

# STRANDLIGHT

• THE • INTERNATIONAL • JOURNAL • OF • STRAND • LIGHTING •

## Aspects of Lighting

*The new Strand PALS automated lighting system makes its West End debut in 'Aspects of Love'.*

The central problem confronting lighting designer Andrew Bridge when considering the new Andrew Lloyd Webber musical 'Aspects of Love', currently at London's Prince of Wales theatre, was that there were some sixty scenes, each with its own lighting needs, and no space for a massive lighting rig.

By West End standards very few spots had to fill many different roles. They had to be able to change colour, direction and beam angle to fill the various tasks allocated to them and they had to be able to repeat the designer's choice of settings again and again. In the end the main burden of the lighting is carried by only twenty-six Strand PALS units — thirteen Cantata PC's and thirteen Cadenza PC spots. The rig has 65 PALS colour changers on front-of-house Cantata profiles and a multiplicity of various units on ladders just behind the proscenium, but the PALS controlled units cover the all important acting area.

### The Choice

Special consultant Howard Eaton researched the various automated lighting systems available and, together with Andy Bridge and Mike Odam, the production electricians for 'Aspects', selected Strand's PALS. The main qualities of PALS are its reliability and ability to repeat lantern settings continually with great accuracy. It is not a pop concert system for flashing beams around on stage for effect — it is a serious system whose movements are relatively slow and deliberate but are above all reliable and accurate.

### How PALS Works

Direction is controlled by separate motors

controlling pan (340° of sideways movement) and tilt (90° of up and down movement) while another motor controls focus and yet another the iris. Intensity is, of course, handled by conventional dimmers while the memory system, in this case a Galaxy 3, provides the repeatability for performance after performance of all functions, including colour changes by scrollers.

In this particular show it was decided to separate control of the selection of circuits and their levels from the PALS lantern

control. This is not strictly necessary as all the lighting functions can be controlled by a single push-button.

### Getting The Show On

Although we had already completed a very large television PALS installation (see Strandlight number 7) 'Aspects of Love' was to be the first ever full theatre use. No question here of the opportunity for a quiet little trial set up in mid-Wales away from the London critics and the near

instantaneous word of mouth that flashes in hours around the theatre's technical world. We would be on stage and on trial at the heart of one of the most eagerly awaited and heavily publicised and advance booked shows ever.

We had exactly ten weeks to get the whole installation supplied and up and running. We knew that success would mean instant good publicity within the theatre world not only in the U.K. but around the globe as the various touring companies set forth. We also knew that

anything less than total success could damn the system.

After all, the whole design concept of 'Aspects' depended on few lamps doing the tasks of many. With so much at stake Alan Luxford was put in charge of the project by Russell Dunsire with one simple instruction. "Just see that it all works!". And it does.

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Alan Luxford of Strand Lighting on stage at the Prince of Wales Theatre where 'Aspects of Love' is the current success.

## Cats - The Show with Impact

When singer Marti Webb takes to the stage in the touring production of Andrew Lloyd Webbers' musical 'Cats', she is well and truly under the influence of Strand.

For an Impact board controls a total of 210 lighting cues used in the production currently at Blackpool Winter Garden's Opera House.

The 3000-seat theatre, the largest in Britain, has been geared up to take even more lighting cues than the original West End production.

A cast of 27 'cats' performs beneath a battery of Lekos, Cantatas, 252 projectors and Act 6 dimmers.

Tour electrician Fraser Hall said, "The average musical has quite a large number of lighting cues, but this production has even more than usual."

"We rely heavily on Strand Lights, but we have a very reliable supplier in Luff Light and Sound."



## Blueprint for The Future

An easy-reference guide providing a blueprint for future theatrical and architectural lighting design, has been published to mark our 75th year.

The 96-page colour brochure, packed with facts, figures, technical specifications on all current Strand products, and expert tips, is intended to become the key reference work for the industry.

Featuring pictures and data from the milestones of Strand Lighting's history, 'The Strandbook' outlines the thinking and developments behind today's market-leading Strand products.

Lighting experts have used Strand's three quarters of a century of experience to come up with helpful hints for lighting everything from an amateur drama to a major television studio production.

On the architectural side, designers are given advice on the most effective way of achieving 'mood' lighting in all situations, from restaurants and showrooms, to museums and airports.

Guidance is also given on the use of filters and colour selections.

The brochure provides the most comprehensive-ever catalogue of Strand lighting equipment, controls and services, with an easy-to-follow index of brand names, local Strand sales contacts and



distributors. A supplementary price list gives current UK costs for all available equipment. 'The Strandbook' is available to all readers at a price of £4.00 per copy, including postage and packing.

To obtain a copy of 'The Strandbook' send a cheque for £4.00, made payable to 'Strand Lighting Limited', to: Strand Lighting Limited, Grant Way (Off Syon Lane), Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 5QD, England.

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# Saudi Festival Hall Completed

*A prestigious Theatre and Festival Hall complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, has been completed and handed over by the Tele-Stage Group of companies.*

The 800 seat Community Centre Theatre and Festival Hall at the Diplomatic Quarters is the most modern complex of its kind in the Kingdom.

Theatre installation included a three section hydraulically operated orchestra lift, two single section main stage lifts of similar design, and a large six segment electrically-powered acoustic stage enclosure designed to 55db attenuation. Upper stage machinery included seventy five computer-controlled point hoists, motorised lighting bridge and towers and various curtains and screens.

The Festival Hall included an electrically-powered acoustically treated telescopic wall that can divide the large hall into two separate function areas to be used simultaneously, complete with projection screens and other facilities.

Lighting for both Theatre and Festival Hall is supplied by Strand Lighting.

Stage machinery supply was a collaboration between two companies, Tele-Stage supplying the mechanical equipment and expertise, with Hoffend & Sons Inc. providing the micro-processor control in the form of a Micro Commander. Micro Commander is a sophisticated rigging and machinery control system specially developed for theatre use.

The heart of the stage lighting installations are two Galaxy memory systems. These control a range of PIP dimmers and Strand luminaires.



## The Theatre

In the theatre the control is a Galaxy 2 Arena system with a 144 channel electronics crate, Alpha keyboard, printer and 14 inch colour VDU. There is a pod mounted dual floppy disc drive 240 channel pin patch and standard effects panel.

There are five 24 x 25 amp PIP dimmer modules with outputs distributed to auditorium lighting bridge, FOH booms, portal bridge, portal towers, (capable of moving in and out as a false proscenium), fly gallery and stage level dip boxes.

The specification that the Tele-Stage Group had to work from stated that the lighting system should be designed to cope with 'all types of events from classical theatre to conferences'.

To meet this specification Strand luminaires of various types have been employed but mainly the Cadenza and Harmony models, ranging from the Cadenza 9/15, through 12/22 and 19/32 to Harmony 15/28 and 22/40. The Cadenza PC luminaires added a most useful instrument to the rig.

The auditorium lighting bridge is equipped with three Solo 1kW CSI follow spots with two Solo 2kW on the fly galleries.

The auditorium bridge is supplemented by ten Pollux 5kW luminaires for extra 'punch' when video is being used.

## The Festival Hall

The control in the Festival Hall is once

again a Galaxy 2 Arena system. This is as in the main theatre except housing 96 channel electronics crate with 120 channel pin patch.

There are two racks of 24 x 25 amp and one rack of 12 x 25 amp PIP dimmers.

Because of the totally different lay-out and requirements of the Festival Hall there is only one permanent lighting position and this is the bridge.

This bridge is equipped with a mixture of Cadenza 19/32 and Harmony 22/40 luminaires. The remaining luminaires, plus 2kW Solo's are distributed around the performance area using Hercules Stands and the well proven folding braced stands to give complete flexibility.

The complete installation was carried out by the Tele-Stage Group employees with Andy Quinn starring as the project manager ably supported by Lionel Prosser as the electrical supervisor.

The commissioning of the lighting controls was undertaken by Strand Lighting, featuring Philip Lehman on 'Scope'.

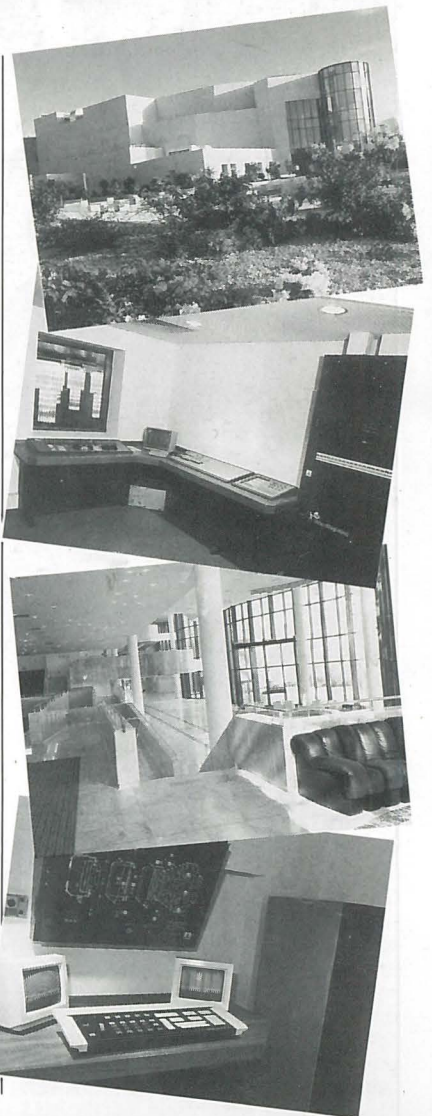
Photography courtesy of Tele-Stage Associates (UK) Ltd.

— Client:  
Riyadh Development Authority

— Consultant:  
Spearplan, West Germany  
— General Contractor: Dumez

— Specialist Contractor:  
Tele-Stage Group  
E. A. Juffali and Bros.

— Theatre equipment:  
Tele-Stage Associates (UK) Ltd.  
Hoffend & Sons Inc.  
Strand Lighting Ltd.



## Ten Scene Christmas Trees in Canada

by Phil Bernard

*A picture is worth a thousand words, but Phil Bernard is, as always, capable of a few more; especially about this project.*

The shiplike design on the pier known as the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre, is now a familiar world landmark after its debut as the Canada Pavilion at EXPO '86.

The fine tent-like 'sails' form the roof of the main hall and became an interesting framework for an Environ 2 lighting project last year.

For the 1987 Christmas season, Westsun Lighting was asked to present a design which would show off the structure. From the basic triangular shape of the tent-like



'sails' was derived the shape of the traditional evergreen tree (incidentally a mainstay of the British Columbia economy).

With a few lighting baubles added to the body of the seventy-five foot high symbols, we have decorated Christmas trees on a grand scale. The dimmers? Well, each side of the Centre is fed from a permanently installed 7759 Environ 2 cabinet, each handling close to 40,000 watts through a combination of 2.4 and 6.0 kW modules.

Why dimmers? What the picture does not tell you is that we added a 7401 Programmable Master station on the front end and created a ten scene auto cycle programme depicting the dressing of the trees for Christmas. Now, besides the obvious benefit of central control, seven day

programming, and savings in lamp life, we were, through the magic of presentation, telling a story that both enhanced the public image of the Centre and accented the building design.

The 'auto-cycle' feature of Environ 2 cycles presets, using programmable 'fade' and 'dwell' times, which produces a subtle pattern of dissolving events symbolising an expression of the holiday season. With programme changes each year we hope to tell a far greater story through the Environ than could ever be present in a static system.

For more information on products featured in this article tick box 3 on the coupon on the back page

## SMX - The Complete Lighting Interface System

SMX, Strand Multiplex, is a revolutionary new protocol which will liberalise the lighting entertainment industry by eliminating the need for additional control boards.

At the ABTT Conference (UK) in April this year, one of the major problems highlighted by the chief electricians was that equipment bought from one manufacturer could not 'talk' to equipment bought from another manufacturer. This meant that if a combination of lighting effects was required a corresponding number of control boards was needed. This in turn meant more operators had to be used and invariably the exercise became too expensive to contemplate.

The problem of communication, or rather lack of it, has arisen as each manufacturer has taken advantage of the latest techniques in the computer industry to ensure their product has a competitive edge. As equipment has become more sophisticated with the addition of motion or special effects, ie. PALS or Parscan 2, existing communication interfaces have been unable to cope with the quantity and type of messages that need to be relayed. A new method of communication or protocol needed to be created.

Strand R&D departments around the world have been working for the last two years to create a protocol that will answer all these needs. Strand is offering this protocol, called SMX, free to the industry.

Lighting and Sound International will be printing an article written by D. Bertenshaw, Strand's European R&D director, explaining SMX in more detail.

For more information on products featured in this article tick box 4 on the coupon on the back page



## A Message from Richard Harris

*This edition of Strandlight marks the last under Richard Harris's editorship. He leaves the lighting industry with our best wishes to pursue a career in sound.*

"Eight years is a long time. I took over the Editorial Chair of 'TABs', which transmogrified itself into 'Strandlight', in 1981. It has been a task lightened by pleasure, both in its doing and from the many friendships and interesting acquaintances that it has brought me around the world.

But all things change. After twenty-five years of lighting involvement I have now turned from light to sound. I have accepted the post of Marketing Manager with a manufacturer of sound mixing consoles.

As this company operates world wide and as a great part of their business is in theatre sound, many readers may well come across my tracks from time to time. So perhaps it is 'adieu' rather than 'farewell'.

I shall particularly miss my editorial visits and the letters to the editor, but I am still involved in the theatre, and still involved on behalf of a good company."

## Strand Lights a Museum

*A combination of theatrical and architectural lighting was called for with Strand Lighting's prestigious project to light the new National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford.*

The museum includes re-creations of photographers studios through the ages, exhibits tracing the history of cinema, theatrical sets illustrating film and TV lighting — including a TV news studio — and also houses the Kodak museum.



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## From Paraffin To Preludes

"Make the Wookey Hole Caves more dramatic and exciting." That was the challenge thrown at lighting designer Steve Wentworth by the management of Madame Tussauds, who operate the Somerset tourist attraction.

Considering that in the 1920's the caves were lit by the highly dangerous method of throwing paraffin onto lakes in the caves and then setting light to it, finding an even more dramatic lighting system seemed like a tall order.

Fortunately for Steve he knew where to go for help and devised a lighting scheme using Strand theatre lighting and water-

proof equipment. The main problem with Wookey Hole, near Wells, was the amount of water running underground. Steve's lighting scheme had to contend with underground lakes, a sizeable river and countless rivulets, and constant trickles of water on all surfaces.

An additional problem was the low temperature inside the caves — on average 9°C — and the exceptionally high humidity.

Steve chose the driest possible locations for the theatre lighting equipment, basing his scheme on the Strand Cantata and Prelude ranges, with motorised effects discs and gobos; waterproof fittings; 1000 Watt waterproof floodlights; low voltage fittings; Par 64 cans and under water fittings for use in pools and lakes.

In conjunction with electronics experts from Madame Tussauds, he devised a computerised system to run low voltage motorised units with colour changers in the final cave.

Built-in is a digital sound store allowing music to be played during the finale to the tour. Altogether, 240 separate circuits were needed, using marine waterproof cable running from a central point in each cave to outlying waterproof socket boxes. This alone took ten weeks to complete, since fittings all had to be attached to rock faces.

It was found that the guides could not guarantee positioning themselves in the correct place to operate the lights each time, so in the end an infra-red system was designed to allow them more flexibility.

A Smart computerised control system was used to record up to 12 presets per cave. This offered 12 faders per page of storage with the option of recording a total of 12 cues per cave. The system was adapted to accept an infra-red signal to allow any of the 12 cues to be selected in any sequence. Each guide has an identical hand-held transmitter with 12 selection buttons to correspond with the 12 lighting states in each cave.

To cope with humidity, dimmer wall racks were fitted in each cave, with each dimmer containing thermostatically controlled heaters.

With lights and fittings hidden from public view, an exciting effect has been created, with rocks apparently springing to life at the touch of a button. The main advantage of the new system is that it can be reprogrammed in the future, as circumstances dictate.

Equipment used includes 13 Prelude 16/30 profiles, 2 Prelude 28/40 profiles and 5 Cantatas.

Wookey Hole caves, in Somerset's Mendip Hills were formed millions of years ago by an underground river scouring-out the limestone rock. Dripping water inside the caves has formed huge stalactites and stalagmites. In recent years divers have discovered previously unknown caverns along the course of the river.

## Touring the Galaxy

Richard Harris visits Mike Odam and Paddy Paterson, of Limelight Designs, in deepest Surrey and hears all about the touring lighting rig for 'Song and Dance'.

A touring rig can mean many things. It can be a couple of 23's, four 123's and a Junior 8 assisting an amateur group to look reasonably professional while doing a three hander in a village hall.

At the other extreme I remember seeing a pop group arriving at Manchester's Ringway airport. They and all their flight cases had been disgorged from a 747 early that morning after a flight from Miami. A dozen pantechnicons then trundled to the Free Trade Hall. They did one 'concert' and were off the next day for Tokyo.

Closer to the latter than the former is the subject of this piece, now in its U.K. phase.

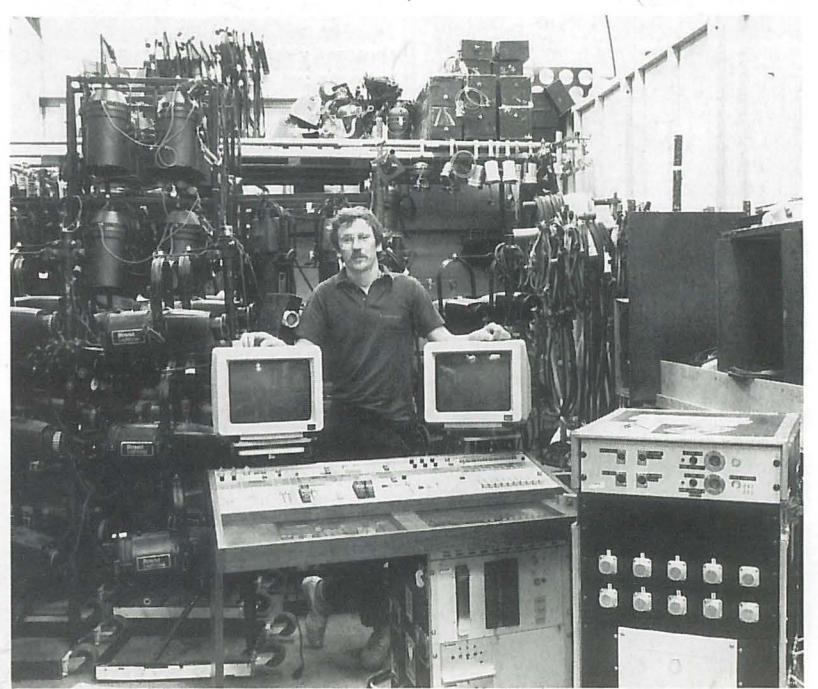
Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Song and Dance' was always planned as a touring

All the rig is either flight cased or 'meat racked'. The Galaxy for example was very cleverly adapted by Luff's. The crate, which has its own flight case, goes under the desk at one end and a folding leg supports the other end. A flat flight case contains the desk, separate small cases holding the VDU's in warm rubbery embrace for travel.

Notable among the all-Strand lantern rig are the Lekos. These truly are now the world's 'professional' touring lantern.

Attentive readers may remember that 200 Lekos contribute to Andy Bridge's superb lighting for 'Phantom of The Opera'. I asked Mike if he would do another tour taking all his own lighting with him again. 'Yes, because we are totally self-contained', he said.

'When you have only got two days to set up that really counts. I tell the theatres we are going to that we shall need 400 Amps and 3 phases — and that's all we shall need!!'



The Hardware Behind the Glamour: Mike Odam poses with the touring lighting rig temporarily at rest in Limelight Designs Surrey Depot. The complete rig, including a Touring Galaxy, is on hire from Luff Light and Sound and the lighting is all Strand. Note the Lekos on their 'Meat Rack'.

## The Northern School of Contemporary Dance

How a redundant Leeds Synagogue took on a new role.

Last year the first professional dance training school outside London opened in the Chapelton suburb of Leeds, a large West Yorkshire city, famous as the home of Britain's ready-made clothing trade as well as of many engineering companies.

The local council provided a grant for the purchase and conversion of a synagogue whose congregation had long since left the area. A further grant was provided by the Gulbenkian Foundation.

The lighting rig was designed by Jeff Riley, the School's Technical Director, who worked out the scheme with David Cusworth, our local area representative.

Stage width is 16.25m, depth 8.38m, giving a usable dance width of 12.5m. There are four lighting bars, the cyc. bar having twelve 1kW Nocturnes, the No.3 bar having four 2kW Cadenza F's for back lighting, No.2 bar having eight 1.2kW Cantata F's (four with 4 way semaphore colour changes) and two 26/44 Cantata

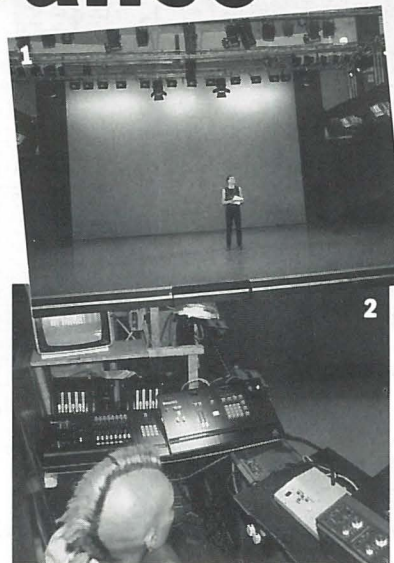
profiles. No.1 bar, half a metre in front of the setting line, has eight 1.2kW Cantata F's (four with colour changers) and two 26/44 Cantata profiles.

As always for dance, side lighting is a key element. In the Northern School the stage is masked by three wing flats and each of the bays created has on each side vertical fixed booms, each boom having a 1.2kW 18/32 Cantata profile and two 1.2kW Cantata PCs. There are also six-side high mounted 1.2kW Cantata 18/32 profiles.

The back lighting to the grey 'Studio Isora' cyclorama is by 'rescued' lengths of compartment battens. These old dears lie on their backs giving their all and still enjoying a useful life after at least forty years of looking down!

Control is by 120 channel M24 and M24 effects. There are fifteen Act 6 dimmer packs mounted on the inner face of the now disused balcony. The joys of multiplexing made this location as convenient as any other.

A most interesting and well-planned and



executed project in an interesting building of very high quality.

- 1 An audience eye view.
- 2 At the M24.

## Transformation Scene

How a Victorian classroom became a Video Production Studio

About a year ago our Midlands representative, Terry Abbs was called in by Queen Elizabeth's School, Mansfield, Notts. Their idea was to transform a mid-19th century classroom into a Video Studio. It was next to the Drama Room, and had the great advantage of good ceiling height.

With the addition of black wall drapes to secure a full blackout, a fixed internally wired barrel lighting grid, Preludes plus Minims with Tempus dimmers and control the job was done — and now the 'Sir John Eastwood Old Elizabethan Studio' is a fine extra facility for the school.

1 Before: A Victorian classroom — but it had potential, with sufficient headroom.

2 After: The 'Sir John Eastwood Old Elizabethan Studio', used for Video production.

3 Schoolboy learning to use a Strand Tempus 2G manual control board.



show. When Luff Lighting and Sound, Strand's South London dealers and now one of the countries leading rental houses, won the contract to supply the whole rig, including a Galaxy, they handed over the whole of the equipment to Limelight Designs. Limelight have the responsibility for running the show lighting as well as ensuring that the rig arrived at each venue and is erected, checked and focussed on time.

And what a tour it has been and continues to be. Arranged to suit the availability of theatres rather than the convenience of travel, Plymouth led straight to Bristol but then came Amsterdam followed awkwardly by Leeds. And at this point the ferry strikes did cause the odd moment of anxiety.

Consider last Christmas. Mike Odam and his team did two shows in Frankfurt on Christmas Day, 'getting out' on Christmas night to open in Hamburg two days later.

The show's lighting design, by John B. Read, involves a box truss over the stage which at its maximum is 48 feet by 26 feet and is flown 30 feet above stage level, with ladder frames at the sides hooking onto the trusses. There are wheeled side booms, moved away while the 'Song' scenery is deployed and then used during 'Dance'. A backlighting bar is rigged on a house bar and bars 1 and 1a are rigged just inside the pros. In Germany a special FOH truss went on tour, but in the UK, host theatres' own FOH lighting has been used.

The rig goes into a 40-foot trailer and takes up about a quarter of another trailer. The touring electricians team consists of Mike Odam himself, the Galaxy operator and two production electricians. Once the show is running a member of the team goes ahead to the next date to prepare the ground and of course, this arrangement ensures that at least one of the Limelight crew is fresh, however tough the get-out has been. Mike recalled one get-out which happened at the same time as a rock and roll get-in. And the scene dock was so high above the ground level that a hoist was involved.

The whole 'Song and Dance' lighting rig can be set up and flashed out in eight hours. The carpenters lay the false stage floor, then focussing goes on from about 8a.m. to, say, 3p.m. while the dancers warm up. Then there is a final check and the team return relaxed, confident and ready for the evening show. Except on the odd occasion when 'focussing' finished at 7.29 for a 7.30 curtain!

### The Touring Rig

No.	Description
1	Galaxy Control System
196	2kW Dimmers
20	5kW Dimmers
212	Strand Punchlites (Par Can) — (220 Volt Lamps)
175	Strand 6 x 12 Lekos
69	Strand 6 x 16 Lekos
2	500W Beamclites
16	2kW Cadenza Prism Convex
7	2kW Cadenza Fresnel and barndoors
1	Quartzcolor Bambino Fresnel 2kW
2	Solo 2kW Followspots with stands
10	Semaphore colour change unit for Cadenza PC
2	Optimist smoke guns
30	6-way internally wired 7ft 6ins bars
8	Lamp Ladders
8	Mobile Booms
1	2 Rung Zargees Ladder
1	6 Rung Step Ladder
1	Tallescope
120	Lengths muticore socapex
1	6 Way Q Light System

All above to be meatracked or flightcased.

### Trussing

7	Corner blocks
17	8FT
10	4FT
9	5FT
12	1 Ton motor hoists

Plus all assorted rigging and distribution for above.

All trussings to be 'toblerone' type painted black.



# A Theatre For All Seasons

The lights have gone up again on one of Britain's finest theatres, The Theatre Royal in Newcastle, following restoration work costing more than £8 million.

As the principal touring theatre of the North, The Theatre Royal has played host to many major companies, including Scottish Opera and Ballet, and is the Royal Shakespeare Company's base during its annual tour of the North East.

In 1985, 151 years after the theatre was built, it closed for refurbishment which has mirrored architect Frank Matcham's 1901 designs. Working from Matcham's original drawings, designer Clare Ferraby has restored the Edwardian colour scheme of dark and pale greens, red, pink and gilt which once highlighted the plasterwork on tier fronts, ceilings and the proscenium arch.

Lighting, of course, became a key feature of the restoration, both for stage and architectural considerations, with Scottish company Northern Light acting as consultants and suppliers for the lighting control system, and installation of lighting being undertaken by Strand.

The control system is a Galaxy 2 Premier with two theatre playback panels, a programmable effects panel and the standard group masters, pre-set masters and channel control panels.

A designer's remote control facility has five infra-red pickup points, two in the auditorium at gallery level, two on the rear of the proscenium arch at fly floor level and one in the prompt corner allowing for a portable receiver downstage centre.

Altogether there are 325 dimmers — 29 × 20A and 296 × 10A. This includes the theatre's original STM dimmers which were re-used to reduce overall costs. There are also 48 independent circuits controlled through the Galaxy.

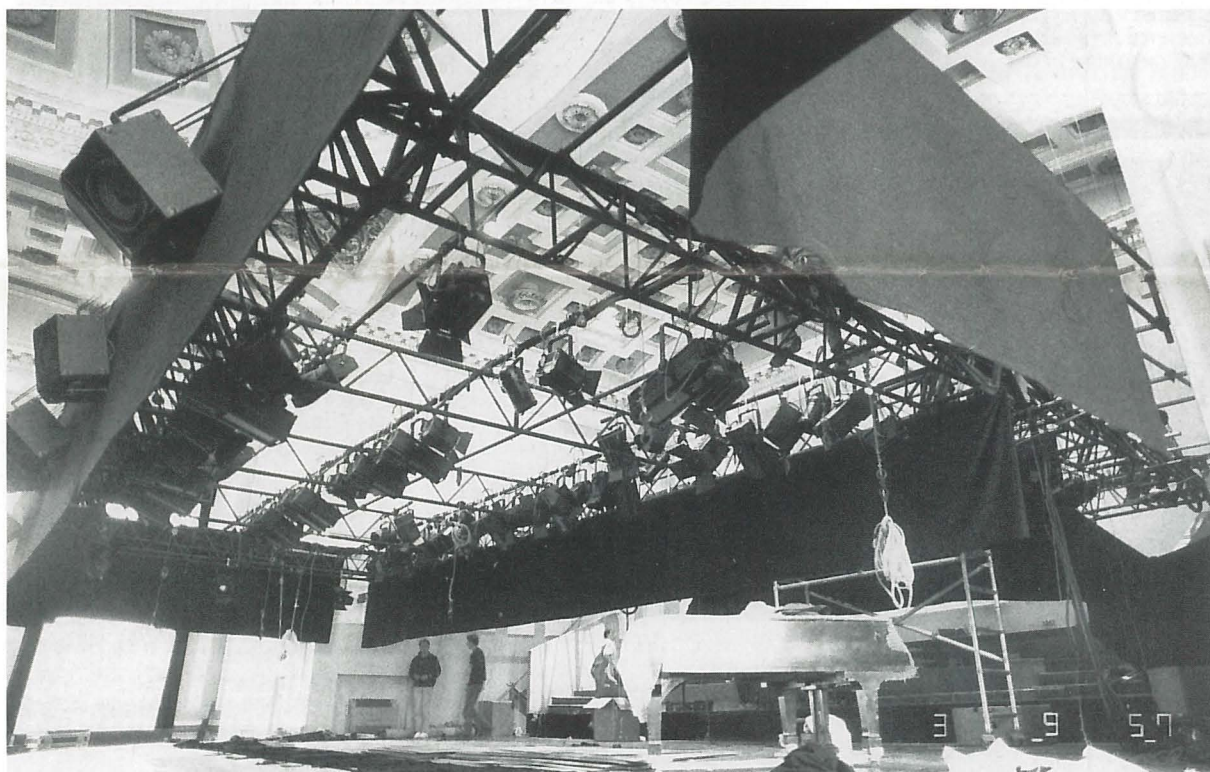
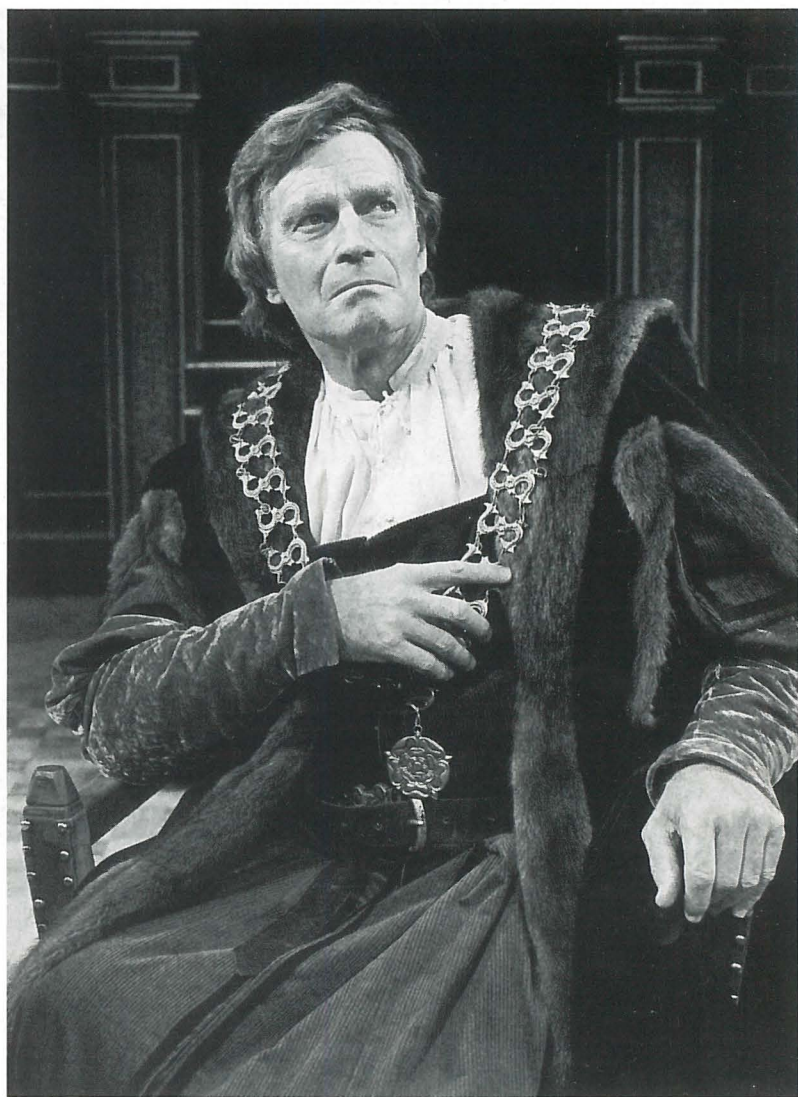
Circuit distribution allows for 100 circuits FOH, 123 circuits at fly floor level and a further 72 across stage level, perches and orchestra pit. The prompt side fly floor has 16 of the FOH circuits, and a further 30 are available for use on both the prompt side fly floor and FOH. These are there to supply equipment on a temporary FOH bridge, which the RSC often has installed. The RSC also frequently uses a tem-

porary forestage, so permanent FOH positions have to allow for steep-rigged lanterns.

Lighting positions at grand and upper circle are removable and the only permanent positions are the gallery front and ceiling. An adaptable front gallery lighting position has been created by removing the former front row of seats and installing a double support bar at the back of the gallery frontage. By doing this, lanterns can be rigged in any position by adding a support tube or a 90° overhang bracket, as necessary.

In the prompt corner, a working lighting control panel has been installed to give the stage manager complete control over performance and fit-up lighting. The system has been designed around a programme controller which provides the logic control for the output contactors from the outstations around the stage area, and the stage manager's control panel.

The Theatre Royal re-opened with 'A Man For All Seasons', starring Charlton Heston in the role of Sir Thomas More. (pictured right)



## The Fringe Benefits from Strand

by Hugh Vanstone

In 1981 The Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh were taken over for the festival period by a company called Assembly Theatre when the venue faced being empty after the 'Festival Club' moved out.

Over the past seven years it has been transformed into a remarkable theatrical centre, and is now regarded as the place to perform during the fringe festival.

Every summer, Assembly Theatre builds five temporary theatre spaces within the Assembly Rooms building. Performance slots in these theatres are then allocated to various companies both from the UK and around the World, by the artistic director of Assembly who is responsible for the overall programme.

This year approximately 60 companies played over 600 performances in three weeks. (The equivalent of one performance a day in a theatre for more than one year and eight months).

The operation of converting the building

into five theatre spaces takes 2600 man hours over just four days. Five articulated lorry loads of equipment are used to build the temporary theatres, which contain: ● 1177 temporary seats ● a mile of scaffolding ● 1500 scaffold fittings ● 500 feet of trussing ● four miles of adhesive tape ● eight miles of electrical cable ● 600 lanterns and ● 280 ways of dimmer.

During the festival there is a full time technical staff of 26, including an electric department of five. To remove the whole, after the festival takes 1400 man hours over just two days.

In 1987 the substantial lighting hire con-



tract was put out to tender, and was eventually won by a main Strand dealer, Stage Electrics of Exeter. Due to the quality of their equipment and high level of service, they were awarded the contract again in 1988. Over the last two years they have supplied the complete lighting rigs, almost exclusively consisting of Strand lanterns and control systems.

The task of supplying the rig is not as easy as it sounds, as the specification can change substantially right up to the closing of the truck doors as lighting designers from 60 companies decide to change a Prelude for a Cantata or add a couple of Coda floods.

The sophisticated computer controlled hire system now in operation at Stage Electrics alleviates some of the problems associated with these last minute changes. It is possible to check instantly the availability and location of equipment at the touch of a few buttons. It is even possible to tell if a few additional items will overload the lorry as the total consignment weight is shown on the hire contract.

It will be possible in future years to loan the Assembly a computer terminal to link with the main processor so that their own staff can make instant amendments to the hire contract themselves, and improve efficiency of the operation.

Taking a tour around the building, the first theatre likely to be discovered is the Supper Room, as it is used as a cafe and bar during the day. In the evening it converts to a 150 seat cabaret venue with an end stage and, lighting wise, a Tempus control system with Prelude lanterns.

The busiest theatre is the Wildman Room, a thrust stage surrounded by 120 seats, with seven performances a day, the first starting at midday, the last at midnight. A 24-way Tempus 2G control with Preludes and Codas comprise the lighting rig.

The Profile lanterns are lifted to their high stirrup position to avoid reducing the already limited headroom under the grid which is flown beneath a suspended ceiling. As the turn round time is so short (30 minutes) there is a rig of Prelude F's to provide general coverage and each shows 'specials' are also permanently focussed and plugged on the grid, and then patched in at the racks for each company as required.

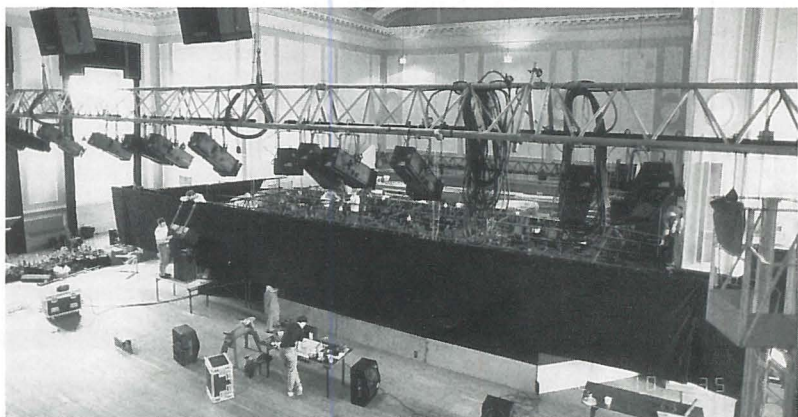
A 36-way Tempus system is used in the

existing balcony, making the total capacity 748. Here there are generally five shows a day with one hour change-overs between them. But as the repertoire is constantly changing during the festival, any spare time is taken up with get-in and rehearsals. The theatre is in use from 9am until 2am the following morning for the best part of four weeks.

A Gemini memory system complete with riggers control is the chosen control. Lighting designers from all over the world, some of whom have never used a resistance dimmer before, let alone a computerised switchboard are quick to master the controls. The equipment proved particularly useful when BBC Scotland installed a supplementary set of dimmers and luminaires for a TV recording, as the multiplex line simply extended to their racks using the spare control ways on the Gemini for their rig.

The rig incorporates everything from Minims to Cadenzas with occasional old favourites thrown in such as Patt 137's with photo flood lamps for lighting effects. Iris 1 flood lights are selected to light the cyc whilst Cantata profiles fitted with semaphore type colour change provide light from the FOH position.

The equipment, supplied by Stage Electrics comprised 150 Harmonys, ninety



Edinburgh Suite, an end stage with 152 seats. Here, with the limited electrical supply and weight restrictions on the grid, 650 watt Preludes again prove the best option.

On the first floor is the Ballroom, certainly the most beautiful room in the building, which was originally opened in 1787. There are three spectacular chandeliers worth in excess of £30,000 each, around which the aluminium trussing is rigged. With just millimetres of clearance a steady hand is required when winching the grid into position.

In the Ballroom 342 temporary seats and a stage 8m wide by 9m deep are installed. A 60-way system controls an assortment of Preludes, Cantatas and Codas.

The largest theatre in the building is the Music Hall where 415 temporary seats form the 'stalls' which rake up to join with

Preludes, a Gemini, a 40-way AMC, 18 and 12-way Tempus plus Solos, Irises, Cadenzas, smoke machines, semaphore colour changers, 58 internally wired six lamp bars, eight miles of cabling — including 2000 metres of Lectriflex multicore and 63A, 100A and 125A 3 phase mains cables and distribution.

And — you have all guessed it — four Patt 23's, without which no theatrical event seems to be complete even now, some five years after the last one left Kirkcaldy.

Some overseas readers might be surprised that theatre lighting for an Edinburgh Festival production should be hired from four hundred miles away. Such, however, are the number and size of Festival events needing our type of lighting that probably every Strand agent in the U.K. has much of his hire stock within a Cadenza's throw of the Royal Mile for that four weeks! ■





# Variety is the Word at The Alhambra

Another gem of the North, Bradford's Alhambra Theatre, has also been given a new lease of life, thanks in no small part to Strand Lighting.

The Alhambra was for years known as 'Yorkshire's Premier Theatre of Varieties'. It was here that Ken Dodd made his name in pantomime, and where a young lad named Ernest Wiseman — later shortened to Ernie Wise — stole the show in a children's revue in 1936.

Opened in 1914, it has featured the top stars of the day such as: Sarah Bernhardt; Florrie Forde; Gracie Fields; George Formby; Paul Robeson, Ivor Novello, Laurel and Hardy; Tommy Cooper; Danny La Rue; Little and Large; and many more.

As part of the total refurbishment, modern facilities were built-in to bring the 1500-seat theatre up to date.

However, the general decor reflects the spirit of the original 1914 design, in red, white, blue and gilt.

New stage lighting equipment installed by Strand includes 38 FOH lighting circuits, 152 stage lighting circuits and a Strand Gemini 180-way lighting board.

Loose equipment includes 14 Harmony 15/28 profiles, 20 Harmony 22/40's and 48 1kW Harmony fresnels, plus two Cadenzas, 26 Iris floods, three four-circuit Groundrows, three follow-spots and 20 Parcans 64's.



The refurbished auditorium.

# Back To Life at The Marina, Lowestoft

Why, as I drove into Lowestoft, did I begin thinking of Los Angeles? Both are near the Ocean, one Pacific and one, according to my 1902 Atlas, German. Smog? Not a chance in those East Coast breezes.

Suddenly I had the answer. In LA gantries over the highways direct a dozen lanes of gleaming cars to such delights as Marina Del Rey or Sepulveda Boulevard. Similar but far narrower gantries as one enters Lowestoft send bicycles and fish lorries to 'Town' or 'Docks'.

But I still prefer Lowestoft, and now my liking for this honest and non-touristy town is confirmed by the opening of the recently refurbished Marina Theatre.

Originally built as a skating rink a hundred years ago, it became a live theatre in 1897. When the all-conquering talkies arrived in 1930 celluloid ruled until a few years ago, when ABC lowered their inverted triangle flag.

All this I learned from the handsome souvenir programme, green with gold tassled cord, which marked the Marina's re-birth last year. One interesting point from this document: during the first period as a live theatre seven different Pantomimes were presented during one

Christmas season! A custom that economics have long since sent right up the beanstalk.

The former Lowestoft show venue, the Sparrows Nest, needed a great deal spending on it, so the decision was made by Waveney District Council to buy the empty cinema and turn it into a local live show and film showcase. I consider they have not only succeeded, but succeeded very economically.

The Marina has been re-seated and recarpeted and a bar-restaurant has been added. A new grid and lines were provided and a complete and very handsome redecoration — green and gold like the souvenir programme — was carried out. All has been done, including purchase, for £850,000. Not a bad bargain at all.

There are nine dressing rooms with showers, a pit for 20 musicians and a playing space of 10.5m x 15.5m.

The lighting? Here my admiration of economy must be tempered by commercial sadness. The M24 and the Strand lanterns were all transferred from the Sparrows Nest! But at least this shows that, once again, Strand equipment lasts and lasts — even in salty sea breezes!



Refurbished Lowestoft Marina Theatre.



Susan Hayes, who is in charge of the theatre, at the re-sited M24.

# The Festival Players

A millionaire businessman with passions for cricket and magic had his own theatre built during the 1930's in the grounds of his Leicestershire mansion. The Stanford Hall Theatre is now an important venue for local repertory companies.

Andrew McGowan, Technical Director of Loughborough's Festival Players, tells the story behind the theatre and its lighting system.

Stanford Hall is a large country house set in several hundred acres of park land and situated approximately two miles north-east of Loughborough, Leicestershire. The Hall dates from 1771 but in 1928 it was purchased by Sir Julien Cahn, the then owner of Nottingham Furnishing Company, now, believed to be part of Cavenish Woodhouse.

Cahn had two passions although legend has it that he lacked any talent in either. Firstly, he owned his own cricket XI with the players being employed by his business empire in one capacity or another during the winter months. Secondly, he was a member of the Magic Circle and after years of providing entertainment to his guests in the library of the Hall he decided to construct a theatre.

In 1936 and at a cost of £73,000 the theatre was duly built at the end of the main hall and connected via a foyer exclusively for the use of Cahn and his guests. The 'hoi polloi' entered from another foyer which is now the main public entrance.

Cahn died in 1944 and after the war the estate was purchased by the Co-operative Union who now use the Hall as a residential training centre. They rarely use the theatre themselves but generously allow the theatre to be hired by local theatrical companies although in the 1950's and 1960's the theatre was regularly used by the Midland Theatre Company and the Lincoln Repertory Company. Sadly, all professional use has now ceased but the theatre is used by six or seven local amateur companies throughout the winter months.

The theatre was constructed and furnished to an extremely high specification and seats 352 people in a raked and fully carpeted auditorium. A projection room houses two 35mm arc projectors and a unique double Brenagraph Arc Follow Spot/special effects projector.

The proscenium has a width of 24 feet and a height of 18 feet with 12 foot wings. The stage depth is 27 feet and there is a full height fly tower with 23 counter-weight and seven hand lines.

Lighting was originally designed for colour mixing and there are still 3 x 4 colour battens, one double three colour cyc batten and 2 x 3 colour cyc towers. Over the last ten years, however, the lighting system has been modernised and we now have in addition:-

FOH 6 x 1 kW Profiles  
4 x Patten 264  
No.1 Bar 8 x Pattern 223 Fresnels

Perches 4 x Pattern 23, 4 x 500W spots  
No.2 Bar 4 x 500W spots  
Cyclorama 4 x Linear Floods  
4 x Pattern 49 1kW Floods  
Floats 4 colour  
Groundrow 3 colour

Three or four years ago a sixty way AMC was installed. This was the first (and probably only) replacement of the 1930's board which was a one-off manufactured by Blackburn and Starling of Nottingham.

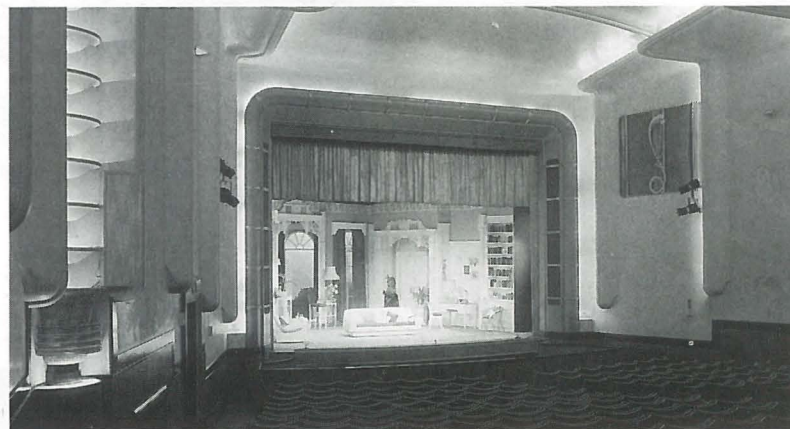
Although not now operating, the original board is still in position on the lighting perch and one of the original dimmer drums has been retained in the Dimmer Room. The board was fairly unique for its age in that it controlled 54 circuits via a 50 volt DC supply to electro-magnets on a continuous revolving drum.

From the photographs I have seen of the Strand system of the time the principle was slightly different in that there were four drums approximately eight feet long and the two magnets rested on the drum and were connected via levers to a sweep arm over a radius of studs connected to various resistance coils.

On the board there was an on/off switch for each circuit plus a three position switch for up/stop/dim. There were no meters or any other way of monitoring levels and the view from the perch was somewhat limited. So as the maximum speed on the dimmers was about eight seconds, if one wanted a half level the dimmer was set to fade, one counted to four, and put the switch to centre. Not very subtle, and a nightmare if more than one or two intermediary positions were required!

A rotary fader was connected to each drum motor to slow the fade to about ten minutes but it was always difficult to tell whether the lights were in fact moving (or the drum had jammed!) and there was always the temptation to 'tweak' up the speed control to make sure things were working — and then find that dawn or sunset was instant.

The Festival Players is an amateur drama company formed in 1953 who pioneered the amateur movement at Stanford Hall by being the first amateur company to appear there in 1954. Since



then they have without break produced a show there every eight weeks or so during the winter season and have just started rehearsals for their one hundred and thirty third production, 'Pack of Lies', which will be performed in February. I should add that the theatre also included on the floor above the auditorium some fifteen bedrooms for the use of the visiting cricket team and, below a six feet thick concrete slab under the raked auditorium, was a beehive style air-raid shelter with air-tight submarine doors and its own ventilating and generating system. There was also a seal pond — now drained but most attractive — and a magnificent heated swimming pool with surrounding stone grottos, fountains and waterfalls.



# Northern Light - a story of Strand's Dealers for Scotland

Northern Light, who represent Strand Lighting in Scotland, are the typical Strand Dealer, but writ large.

They have their headquarters in Leith, the part of Edinburgh from where they cover Eastern Scotland and they cover the West of the country from Govan, a Glasgow Western suburb. (I must explain for overseas readers that although Scotland has a population of only 6 million — of whom a third live in the two principal cities — in area it is nearly as large as England).

In recent years, along with the rest of the UK, Northern Light's projects have more often been the upgrading of theatre facilities in existing buildings than work in new construction. So I have dealt here with two of their recent contracts, both typical of their day-to-day work, and one new from the ground up.

I should also explain that the company carry out stage equipment work as well as having a growing sound operation, supplying speakers, amplifiers and mixing consoles.

John Allen runs the Leith operation, while Mike Smyth, for many years a member of Strand's management, now runs the Govan office. Both depots have a large hire operation for both lighting and sound equipment, plus fit-up gear.

## Some Northern Light Projects: Alloa Town Hall

The whole building is a delight, from the coloured faience interior of the entrance hall to the quality stonework of the whole of the exterior. No descent to common bricks to the sides or rear at Alloa!

Northern Light were responsible for the lighting, the sound, the stage equipment and drapes, the electrical contracting and the houselight dimming. (Strand Architectural).

1 Alloa Town Hall. This handsome pile expressed the town's local pride some eighty years ago. Its recent refurbishment by Northern Light is a symbol of continuing civic self-confidence.

2 The re-lit and re-fitted hall interior. The coat of arms on the pelmet, like the drapes, supplied by Northern Light, flaunts the Alloa Town motto — 'Look Aboot Ye'. Yes — they really do spell it this way!

3 Interior of one control room with M24 and effects. The other control room has the sound desk.

4 The FOH Harmonys. Note neat grouping and absence of 'clutter'. The hall has many uses, so must continue to look handsome by daylight as well as at show times.

## The Volunteer Hall, Galashiels

A more modest project in scope than Alloa, but very professionally carried out.

Everything a Scottish Hall should be — local stone, stepped gables, unpompous, quality building. Pity about the ventilators spoiling the roof line. When the stackable seating is out 550 people can be accommodated.

5 The 1874 Volunteer Hall in the delightful Burgh of Galashiels, a fine town in the Scottish Borders. As Michelin says, 'Well worth a detour'.

6 Control is from the horseshoe gallery. Tempus 2G 36 and nine Tempus 10 Amp, Dimmer Packs. Not shown, but Cantatas are very much part of the picture in this project.

## The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama

In the centre of Glasgow, this Northern Light project was carried out a little while back.

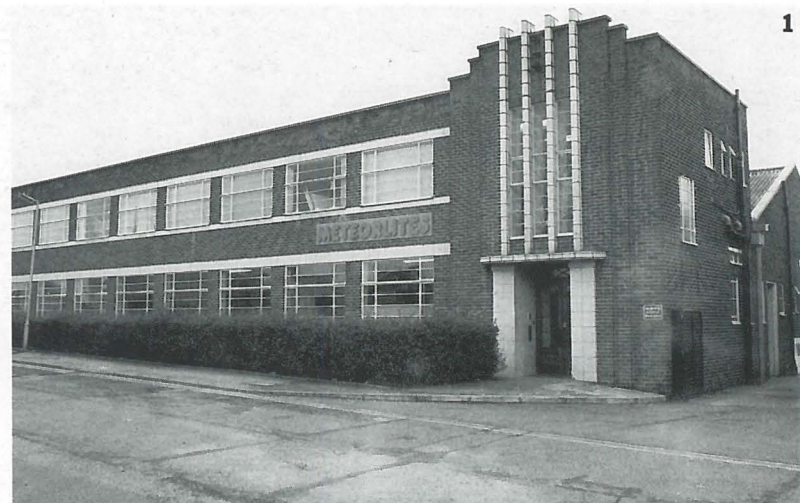
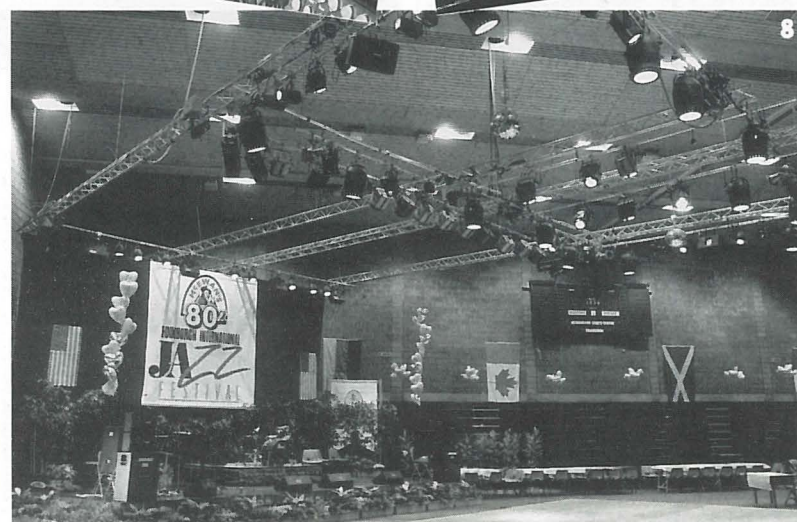
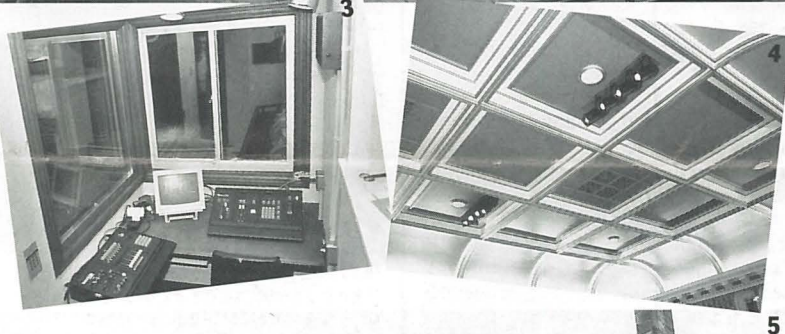
The consultant was Michael Holden, the Architects were Sir Leslie Martin in association with William Nimmo and Partners.

Northern Light equipped all the performing area in the building, as well as providing and installing the CCTV installation.

7 The Principal auditorium interior.

## Northern Light and the Edinburgh Festival

8 One photo must stand for the company's very heavy involvement in this tremendous event — here we see the Meadow Bank Concert Hall set up for a Jazz Festival. This featured a rather vintage lighting rig, proving that Strand make things to last and that Northern Light maintain their hire stock to a very high standard.



# Meteorlites of Elstree

Anyone with any interest in light must have their attention awakened by the name Elstree. Originally three film studios were to be found in 'England's Hollywood'. Today, as with the original Hollywood, television has made great inroads.

The BBC have one studio complex, now Galaxy and Quartzcolor equipped, from whence 'Eastenders' among many other famous shows comes. There is the Cannon film studio — 'Raiders of the Lost Ark', 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit', etc — and just across the road from the Meteorlites 'thirties' head office was originally another studio, now transformed into a more mundane commercial building.

Meteorlites, founded and controlled by Ronan Willson, is one of the UK's really major lighting and rigging hire companies. They originally specialised in hires to the music business, still a very important part of their activities, but quickly became involved in trade shows and large scale product launches. Within the last few years TV hires have assumed ever greater importance.

With over a million and a half pounds worth of hire stock they are one of the few companies that can equip several major tours at a time and still cope, say, with a complete OB rig of the Albert Hall for the BBC.

Among their many firsts, Ronan told me that his was the first company to bring pre-wired bars into the TV centre — in 1983 for 'Top of the Pops', when they were able to impress the BBC with the speed of their setting up.

Said Ronan, "It's no good arguing with the TV people about whether their very strict safety standards are really required. We meet them scrupulously and co-operate fully with all their safety checks".

On one famous occasion Meteorlites rigged the Albert Hall for a Rock Gospel show between midnight and 8am, effectively saving the show's budget a complete day's hire of the hall.

On the music side Iron Maiden, Fleetwood Mac and Elkie Brooks tours have been supplied. And if you are used to purely theatre lighting sized rigs reflect on the eight tons of lighting which is to be rigged for the Iron Maiden Wembley show!

Strand have provided Showchangers and Colour Scrollers and will shortly be delivering Litescan units.

## Where Might You Have Seen Meteorlites and Strand Automated Lighting Last November?

Status Quo — 18 Par Scans (with Scrollers)  
Elkie Brooks — 19 Par Scrollers.  
The Earls Court Ski Show — 5k Colour Scrollers.

Thames TV 'Meltdown' — Par Scans and Cadenzas with scrollers.

Iron Maiden — 12 Cantatas with scrollers, 18 Irises with scrollers.

Meteorlites is the first UK hire company to go into Strand automated lighting in a really big way. Said Ronan, "We held back for a time on colour changers and remote control lighting until we saw which system came out on top. Then we chose Strand. Now we are fully committed with spare units in stock and fully trained technical support in the field".

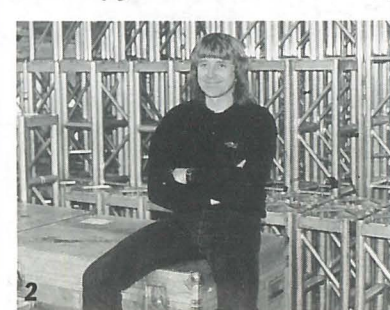
We next talked about the increasing use of 'music lighting' techniques — the trussing, the pre-wiring and the remote control of lights and of colour — in the theatre proper. "Ah", said Ronan a glint appearing in his

eye, "that's why we are now so interested in getting theatre hire contracts!"

1 Meteorlites Elstree head office. The lighting and rigging lives in the industrial building behind. Although the extension is pure 'Thirties' the interior is all smart black and grey and angular furniture.

2 Ronan Willson with just a little of Meteorlites trussing.

3 Tony Simpson checking Showchangers before they go out.



# Peter Joins The Trekkies



Peter O'Hara outside our Los Angeles factory.

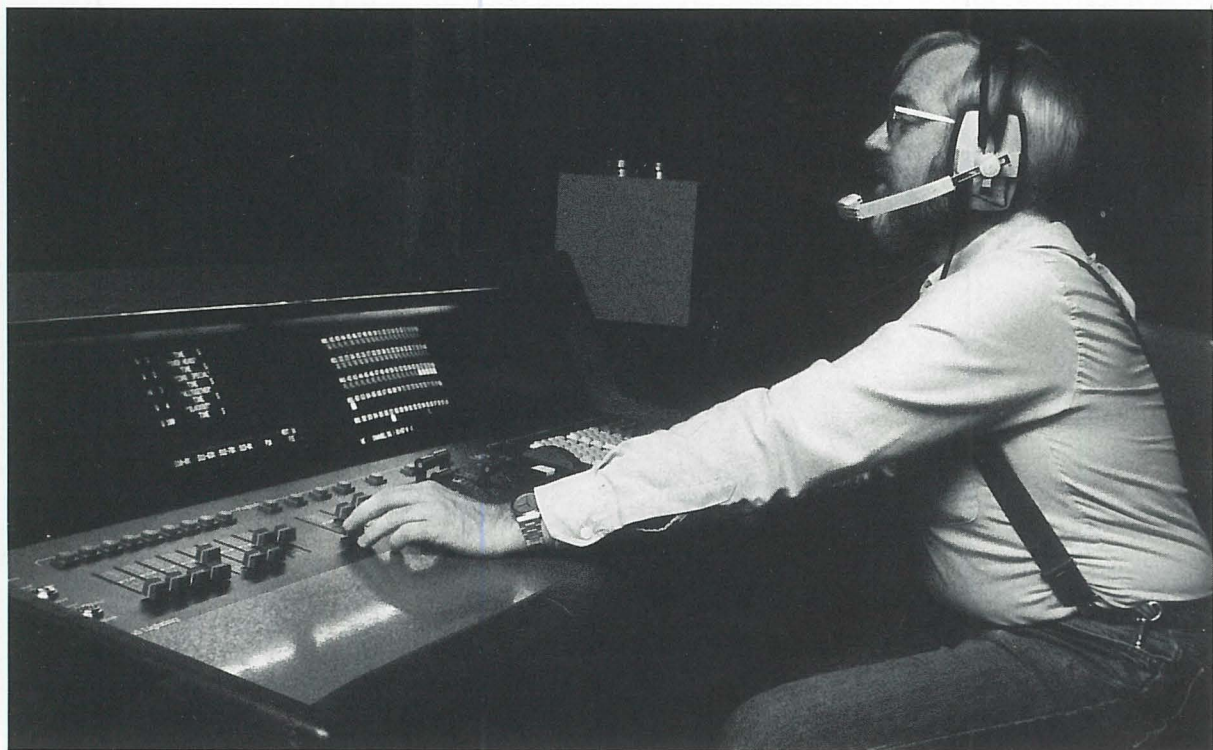
Strand stalwart Peter O'Hara, who joined the company in 1935 and worked for us for 27 years, joined the 'Trekkies' — fans of the 'Star Trek' TV and film series — on a recent trip to the USA.

Now retired, but still acting as a consultant, Peter worked on installations in many of Britain's most famous theatres during his career. He also designed the Samuelson 400 and 125 systems.

On his visit to the States, he toured Paramount Studios, NBC TV, and the Strand Lighting factory, all located in Los Angeles.

At the film studios he studied the sets of both the new 'Star Trek' movie and the new TV series — 'Star Trek — the next generation'.





# Talbot Theatre Invests in Latest Technology

by Darryl Crichton,  
Technical Director, Talbot Theatre

Talbot Theatre at The University of Western Ontario has replaced its lighting system.

The old system, a Strand 72 dimmer four scene preset board, was the original system installed when the theatre first opened in January 1966. It provided lighting control for more than a thousand performances as the theatre's programming grew from approximately 30 shows in its first year to 106 in the 1986-87 season.

The expansion of theatre usage, the increase in maintenance, an accelerating failure rate of components and the scarcity of parts for repairs all contributed to the decision to replace the lighting board and dimmers.

Even more important though was the realization that the theatre had fallen far behind the times in the technology of

lighting control. Often we could not accomplish what many designers considered routine lighting practise. A change of system was inevitable and long overdue.

After an exhaustive review of available equipment, Talbot Theatre elected to install a Strand 'Light Palette III' as the main control console and a 'Lightboard M' as a back-up console.

In addition, 192 Strand CD 80 dimmers were purchased to create a dimmer per circuit application. This part of the installation was probably the easiest decision to reach since the Strand CD dimmer is the standard for the industry.

In the six years since its development it has proven to be a reliable and efficient instrument for dimming lights.

The increase to 192 circuits (from the old

133) allowed the placement of receptacles where time and experience had shown they were needed and eliminated extensive and potentially dangerous runs of cable.

Also, by going to a dimmer per circuit application, all patching could be accomplished electronically, avoiding the time consuming, error-prone manual patch method.

With the purchase of the 'Light Palette III', Talbot Theatre has moved into the forefront of light control capability.

The system itself is a dedicated micro-computer designed specifically for the control of theatrical and television dimming systems and allows up to a thousand cues to be stored on one floppy disk.

The electronic control of the dimmers eliminates the need for a person to sit at the control board during focusing sessions as any dimmer can be accessed from anywhere in the theatre via a hand held remote unit.

Single cues can be created with up to six separate parts each running at their own time rate. Multiple special effects such as fire light or chase lights for signs, using up to 80 steps, are possible.

A designer's remote console, which can be located anywhere within the theatre, allows lighting designers to monitor dimmer levels visually and cue sequences while seated in the house.

The new Talbot Theatre will provide a much needed increase in the theatre's technical capabilities, and will allow us to serve both our theatre users and our audience better.

# Lights Go Up in Spain's Theatres

Any observer in the Spanish theatre world knows that this market is now developing at all levels.

Cultural policy from central government is giving its first results. Old theatres closed for years, almost destroyed or used for other purposes are beginning to be updated and completely renewed to become again what they should never have stopped being: THEATRES.

Although the steps taken have been important, there is still a lot to be done because of low budgets.

All this would not have been possible if there were no companies with the necessary technology to match the challenge. In this respect Kremesa has been at the forefront.

Kremesa began in 1971 as a distributor for light projectors, and after a few years began to work in disco lighting as a manufacturer and in the theatre together with the world leader, Strand Lighting.

In Spain they introduced specific light projectors, electronic dimmers, control desks with different presets, and gave the market the systems everyone was waiting for.

The company created the most extensive commercial and technical network in

the country to take the new developments to big cities and small towns. With Strand, Kremesa are supplying the market with the most advanced discoveries in control systems and lighting for the entertainment industry.

On the other hand Kremesa, aware of the needs of the national market, have created a stage machinery department.

This department has grown together with the lighting department to the point that today we can design and supply all the technical needs of a theatre.

All this has taken time, effort and investment. Kremesa grew from an office in Madrid to a big company with more than 100 employees covering the mainland and the islands.

The collaboration with Strand Lighting has steadily increased with joint programmes and technicians training courses. Strand is involved in the special needs of the Spanish market and keeps on improving their equipment for it.

Today Kremesa and Strand Lighting successfully cover one of the fastest growing theatre markets in the world.

Miguel Barba Galvez (JA)  
MADRID

# Cantata Followspot

You may already have heard that Strand are offering a new followspot based on the Cantata 11/26. This luminaire has been specifically designed as a followspot for small theatre and clubs or schools where only a small throw is required.

This low cost followspot comes with facilities normally found on professional followspots.

- Full blackout Iris
- Ergonomically designed operating handles front and rear
- In line switch
- 29mm spigot fitted as a standard for stand mounting
- 11°-26° variable beam angle
- Beam distribution adjustment
- 1.2kW or 1kW lamp

The Cantata followspot is available with a new 4 colour hand operated magazine and can be fitted with aiming sights as an accessory.

Uniquely this followspot can be configured for both right hand and left hand

operators by refitting the handles in the left hand side extrusion slots and reversing the colour magazine on its mounting plate.

Since the followspot has all the features of a Cantata, the lens tube and Iris assembly can also be reconfigured.

For more information on products featured in this article tick box 5 on the coupon on the back page



# Lightboard M Junior

Edgehill College in Ormskirk, Lancashire is fortunate to have both a theatre and a studio to provide its students with training in the technical aspects of live performance. Recently, it began the search for small lighting control desks for two spaces that met its budget.

The hope was to find consoles which provided simple controls but with adequate facilities for the needs of both types of production work. It was also hoped that the control philosophy could be similar,

so that students moving from one production facility to the other would not have to learn two entirely different methods of operation.

Strand has recently introduced a smaller version of the popular Lightboard M console. Known familiarly as LBM/Junior, the new desk offers everything in the larger system but the manual faders — still a powerful memory system with 24 submasters, special effects, colour VDU and disc storage, but without the cost and

space requirements of a full two scene preset system.

While we thought a full size Lightboard M and a LBM/Jr. would have been an obvious choice, after thorough review of the options available on the market, Edgehill settled on an Action 24 and the new LBM/Jr., believing that the two consoles complemented each other quite nicely and offered the best value for money.

The school also felt that Action and LBM/Jr. provided ideal common teaching facilities by blending manual operation with basic memory control. The two desks suited the needs of both studio and theatre production work. Common output means they can move both desks between the studio and theatre as production needs vary.

Action offers 24 individual channel faders for set up and recording of 99 memories. The memories may then be replayed via a split crossfader, either manually or according to a preset fade time.

LBM/Jr. additionally offers a split crossfader to replay previously recorded memories, but also offers extensive use of submasters where individual channels or entire memories can be controlled manually, and a second timed crossfader for automatic initiation of cues.

Both systems offer special effects: Action offering nine simple programmable chases which can have both level and speed mastered by dedicated controls. LBM/Jr. expands Action's abilities to offer unlimited numbers of effect memories of which two can be replayed simultaneously,

each with level and speed controls.

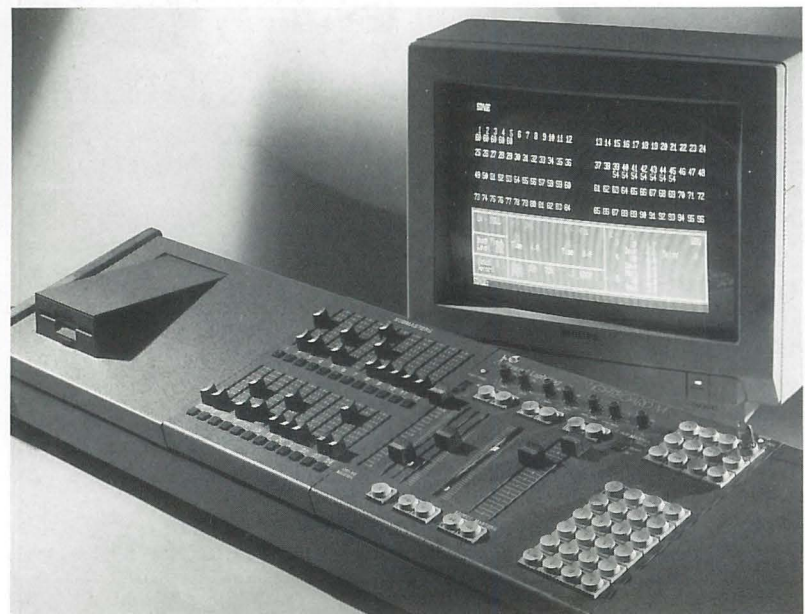
While Action provided the perfect introduction to memory control by allowing manual control of individual channels to create memories, LBM/Jr. extended the manual philosophy and introduced other memory concepts: pre-recorded split times with waits and delays, blind memory modification, VDU displays of programmed information and digital entry of level information.

Action and LBM/Jr. meet or exceed Edgehill's criteria: two consoles appropriate for student training, and television and theatre production, with similar operational philosophy, and finally, the price was right.

Since LBM/Jr. is a brand new Strand offering, below are just a few of its many features:

- 96 or 144 digitally addressable channels
- 768 dimmers
- 4 Tables of fully proportional softpatch
- Flash buttons with level adjustment and Solo
- Split dipless crossfader for timed or manual cues
- Go button for activation of timed cues
- Programmable split times, delays, automatic follow-on and cue linking
- Any number of recordable effects for channels or memories
- 2 Effects playback faders with levels and rate control
- Memory list with editing capability
- Internal backup system
- 8 Programmable function keys
- 8 additional remote submasters (optional)
- 3 1/2" disc drive supplied standard
- 14" EGA colour monitor supplied standard

For more information on products featured in this article tick box 6 on the coupon on the back page



# Viva TV!

Spain's decision to de-centralise its Government and give more power to the regions has had a spin-off for the lighting industry.

For regional television is now all the rage, with each area setting up its own local network.

As a result, the Basque region now has Euskal Telebista, Cataluna has TVS, Galicia has Television Gallega and Seville has Canal Sur TVA.

In June 1987, Valencia's regional government, which covers the provinces of Valencia, Castille and Alicante, put a £20 million broadcasting equipment contract out to tender — the most important contract of its kind in the country at the time.

A similar-sized contract had already been awarded for construction of the studios on a site about four miles outside Valencia.

Altogether, 17 companies, including many big 'names' from the lighting world fought for the contract but it eventually went to Strand Lighting local dealer, Sadilsa, who have more than 25 years' experience of cinema and TV lighting.

Sadilsa's contract for a total lighting equipment system included, for four studios, hoists, pantographs, drop arms, lighting control systems, luminaires, lamps, accessories, cyclorama and electrical installation.

Work on-site began in July last year and was finished — despite a five-month halt to allow more building work — commissioned, tested and handed-over by early April.

With testing of the studios carrying on throughout the summer, Television Valencia is ready to hit the screens in October.



# Waiting for Gobos

*Cantata shows its paces as an accurate and sharp focusing gobo projector at a fashion show.*

"Peter Coleman here. We've got a job coming up that will interest you!"

This call, from the managing director of our Birmingham based distributors, Midland Theatre Services, was to tip us off that a large scale trade show for which they were hiring the lighting rig, was scheduled to use a real array of Cantata and Harmony projected gobos.

Held late last summer, the show was for the 'Next' chain of shops to introduce the autumn and winter fashion range they would be offering the women of Britain. A magnificent marquee was erected in

the grounds of a stately home in Leicestershire and groups of 'Next' managers and staff gathered on three successive evenings to enjoy dinner, participate in an awards ceremony and see a professionally produced show, by the 'Next' design department.

At the heart of the presentation decor were over 120 gobos that were used to set the three fashion themes — Italy, France and USA.

As a sidelight on the latter, Peter Coleman told us that achieving the effect the producer wanted for the US theme was the most exacting part of the set up. First Stars and Stripes appeared simply as an open black and white image, then came the red and then the blue. A moment's thought by anyone who has ever tackled gobo projec-

tion will give an idea of the accuracy of lantern setting necessary to superimpose three images exactly.

Control was by M24 and two M24 Effects plus a Lightboard M. Midland Theatre, as a matter of policy, supply a Line Volt Conditioner on all large scale hires on the principle that if you are certain of the quality of your electricity supply, you know you are starting off right whatever other snags may arise during a limited fit-up time.

In fact, starting promptly on Monday morning, sixteen tons of equipment worth £150,000 was rigged in four days with only one 'all nighter'. No prizes for guessing which night that was.

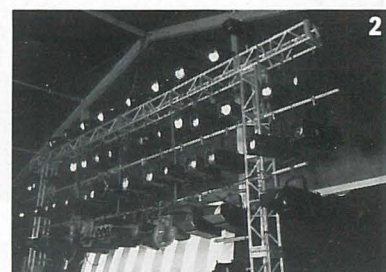
The rig included 51 Minims, 48 Harmony F's, 16 Prelude 28/40's, 48

Punchlites (this unit is now really taking off), 72 Prelude F's and 2 Solos for spotting the award winners at their tables.

Gobo back projection — onto Rosco material — was by 16 Cantata 26/44's, 24 Cantata 18/32's, 16 Harmony 22/40's and 24 Harmony 15/28's. Assorted Codos, Cadenzas, Cadenza PC's and a couple of 252's completed the rig.

Once again the Lightboard M covered itself in glory. Operator Rick Boylan praised the system's electronic patching, and the fact that it could be used as a straightforward manual lever-per-channel system when that was the simplest method of control.

For the 'Next' show 188 dimmers were patched in varying configurations to the 98 channels.



1 On the Bridge, Peter Coleman, of Midland Theatre Services at the M24. Rick Boylan at the Lightboard M.

2 This gives some idea of the scale — 120 gobos were used during the half hour show.

## A Brute in Bournemouth

*The editor visits a fascinating project whose scope is no less than the forming of a complete history of stage and studio lighting.*

David Sandham combines the roles of school master and theatre and studio lighting enthusiast, and is certainly not the subject of my title. While we are all enthusiasts (why else would I write and you read) Mr Sandham has embarked on a personal crusade in which members of his school have become involved. I suggest that his enthusiasm has been both the starter and the engine of this enterprise.

In October 1987, a YTS student rang David, knowing of his great interest, and reported that 'Some old theatre lights were going in a skip'. A rescue dash was mounted and the skip gave up no less than nine Swabe cyclorama lanterns. These were cylindrical units with 1kW GS lamps that flourished before the war and are now nearly extinct. The units rescued are, in fact, the only ones I have ever seen!

Feeling that such noble old performers should have a better fate than a skip, nine of David's pupils, fired by his interest, took on the lunch break task of complete refurbishment.

Then, as so often happens, the word began to spread, and news of redundant spots and floods came in ever increasing volume.

Now over five hundred lanterns await full restoration to their makers original specifications and a research project on lantern history is under way. The lanterns include: Strand Acting Area lanterns; Digby low intensity arc wing spotlights and vast 2kW fresnels with ventilation holes in the back modestly spelling out their manufacturer's initials.

In a store shed in the school's grounds lurk, among a tangled throng, a fifty year old bracket handle board, the Thyatron board from Manchester Opera House and — this really shook me — the Strand Lightboards from the National Theatre that I remember working so hard to sell in the early seventies.

During a visit by illustrious members of the ABTT many memories were revived and a few mysteries were solved.

Strand's Fred Bentham was asked why one type of relay was fitted with a beautiful Strand label reading, 'G.S. Type Relay.' "Easy," said Fred, "it meant Government Surplus!"

The hope is to have, eventually, a complete museum incorporating performance



areas, with working examples of every type of lantern and control that was of significance. The target date? At least five years from now.

In the meantime, interesting items for the collection can be pointed in the direction of David Sandham at St Peter's School, Southbourne, near Bournemouth. Collection can usually be arranged.

And the Bournemouth Brute? I did say that studio lanterns were included!

1 Part of the lantern collection awaiting refurbishment.

2 Was this one of ours? Fred Bentham looks doubtfully at someone's patch panel.

## Redheads and Blondes Available for Home Videos

'Leisure Industry' has rather a feeling of something passive. But over the last few years the Do-It-Yourself amateur video market has doubled and re-doubled.

After the initial somewhat low key excitement of seeing themselves on television, most camcorder owners graduate to more ambitious productions, either documentary or drama. This is where professional style lighting plays its part.

Unlike the joys of the amateur stage, where many of the audience will never set foot in a professional theatre, everyone sees television regularly with its high production standards.

Now, thanks to the use of modern materials and large production volumes, certain professional TV lighting equipment is available at affordable prices.

The 'Redhead' is an 800 Watt variable beam floodlight. It is made from a high density heat resistant plastic and gives a brilliant white (3200L) light from a small and very portable unit.

The Iadi is a small flood suitable for general 'fill' lighting, ideal for general lighting of a scene whose emphasis can be provided by the Redhead. This is

available in various wattages from 300W to 1000W.

For a more ambitious production, perhaps by a local video society, the Blonde, a 2000 Watt variable beam flood — the big sister of the Redhead — gives power for lighting bigger sets.

A full range of stands, wire guards, gaffer grips, etc. is available and complete kits of portable video lighting equipment with a full range of accessories in a travelling case are offered.

Never think that daylight is enough. If ever you see a professional crew at work, even if it is a TV reporter speaking to camera, you will see that extra lighting, either to fill in the shadows if in sunlight, or to give a bright image on a dull day, is always used.

So Strand, the world's largest professional entertainment lighting company, now offers its equipment to the amateur in the newest branch of show business.

For more information on products featured in this article tick box 7 on the coupon on the back page

## Technical Information Request Form

For further information about the following Strand products please tick the relevant number and return the coupon to your local Strand office or dealer.

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Strand Lighting

Strandlight is published by Strand Lighting Limited

Printed in England and U.S.A.  
ISSN 0950-0634  
© Strand Lighting Limited

**United Kingdom**  
**Camilla Aitchison**  
Strand Lighting Limited  
Grant Way, Syon Lane, Isleworth  
Middlesex TW7 5QD, United Kingdom  
Telephone: 01-560 3171  
Telex: 27976. Fax: 01-568 2103

**Australia**  
**Rod Gilbert**  
Strand Lighting  
264-270 Normanby Road  
South Melbourne, Victoria 3205  
Australia  
Telephone: (03) 646 4522  
Fax: (03) 646 5020

**Canada**  
**Donna Appleton**  
Strand Lighting  
6490 Viscount Road, Mississauga  
Ontario L4V 1H3, Canada  
Telephone: (416) 677 7130  
1-800-387-3403  
Telex: 06-968645. Fax: (416) 677 6859

**France**  
**Bernard Bouchet**  
Strand Lighting France S.A.  
26 Villa des Fleurs, 92400 Courbevoie  
Paris, France  
Telephone: (1) 47 88 66 66  
Telex: 611921 F/Strand F. Fax: (1) 43 33 71 75

**Hong Kong**  
**Phil O'Donnell**  
Strand Lighting Asia Limited  
802-4 Houston Centre, 63 Mody Road  
Kowloon, Hong Kong  
Telephone: 3-685161  
Telex: 44953. Fax: (852) 3-694890

**Italy**  
**Andrea Molinari**  
Strand Lighting SpA  
Divisione Trading, Via Paola Albera 82  
00181 Roma, Italy

Telephone: 06-785 3544  
Telex: 620178 Luxian. Fax: 06 780 9018

**USA**  
**Bill Groener**  
Strand Lighting  
18111 South Santa Fe Avenue  
PO Box 9004, Rancho Dominguez  
California 90224, USA  
Telephone: (213) 637-7500  
Telex: 664 741. Fax: 213-632-5519

**USA**  
**Rick White**  
Strand Electro Controls  
2975 South 300 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115, USA  
Telephone: (801) 487 6111  
Fax: (801) 466 1003

**West Germany**  
**Heinz Fritz**  
Strand Lighting GmbH  
Salzbergstrasse 2  
3340 Wolfenbuttel-Salzdahlum  
West Germany  
Telephone: (05331) 7951  
Telex: 95641. Fax: (05331) 78883