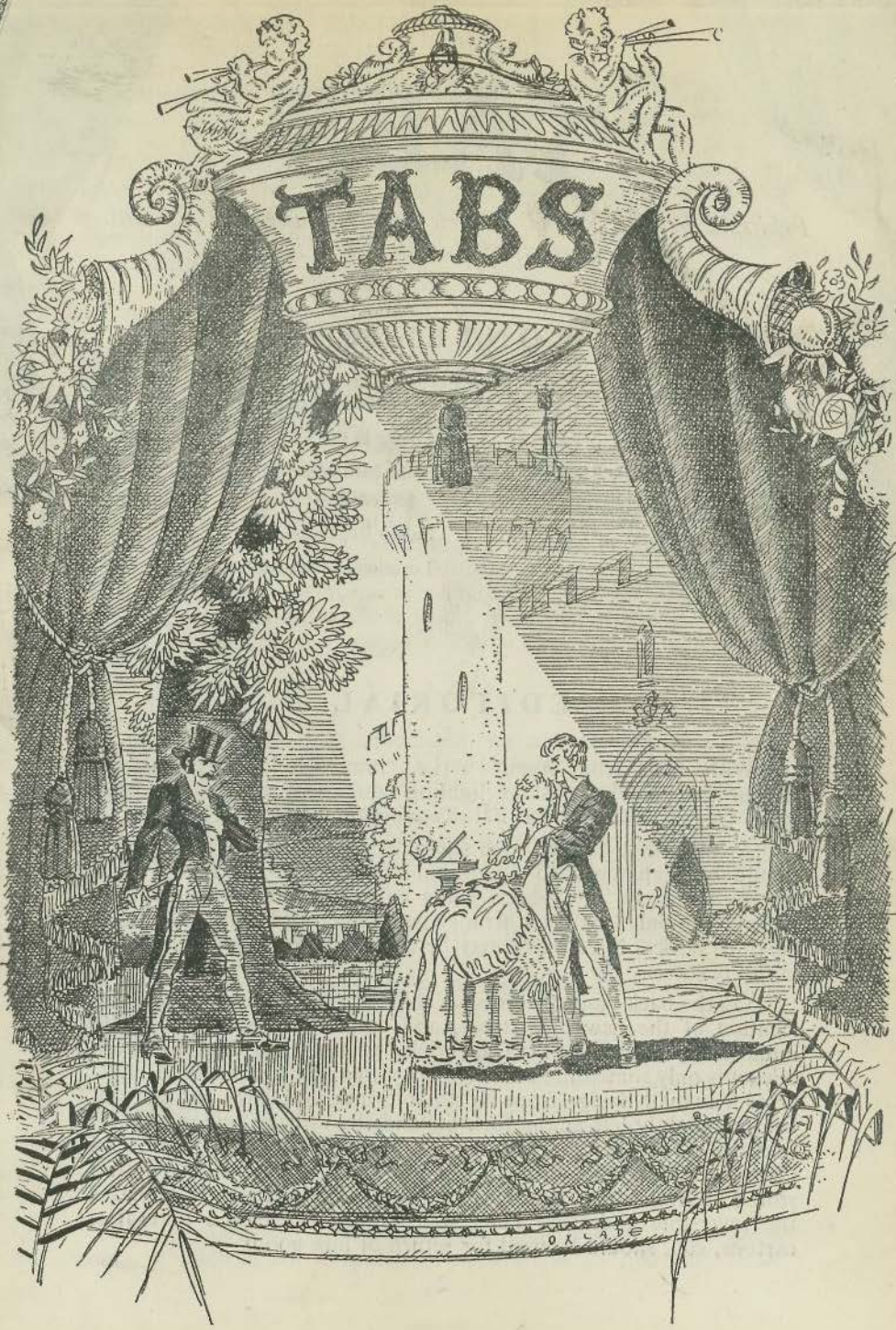


TABS



O. K. L. A. D.

TABS

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EDITORIAL

The *nom de plume* "Paul Bedford" on page 27 conceals the identity of an ardent playgoer who, if he occupies no recognised place in the professional theatre, must be regarded as writing with some degree of experience. In the last four years he has seen over 500 plays and has subsequently written a review of all of them purely for his own benefit. Incidentally he has had to pay for his seat on practically every occasion. What a contrast to the doleful poet on page 29.

* * *

L. Du Garde Peach whom we welcome as a contributor on page 5 needs no introduction to our readers as an author. It is also widely known that he has his own amateur theatre at Great Hucklow seating about 300. Great Hucklow is a tiny village in Derbyshire, but each of the plays runs for a period of three weeks and there is always a big demand for seats; in fact, we understand that they are always sold out before the first night. People travel from all over Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Derbyshire to see the shows. The names of the actors are never published on the programme and there are no committees. Dr. Peach himself usually produces and often acts in the plays.

* * *

The frequency of errors in publicity matter which is pointed out in the article on page 30 are by no means confined to the professional theatre. A recent issue of an amateur theatre magazine contained the following.

"The Committee constituted as comprising one representative of each Dramatic Society, . . . four school representatives and a representative of the Youth Advisory Committee *with power to co-operate.*" (The italics are ours.)

There is, however, a deal of sense in this obvious blunder just as it reads. How often, we wonder, do individual committee members exercise their "power to co-operate," not only with each other but also with those within and outside the Society who work with them

* * *

The article on page 12 deals with the construction and operation of optical effects. Owing to the present-day shortage of mica it is regretted that no effects using discs in their construction will be available for outright purchase until further notice. This means in fact that only waves, ripples and lightning are now being made for sale, though of course the whole range of effects is still available for hire.

* * *

The facetious suggestion on page 25 that actresses retain their make-up and glamour generally after a show for the benefit of their public, reminds us of the following true story of Marjorie Maude,

daughter of the late Cyril Maude. About 40 years ago a benevolent uncle took his nephew Kenneth Rae, now secretary of The Joint Council of The National Theatre and Old Vic and of the British Centre of the International Theatre Institute, to the theatre for the first time. It was a Tree production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at His Majesty's Theatre, and the uncle, wishing to do the thing properly and happening to know Miss Maude who was playing Titania, asked if he might bring the small boy round to meet her afterwards. To her eternal credit, Titania, hearing that this was the lad's first visit to the theatre, refused to shatter all his illusions by letting him see her without all her make-up and finery, and received him instead in state on the stage not only in full make-up and costume but in the setting of Theseus' Palace. To crown everything, it being a Friday, she pressed a bright new golden half sovereign into the young hand.

The sequel, however, is rather less happy. The small lad grew up and in turn took his nephew to his first theatre, again at His Majesty's, on this occasion the production being "Henry IVth—Part I," with George Robey playing Falstaff. Once again and in accordance with tradition a visit was paid to the stage afterwards, but this time alas, the stage management must have been less good for the small boy said, "Oh dear, Uncle, the battlefield of Shrewsbury, when you actually stand on it, is *very disappointing!*"

THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN

Readers who visit London for the Festival this summer may care to keep an eye open for some of our activities in connection with it.

In the Riverside Theatre described in our last issue, we are putting in a fairly complete theatre lighting installation including an electronic control, the desk of which will be situated in the circle.

In the Amphitheatre and in its wet weather counterpart, The Tent, we are putting in what might be described as Concert Hall installations, while in The Grotto, a number of special effects, including some novel uses of ultra violet, will be seen. We are responsible too, for the lighting of the fountains in The Grand Vista.

All the above are of course in the Festival Gardens, Battersea Park, but on the South Bank site we are carrying out the special concert platform lighting and dimming in the Royal Festival Hall, the latter being operated by means of a Strand Light Console type of control.

This installation will, of course, be seen to best advantage during such entertainments as Ballet, as the lighting for purely concert work, though important and not as straightforward as it might seem, is not exactly spectacular. The special dimmers we are using for the cold cathode fluorescent lighting in the auditorium give a brightness range of 600 to 1, a figure which we believe has never been equalled before in a public building.

THIS BUSINESS OF PAGEANTS

By L. DU GARDE PEACH

I am aware that the word "Pageant" is calculated to call up the gloomiest memories and forebodings. If you ever participated in one, your recollection is probably of changing into damp and uncomfortable costumes in a wet tent, and being a Roman, two citizens, the second messenger, and a trumpeter. Very tricky, this last: it involved putting the property trumpet to your lips to coincide with blasts from the cornet in the band, a hundred yards away. If, on the other hand, you were a mere spectator, you remember a hard and backless bench, endured rather than occupied for three hours, in a steady drizzle. At intervals, nervous looking horsemen, or a few nondescript individuals, dressed sketchily in hessian, would run about and shout in the far corner of a wet field, and reference to your programme would confirm a suspicion that it was the Coming of the Danes, or the Norman Invasion. With a sigh you would note that the next item was the Founding of the Abbey, and inevitably the dismal chanting of a party of more or less willing, but thoroughly disillusioned, volunteers, would precede the entrance of a procession of half drowned monks. Pageants are such *fun*, aren't they?

Actually, they can be. But not, in our so-called climate, the amateurish open-air events which pass by that name. These are usually quite dreadful. They are painfully slow, owing to lack of rehearsal, and they are dull, because the writing of them is so often entrusted to the local archæologist, who may know a lot about celtic urn burial, but who knows damn all about the show business. Crowds of supers hang about, more or less out of sight of the audience, and few of them know when they have to go on, or why. Even fewer care. The audience gets more and more depressed, and the only amelioration of their hard lot is that if it is a fine hot sunny day, they can perhaps sleep. Only it never is.

During the last ten years I have devised and written a dozen or more large-scale pageants, but they were pageants with a difference. All of them were indoor events, staged in large halls, like the City Hall, Sheffield, or the enormous Ice Palace, Nottingham. This made all the difference to the presentation possibilities. For one thing, artificial lighting was able to play its vital part in the stage pictures, and actually, in each of the above pageants, there were more than 150 separate lighting units, each and every one of them on dimming circuits. Anyone who knows anything about stage presentation, will realise at once the difference that controlled lighting makes in a show of this sort. Instead of a leaden sky, hanging low over a wet field, here is a battery of floods and spots, battens and acting areas, with colour mediums to suit the varying moods of different

scenes. The whole playing space can suddenly be flooded with light, or a small vital area can be pin-pointed, whilst crowds assemble or disperse. Even the Founding of the Abbey can be given entertainment value if it is properly lit.

But revolutionary as indoor production of a pageant is for the Pageant Master, it is even more so for the author of the script. He who writes a script for an open-air pageant would seem, judging by some of the published scripts for such events which I have read, to write it in the hope that none of it will be heard by anybody. Nine times out of ten his hope is amply justified: the rhymed doggerel in which many of these scripts are or were written, wastes its sweetness on the desert air—or, more accurately, is heard only by those in the immediate neighbourhood of the speaker—and of course the Recording Angel, who will, I hope, bring it up in evidence against the author at the appropriate time. But I must be careful. I have myself just finished writing the script of a large open-air pageant for the Isle of Man, and I certainly hope that the whole of it will be heard by every member of the audience. They will miss a lot of good stuff, if it isn't. But I am relying on an efficient amplifying unit and a Pageant Master of genius, who stands no nonsense from anybody.

With the exception of this recently completed script, all my pageants have been indoor productions, where it was reasonable to suppose that the words would get over to the audience. This being so, the actual words become important: in fact, in such circumstances an entirely new conception of a pageant is necessary. It suddenly becomes not merely something depending primarily on mass movement and colour, on shouting and horses and an explanatory but optimistic programme, but an essay in showmanship not unlike a revue. It must be written on the revue pattern, with essentially the revue technique. Incidents must be dramatic or humorous *in themselves*; character and dialogue become important as a means of getting effects. Moreover, a sense of balance must order the whole, and with far wider possibilities than are present in the wet-field school of pageantry. A large crowd scene, employing the whole of the playing area, can be followed by a highly dramatic scene of three or four principals, spotted and isolated, in its turn to be followed by the splash of moving colour of a miniature ballet, or perhaps a comedy number. No episode must be too long. The audience must have just not quite enough of each, and be quickly surprised by the next: in fact, the audience must be constantly surprised. Vivid, quick moving, colourful, dramatic and humorous by turns, with some good dancing in small doses, and plenty of music, a pageant should never for one moment offer the opportunity for boredom to even the most dull-witted member of the audience. The end of the first half, and the grand finale, must be built up, pictorially, emotionally, and musically, as carefully and with as much calculated effect, as the end of a pantomime, but with this difference: the end of a pageant should punch home the theme of the whole. All these

things are possible in an indoor pageant: I am still to learn whether the same effects can be obtained in the open air.

The question arises, can a pageant, which nine times out of ten must deal with historical episodes, have entertainment value: can history be made amusing without being guyed? The answer is that it can, provided the episodes are properly selected, and not limited to a series of scenes in which visiting monarchs of the past are cheered by more or less period crowds, interspersed with extremely unconvincing battles of the Civil War. Where a historical event calls for broad treatment, give it crowds and banners and trumpets, but let your next historical event be one that depends on individuals and the interplay of character. It is surprising what a flood of light can be thrown on some vital turning point in history in eight minutes, if the historical personages who take part in it can be shown as understandable human beings, motivated by feelings and points of view shared by every member of the audience. And then, when you have seen, shall we say, King John blowing off steam to a couple of friends (if he had any) after having been bullied into signing Magna Carta, dissolve the whole thing with a well drilled ballet, or open up every spot and flood you've got on a medieval fair. Variety, change, contrast—never a dull moment, never a dry eye: and it doesn't matter whether they're laughing or crying or both, whether there's a lump in their throats or a stitch in their sides—keep it going!

I don't know why I should give away trade secrets, the recipe by which I earn at any rate part of my living. But there it is. There is no mystery about it. All that is necessary is to adapt it to the locality, and then to persuade the inevitable Committee to spend ten thousand pounds on it. When you've done that, other difficulties don't seem so big, anyway.

* * *

PUNCTUALITY PAYS!

The following notice appears in a brochure giving advance publicity about the tented Festival Theatre, Pitlochry, which opens its 19-week season on May 19th.

LATECOMERS

Owing to the unusual construction of the theatre and to the ample consideration given to the starting times of performances, patrons will not be permitted to proceed to their seats after the play has commenced. Give yourself plenty of time to be comfortably seated before the above times and thereby enjoy, and allow others to enjoy the performances undisturbed. Tickets are sold subject to this condition.

MUSICAL DIRECTORS MUST DIRECT

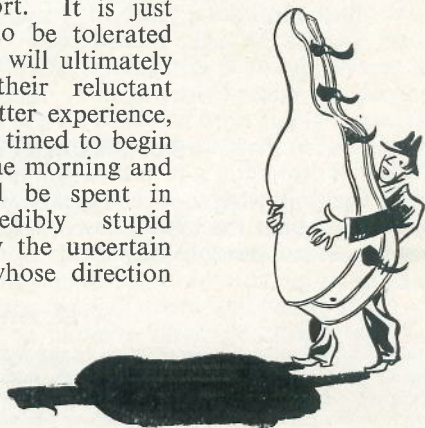
During the rather hysterical gaiety of assembly for a Sunday dress rehearsal of The Crotchety Quaverers' show at the local theatre, it is always possible for an observer to spy strangers in the midst. These strangers do not join in the squeals of admiration or the blasé badinage of the groups gathered around over-bronzed Ruritanian



"They arrive singly . . ."

swordsmen, whose azure tunics and crimson pants forlornly fail to conceal the authentic slouch of erstwhile foot-sloggers in battle-dress. These strangers do not rush around with the voluble excitement of children at a Christmas party; they do not even strut about with the complacent charm of a chairman of committees. They arrive singly, unheralded and unsung, strangely encumbered and wearing looks that alternate between lugubrious vagueness and vindictive loathing. They are, of course, members of the orchestra. To them, this is no exciting culmination of months of concentrated effort. It is just another show—a rehearsal to be tolerated only for the meagre pay that will ultimately and inadequately reward their reluctant efforts. They know, from bitter experience, that although the rehearsal is timed to begin at 10.30 a.m., the whole of the morning and most of the afternoon will be spent in "running through" incredibly stupid "numbers," accompanied by the uncertain baton of a conductor for whose direction they couldn't care less. Their contempt is not based on any high regard for musicianship, nor is it in any way affected by the capabilities of the honorary musical director.

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It arises quite impersonally from a jaundiced attitude to life, induced by a prolonged occupation of the orchestra pit and a nightly (or twice nightly) proximity to crazy comics and corny crooners. They remain impassive when their erratic harmonies are inevitably accompanied by audible evidence of great heavings and thrustings on the stage; by shoutings and cursings, by banging of hammers and screeching of saws, as scenery flats of doubtful authenticity and inconvenient bulk are laboriously assembled into some approximation of a terrace to the Royal Palace of Monomania. They are coldly indifferent to the fact that after weeks of bitter bickering, the producer and musical director will now communicate only through an intermediary. They are unimpressed by any triangular arguments about whether a particular passage should be allegro or andante; they know that it will, in any case, be neither.

Of course, if the orchestra should be composed of amateur musicians, the attitude will be less unimpassioned and more actively antagonistic. The inevitable conflict between vocal and instrumental contestants for supremacy will be no less catastrophic in result but would be more definitely partisan in intent. The professional, soured by continual suffering, will be just naturally and quite impersonally bloody-minded. In contrast the amateur musician will be enthusiastically sadistic in the certain conviction that the vocal efforts from the stage are tolerated merely as accompaniment to a violent virtuoso by the brass section and the tymps.

The way of the musical director is hard. Even if he is also the producer it is inevitable that he should be involved in some conflict of purpose. He frequently fails to realise that his function must be subsidiary to that of the producer. He must not be a musical purist. It is futile for him to protest against the producer's demand that the music must be modified to accommodate the limitations of song and dance. A producer will sacrifice, without compunction, the rhythmic niceties of a Romberg, or the staccato subtleties of a Sullivan, in the interests of a well-timed exit or, maybe, to cover up an unavoidable lack of *esprit de corps* in a politically selected corps de ballet. He is, of course, perfectly right. In a musical show the operative word is "show." The show is the thing. It must not be a thing of shreds and patches. The stage must not be confused with a concert platform. It is part of the producer's job to create and foster a perfect unity between the oral and the visual. Only too frequently the composer's indicated intentions are beyond the varying capacities of the interpreters and a musical director must be willing to forgo too academic or literal a translation of those intentions.

The conductor of a musical show must be a leading actor. He has to blend into a complete whole a conflicting variety of sounds created simultaneously by a conflicting variety of animate and inanimate instruments controlled by a conflicting variety of emotions,

mentalities and muscular craftsmanship. He, himself, must be an instrument of acute sensitivity and complexity, for he must be both transmitter and receiver. He must project a magnetism that is



"... eyes and face must augment the meanings of his baton..."

hypnotic in influence on instrumentalists, singers and dancers alike; he must be conscious of the subtle shades of differences in their expressions and adjust his conscious control to emphasise or conceal those differences. He must create for his fellow-artists the feeling of security and confidence that a good captain creates for the officers and crew of a happy ship. His conductor's score should be a discarded superfluity from the opening bar of the overture at the first performance; his eyes and face must augment the meanings of his baton. He must know the show as a whole as thoroughly as any actor knows his own part. He must be able immediately to detect the flagging of any performer and stimulate him to greater effort, or restrain with gentle firmness any tendencies towards excessive exuberance.

The conductor is a performer—not a producer. The producer is the onlooker who sees most of the game. The conductor who is also the producer is in the same boat as a producer who plays a leading part in the play he is producing; either the acting or the producing usually suffers because of the divided interest. The musical director must have knowledge and appreciation of showmanship as well as of music, and he has the right to expect that the producer with whom he has to co-operate and whose intentions he must interpret, shall have a knowledge and appreciation of music as well as of showmanship. The musical director is a managing director operating under the guidance of a chairman of directors. Both must know and agree on the direction in which they are going. Without a competent conductor any collection of singers, dancers and instrumentalists are liable to become an undisciplined mob of self-centred individualists. They can be fashioned into a joyful company of enthusiastic co-operators with a common purpose if their musical director knows and does his job. And his job is to direct.

P.C.

PROMPT SIDE

A correspondent to a Sunday paper recently drew attention to the following definition of "Prompt Side" as given in various dictionaries.

Chambers Twentieth Century: "actor's left in Britain, right in U.S.A."

Concise Oxford: "actor's left"—but, under "opposite": "opposite prompter—to actor's left."

Oxford New English: "actor's right."

As the correspondent points out "this would seem to be a tie: one left, one right, and one centre." The Theatre does not always seem to be best served by certain dictionaries. Quite recently, that is since the war, a well-known dictionary still defined a ground-row as being a "row of gas jets on the floor of a theatre stage!"

So far as the P. and O.P. question goes there is, however, some excuse for a difference of opinion. The position of the prompt or working corner is what determines the issue, and this cannot be said to be sufficiently universal to justify any concise definition without further qualification.

In the majority of cases the prompt corner and therefore the prompt side are on the actor's left but leaving the provinces out of it, a hasty survey of West End theatres shows that almost 25% have the position reversed. Scenery flats are marked Scene 1, O.P.3 and so on, and of course where the prompt side of a theatre differs from the majority, certain mental if not physical complications may be expected. No doubt the stage staff of a "reversed" theatre are accustomed to setting scenery marked P. on the O.P. side and so on, but of course the complications do not stop there. Hanging plots, lighting plots, lighting rehearsals and even stage direction are involved.

It is a thousand pities that there should be any doubt or ambiguity about anything as important as this, and for safety's sake the answer would seem to be to use either the terms stage left and stage right or better still actor's left and actor's right. In certain theatres where the prompt side is on the "unusual" side a practice is made of referring to "prompt proper," but this still leaves some doubt in the stranger's mind as to whether "proper" refers to the conditions pertaining in that particular theatre or to the great majority of others where the position is "normal".

OPTICAL EFFECTS

For the purposes of these notes the term "effects" is used to cover projections which may be stationary or moving, realistic or otherwise. Basically the same equipment is used in each case—a projection lantern, the picture to be projected, its carrier or housing, and an objective lens to focus the projected image.

Lanterns

The lanterns most commonly used are the Pattern 51 Effects Projector and the Pattern 42 Arc Lantern. The former (Fig. 1) uses a 1000w Projector lamp, either Class B.1 Round Bulb or preferably, for intensity and clearness of definition, Class A.1 Tubular where the angle of tilt of the lamp does not exceed 22° . The lantern resembles the ordinary Pattern 43 1000w Spotlight but has in addition a supporting quadrant on the fork to carry the extra weight of lenses, etc., on the front. Two plano convex lenses are fitted ball to ball to form a condenser and the runners take the various attachments. Adjustment of the lamp, reflector, etc., is made in the same way as for the Pattern 43.



Fig. 1. Pattern 51 effects projector. The effect to be projected slides in the front runners.

The Pattern 42 Arc Lantern gives a brighter and better defined picture and is, therefore, suitable for longer throws, but is much more difficult of operation.

Slides

For slide projection, using the standard $3\frac{1}{4}$ -in. square slide, a turntable front and slide carrier are necessary. The former (Fig. 2) consists of a casting (a) which fits the front runners of the lantern. Round the centre hole of this is a cast ring carrying a housing (b) for the slide carrier. While the unit (a) is thus fixed to the lantern (b) and the part (c) carrying the slide can rotate about the axis of the lantern to tilt the picture at whatever angle is required. It is then locked in position by a screw (d). The slide carrier itself (c) carrying two slides is simply slipped into the mounting and held in position by a knurled knob (e). On the front of the mounting are runners (f) for the objective lens and colours. Viewed from the rear a slide is inserted upside down and left to right. Some cloud slides are painted on mica and are held in a special frame which fits the turntable (b) direct without the slide carrier.

The question of objective lenses is dealt with later. Correct choice of these will help to minimise distortion at the edges of the picture. Further distortion is of course likely to occur when a picture is projected at an angle to the cyclorama or screen. With non-rectilinear pictures such as clouds some distortion may be acceptable, but if not and if the slides are non-photographic, i.e., drawn or painted, advice should be sought as to the means of minimising the defect by the contra distortion of the slide.

Moving Effects

In general these are used to produce realistic rain, clouds, snow, etc. The method of obtaining the movement is by the rotation of a disc at an appropriate speed in place of a slide, the disc being painted or marked to represent the desired effect. Some of the

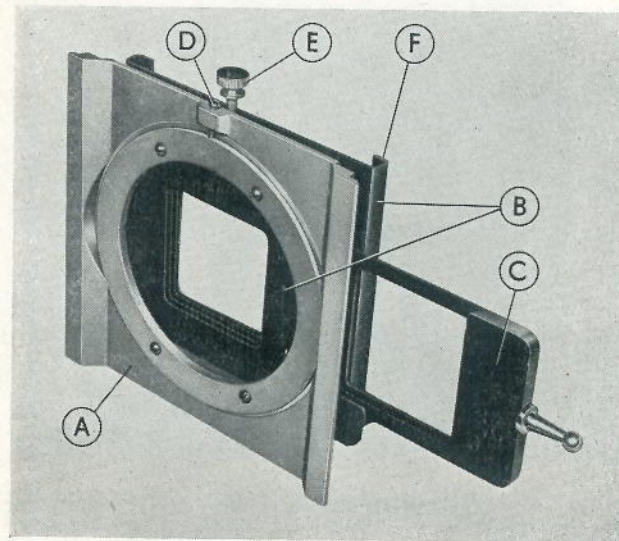


Fig. II. Turntable with slide carrier assembly viewed from the rear. (A) This casting slides into and remains upright with the runners of the projector lantern. (B) Housing for (C) Slide Carrier. Both (B) and (C) can rotate relative to (A) when (D), the tilt locking screw, is slackened. (E) Knurled screw retaining slide-carrier (C) in its housing (B). (F) Runners for objective lens assembly.

limitations will be immediately appreciated, e.g., periodic repetition, movement in one plane only from a single projector and a tendency to a curved path of movement. The disc is carried on a centre spindle in an aluminium case (a, Fig. 3) which has an aperture for the projected beam. On the back of the case round this aperture is a turntable for swivelling the effects. This is of the same design as that carrying the slide carrier as described above. Once the locking screw

has been loosened the whole effect-case can be swivelled about the axis of the projector whilst the casting (*b*) is held in the front runners of the lantern. This movement is needed with an effect driven by a uni-directional motor so that the direction of picture movement can be selected, i.e., to left, to right, upwards, downwards or diagonally at any angle.

On the front of the case are two runners (*c*); that at the rear for colour mediums or an adjustable mask, the other for the objective lens (*d*) which focuses the picture. There is a spring-loaded retaining wire (*e*) to hold the lens in position even when the effect disc is rotated to give the required direction. Also on the front of the case, carried in a box (*f*), is the driving mechanism which may be either electric or clockwork.

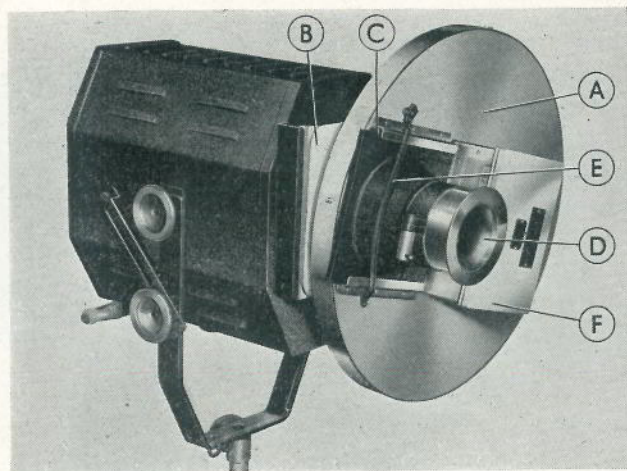


Fig. III. Patt. 51 with effects disc and objective lens in position. The effect has been rotated by means of turntable to give downward diagonal direction to the projected effect. (A) Disc housing, (B) Turntable casting, (C) Colour (or mask) and objective runners, (D) Objective lens, (E) Objective lens retainer spring, (F) Motor housing.

An electric drive (Fig. 4) can be used when A.C. supply is available. This is a constant speed motor (*a*) geared to a shaft (*b*) carrying a small rubber tyred wheel (*c*), the position of the latter being adjustable along the length of the shaft. This bears on and drives an aluminium plate (*d*) locked to the centre spindle (*e*) of the effects disc. The system is known as a "potter's wheel" drive. When the small driving wheel (*c*) is positioned on its shaft so as to drive the outside edge of the plate (*d*), the resulting speed of travel of the disc will be slowest. The nearer it is moved towards the centre of the potter's wheel the faster will be the rotation of the effects disc.

Motors having speeds appropriate to the effect disc are fitted but the potter's wheel gives a final choice to the user. Furthermore, if the small driving wheel (*c*) is moved past the centre (*e*) of the plate to drive the opposite side, this has the effect of reversing the direction of travel of the disc and obviates the necessity for rotating the effects on the lantern to obtain the same results.

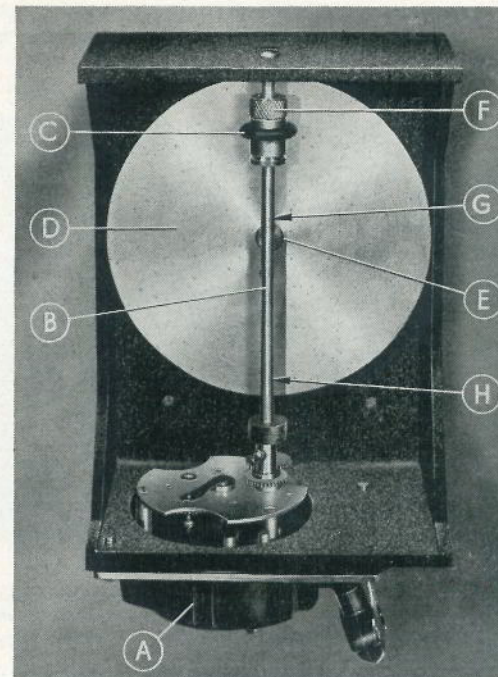


Fig. IV. Electric motor with potter's wheel drive for effects. (A) Motor, (B) Driving shaft carrying (C) Rubber-tyred wheel transmitting drive to (D) Driven plate which in turn rotates effects disc via (E) Centre spindle to which both are locked. (F) Knurled screw after loosening which the position of wheel (C) on shaft (B) may be adjusted for speed and direction. If moved to position (G) for example the speed will be maximum or if to (H) which is on the opposite side of effects spindle (E), the speed would be slow and the direction reversed.

The clockwork drive⁽¹⁾ consists of a double spring motor (Fig. 5) with a winding key attached. There is a governor spindle carrying adjustable vanes to control the speed of the disc. If these vanes are faced to the front (*a*) they impede the rotation and slow

⁽¹⁾ Clockwork drives, though available for hire, cannot at present be supplied for purchase.

down the disc whilst the nearer they are set to "edge on" (b) to the direction of travel the faster the disc will rotate owing to reduced air resistance. When adjusting the vanes care must be taken not to damage the spindle. A small thumbscrew (d) will stop the motor, and this also should be handled with care. There are two types of clock motor, one fast and one slow, the choice of which is fitted depending on the requirements of the effects in question. Fully wound, the fast motor runs for approximately 50 minutes at the fastest speed and 2½ hours at its slowest speed, whilst the slow motor will last for between 4 hours and 6 hours without rewinding.

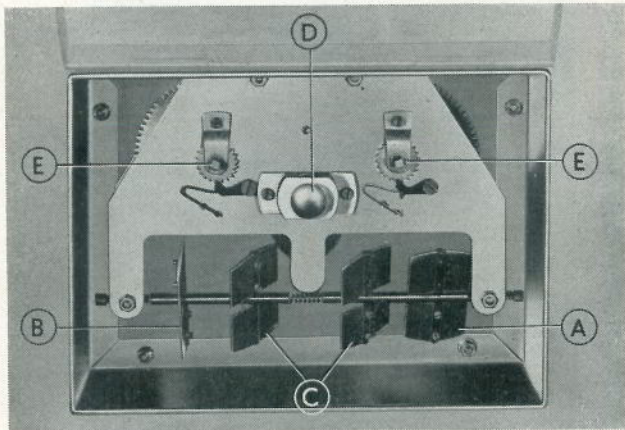


Fig. V. Clockwork effects drive. (A) Governor vane set for slowest speed, (B) fastest speed and (C) intermediate speeds. All four vanes are separately adjustable. (D) Thumbscrew for stopping and starting motor. (E,E) winding key shafts.

Other Optical Effects

Certain effects such as waves, ripple⁽²⁾ and lightning do not use the discs described above. In the first two the movement is required to reverse at frequent intervals, whilst in the latter the effect is only shown momentarily and intermittently. Consequently the whole construction is different. The cases of the two former which are rectangular are fitted with the usual turntable at rear and runners at front to take the objective lenses. An appropriate stationary slide is

⁽²⁾ A different form of ripple effect using no projection lantern or objective lens is also available for short throws. It gives a 20 ft. wide by 3 ft. high "picture" at 3-ft. throw.

It consists of an irregularly slotted rotating horizontal drum in front of a 500w or 1000w Horizon type Tubular Projection lamp which burns in the horizontal position. Care should be taken to align the filament supports away from the drum to get the best results.

fitted internally while a motor alternately raises and lowers three distorting or "break up" glasses which impart the necessary movement to the picture. Unless special warning is given at the time of ordering so that the necessary provision can be made, effects of this type may only be tilted or rotated to a limited degree.

The forked lightning effect consists of a metal slide with a covering mask operated by a handle when required. Objective lenses are used in the usual way, and the effect may be regarded as a slide so far as the description above is concerned.

Objective Lenses

These are available in a variety of focal lengths and it is always necessary to specify the length of throw and the size of the picture required so that the right one for the job may be supplied.

With the Pattern 51 Lantern which is suitable only for comparatively short throws (and effects are usually best employed thus), the commonly used lenses are as follows:—

2½-in. focus	Extra Wide Angle	giving a 14 ft. picture at 10 ft. throw.
3-in. "	Wide angle	" 10 ft. " 10 ft. "
3½-in. "	Medium angle	" 7 ft. " 10 ft. "
4-in. "	Narrow angle	" 6 ft. 6 in. " 10 ft. "
4½-in. "	Extra Narrow angle	" 6 ft. " 10 ft. "

In all cases the use of a 3¼-in. × 3¼-in. slide is assumed.

The wider the angle of the lens used the more will be the distortion, the tendency being for the picture, if projected squarely, to have curved instead of straight sides and for the sharpness of the picture to fall off at the edges.

A Warning

Generally speaking, effects are difficult to use satisfactorily in the theatre. Success is most easily attained in the case of spectacular productions, but in a straight play, unless they are handled with considerable restraint, there is a serious danger that effects will detract from, rather than add to the success of the production.

It is extremely seldom when sitting in a room that one is actually conscious of clouds moving across the sky. One may notice from time to time that a particular cloud has moved or has changed its formation, but the actual movement and change are so unobtrusive that they usually remain unnoticed while in progress. Consequently, although these are probably one of the easiest optical effects to use successfully, even clouds must be used with the greatest discretion on the stage lest they distract the audience's attention from the more important aspects of the production. As the cost of purchase or hire of the apparatus necessary to project effects is not inconsiderable and the pitfalls both artistic and technical are many, it cannot be too strongly recommended that the intending user should seek expert advice at the outset.

REALISM AND ILLUSION

It is often claimed that the theatre of realism—or naturalism—is on its way out ; that it is dead or dying. When the revolt towards realism was most robust it was claimed with equal certainty that romanticism was in a state of decomposition. Of course, the theatre of romanticism has never died ; it is still with us. And realism itself was always most satisfying when it was least real.

All theatrical expression is an essay in illusion and exaggeration. There are wide differences in degree. Changes in the technique of popular play writing and production are created by changes of current thought, emotion, behaviour, and speech. The theatre reflects the spirit of the age in which it is operating. The spread of the naturalistic play coincided with the growth of materialism, the eclipse of the aristocracy by an industrial plutocracy, and with reformist strivings towards an imperfectly conceived social democracy. Popular plays ceased to be concerned with the decorative and the abstract ; they no longer revered tradition. They began to “ shatter creeds and demolish idols ”. Stage life shifted from the castles and palaces of the hierarchy or the libraries and pantries of the squirearchy. The popular settings became the drawing rooms and bedrooms of the bourgeoisie or the kitchens and parlours of the proletariat.

Every play that has ever been written—from the ancient Morality Play to the modern immorality farce—has been concerned with some aspect of the eternal conflict between the good and the bad. The aspect may be trivial or momentous. The treatment may be materialistic or mystic ; realistic or fantastic ; hilarious or solemn. The idiom may be commonplace or significant ; simple or extravagant ; prosy or poetic. The concern may be with throwing a Cocktail Party or a Bonnet Over the Windmill ; somebody is, perhaps, getting a gun or searching for an Irishman's elusive rainbow ; but there is always that essential struggle for supremacy between good and bad ; love and hate ; beauty and ugliness ; life and death. There is always the inescapable conflict between the righteous and the evil ; the comic and the tragic ; the abstract and the material ; the eternal and the ephemeral. Fashions will affect popular partisanship but the triumph of right over wrong is always popular. A happy ending is always satisfying to the multitude ; it represents hope to those who have despaired and the restoring of illusion to the disillusioned. To-day the theatre exists in a world of disillusionment and offers a means of escape from frustrating reality. The theatre is moving away from the matter of fact reality of a world that is a shambles of wrecked ideals and ideas, into realms of fantasy where ideals provide emotional solace.

The growth of naturalism in the theatre had a profound effect on the technique of production and acting. It created a period of under-statement on the stage. Realistic acting at its best was and is exquisitely subtle in the concealment of emphasis ; at its worst it is merely behaviourism masquerading as acting. Realism makes it easier for the actor who lacks the divine spark to convince himself and others that he is creating a character when he is merely exhibiting his own. His deficiency is least obvious when the theme is most mundane. But when a playwright creates characters that do not conform to suburban standards of speech and behaviour, the real actor adjusts his interpretation to a stylish exaggeration. Now he must not subtly conceal the exaggeration ; he must, with equal subtlety, betray it. Acting is an art . . . an interpretive art ; it is *never* real. A general departure from the creation by dramatists of commonplace character and situation will not increase or decrease the difficulties of the actor's art. It will make them different ; and make failure more obvious. It will, therefore, more clearly expose the inadequacy of the enthusiast who thinks he is acting when he is merely animating dialogue. He will be trying to perform a ballet with the technique of the palais-de-danse. And the least critical of audiences can spot the difference between a palais glide and a pas de deux. The audiences that acclaim with rapture the prentice production of “ Laburnum Grove ” by the Pedestrian Players, might find their attempts to put a Ring Round the Moon a trifle hard to bear.

Changes in the theatre are always very gradual and are stubbornly resisted. Naturalism is not dead yet. The hey-day of the realistic play has, perhaps, passed but it will long continue to survive. Its passing has already profoundly affected the professional theatre and professional acting. Its effect on the amateur theatre is less obvious, notwithstanding that much of the impetus of the movement away from realism was provided by the more adventurous amateurs. The more orthodox amateurs must sooner or later be affected by the change and the testing will doubtless be severe. Many may fall by the wayside but the amateur theatre at its best will certainly survive—and should be strengthened by the change.

P.C.

SCALE IN LIGHTING

A few weeks ago, I was in the office when the phone rang and a customer, unknown to me, wanted to hire some lighting apparatus. Her request was for two floods and a spot, all three to be 1000 watt each.

Now I do not believe “ the customer is always right ”. My experience, both when I have been the salesman and when I have been the customer, has often shown the contrary to be the case. In point of fact I expect advice in those cases where I am inexpert, and also, tactfully, in those where I think I am expert. Consequently

the next step in this phone conversation was to sound the customer and try to set the stage for the drama in which the odd combination of two floods and a spot, all 1000-watt were to play a part.

It turned out that this hall had two compartment battens and a footlight (it would!) with 60-watt lamps and nothing else. The floods were to go on the side of the stage and the spot to provide front lighting from a projection room 80 ft. or so away.

I expect the strangeness of this arrangement will be apparent to most readers. What hope had a single 1000-watt spot on an 80 ft. throw, however good its optical system, against 1000-watt floods at close range on the stage ; or how were the 1000-watt floods to be good neighbours with 60-watt battens? Yet this kind of error is commoner than one might suppose nor does this kind of thing necessarily indicate an ignorance of basic lighting principles. This show was a dance display, and side floods to correct the flatness of battens and floats were a proper addition, as also was front lighting to correct bad facial shadows when under No. 1 batten and close to the footlight. The real trouble was the lack of a sense of scale.

Scale is important in everything that concerns the eyes, whether it is a matter of an accessory on a dress, decoration on a building, or the relationship of a building to the others in a street. Perhaps the best example is provided by models, and as it is a hobby of mine, let us say model railways. If a model railway is to look right, all the objects in it—buildings, figures, locos and all—must be reduced in the same ratio.

In stage lighting it is not necessarily the size of stage and hall which sets the scale, but also finance. Obviously a stage 20 ft. wide by 15 ft. deep should require less apparatus than one 40 ft. by 30 ft. deep for the same class of production. But it may not be so obvious what to do when our money is enough for the former, and we have to produce on the latter stage. Then a sense of scale is important if the whole lighting scheme is not to be wrecked.

The key to scale lies in the general level of illumination that the electrical supply and finance will allow : a moderate increase above this level represents the highlights and decrease below, the shadows. The actual intensity which the human eye will interpret as a bright light comes at either end of an enormous range. Measuring intensity with an instrument (a photometer) which registers in foot candles, the range is something like this.

At mid-day in June on the South Coast of England the sun gives 10,000 ft. candles. In an industrial city where the clear sky of the former is *not* so clear, 4,000 ft. candles has been recorded. Daylight outdoors at other times will vary from 1,000 to 500 most days of the year ; that is leaving out exceptionally overcast days and of course fog. A battery of 1,000-watt acting area floods may provide 50 ft. candles of white on a stage and this will seem very bright—more than enough to represent a bright day in a really large theatre.

In the home and office a room will appear highly lit with 15 to

20 ft. candles. Actually most rooms probably score between 5 and 10. Getting down even lower, bright moonlight has a maximum of 0.02 ft. candle ; yet how bright the moonlight seems. Only trying to read by it gives it away.

Thus from 10,000 ft. candles certainly down to 20 ft. candles, perhaps even to 0.02 can, when properly applied, suggest the effect of bright light. The human eye adapts itself to the level of the illumination. Nothing is harder even for the expert than to assess the level of illumination without some sort of instrument.

So far I have been talking of judging a bright patch of light by itself without any secondary clues. The moment there is the possibility of visual comparison so the present level of illumination will be elevated or depressed. For example, at the London Palladium there is a very high intensity on the stage, but if one pays a visit to the open air for a breather during a summer's day rehearsal, then on return to the theatre the stage appears poorly lit for a time, until the sunlight impression wears off. At night the reverse is the case, the stage intensity having gained by the rest.

Another way of depressing the apparent stage intensity would be to admit a narrow shaft of sunlight through an improperly closed blind. There is a London theatre where this has a way of happening at afternoon rehearsals. Then all the fine lighting on the stage becomes a washed out yellow. This is not because of the scatter from the beam itself, which is small, but because a new standard has been introduced against which the eye involuntarily sets the rest.

By now the need for scale in stage lighting will be apparent. At all costs no chance must be given to the eyes of the audience to make comparisons unflattering to our general level of illumination. Highlights must only just tell, and deep shadows somewhere will help to raise our apparent intensity. A well-darkened auditorium is useful for this later purpose, but however dark it is it can be defeated by one brightly lit exit sign in the field of view.

It follows, therefore, that the auditorium and the public parts of a theatre whose stage equipment is limited (i.e. *most* theatres and halls) must not be any lighter than necessary to read programmes in comfort ; also, that a period of darkness or low intensity* before raising the curtain will help the stage to be at its existing best. A slow dim out of auditorium is a valuable aid to this.

The curtain once up, is any of the stage lighting out of scale and betraying the rest of the lantern team in their pretence of a bright day? Here are a few examples from my own experience. Ballet in a large West End theatre ; the mass of lighting on the dancers dwarfed by a bright splotch of light on either side of the backcloth from a triple 1000-watt flood in each wing. A cine-variety house where the manager complained the fore-stage lighting was inadequate whatever lanterns he installed, whereas the fault was really with the

* No bright patches thrown by F. O. H. Spots on the tabs, please. Bring them in as the curtain rises.

two magazine 500-watt battens used to light the curtain setting, and which always silhouetted the artists on the fore stage. As a last example, an amateur production for which a 1000-watt Pageant lantern and similar acting area flood had been hired and switched full on to augment batten and floats of open 60-watt lamps, with the result that there appeared to be no stage lighting at all outside the two intense pools they produced.

These may be extreme examples but they are true ones nevertheless, and in any case even a slight let up on the matter of lighting scale may upset the whole balance. Remember all lighting on stage and in auditorium must be in scale. The aim at all times should be the maximum intensity feasible. Seeing how high are the levels of daylight, do not stretch the credulity of the eye too far! But if funds or current limit, then set a lower scale for the lot.

Here is a general guide. A small scale layout may have six or eight 150-watt baby floods as a flooding batten behind the proscenium, and a similar arrangement for the backcloth. In this case 250-watt focus lanterns (Patt. 27 or 45) will be appropriate as a spot batten and 500-watt Patt. 44 or 43 focus lanterns as front of house spots. For high lighting on stage (sunlight etc.,) use 500-watt spots, and as wing floods, 150-watt floods singly or in pairs. The latter lantern with hood becomes a suitable acting area flood.

Medium scale involves magazine battens with 60-watt lamps, 500-watt Patt. 44 batten spots, 1000-watt Patt. 43 lanterns front of house and for special high lighting on stage, wing floods should be 500-watt (Patt. 60). Large scale becomes 100-watt battens, 1000-watt batten spots, 1000-watt Patt. 73 Mirror spots† in the front of house, Patt. 50 1000-watt Pageant lanterns for high lighting, and 1000-watt Patt. 49A wing floods. If acting area floods are used then Patt. 76 or 56, but I am dubious whether more than a 500-watt lamp should be used even so. This 500/1000-watt lantern is more appropriate when used in quantity on the very large installation which is beyond the scope of this article. By the way, this lantern could in many cases be used for high lighting from the side instead of a Pageant since it has a wider spread and is, therefore, handy on a smaller stage.

These indications of scale are only intended as a rough guide, because multiplying the number of lanterns also represents intensity, but this takes us into the matter of light distribution on which all installations must be built and which subject demands a series of articles to itself. All I have attempted to do here is to warn the prospective hirer or purchaser of one or two pieces of additional apparatus to take careful thought lest by adding light the effect of less light is obtained.

F.P.B.

† A Pattern 73 1000-watt Mirror spot gives twice to three times the light of a 1000-watt Patt. 43.

OFF-STAGE ETIQUETTE

or

Dressing-room Drill for Amateur Young Ladies

By GLORIA GAYE

Post-war issues of TABS have been to some lengths to give to actors, stage hands and others, advice and information as to what is expected of them during a show. This was carried a stage further in a recent issue of TABS by Peter Quince, the darling, who has his own ideas as to what even the audience should wear. Without wishing to butt in, I should like to make one or two comments on a matter which has so far been overlooked. I refer to "Off-stage Etiquette."

So far as stage hands, electricians and other rude fellows of the baser sort are concerned, they can I think be trusted to look after themselves. On stage and off stage they behave very much the same; at least that is my experience. No one expects any different of them. Those tea cups, beer bottles and empty cigarette packets which not only litter the wings but are so cunningly placed as to make a graceful entrance or exit almost impossible! No, let such people take care of themselves. I am concerned with the off stage activities of The Artist. After all, we are really the people who matter, don't you think?

Now the medical profession are agreed that any sudden shock to the nervous system, or likewise any sudden change of habit or habitat, is an extremely Bad Thing, in fact *utterly Miz*. Consequently it can be too shame-making if, having worked our various friends and relations up into a state of ecstasy at our first night performance (and of course probably the same friends and relations at the last performance) we let them down "afterwards." I want therefore to make these few suggestions, particularly to you of the fair sex, on what you might do so as not to disappoint your admirers. Remember too, you must retain your glam if you are to retain their admiration.

In the first place you must, of course, ask the poor darlings to "come round afterwards." All of them. It won't matter if they can't get into your dressing room. They'll be quite happy standing outside in the corridor so long as you keep the dressing room door wide open, and let them hear a general buzz of conversation and the occasional clink of glasses which can be empty anyway. Indeed, they will be favourably surprised at your sudden rise to popularity.

For the benefit of the few who do gain access thereto, it is most important that your dressing room is in a fit state to receive your Public. I do not mean that everything should be spick and span and in its proper place, for this might give the impression either that your part was so small that you had ample time to clear up, or that you had not been entertaining earlier in the evening. So flowers, glasses, bottles, grease paint and of course telegrams galore should be the order of the day. Your own street clothes may be a trifle mundane amongst this array so they are best banished behind a screen or curtain, except of course any new or borrowed furs or other fineries

which should not be crushed in this barbaric way. If everything else is tastefully arranged, the dressing room should be really absolutely *you* before they arrive. And now for the details.

The flowers first of all. If you have a number of rich friends you will inevitably have made sure that they come to either the first or last nights, or preferably both. You can make fairly sure of getting flowers from this quarter by inviting them to "come round after-

THE "VERY THING" FOR LADIES
FOR AN ELEGANT FIGURE & GOOD HEALTH
HARNESS' ELECTRIC CORSETS
PRICE ONLY 5/6
POST FREE

FOR WOMEN OF ALL AGES

HARNESS' ELECTRIC CORSETS
ONLY 5/6 POST FREE
By wearing these perfectly designed Corsets the most awkward figure becomes graceful and elegant, the internal organs are speedily strengthened.
THE CHEST IS AIDED IN ITS HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT.
And the entire system is invigorated.
Send at once Postal Order or Cheque for 5s. 6d. to the Secretary, G. Dept.
THE MEDICAL BATTERY CO. LIMITED.
ONLY 5/6 POST FREE
52, OXFORD ST LONDON W

Your public should never see this sort of thing. Remember the "misappointed" little boy on page 4.

wards" at least 24 hours before the performance, always allowing, of course, for early closing days. If your Society is one of those which only permits the handing of bouquets up to the stage on the last

night, a discreet word or two at the local florists can usually effect delivery not only to the stage door but direct to your dressing room. If the flowers are boxed and a note attached marked "Urgent—awaiting reply" the trick is as good as done and you can have the flowers in your dressing room right through the run, only parting with them on those two or three occasions when they are handed up over the footlights after the last act curtain. Nothing looks so *utterly* theatrical as a good display of flowers in the dressing room, so you will probably wish to take the precaution of sending yourself a few floral tributes. These should always be sent direct from the shop—or if possible from several shops—each with a short note wishing yourself good luck. The use of different styles of handwriting is to be recommended, but it can become confusing if any friends who visit you after the show and who have *not* sent flowers find a bouquet with their name attached. Particular notice must, therefore, be given to this point.

The same attention to detail must of course apply in the case of any self-addressed telegrams. Where possible they should be handed in at different times on different days and from different Post Offices. Greetings telegrams always make a good showing and there are many who feel that these are worth the extra outlay. A convenient way of displaying telegrams is to pin them to the dressing room curtains, and provided a little careful overlapping is arranged it is surprising what an extensive use of last season's wires can be made.

Make-up weapons always lend a useful splash of colour to any dressing room, and your various sticks, liners, etc., should be neatly arranged in rows. A comparatively modest display can always be enhanced by a little tactful borrowing "in case," or by the breaking of some of the longer pieces into two or three parts. The spilling of "wet white" on the dressing table is nowadays considered *démodé*, since instead of indicating the number of quick changes you were required to perform, it may be taken as indicative of a certain amount of nervousness on your part. Regarding your actual facial make-up, the visitors to the dressing room will, of course, wish to see this exactly as it was on the stage. One school of thought requires that your stage make-up be worn *in toto* to any "after the show" party and even to the home, but a rather more subtle treatment calls for the retention only of all make-up round the eyes, and a narrow margin say a quarter of an inch wide, all round the roots of the hair. This reduced quantity of war paint has been satisfactorily worn to work the next day with surprising results.

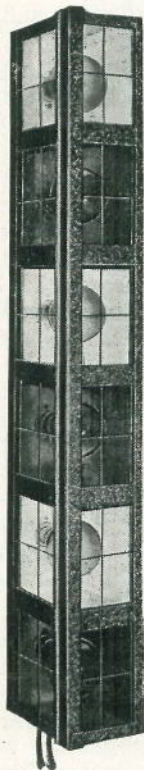
I must just mention one or two points about the question of drinks and glasses. As to the latter, these should be of different shapes and sizes and it is always a tip worth remembering that only a proportion of these should be clean. It is so much more exciting for your guests to have to use someone else's glass occasionally as it does just remind them of all the other visitors you've had earlier

in the evening. Regarding the drink itself, one or two empty champagne bottles always look well, and of course last year's will do just as well. Beer is so dreadfully dreary, I always think, and everything seems to point to gin. Remember though, that two or three partly used bottles are so much more glam than a single full one. Brandy and whisky need never be offered. Some ginger ale dregs at the bottom of one or two glasses will clearly indicate to latecomers that your earlier and more ardent admirers just "drank you out of house and home, my dear."

There are various other points on which I should have liked to give guidance, for example in the matter of speech. At all costs avoid the ordinary. Such simple terms as "dear," "nice," etc., should be replaced by the more explicit "darling," "delicious" or "just too too divine." But don't you agree, actually? Anyhow that will have to be all for now. I just *must* get round to the post office. The whole cast have agreed to send each other telegrams this year. So much easier, don't you think, and such a surprise for all of us.

MAGAZINE HANGING LENGTHS

Double sided Pattern L hanging lengths are now available for Hire. This equipment is designed to be as compact and light in weight as possible in order that it may hang on framed scenery. The light distribution is wide and free from "hot spots" making it particularly suitable for lighting window and door backings. On small stages it will also be found useful as footlight or as groundrow to light the bottom of cyclorama and backcloths at close range. When used in the hanging position the lengths may either be mounted vertically as illustrated, up the side of a door or window, or horizontally along the top. In cases where the light distribution is found to be inconveniently wide, one side or part of a side may be blanked off quite simply by inserting cardboard into the colour frame runners. The Hire charge per 3 ft. length is 10/- per week, this including a pair of connecting leads up to 30 ft. in length each. Gelatine colour media which is not included in the hire charge and which must be purchased outright is priced at 2/3 per set of 12 pieces. As usual, the hire charge includes lamps and these may be 25w, 40w, 60w, or 100w. In the absence of instructions to the contrary 60w lamps will be supplied. Each length weighs approximately 23 lb. and the measurements are as follows: 3 ft. long, 8½ in. from back to front, and 4¾ in. wide.



WEST END AT SIXES AND SEVENS

By PAUL BEDFORD

This is not a discussion of opening times, as the title may suggest, for, although I am convinced that most people prefer a reasonably early opening, it is of little real consequence whether West End Theatres open their doors at six, seven, or nine-thirty. The important thing is that they should continue to open them at some hour. Nevertheless the present assortment of times probably adds to the confusion that is my present concern. I refer to irregularities of place rather than of time. But first let us consider whether we can discern the function of the West End, and whether that function is being performed as it might be.

These are complex problems because there are inevitably many very different viewpoints ranging from the suburban housewife, whose ideas are still influenced by the glamour of Edwardian vogues, to the modern cynic, who likes to think he has discovered far better theatre in the provinces or in some bargain basement in Bayswater. But both these extremes have a basis of truth, which rightly suggests that the function of the West End is a multiple thing.

It is comparatively easy to make perfunctory suggestions as to what the West End should be doing. It is not always so easy to reconcile our own ideas with those of others; unless we remember that the words "West End" stand for forty-odd theatres, each of which could follow a definite and distinct policy. Half the confusion to-day arises from the lack of cohesion within each separate theatre, none of which has any character of its own. Each is merely another theatre building instead of a theatrical entity.

Perhaps it is not immediately apparent what difference this makes. It would seem that there are so many revues, so many comedies, tragedies, farces, classical or musical shows at any given time; and that it matters little which theatre happens to house which show. Does it really command attention that the Globe, for instance, has been the home of such varied fare as "Trespass," "Tuppence Coloured," "Medea," "The Return of The Prodigal," "Oranges and Lemons," "The Lady's Not For Burning," and "Ring Around The Moon"? Who cares about the Comedy belying its name for "The Crime Of Margaret Foley" or the theatre that bears the name of Garrick becoming the home of a Sylvaine farce? What on earth difference does it make?

Surely it is significant that no theatre is associated with a particular type of show, that none has its regular audience—with

the exceptions of the Old Vic, Sadlers Wells, and (Oh yes!) the Windmill; which after all, are the three most consistently flourishing theatres we have. Is it not true that the highest achievements have always been at times when a theatre specialised in a certain class of production? We still speak of the Lyceum productions under Irving's management (but look at that poor theatre to-day, and weep), the Aldwych farces, the Savoy operas and the Gate revues as among the best of their type.

Quite apart from this, each theatre is more suitable for a certain kind of show than any other. This fact is considered very seldom to-day, as is proved by the production of intimate revue at the Comedy, straight plays at the Winter Garden and Musicals at the Strand. Even the Adelphi, which for a time looked like establishing itself as a new Savoy for light opera, has slipped back to a comedy and now a revue; and it was certainly too large for the Coal Board's *bête noire*.

Possibly theatre managers would like to plead a catholic taste; an attribute all should try to possess. But in the West End it is not necessary; or if it be let us have variety, ballet, boxing, wrestling, films, circuses, lectures, debates and chamber music at each theatre. This would not do, for mere eclecticism cannot be considered a policy; and it is policies that are so sadly lacking.

Can we not look forward to the day when more theatres will echo the Palladium's slogan "The Home Of Variety"? (Incidentally this is another theatre that flourishes best when it sticks to this set of guns—even if they are too often "Lend-Lease"!) Let us have a "Home Of" everything from Greek Tragedy to Musical Comedy, Shakespeare to Italian Opera, Ballet to Existentialism, or Shaw to Continuous Revue. But let it be something specific. Let us see some order instead of the present chaos so that visitors to London will know where they ought to go to see the type of show they wish to see, and, even more important, so that each theatre will create its own audience—and that audience will take a direct interest in the fortunes of their particular theatre (or theatres, if their tastes are healthily wide enough to include several). After all, it is a keen audience that keeps the theatre alive, and they cannot be expected to be as keen as they might be while everything is at sixes and sevens.

Owing to the increased cost of materials the 2/- deposit on tin containers used for packing Stagesound effects records has had to be increased to 4/-.

IF ONLY

If only I'd sufficient cash,
I'd really like to go
To-night, and every other night,
To see a different show.
I seldom seem to get about,
And tickets that are free
Are sent to him, to her and you,
But never come to me.

I'd like to go to Opera,
I'm sure I'd understand;
I don't know any German, but
I'm sure it would be Grand.

I'd like to be a Ballet fan;
So little French I know
I couldn't tell an *entrechat*
From *pas* that might be *faux*.

I'd like to see a few Straight Plays
(For preference First Nights),
But most of all the smutty ones
That wangle tax free rights.

I'd like to go to Musicals
Where 'blue' must rhyme with 'you,'
Where everyone is frightfully young,
Though over fifty-two.

I'd like to see a Comedy
Or good old Bedroom Farce,
Where bachelors mislay their pants,
And widows thrive on grass.

I'd like to go to Music Halls;
At least I know I'd hear,
For Compères nowadays use mikes
Where Chairmen once had beer.

I'd like to go to Pantomime
Where fairies uphold rights,
Where boys are girls, and everyone
Consists of thighs and tights.

I'd like to join some Theatre Clubs,
Ars Arty Artis Causa,
My hair is long, my shirt is black,
And corduroy my trouser.

But as I haven't any cash
The case does not arise;
And when a great occasion comes—
A birthday or surprise—
A visit to a Windmill Show
Must satisfy my yen,
"Continuous Variety
For Tired Business Men."

ERRORS IN PUBLICITY

By RODERICK WILKINSON

By courtesy of "The Theatre Industry Journal."

Most businesses have their share of errors in the press. Typographical mistakes, the mis-spelling of a word or a letter misplaced can make a sincere newspaper report look ridiculous and exasperate the author of the damaged paragraph to such an extent that he "sees red."

The cinema and theatre businesses, however, seem to have more than their fair share these days. Here are a few recent examples:

From a London newspaper: "*This play is set in a public school. The production is being prevented by Linnit and Dunfee with Michael Benthall directing.*"

From a Chicago Sunday paper: "*Gaiety girls made good, a half-dozen of them marrying into the nobility, and many becoming wealthy.*" Apparently there is a difference in U.S.A.!

From a criticism of the film "*Perfect Strangers*": "*Then comes the war and they separate—the husband joining the Navy and his wife one of the Services.*" This definition of the difference between the Navy and a Service is credited to a Dublin evening newspaper.

Why should it be that the headline-writers and sub-editors exercise the greatest possible care to avoid the ludicrous in political articles, yet they seem to cast care to the wind when they deal with entertainment matters? Look at these headlines which appeared a few months ago in a London newspaper:

Films: Cabinet Will Act: U.S. Producers Face Dilemma.

Nor is there any excuse for this item from a British national daily: "*Miss Blanche Littler, equally well known as Mr. George Robey, is producing the Christmas show which opens on Boxing Day.*"

Perhaps the reason for the "gaffs" lies in the fact that showmen themselves are not too careful. For instance, here is the wording of a sign in huge letters above a London cinema:

Theodora Goes Wild Weekdays Only.

Even in slick New York we have sign examples such as these:

"Mother Wore Tights also Selected Shorts."

"30 Beautiful Girls—20 Beautiful Costumes."

Yet it is to Ireland we must return for the classic sign. A Dublin cinema has two notices opposite each other outside the exit:

"Have you left anything behind you?"

"No readmission."

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of TABS.

Dear Sir,

I enjoyed Mr. Paul Bedford's letter in your December issue. I move *him* to pity, and he makes *me* chuckle, so we are both happy.

I particularly appreciate his prophecy as to what will happen when I become "an ardent Theatre-goer." During my fifty years of adult Theatre-going I do not see that I could very well have been "ardenter." True, I have never attained Mr. Bedford's prodigious average of ten plays per month, but then I had an exacting job that would not allow so much time as that on all my artistic activities put together, and Literature, Music, and the other Arts had to come in somewhere.

Still, I once saw four of Shakespeare's consecutive Histories played by the same Company in one day (a truly arduous Marathon), and I have seen eight plays in a week at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre on more than one occasion. I have acted in almost every kind of play, sung in comic opera, produced, adjudicated, and generally tried to pull my weight on the Amateur Stage. So perhaps even Mr. Bedford will admit I am interested in the Theatre, even if I cannot yet aspire to the ranks of the "ardent."

I suspect the dress question will settle itself whatever I or Mr. Bedford may happen to think. As to theatre times, I have no doubt the Managers will try to suit the wishes of the majority, which, of course, may coincide with mine or Mr. Bedford's. Whichever way the decision goes, there will be no need for Mr. Bedford to continue "adamant."

Yours faithfully,
PETER QUINCE

TO THE EDITOR,
Sir,

I note that in your diagram of the "correct" wiring for a switchboard, page 16, December 1950, you place the switch for the final sub-circuits between the fuse and the controlled circuit. Surely it is better to connect the switch to the bus-bars, thence to the fuse and to the dimmers, load, etc. In this case the whole of the fuse unit is isolated when the switch is open, while it is not isolated in your case. I would suggest that my arrangement is better as there are a number of proprietary fuse-holders in current use in which it is just possible to touch live metal during the process of inserting or removing the fuse: if the switch isolates the fuse from the live bus-bar, no risk can arise from accidental contact. The wire from the live bus-bar to the switch is, of course, protected by the main fuse, but it is short and totally enclosed within the equipment and in consequence not very liable to earth faults.

This suggestion may not, of course, conform with your present works practice, but I would urge that you give it your earnest consideration.

Yours faithfully,
J. R. P.

F. P. B. REPLIES:—

On switchboards of Strand Electric manufacture where the wiring is of panel type, the main object of the fuse is to protect the dimmer winding and the external circuit, it is often placed where J. R. P. suggests. Certainly neither the panel wiring nor switch should need protection. When writing in "TABS" I am not dictating the policy or practice of our works but giving what I consider to be the best advice to cover what may be termed "home made" boards. In this case I do feel strongly that the circuit should begin with a fuse, for the wiring may be rather makeshift. Indeed it is usually convenient to mount a commercial ironclad fuseboard on top of the switch-board and thereby combine bus-bars and protection in one compact unit.

I agree with J. R. P. that some proprietary fuses are of a type that make it advisable to switch off before inserting. Where, however, Strand Electric have the specifying of the fuses to be used, such types are studiously avoided.