.30 a.m.

As we approached Burton I looked forward to the aroma of well brewed hops that hangs over Britain's beer capital. However, we turned aside a mile or so

outside town to the Burton Technical College. A large hall is to be converted into a drama studio. Terry prepared the scheme-lighting, drapes and seating and today's visit was to fix a starting date and dot 'i's and cross 't's with Nick Jones, the Senior Course Tutor of the Drama Section, and Jean Dutton, the Head of Drama.

12.30 a.m.

Off again to deliver a quotation for a Galaxy to a theatre. Which one? ... are, an unfriendly eye might see this article. The customer had already warned Terry that he "might be tied up". When the two eager beavers arrived at the stage door we were told "Sorry - rehearsal in progress".

Reluctantly we gave up on this one till the next day - Terry doesn't believe in abandoning a quotation un-chaperoned and I agree - and we went on to check on the Environ installation in a nearby hotel.

2.00 p.m.

A semi chance meeting leads to an enquiry for six Minims. Terry gently suggests the addition of Barndoors. Order achieved!



2.30 p.m.

Begin the search for a working telephone. First two full of coins so no go. The third

box obviously works, as it contains an elderly and irascible gentleman who gestures vigorously at the unknown party at the other end, finally slamming down the handset. Terry springs in to the box and Brentford receives ten minutes of such intense communication that from the pavement outside I can actually feel will power going southward down the lines.

3.30 p.m.

A school has decided to turn an old class room into a drama studio. Discussion followed by measurement. Are the roof ties strong enough for lighting bars? Is there a 60 amp supply? Where will the desk go? All to be settled. It must not be hurried. However much or little the customer is spending, it will be a great deal of money to him, and a worth while project to us.

4.30 p.m.

Tea offered by customer and consumed by Strand. Back to Leicester. Reports and a scheme for Terry to produce. A hundred and fifty miles home for your Editor. No day for a Strand salesman is ever totally typical. But October 6th was a fair sample.

*This reminds me of my last meeting with our first hero, Bob Schiller. It was for breakfast in a humble coffee shop just outside Kansas City. Grapefruit, were ordered. They turned out not to be the magnificent fruit one expects in the U.S. But like a stoic Englishman I chewed my way through about half of mine. Bob dipped a spoon and rejected his immediately. The waitress asked him "All finished?". Bob replied "I can only take one mouthful of pith and pips!". I felt at that moment America was right.

Dim and Bright



in Euston Road

The Euston Road studios of Thames Television has the first installation of our new PIP - Plug in Professional - dimmers, controlled by yet another TV Galaxy.

Between 306 and 316 Euston Road is one of the few television studios in central London. It is the home of Thames Television, a leading independent contractor, among whose distinguished programmes seen around the world have been "Edward and Mrs Simpson", "The

World at War", Benny Hill and now the excellent "Paradise Postponed".

Studio 5, the current project, is fairly small at only 2000 square feet, but it is heavily used because participants in news and current affairs programmes can easily be gathered at this focus of transport in London.

Robin Stevens, the engineer in charge of the project, was kind enough to give me a technical briefing.



Studio 5 control room Galaxy.

Studio 5

The control suite is surprisingly large for the size of studio because for very large outside broadcasts it becomes the

control centre for the total independent coverage.

There are 242 lighting socket outlets, and a PIP dimmer for each. 35 sockets are at studio floor level, 20 on the lighting gallery and the remainder feeding the forty five powered hoists. Because of the lack of studio height, stemming from the use of a converted building, there is no grid, the hoists being fixed to the studio ceiling.

A Useful Extension of a Hoist Numbering System

Each circuit has a number which identifies the hoist and the outlet and the dimmer capacity. Channels are numbered from 11 - hoist 1 circuit 1 - to 455, hoist 45 circuit 5. Channels numbered '5' have 5kW dimmers, the remainder having 2.5kW.

"Personality Prom"

This is the device in the Galaxy which allows special circuit numbering, to suit a particular studio or stage layout, skipping unallocated numbers automatically.

The Galaxy has a disc unit and a



Robin Stevens, the engineer for the project, with PIP dimmers.

memory back-up. The staff at a busy studio where many programmes are broadcast 'live' understandably feel that setting up a pin patch is too time consuming and need the immediate response of the disc as well as the main Galaxy memory.

And on the Hoists?

I am pleased to report that 90% of the lanterns are Quartzcolor, some bearing honourable long service scars.

Broads as Houselights

The studio originally had mercury discharge lamps for its "house lighting". These took some ten minutes to reach their operating output, so 300 watt tungstens were added to ensure light as soon as the house system was turned on!

The new system uses 21 kW Broad floods controlled by pre-set Environ dimmers programmed to give a one second ramp up to a maximum of 140 volts.

Lamp life will probably be extended tenfold by the gradual ramp up and by the restriction to the 140 volt maximum. ■

Cries for Help

or 25 years of the Strand U.K. Service Department

"It won't start!"
"It won't switch to rinse!"
"I can't get any lights up!"

Three heart cries from the customers of three different industries. If you consider the companies who market technical products, the long stayers are the ones who support their products in the field. From 1914 we have always looked after our products, but it was a quarter of a century ago that the Service Department was formally set up as a separate operation.

"The Amateurs won't stand for it!"

This was the cry in the company as travelling costs continued to rise in the 60's and 70's, and thus the cost of making

service calls.

Add to this the growing complexity of the equipment as electronics took over on the control side. After all, it was nearly twenty years ago that the last Junior 8 left the Kirkcaldy factory.

Local Service the Answer

Thus the setting up of the local service network that operates today, bringing reasonably local service to all parts of the U.K.

Our service agents are all trained by us and kept up to date by a constant flow of service bulletins.

Fred Brown, the doyen of the department is responsible for this training. He circulates constantly round the country on his mission.

"Fog in the Channel - Continent Cut Off"

This famous London evening paper headline of some years ago is not true for Strand Lighting overseas customers.

All our Agents abroad send staff to Brentford for service training on a regular basis. Customers from overseas and at home who wish to carry out their own memory system maintenance also send their staff for training.

A typical week for one of our service engineers might include a routine service on an MMS in Manchester, an emergency dash to London's West End and then a flight to the Middle East to commission a Galaxy. ■



Fred Brown, doyen of the Service Department. Fred is responsible for U.K. service agent training.



Off on an overseas service call. Just a few tools and an oscilloscope and Ian Lake is ready for Heathrow.



Not every customer problem has an off the cuff answer. This one appears to need deep contemplation by Fred Humphrey of Contract Management. Ed Pagett (Right) has obviously seen it all before.



The Service Department workshop. Terry Twyford (Service Manager) on the left of picture addresses his troops.

Architectural Lighting Control

It was lighting, that created today's sophisticated electrical supply system and the subsequent industries that now inhabit the electrical sector.

Surprisingly, it is only quite recently that conventional switching arrangements have been challenged. Typically switches are placed near a room entrance. The larger the room, the more switches. The result - the first arrival in the morning will switch on all the lighting regardless of need, and it will be left to the last to leave at night to turn off.

During the working day the entire installed lighting load will have blazed merrily away. Independent studies have shown that significant savings in energy consumption can be achieved by providing lighting only when it is needed in response to occupancy of a space and in relation to existing daylight. Our first occupant could have arrived when it was still dark outside. But later in the morning, daylight penetration in many areas may be quite sufficient to obviate the need for artificial lighting at all. But the occupants will probably be too busy to notice and the arrangement of switches will act as a further deterrent to switching off.

Happily, a solution exists which enables areas with a high daylight factor to be automatically controlled in response to available daylight. A photocell detector and amplifier can take over this task, feeding a continuous signal to Environ dimmers so that artificial light will fade or increase to maintain a target illuminance at the work place. Dimming to provide a gradual transition from one state to another has a proven psychological benefit as a fade change goes undetected, where abrupt switching will often interrupt the working pattern and become a cause of annoyance and complaint. The maximum benefits of such a system can be derived by controlling the row of lighting nearest to the window.

Supplying lighting to match occupancy falls into two major categories. Where lighting can be scheduled in advance or where only occasional use is made of a work space. Many places have distinct



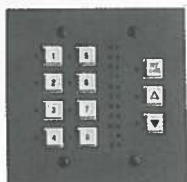
Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre London. Fluorescent dimming by Environ.

working patterns. For example, a hotel restaurant. Breakfast is served between defined morning hours and breakfast suggests a bright and cheerful ambience. Later, for lunch, the mood will change - different lighting arrangements will be called for. In the evening more subtle effects will be needed to create the appropriate atmosphere. In between these set times, a different working level is in order, whilst place settings are re-organised and the cleaning is done. Retail operations have their specific patterns too, boosting lighting to respond to high trading periods, dropping back for after hours for shelf re-stocking and for cleaning.

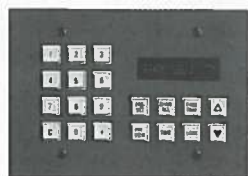
Environ Programmable Control enables considerable sophistication to be introduced into scheduling lighting needs and levels. At its heart is a small module into which plugs a program cartridge customised to the geographic and switching configuration of the building. For time scheduling a master station unit is utilised which can control up to 99 channels, providing 9 presets plus clean up and blackout. It has 7 day clock operation with 30 hour back-up in the



Slider Control Outstation



Push button Outstation with Preset



Master Outstation

event of a power failure. Fade rates can be set anywhere up to a leisurely 998 seconds. Electronic lock-out prevents unauthorised intervention.

This master station can be supplemented by a variety of local and simpler outstations. Taking our hotel restaurant example, a four pre-set panel can correspond to the four different lighting needs throughout the day and be actuated by the appropriate staff to call up the stored presets.

Whilst many work spaces have more than one use, some rooms are only used occasionally and what is needed is a means of simply switching lights on or off. Meeting rooms and storage areas are cases in point and a presence detector can determine that the space is occupied. Once that area is vacated the lighting will automatically extinguish after a pre-determined interval. Such a device has recently been introduced into Strand's Environ programme.

Whilst dimming has been available for architectural applications for many years, it is only recently that it has been linked to a switching control philosophy. Now we need no longer think of lighting as being 'ON' or 'OFF' but as comprising a set of parameters we can choose how to control. These can include:-

- Level; any state between full on and off and stored as pre-sets.
- Rate of change; the fade rate between one state or pre-set and the next.
- Time; pre-determining when lighting actions are called for related to a clock/calendar.

The ability to control these parameters gives an entirely new dimension to the lighting designer. We now have the tools to advance lighting design through the flexibility of this control philosophy. The possibilities are endless. Dramatic displays in retail operations using lighting to both accent and animate the merchandise, or special display, to dramatise reception areas of prestige buildings, create a subtle lighting scene or suggest a mood. In the office, traditional tasks are changing from reading papers at desk level, to scanning VDU screens where the ability to locally adjust lighting levels needs to be provided.

Today's interior environment is less likely to remain static. The refurbishment cycle has shortened rapidly in recent

years, whether it be to create new excitement in a retail operation, attract customers to restaurants or deal with the changing needs in offices, the days of fixed arrangements are over. The ability to change lighting frequently to suit the changed application of a space now becomes realistically achievable once we discard the traditional wall box switch and think instead of re-programming instead of re-wiring.

Environ Programmable Control makes tomorrow's world possible today. ■

by David Brooks

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