

TABS

Published in the interests of the Amateur Theatre
by
The Strand Electric and Engineering Co., Ltd.

HEAD OFFICE SOUTHERN OFFICES, SHOWROOMS TABS EDITORIAL OFFICE	} 29, King Street, London, W.C.2 Phone: Temple Bar 4444 (16 lines)
Southern Hire Stores	
Northern Branch	313/7, Oldham Road, Manchester Phone: Collyhurst 2736
Eire Branch	62, Dawson Street, Dublin Phone: Dublin 74030
Australian Branch	481, Malvern Road, Melbourne Phone: BJ 4503
Scottish Agents	Stage Furnishings Ltd., 346, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow Phone: Glasgow, Douglas 6431

TABS is published in April, September and December. All correspondence relating thereto should be addressed to The Editor at Head Office. Ordinary business communications should in all cases be addressed to the office of the Area in which the correspondent is situated, see map on page 27.

CONTENTS

	Page		Page
Editorial	3	The Oldest Theatre in a New Country— <i>Theatre History from Tasmania</i>	17
The Bearded Lady in the Box Office—a comment on the Theatre in New Zealand	4	Keep it Dark by S. Woolf— <i>Stray light distracts</i>	20
Light, Shade and Balance by George Devine	6	Colour Medium Range	21
Book Review... ..	8	The Price of Seats—100 years ago	23
New Baby Mirror Spot	9	A Private Theatre—from an old sale catalogue... ..	24
Pattern 58 Pageant Lantern	9	The Amateur	25
Fluorescent Paints And The Like	10	The Amateur Again	26
Changing Conventions by Harold Downs	11	Strand Branch Areas	27
New Class T Projector Lamp	14	Glossary of Technical Theatrical Terms	28
Lamps and Maintenance	15		
Bars and Barrels—a note on Lantern Suspensions	16		

EDITORIAL

Out of the last twenty-five issues or so this is the first one which does not contain an article by "P. C." writing either over his initials or some *nom-de-plume*. His fans need not be unduly alarmed. He is resting—not in the theatrical sense of being out of work, but in the rather more fortunate one of having other, though we hope not better, things to do. He will be with us again in the autumn.

We refer above to "about twenty-five issues." The fact of the matter is that we are not at all clear as to how many issues of TABS were, in fact, produced before the war. Many of our records at Head Office, including unfortunately those relating to TABS, were destroyed by enemy action. Furthermore, the editor's private and carefully cherished copies suffered the same indignity along with his other personal effects at home on two occasions. The only pre-war copies of TABS remaining to us are as follows. Vol. 1, Nos. 2, 3 and 4; Vol. 2, Nos. 1, 2, 3; Vol. 3, No. 1.

If any reader could tell us how many issues there were in each of the first three volumes we would be most interested. Furthermore, if any reader having a copy of any of the missing numbers would be good enough to lend the Editor his copy for a short while he would earn our deepest gratitude. Safe return of any copy so lent is promised.

* * *

AN APPEAL

Good news! The Central School of Speech and Drama, as it nears its fiftieth anniversary, finds dramatic training more and more vigorous. The School has grown up and grown out of its present home in the Albert Hall, and now has to find new quarters to house all the activities of a thorough training for the theatre. This will cost money and the School has no grants—the students' fees pay entirely for their training and there are no reserves or endowments to turn into new buildings. So a fund has been started. The School has helped numerous young people who have later become fine teachers or have given the public joy in the theatre and on television, in the cinema and on the air. They—and all old Fogerties—will show their gratitude! We can all encourage the good work and enable it to go on by sending donations, welcome large or small, to the Honorary Treasurer, Building Appeal Fund, Central School of Speech and Drama, Royal Albert Hall, London, S.W.7. Clubs and Societies may organise performances and collections for the fund. There will be exciting returns on the stages of to-morrow!

Sybil Thomadice

THE BEARDED LADY IN THE BOX OFFICE

With acknowledgments to the New Zealand Drama Council and the Editor of "The New Zealand Theatre Newsletter"

The Pahiatua Repertory's programme for its production of *Castle in the Air* carries a note quoting J. B. Priestley on "Show Business" which runs: "The difference between show business and the theatre is quite simple. Show business ranges from inducing ten elephants to play hockey at the Empress Hall to Miss Vivien Leigh playing in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Show business is the business of packing them in. The perfect example of it is the bearded lady at the fair. I am interested in the art of the theatre. It takes patience and hard work. It is the one place where, to enjoy yourselves, you have to "feel" with your neighbours and be one of a little community."



"Show business is packing them in."

Priestley then goes on to say that he is not interested in show business but in real theatre, the "art of the theatre." For real theatre, in spite of what some critics have had to say, is an art that ranks with painting, music and sculpture. For its expression it needs a touch of genius, infinite patience and hard work, a deep understanding of humanity, and, what is more, the co-operation of author, producer, players and audience.

These two dogmatic definitions, of show business and real theatre, will raise little argument. But where does show business

end and theatre begin? The Ice Follie at present touring New Zealand is show business with skaters taking the place of Priestley's hockey-playing elephants; good honest show business with no pretence. The musical comedies we see are show business—not quite so honest perhaps, as they rely on tinsel glitter and popular melodies, plus nostalgia, to cover the often third-rate performance. From the musicals we pass to the semi-musicals, the farces and the hilarious comedies, and we reach an undefined area of opinion. A farce is written in the form of true theatre; there are classical examples of farce which Mr. Priestley himself would uphold as real theatre.

So the difference between show business and theatre is not quite so simple. Let us, for example, analyse the plays most popular over the last few months with New Zealand drama groups. Well in the lead is *The Happiest Days of Your Life*, a play that can be enjoyed

with the rawest amateur cast, a play that does not need, either in cast or audience, a deep understanding of human nature or a background of culture (although the scene is laid in a school). For expert performance all it needs is the technique of the comedian, i.e., the hockey-playing elephant. Next on the list of popularity comes *Bonadventure*, which makes a show of depth by mixing religion into a whodunit. But does it really do more than scratch the surface? A simple whodunit is close to, if not within, honest show business; a compound whodunit, unless its art is very great, can hardly be put in a different category. Third in popularity seems to be *Castle in the Air*, a revival of the type of the Gay Twenties drawing-room comedy in which the bedroom is never far away. For this play, does good performance require much more than a high polish of technique, and does full audience appreciation need more than a surface acquaintance with English politics and the facts of life?



"... mixing religion into a whodunit."

A glance at the plays produced here over the past year will show that few, remarkably few, societies have kept clearly within the realm of true theatre. A small number has dropped an occasional piece of true theatre tentatively into programmes of "popular hits." The majority, pleading box-office and conditioned audiences, have kept well in the twilight area where Mr. Priestley's bearded lady, wearing something from the theatre wardrobe and a little make-up, can so easily get herself accepted as true theatre. And once ensconced in the box-office, she is hard to shift.

LIGHT, SHADE AND BALANCE

By GEORGE DEVINE

The more productions I light, the more I become endeared to the "pageant family" of apparatus. I suppose I am lucky in that I never have to do much with "domestic interiors" where, except through the window on a fine summer's day, I imagine the pageant would be a bit rude and crude amongst the tea cups. But for the three-dimensional scene of a more open kind, the pageant or the narrow-angled acting area used horizontally are the only apparatus that we can satisfactorily use to give shape to our lighting in a dramatic way. (I am speaking, of course, of the acting area lighting and not of backings, backcloths or other special effects.) Another valuable asset of the pageant class is the punch for long throws: from fly rails or bridges for high cross or back lighting they keep their value. I wish there was a 2 kw. pageant. Perhaps there is, but no one I work for ever seems to have one.

Also the pageant is a bold and definite light. It doesn't pretend it isn't there, and why should it? It gives the kind of clarity which the theatre needs as it emerges from the muddy gloom of naturalism.

But this brings me to the point of what I want to say. As these strong definite lights become more and more used, another type of apparatus becomes necessary, which we might call the "balancing light." How many times have we had to "check" a pageant, thus reducing its dramatic effect, because the light on the actor's face was too one-sided, and we had nothing to balance it on the other side? In the old Queen's Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, now derelict, there was in the proscenium wall on each side a series of six float spots let into the wall. They were situated within six inches of the edge of the proscenium, and were invaluable for just the function I am mentioning above. They did not "cancel out" a strong dramatic beam, but, by their proximity to the actor, one could use them to "balance" almost all over the acting area except, perhaps, centre stage. I strongly recommend all those concerned in the construction of new stages to consider this point deeply at the outset of their planning, as it is almost certain to involve architectural considerations. When we planned the new lighting at the Old Vic, we made the fatal mistake of leaving this matter too late, and discovered that no space had been left for just this type of light. In that case we were intending to use the new small mirror spots, which would have been more useful and flexible than float spots.

Another type of apparatus we need for "balancing" is a small focusing light we can conceal inside scenes, pillars, false prosceniums, etc. Apart from the old float spot, which is not very efficient or small, I know of nothing available here. I have seen some apparatus from the U.S.A. which serves this purpose well, but I have frequently been told there is some technical reason why we can't have

such lanterns here. (Perhaps the Editor will fill this in by telling us the reason.) But I do not believe it will be long before these technical problems are overcome.

In the meantime we must wait and plan. The most important thing is to build our theatres and stages with these necessities in view.

* * *

We reply—

Mr. Devine's praise of the Pageant type of lighting, as he calls it, is really welcome and focuses attention on a style of lighting peculiar to this country and one with the introduction of which I, as a member of the Strand Electric, had much to do. It vexes me when people complain of striation in the Pageant's light, or above all when they complain that, using them from the circle front, they light up the orchestra with ghost light. Let it be said with all the emphasis I can call up that they are not intended for that—the mirror spot position.

The Pageant is a side lighting lantern which makes its contribution as much by the shaft of light of its beam as by the ultimate result where it hits stage or actor. The beam stabbing through the comparative darkness tends to obscure the outer reaches of the stage picture and give the mellowing quality of, without the barrier drawback of, a single gauze across the stage opening. At the same time the actor at the receiving end of the beam is lit in no indecisive manner.

Peter Brook's production of *Dark of the Moon* at the Lyric, Hammersmith, showed complete grasp of the Pageant lantern, and he used them in extraordinarily large quantities for such a small stage. I remember at the time thinking that a "Chorus of Pageants" ought to have been listed along with the cast.

Pursuing the correct line of development we have recently redesigned the Pageant not to soften the light, not to remove the striation, ghost light, etc., but to increase the intensity still further. By substituting a small masking disc for the spill rings used hitherto, we have put up the light output at least 25 per cent. Also the new lantern (Pattern 58) can be used with a 1500 watt tubular lamp when the angle of tilt does not exceed $22\frac{1}{2}$ degrees and when the extra light warrants more expensive lamp outlay. This should answer one of Mr. Devine's queries.

Correction to all this side lighting and the corresponding overhead acting area lighting is important. For the most part a really comprehensive nicely adjusted set of mirror spots on the upper circle front is the answer, but I agree that something else is needed.

Lately I have been wondering if sufficient use is made of the footlight position and if more float spot points, each with a dimmer, should not figure in a first-class installation—seven or eight 100 watt spots housed between lengths of compartment float as a kind of miniature spot batten at the front edge of the stage, for serious use instead of for mere shadow stunts.

The proscenium position referred to is a valuable one, as I found while supervising the Lisbon Opera House scheme early in the war. There the proscenium column either side was hollow towards the stage and we concealed four 500 watt spots with dimmers in each. They were specially valuable because the columns were further from the acting area than usual, due to a vertical line of boxes actually on the stage between proscenium and house tabs. These historical curiosities did keep the artistes at respectable range.

Very often side spots are fitted under the side boxes of a theatre, but invariably they are too far from the stage, being almost circle spots, too few in number and the wrong type—usually Pageants! As they are on the side walls of the theatre managers are chary of hanging an array there, and even in the Old Vic, architecture came first and was allowed to make nonsense of most front lighting, as Mr. Devine confesses. Stratford-on-Avon is happier in this respect, real places of concealment being sited to give a variety of angles (see TABS, December, 1951).

Of course, lanterns available up to now have been bulky and somewhat of an eyesore, and the practice of using a sheet metal housing has aggravated rather than ameliorated these defects. The latest lantern, the baby mirror spot (Pattern 23), is as near good looking as a spotlight can be and is certainly small and compact. Therefore, I pray architects and others allow it to hang in the open, frankly as a spotlight, and in sufficient quantity for spotlighting to be used as spotlighting and not a "hope for the best" localised flood.

F. P. B.

Note.—The new lanterns, Patterns 58 and 23, are described on pages 9 and 10.

* * *

REVIEW

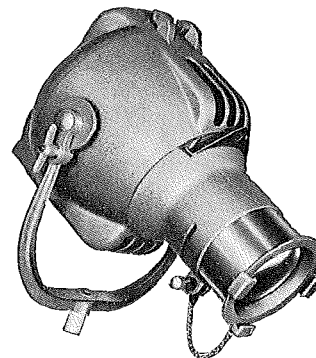
The Art and Science of Stage Management. By Peter Goffin. (J. Garnet Miller Ltd.) 12s.

This is a shrewd appreciation of the work of designers and technicians in the co-operative effort necessary to bring to theatrical life the written words of the dramatist. Peter Goffin applies the critical mind of a practical and practising artist to the gospels of Granville Barker and Gordon Craig and exposes some of the extravagant theories that ignore fundamental truths of the theatre. It is a book that has something to say to producer and actor as well as to all those to whom décor is a special concern. It is not a technical treatise; it is a point of view. And the author takes his stand securely on a vantage point of reality from which he sees the view in true perspective: his vision is in no way distorted by the insubstantial clouds of obscurity that so often surround the higher altitudes.

P. C.

NEW BABY MIRROR SPOT (Patt. 23).

This lantern takes either a 250 w. B.1 round bulb lamp or an A.1 tubular 500 w. It is hoped that the Class T. 500 w. round bulb lamp* may be also available shortly. The wattage is not a good guide to the performance of this spotlight as, for example, with the 250 w. lamp mentioned above, the light is brighter than from a standard 500 w. (pattern 44) stage spot. With the 500 w. lamp comparison for light is with a 1000 w. (pattern 43) stage spot. On top of that there are the additional mirror spot masking facilities.



Baby Mirror Spot.

The Pattern 23 is mass-produced in the die cast aluminium technique which not only keeps the weight down but also gives an exceptionally well finished article at low cost. The interior contains two reflectors which, in conjunction with the lamp accurately held in a prefocus holder, direct the beam on to a gate, which is in turn hard or soft focused by a 3½ in. diameter objective lens. For long throw work a 6 in. diameter lens in a special funnel is available.

For the Amateur or Little Theatre this spotlight will allow the use of the correct type of lantern—the Mirror Spot—for a host of jobs, particularly front-of-house, where costs have hitherto dictated an ordinary stage spot which is inappropriate.

* * *

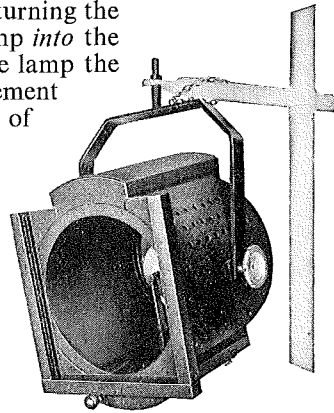
PATTERN 58 PAGEANT LANTERN

The Pageant lantern (late Pattern 50a) has been re-designed using a masking disc instead of spill rings, and the ventilation has been improved when used vertically pointing down. The lamp is held in a prefocus holder which cuts out the need for adjustment and centering of lamp. Nevertheless, responsibility remains with the user to keep the reflector and lamp really clean and to see that the filament supports are *away* from the reflector and not facing into it. Best results come when the beam is at its smallest, i.e. near

* The larger size of Class T. lamp is described and compared with other projector lamps on page 14 of this issue.

parallel. It can be flooded slightly by turning the focus knob clock-wise to take the lamp *into* the reflector. If it is flooded by taking the lamp the opposite side of the focus, then movement away from the reflector results in loss of light and ultimately a crossed beam on the colour filters to the detriment of the latter.

A long life anodized aluminium reflector is now supplied as standard and this suits most users, but where really special results are desired silvered glass should be specified, though this will mean keeping an eye on the silvering for renewal.



New Pattern 58 Pageant Lantern.

* * *

FLUORESCENT PAINTS AND THE LIKE

In our last issue we gave details of a new range of fluorescent paint for use with black light. Certain allied products are now also available as follows:

1. Clear protective varnish for application over fluorescent paint for outdoor use or where protection from water is required.
2. "Thinners" for reducing the consistency of fluorescent paint when required.
3. Neutralizer for fluorescent paint. Application over fluorescent paint neutralizes the part treated which will show black under U.V. light, but virtually invisible under normal light.
4. Fluorescent Fountain Additive. This is for mixing with water to provide fluorescent effects. It is available to special order only in blue and green in powder form and red and orange in liquid form.
5. Two further fluorescent liquid paints are also available—invisible green and invisible blue. As their name implies, these colours are invisible under ordinary light but fluoresce in their name colour under black light.

Cleaning up afterwards

Paint brushes may be cleaned after use with U.V. paint in acetone, which may be purchased from any chemist. *N.B.—Acetone is highly inflammable.*

CHANGING CONVENTIONS

By HAROLD DOWNS

Author of *Theatregoing, etc.*

The theatre is in a state of transition. It always has been, always will be, for transition presupposes movement, and the theatre has never been static.

What is important is the direction of the movement, and the destination that may be reached by the end of an epoch or an era.

Both the material that has passed through the theatre and the methods of using it are influenced by the persistence of conventions, which, notwithstanding the indelible marks they leave on history's pages, are themselves merely the characteristics and expressions of a period.

Think, for example, of the conventions that have accompanied the evolutionary march of Naturalistic Drama. Jones and Pinero were "in" at the beginning of it, and made worthwhile contributions to it. The name of the one is associated with unflagging persistence that the material of drama must be of a quality to make Literature of the printed play, and of the other with the "cup-and-saucer" drama, of "real" things, i.e., doors, knobs, and the other trappings and paraphernalia of spurious make-belief.

These facets of their influences on contemporary drama affected writing, producing, and acting.

A mightier influence was exerted by Shaw, the self-confessed propagandist who deliberately—and as some think perversely—used the theatre to effect conversion. Shaw's first play, *Widowers' Houses*, was produced in 1892; Stanley Houghton's *Hindle Wakes* in 1912. Why couple the two? Because Houghton was one of the principal contributors to what is often disparagingly referred to as the Manchester School of Playwrights, and the dramatists who were tutors (or pupils) in that particular School thought more of photographing than imagining life. They introduced "the-slice-of-life" play into literature by putting Lancastrians on the stage with a fidelity that made of the theatre just another building where Northerners could be seen and heard.

My point here is that they fashioned playwriting for a time, their naturalistic drama demanding for effective presentation a different style of acting, a modified histrionic attack when compared with that which was suitable for the artificial, theatrical, rhetorical, and psychologically false plays of the pioneers of Naturalistic Drama.

Ripening and maturing, other playwrights had different ideas about the theatre.

Somerset Maugham, for example, during one period of his playwriting career had four plays running successfully, and learned to know the alphabet of the theatre. Yet a few years ago he declared

that he had closed that career—not his writing career, though—because neither theatre nor playwriting held its appeal for him. In his volume of autobiography, aptly entitled *The Summing Up*, he included some pertinent writing on the Contemporary Theatre and Modern Drama.

Although he confessed “I have never been a propagandist”—an accurate declaration in its context—he stated a belief that can be considered as indirect propaganda in expression. “To my mind,” he wrote, “the drama took a wrong turning when the demand for realism led it to abandon the ornament of verse. . . . I have always eschewed the prophetic role and have left to others the reformation of my fellows, but I cannot but state my belief that the prose drama to which I have given so much of my life will soon be dead. . . . One thing seems certain, and that is that if the stage play has any chance at all of survival, it is not by trying to do any longer what the pictures can do better. Those dramatists have followed a false trail who by a multitude of little scenes have tried to reproduce the rapid action and varied setting of the cinematograph. It has occurred to me that possibly the dramatist would be wise now to go back to the origins of modern drama and call to his aid verse, dancing, music and pageantry so that he might appeal to all possible sources of entertainment. . . . Perhaps the best chance the realistic dramatist has to-day is to occupy himself with what, till now at all events, the screen has not succeeded very well in presenting—the drama in which the action is inner rather than outer and the comedy of wit.”

Do I force a point when I suggest that here is advocacy of change that would revolutionize theatrical and dramatic conventions?

Incidentally, perhaps the writers of “pure” Naturalistic Drama preferred to ignore Wilde’s “All bad art comes from returning to Life and Nature, and elevating them into ideals. Life and Nature may sometimes be used as part of Art’s rough material, but before they are of any real service to art they must be translated into artistic conventions.”

Priestley, by the way, with *Johnson Over Jordan*, went some way on Mr. Maugham’s suggested road, but in experiment and accent, imagination and presentation, was too unconventional for those whose love of theatrical conventions is stronger than their rationalized demands of the contemporary theatre.

If we assume that Maugham was right in thinking that Naturalistic Drama is dead, does the changing convention—I have primarily in mind writing which will influence both acting and producing—mean that we are about to have plays in verse, plays that will synthesize and reflect world rather than national culture, and introduce “new writing” different in form and emphasis from the “straight” writing of the Naturalistic School?

Political and economic revolutions are always on the way. The Russian “experiment” now more than a quarter of a century old,

was the latest “outsize” upheaval before the Second World War. It had inescapable influences on playwriting, producing, and acting conventions. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, writing years ago, stated: “The theatre, the opera, and the ballet were of outstanding excellence in Tsarist Russia, but any educative influence that they had was confined to a small class. To-day in the U.S.S.R. they appeal literally to millions; they are not limited to the great cities, but exist in every town. . . . Probably in no other country has so large a proportion of the urban wage earners, and even some of the villagers, acquired the ‘theatre-going habit.’” Since then books by Joseph Macleod and others have brought out the significance of changing conventions.

Across the Atlantic Maxwell Anderson, with his interest in poetic drama, and Clifford Odets, with his accent on “universals” rather than the family circle—names introduced by random thought—provide pointers of change.

Here the octopus-like spread of the cinema, with the resultant disappearance of the “legitimate” theatre in wide stretches of the country, with the concurrent vast expansion of repertory (and, parenthetically, the Amateur Movement), the growth of dramatic and theatrical activities in association with youth organizations, adult education, etc., touring under various “official” auspices, political policies that seek to encourage and develop theatregoing activities as an expression of cultural and leisure interests, must affect conventions. About some of them, even the seemingly trivial and relatively unimportant (i.e., the time the curtain “goes up,” the number of acts of a play, programmes: free or priced? the relationship of bar receipts to the length of intervals, etc.) more, either in advocacy of change or in defence of the established, needs to be written.

* * *

An Unusual Testimonial

Extract from a customer’s letter about Church Lighting: “We have put the flood in position and it is an outstanding success—so much so that one of the congregation remarked they never knew our Canon was so bald.”

NEW CLASS T

STAGE LIGHTING PROJECTOR LAMP

For the first time in Britain a special projector lamp has been specially evolved for stage lighting by the lamp manufacturers in conjunction with ourselves. Until now, only two types of lamp, the A.1 Tubular and B.1 Round Bulb, have been available for use in stage spotlights. The A.1 has a flat "grid" filament in a tubular bulb while the B.1 has a "bunch" filament in a round bulb. Either lamp has recently become available with a prefocus cap as an alternative to G.E.S. (see TABS, September, 1950).

The grid filament is an ideal source for use in Pageant lanterns, Focus lanterns, and Mirror spots as it is regular, flat and compact in shape. The disadvantage has been the tubular bulb which has prevented tilt beyond $22\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ either side of vertical cap down.

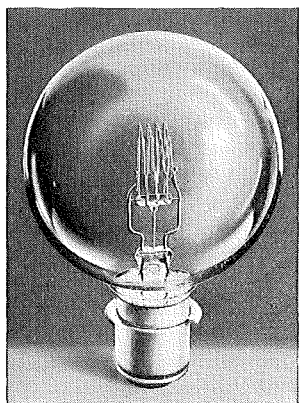
Added to this the "Average Objective Life" is only 50 hours. By using lamps of a slightly lower voltage than the supply (e.g. 250 for 240) this life can be extended to 100 hours, though at the cost of some light, and in any case this is scarcely enough.

The B.1 lamp on the other hand can be tilted as we need—any angle except within 45° either side of vertical cap up—but has a poor filament shape to focus.

The bunch filament is almost completely circular in plan and consequently the surface which must be presented to lens or mirror will not be at a regular distance. This, plus the wider spacing between the filament strands, tends to increase striation and irregularities in the focused light.

The Class T lamp which is now available in 1000 watt (and it is hoped to have in 500 watt by the autumn), has an A.1 grid filament in a B.1 round bulb. This allows useful tilt of 90° either side of vertical cap down. The filament may only be tilted flat on, and therefore the lamp is only supplied with a prefocus cap. The position of lampholder in the lantern prevents mistakes in this respect as well as ensuring the correct optical centering. The "average objective life" is 200 hours, which is more appropriate than the 50 hours of the A.1 tubular. Of course, the 200 hours can be extended by the under-running as described earlier.

Here at last is a lamp whose filament will allow us to get the best out of the Pageant Lanterns and Mirror Spots, so it behoves the theatre world to receive it with open arms.



The new Class T Lamp.

LAMPS AND MAINTENANCE

It is quite usual for lamps to be left in lanterns until they fail. The longer a lamp lasts the better! The life of a lamp is curiously variable and while some fail prematurely, others struggle on working for years, but not, alas, giving much light. The lamp in the photograph still lights, but the emission from the filament is poor and its shape is distorted with age. This combination will ensure a streaky yellow light from any spotlight in which it is used. Nor is this all, the emission from the filament has blackened the bulb and further light loss takes place there.

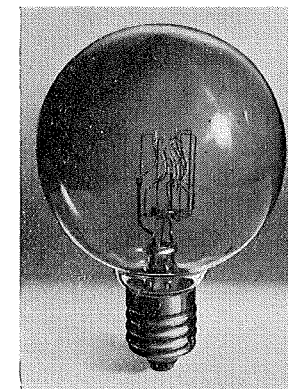
In the photograph the lamp is at least clean, but when I first saw it the bulb was encrusted with grime, and the lens and reflector of the lantern were in a like state. Where did I meet this grimy, if game, veteran? Well, the actual theatre must remain nameless, but I can assure you that it is very well known and far from hard up!

It was the fitful gleam the lantern radiated that caused me to inspect and then to carry off my trophy. There is no need to continue, and the reader will be profoundly shocked as he murmurs "not guilty." But one of my readers is guilty and quite a few could, if they look, find horrors of lamp overwork and neglect nearer home—lesser ones, perhaps, but horrors none the less.

Lenses and reflectors of stage lanterns may be dusted more or less regularly, even washed sometimes, but an aged lamp can make mock of this maintenance. A yellow lamp behind a blue filter, and where is the light to come from?

Each class of lamp has a definite expectation of life known as "Average Objective Life": many exceed this and it cannot be denied some never attain it. For the usual round bulb B.1 spotlight lamp the figure is 800 hours. At seven 3-hour shows a week this is 38 weeks' continuous life. Under theatre conditions where the lamp is unlikely to be in use continuously, this means one year, perhaps two.

How can age be checked? Fortunately, there is a simple test by eye. When washing the lamp bulb, as is essential, look for blackening. A large amount of this in conjunction with a pronounced yellow light and the time has come to scrap—and you can tell your Manager I said so!

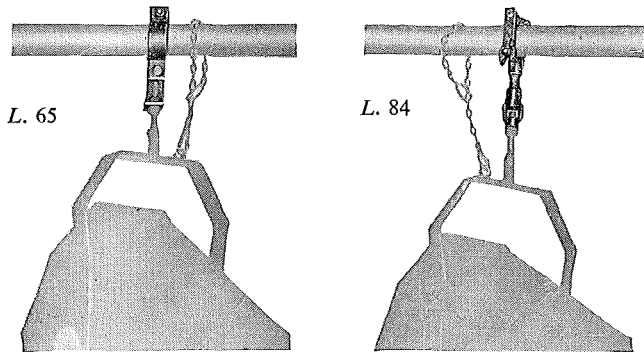


BARS AND BARRELS

Although we are concerned with Public Entertainment, we refer on this occasion to the means of suspending stage lighting equipment, and not, as our title might suggest, to the sustaining of the Thirsty Soul in Theatre Intervals.

From the present and rather dry point of view, bars and barrels are one and the same thing, one simply being a contraction of the other. Neither contains anything except perhaps some electric cable, but certainly never liquid of any kind.

From time to time misunderstandings can arise as to the way in which the diameter of barrels is referred to. The size in general use is at times called "1½-inch Gas (or Steam) Barrel." In such cases the dimension given is the *internal* diameter. Sometimes, however, the same article is referred to simply as 2-inch barrel, the assumption being that in the absence of information to the contrary, the dimension is the external or outside diameter. One-and-a-half-inch Gas Barrel has, in fact, an outside diameter of 1¾ inches, but it is usually sufficiently accurate for present purposes to call it 2 inches diameter as long as there is no doubt as to whether the internal or external diameter is referred to. As and when opportunity arises we will amend our printed literature to give both dimensions so that there should be no room for confusion.



Our standard barrel clamp (above left) is designed for 1½-inch Gas Barrel, but the adjustable variety (above right) is available to fit from 1¼-inch Gas Barrel (outside diameter 1⅞ inch) up to 2-inch Gas Barrel (outside diameter 2⅜ inch) inclusive. Electrical tubing or conduit is not recommended for suspension purposes owing to its tendency to sag or bow under the weight of lanterns, if anything other than a very short length is used.

When both barrels and clamps are being obtained from the same source, the supplier can ensure that the two fit one another. In other cases the diameter of the barrel must be stated leaving no room for doubt as to whether this is internal or external.

THE OLDEST THEATRE IN A NEW COUNTRY

with acknowledgments to The Theatre Royal, Hobart, Tasmania.

In the year 1789, on the occasion of the birthday of His Majesty King George III, in a wooden shed in Sydney, Farquhar's comedy *The Recruiting Officer* was performed by a group of convicts.

From this humble beginning has grown the Australian theatre of to-day—noted alike for the excellence of its home artistes and for the warm welcome accorded to visiting companies from the old country and elsewhere.

In January, 1796, the first real theatre was opened in Sydney with a performance, also by convicts, of *The Revenge*. Most of the dresses were made by the actors themselves and some of the properties used had been brought out from the York Theatre in London. The fact that one George Barrington, formerly a strolling player in England and transported for pocket-picking, took part in the performance, lends colour to the idea that these articles probably left the York Theatre unknown to its owners. He had by this time become a reformed character and had obtained a conditional pardon. Tradition has it that he was the first to speak the prologue to *The Revenge*, beginning with the lines



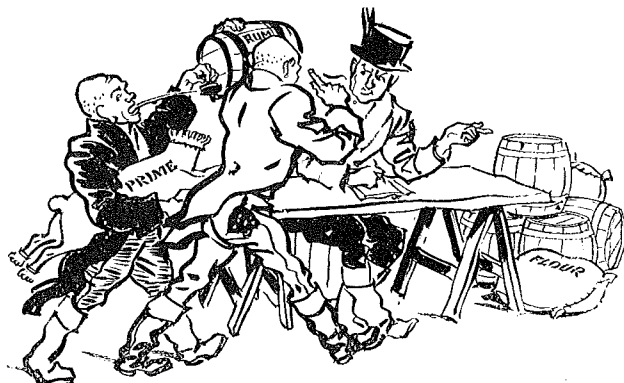
“ . . . by this time had become a reformed character.”

“ True Patriots we, for be it understood
We left our country for our country's good.”

In view of the state of society then prevailing it was considered necessary to prescribe strict decorum of conduct, and both actors and audiences were warned that if they did not behave themselves they would be transported to some other settlement. Prices of admission were payable either in money, flour, meat or rum, and this appears to have been the cause of an unprecedented outbreak of burglaries in the district. Things got so bad that in 1798 the then Governor was forced to order the theatre to be closed down altogether in the interests of public morals. For about thirty years after that Sydney had to depend for theatrical entertainment upon amateur performers.

Meanwhile, in Tasmania, then known as Van Diemen's Land, the community was far too preoccupied with the struggle for existence to bother about æsthetic and cultural matters. By 1826, however,

conditions had improved and some degree of social order had been achieved. In that year there occurred the first public musical performance ever held on the island. It took place in the Old Court House in Hobart, and in spite of particularly inclement weather, we are told that it was attended by a large and fashionable audience of some three hundred persons. The Band of the 40th Regiment, resplendent in "elegant, chaste, new uniforms," occupied seats of honour on the platform whilst the other performers—all male—came up out of the audience when called upon.



“. . . payable in flour, meat or rum.”

There were other places of entertainment in Hobart in those early days, generally consisting of a room in an hotel set apart for dancing and other forms of amusement, but it was not until 1834 that serious steps were taken to establish a permanent home for the drama. In April of that year it was decided to form a company to raise money for the building of a theatre. In November the foundation stone was laid, the event being celebrated by the discharge of a rocket and the firing of guns from the ships in the harbour. It was followed by an "elegant collation" in a tent erected on the spot. By the end of 1836 the Theatre had been completed and named "The Royal Victoria"—presumably in honour of the then heir to the throne. On the foundation stone, however, the name of the theatre is given as "The Theatre Royal" and this name was restored in the 'sixties.

The theatre stood about forty feet back from the street and there was a tavern underneath called "The Shades." The building looked like a two-storied house, with a railed-in area. The seating accommodation consisted of boxes arranged round the walls, the entrance to which was in the centre, and a pit on the ground floor, reached by a flight of stone steps leading down from the street level on the south-eastern side and then up a short stairway. Seats in the

pit were only rough wooden planks, those in the boxes were padded and covered with red baize. None of them had any backs. There was no stage entrance and the actors had to make their way to the stage through the auditorium. Underneath the stage was a perfect labyrinth of narrow, ill-lit passages and tiny brick dressing-rooms. Sperm oil was used for lighting.

The first occasion on which the new theatre was used by the public was on January 17th, 1837—Coronation Year—but the official opening did not take place until March of that year when a performance was given of Morton's comedy, *Speed the Plough*, a rather dull play chiefly remembered for its creation of the character of Mrs. Grundy. A local paper, reporting on the occasion, said: "Of the house we are happy to speak in terms of commendation . . . it is of that convenient size . . . which does not distress the senses either of hearing or seeing." (Certainly whoever was responsible for the design of the building must have been very competent, for it has always been renowned for its wonderful acoustic properties—a mere whisper on the stage being audible in any part of the auditorium—a quality noticeably absent from many theatres built in the present enlightened century.) The same paper remarked that when the National Anthem was played at the beginning of the performance, whereas the whole company on the stage stood to sing it, the audience sat silent "thinking, probably, that being so near the *antipodes*, if they stood at all it would be upon their *heads*."

Soon plays with local themes were being written by local writers both in Tasmania and on the mainland, and so the Australian theatre became an established reality.

The Theatre Royal has passed through many vicissitudes between 1837 and the present day. It has changed hands a number of times and in 1839 it was up for auction—with the suggestion that it would make an admirable hotel! Luckily it was saved from this fate and continued to function as a theatre. There have been frequent structural alterations to the auditorium, and the present classical façade was added in 1860. On June 4th, 1948—exactly 159 years after that first performance by Sydney convicts of the *Recruiting Officer*—a Gala Performance, sponsored by the British Council, was given of *The School for Scandal* by the Old Vic Company, led by Sir Laurence and Lady Olivier. In a souvenir booklet issued on this occasion the Premier of Tasmania, Mr. Robert Cosgrove, wrote: "A fitting outcome of this visit would be if the people and the Government of Tasmania were sufficiently united to found a National Theatre of their own." His hope would appear to have been fulfilled, for the theatre is now the property of the Council of the National Theatre and Fine Arts Society of Tasmania.

D. M.

* * *

KEEP IT DARK

By S. WOOLF

The modern producer uses lighting and shade to (i) enable the audience to see the actors; (ii) inspire the mood of the play; (iii) concentrate the attention of the audience towards particular areas of the stage. Too often at amateur performances the third aspect is hardly thought about. What is worse, light is frequently allowed to reflect towards or escape into the auditorium, in addition to that light unavoidably reflected by the set, etc.

Perhaps the most subtle and worst offender is the light coloured border, suspended to hide the battens and flies. Frequently several borders of an off-white or ash grey colour are allowed to remain because they have always been part of the church or assembly hall. The subconscious effect of these upon the audience is omitted to be taken into account. The result is that light from battens and floats is greatly reflected by these borders, which act almost as mirrors. Thus, a firm, wide band of intense light is inflicted upon the spectators along the whole length of the top of the stage. The resulting tendency is to draw the attention of the spectators upwards, to establish a centre of interest away from the acting area. Although the audience may rarely react consciously to this tendency, it is nevertheless a force creating a decreased intensity of concentration upon the performers. The substitution of black light-absorbing borders focuses attention first of all on the essential acting area, and is the first step in enabling the producer to create centres of interest at various parts of this area.

Some small halls have floats with reflectors more suitable for the water-floating burners from which footlights derive their stage name. The design of these reflectors permits much light to illuminate the ceiling of the hall immediately in front of the proscenium arch. More still is permitted to escape to the walls of the hall and the proscenium. The harm these false light areas do is not generally realised or mentioned when the production is being planned, but it is fortunately not too difficult to eliminate by the careful positioning of extra reflectors. The removal of some float lamps at the extreme ends of the stage may also assist.

Amateur companies, in their eagerness to have everything ready on their side of the main tabs for "the night," almost universally omit action to ensure that nothing from the front of the house distracts the attention of the audience. The effect of even really good acting can be severely reduced by failing to take into account well in advance that most important factor—the audience. During performances given at the time of the long days or at matinees, daylight entering through badly drawn or damaged curtains does much to destroy the "willing suspension of disbelief" of the audience. Yet rarely is there some pre-organisation made to guard against what can easily spoil the long worked for effect of the

company. Often, the producer, who should be showing an air of smiling sensitive nervousness to as many as he can manage to encounter in the foyer, is reduced on the night to borrowing a packet of pins from the caretaker's wife at the last minute and pinning the curtains himself. The wise producer will appoint a Front of House Manager whose sole task is to ensure that nothing on the audience side of the main tabs distracts from the work upon the stage, before or during the performance. He will ensure with a continually watchful eye that no light enters from street or adjoining rooms. He will cure banging doors. He will expel bawling babes, remove the non-stop hacking cough, or piercing solo laugh, and suppress the noisy sucker of toffees.

Assuming that the setting is appropriate and the acting reasonable, then the question of illuminated borders or side walls and ceilings, together with that of front of house organisation, is as *ultimately* important as the casting of a part. It requires to be decided upon well in advance alongside other matters already generally considered important. After all, rehearsals and plans may be enjoyable, but to the majority of performers and the audience what happens "on the night" is everything.

* * *

COLOUR MEDIUM RANGE

Several changes have been made in the last few months in the range of standard stage colour filters. The list below shows the range as it stands at present. Colours are listed both in numerical sequence as well as colour order for convenience. It will be noted that the latest addition to the range, No. 34 Golden Amber, is not yet available in Gelatine and that colours 55, 56 and 60 are not available in Cinemoid. Approximate equivalents may however be obtained by superimposing Cinemoid filters as follows:

<i>To obtain</i>	<i>Superimpose</i>
No. 55 Chocolate tint	17, 50 and 51
No. 56 Pale Chocolate	17, 50 and 53
No. 60 Pale Grey	17, 52 and 17

It should be understood that Gelatine and Cinemoid colour mediums bearing the same colour number are as close a match as is commercially possible at present, but it is not claimed that they are identical in any particular case. Where strict accuracy is required it is important, therefore, to order gelatine from a colour booklet made of this material rather than Cinemoid, and vice versa.

Sheet sizes remain as follows: Gelatine, 22 inches \times 17½ inches, and Cinemoid either 24 inches \times 20 inches or 48 inches \times 20 inches.

LIST OF STANDARD STAGE FILTERS

COLOUR ORDER

LAVENDER—GOLD—PINK

Pale Violet	42	Pale Rose	54	Deep Salmon	8
Pale Lavender	36	Light Salmon	9	Bright Rose	48
Gold Tint	51	Light Rose	7	Deep Rose	12
Pale Gold	52	Middle Rose	10	Magenta	13
Pale Salmon	53	Dark Pink	11		

YELLOW—AMBER—RED

Pale Yellow	50	Medium Amber	4	Orange	5
Straw	3	Deep Amber	33	Deep Orange	5A
Yellow	1	Golden Amber	34 (C)	Primary Red	6
Canary	49	Deep Salmon	8	Ruby	14
Light Amber	2				

BLUE—PURPLE—VIOLET

Blue-green	16	Bright Blue	41	Purple	25
Peacock Blue	15	Medium Blue	32	Mauve	26
Steel Blue	17	Dark Blue	19	Pale Violet	42
Pale Blue	40	Deep Blue			
Light Blue	18	(Primary)	20		

GREEN—NEUTRAL—FROST

Pale Green	38	Primary Green	39	Pale Grey	60 (G)
Pea Green	21	Blue-Green	16	Light Frost	31
Moss Green	22	Peacock Blue	15	Heavy Frost	29
Light Green	23	Chocolate Tint	55 (G)	Clear	30
Dark Green	24	Pale Chocolate	56 (G)		

NUMERICAL ORDER

1. Yellow	18. Light Blue	39. Primary Green
2. Light Amber	19. Dark Blue	40. Pale Blue
3. Straw	20. Deep Blue	41. Bright Blue
4. Medium Amber	(Primary)	42. Pale Violet
5. Orange	21. Pea Green	48. Bright Rose
5A. Deep Orange	22. Moss Green	49. Canary
6. Red (Primary)	23. Light Green	50. Pale Yellow
7. Light Rose	24. Dark Green	51. Gold Tint
8. Deep Salmon	25. Purple	52. Pale Gold
9. Light Salmon	26. Mauve	53. Pale Salmon
10. Middle Rose	29. Heavy Frost	54. Pale Rose
11. Dark Pink	30. Clear	55. Chocolate Tint (G)
12. Deep Rose	31. Light Frost	56. Pale Chocolate (G)
13. Magenta	32. Medium Blue	60. Pale Grey (G)
14. Ruby	33. Deep Amber	
15. Peacock Blue	34. Golden Amber (C)	(C) Available in
16. Blue-green	36. Pale Lavender	"Cinemoïd" only.
17. Steel Blue	38. Pale Green	(G) Available in Gela-
		tine only.

THE PRICE OF SEATS

At the present time one is so accustomed to compare prices with those holding good before the last war, or even before the First Great War, and to blame entertainment tax, purchase tax, income tax, surtax and the like for all our woes, that it is interesting to try and relate theatre prices with those of nearly 100 years ago.

All sorts of factors must, however, be taken into account in making a comparison, for apart from the cost of living generally, one should be satisfied that the fare offered by the theatre was substantially the same, and that the building itself offered approximately the same comfort and amenities. So far as the latter point goes, Covent Garden Opera House, the admission prices of which are quoted below, was burned down in 1856 and the present building dates from 1858. On that score, therefore, some kind of comparison should be possible, but what must not be overlooked is that in 1860 (which is the actual date of the prices given) it was "the thing" to be a patron of the Drama and Arts, and those who could afford it were quite as prepared to be seen in suitable surroundings in public as they were to derive enjoyment from the particular function.

In 1860, at Covent Garden, a single stall was priced at 18s. 4½d. per night or the modest sum of £49 12s. 3d. for 54 nights. A pit box cost £5 15s. 6d. or £311 17s. for the season, while one seat in the grand tier cost 6 guineas a night or £340 4s. for the season. No doubt few people went by themselves, and so even the price of a stall for the season and one for your friend meant an outlay of £100. On the other hand, no one can surely ever have imagined that they would have sufficient stamina (if indeed anything else) to attend on 54 consecutive occasions, so no doubt the seats were to a large extent syndicated amongst friends.

Such certainly seemed to be the case with the boxes. The Marquis of Aylesbury with nine other subscribers paid £500 for Boxes 31 and 32, while Sir Alexander Bannerman with seven other subscribers paid £420 for Box E. The Duke of Portland, however, paid £623 14s. for Boxes 3 and 4 every night, and it is a matter for conjecture whether he filled these nightly with his friends or came to some other and more commercial arrangement.

Those were indeed the spacious days, but with all our present-day troubles we should be thankful that it is no longer a social necessity either to be seen nightly at the opera or to pay for keeping a reserved seat empty. Whether Opera or Theatre have gained or suffered by having to rely, as nowadays, on the Plebeian Paybox rather than the more Social species of Support gives much food for thought. Just a different form of competition, perhaps?

A PRIVATE THEATRE

How many of the stately homes of England can to-day boast of a private theatre, we wonder.

We are indebted to Sir Alec Martin of Messrs. Christie, Manson & Wood for permission to reprint certain details of a "model theatre" in 1858. The property of one "Frederick William Potts, who is leaving his residence," it was situated in 40, Brunswick Square, London. Unfortunately Christie's records were destroyed during the war and consequently much further detail regarding this sale is not available. Mr. G. W. Nash of the Victoria and Albert Museum has also kindly assisted in the search, but unfortunately in this instance unsuccessfully.

Without wishing to raise any political issues we must confess that the phrase "peculiarly adapted for any nobleman's mansion" strikes a nostalgic note to-day.

The complete lot in this particular sale was acquired, so Sir Alec Martin tells us, by a Mr. Mitchell for 55 guineas—22 scenes and flats, 15 pairs of wings, a quantity of props and lighting equipment, and also apparently a set of staging for raking or stepping the audience's seating. It is interesting to note that even in the more spacious 1850's people found themselves cramped for wing space. One can only conjecture what were "the greatest dramatic works" which were performed on this stage, but both *Macbeth* and *The Merchant of Venice* would seem to be probables.

EXTRACT FROM SALE CATALOGUE

MAY BE VIEWED THREE DAYS PRECEDING, AND CATALOGUES HAD, AT MESSRS. CHRISTIE AND MANSON'S OFFICE, 8, KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE; AND AT THE HOUSE
LOT 74. THE MODEL THEATRE, PECULIARLY ADAPTED FOR ANY NOBLEMAN'S MANSION, AND CONSISTING OF EVERY REQUISITE NECESSARY FOR REPRESENTING THE GREATEST DRAMATIC WORKS.

1. A Roller Scene, painted to represent Interior of a Chamber, with Double Door in Centre and decorative Armorial Trophies.
2. A Roller Scene—A Woody Landscape.
3. A Roller Scene—Exterior of Castle, with Ramparts and distant Country.
4. A Roller Scene—Interior, Grand Hall in perspective.
5. A Roller Scene—Modern Drawing-room, with French Windows.
6. A Roller Scene—Highly finished Tapestry Chamber.
7. A Roller Scene—Exterior of Castle, with Drawbridge and distant Country.
8. A Roller Scene—A Gothic Chamber, with Portraits.
9. A Roller Scene—Castle Gates, with Buttresses.
10. A Roller Scene—Foreign Landscape, with distant Country.
11. A Roller Scene—A Rocky Pass.
12. A Roller Scene—Ornamental Garden, which is backed with
13. A Stormy Sky.
14. A Practicable Bridge, to use with No. 13.

15. A Side Cottage on frame, with practicable Door and Window.
16. A Back Cloth, representing Interior of Cottage.
17. A Flat—The Rialto in Venice.
18. A Flat—A Thick Wood.
19. A Flat—A Foreign Street.
20. A Flat—Interior of a Palace.
21. A Flat—A Wooded Rural Landscape with Water.
22. A Flat—Gothic Chamber, with Painted Window.

The Proscenium is modelled in the Italian style, so as to suit any modern room of 24 ft. width, but a larger space would be most desirable. It is considered by judges to be most unique and elegant.

There are three Curtains, so constructed as to form a Drapery to the Proscenium; namely, a Red Damask, a Green ditto, and a Black Gauze Medium Curtain.

The Stage has a row of Gas Jets with Glass Globes to prevent accidents to Dresses, with Apparatus for darkening the Stage, and Gas Fittings for the Wings.

The Scenery, applicable to any Play, has been painted by W. Fenoulpat, and consists of the following:—

15 Pairs of Wings, applicable to all the above Scenery.

Several small pieces, such as Caldron with transparent Fire, Fireplace for a Room, Signboards, hanging temporary Wings for Farces, &c. &c. &c.

Many useful Theatrical Properties, such as Thunder, Hail, Lightning, Torches, Spears.

A Platform to raise Chairs for Audience, which entirely takes to pieces, and is adapted for a room 24 ft. wide; very strong and well constructed.

This substantial and beautiful Theatre has been constructed by Mr. Potts, *con amore*, at a very considerable cost, and with determination to render it, in every point, perfect.

C.

* * *

THE AMATEUR

Reprinted with acknowledgments to "The Arc", a Journal issued in the interests of better projection by Chas. H. Champion & Co., Ltd., manufacturers of "Ship" carbons.

Queer word—"amateur."

Some people pronounce it "amatoor," some "amaterr" and yet others "ama-tschure."

And it has even more shades of meaning than it has pronunciations.

Basically, of course, it derives from our old friend "amare," to love—"amo-amas-amat" and all that.

And an amateur, however you pronounce his name, surely means someone who does something because he loves doing it—someone for whom the love of doing a job to the best of his skill and ability transcends whatever he may or may not gain in the way of praise, solid cash, or other "emoluments" as they are pleased to call them in Inland Revenue circles.

You might think that to put all you've got into a job for the sheer love of the thing was at least commendable if not praiseworthy.

But apparently not.

One of the most scathing condemnations in the whole of our language is to dub another man's work "an amateurish effort."

The inference is, of course, that if you are an amateur you

can't be as good as a professional. And, by further inference, the professional cannot love his work, because if he did he would be an amateur.

If it were said that the projectionists of this country were a lot of amateurs, there would very rightly be storms of indignant protests.

And yet it would be the highest compliment that could possibly be paid to that army of unseen showmen who night after night up and down the land prove by the excellence of their work and close attention to minute detail that they are worthy of being classed as craftsmen and amateurs in the highest sense of the term—the love of seeing a good job well done is strong upon them.

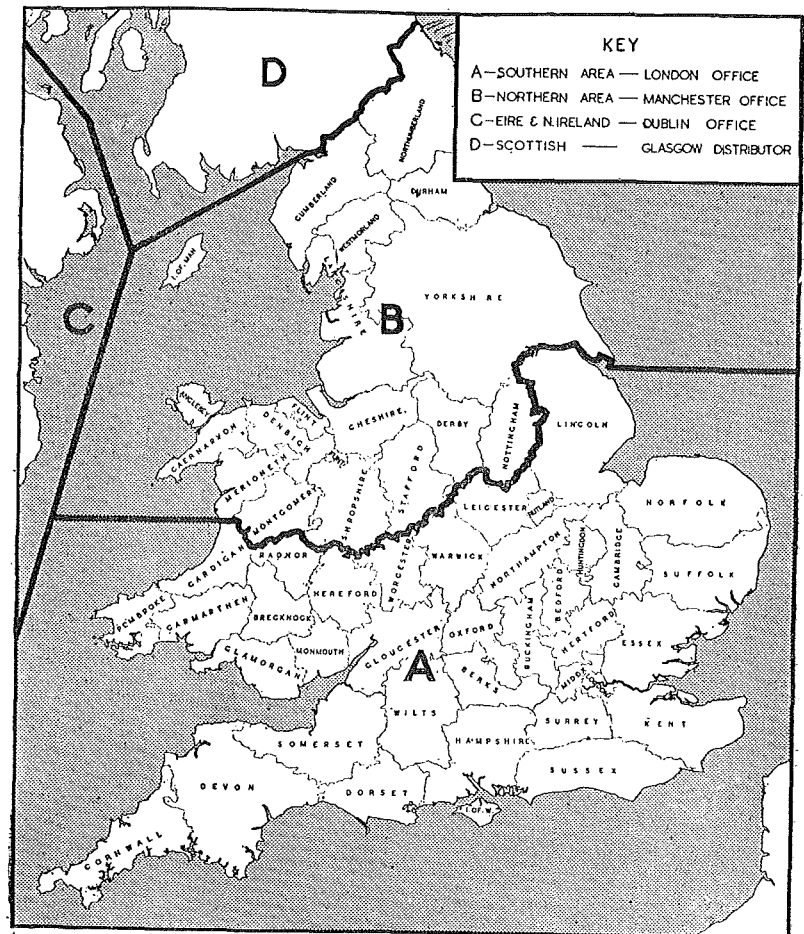
THE AMATEUR AGAIN

The following notice, bearing signs of having been posted by the producer on a green-room or crowd dressing-room notice-board, has been returned to us with some hired equipment. If the production was amateur in the sense of being non-professional it was obviously also amateur in the sense of being done for the love of the thing.

IMPORTANT

- (1) THE FIRST EXCITEMENT HAS WORN OFF. FROM NOW ON YOU'VE GOT TO WORK.
- (2) WATCH ALL ENTRANCES. DON'T JUMP YOUR TURN.
- (3) KEEP OFF THE STAGE UNTIL YOU'RE WANTED. THE TIME-TABLE IS REASONABLY ACCURATE AND YOU CAN HEAR WHAT IS GOING ON FROM ALMOST ANYWHERE IN THE BUILDING.
- (4) WHILE WAITING—STOP TALKING IN THE WINGS.
- (5) THE STAGE STAFF IS PERFORMING MIRACLES. KEEP OUT OF ITS WAY.
- (6) THE MEN COME ON FIRST FOR "LOOK AT THAT SIGHT, BOYS". GIRLS KEEP BACK.
- (7) AT THE FINAL CURTAIN THE CROWD IS STILL NOT QUICK ENOUGH GETTING ON.
I WANT THE CURTAIN OPENED AGAIN IN 10 SECONDS.
- (8) YOU'RE DOING A GOOD JOB.
YOU CAN STILL IMPROVE A LOT.
- (9) AGAIN—KEEP OFF STAGE UNTIL YOU'RE WANTED.
- (10) YOU WANT TO SEE THE SHOW?
THAT'S JUST TOO BAD—AND IMPOSSIBLE. I HAVEN'T SEEN IT YET.
- (11) DON'T SPOIL A GOOD JOB BY A LOT OF SILLY AMATEURISH FOIBLES.
- (12) ALL THE ABOVE REPEATED *AD NAUSEAM* WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO Nos. 1-12.

STRAND BRANCH AREAS



In their own interests customers should correspond with the branch in whose area they live.

THE DIRECTORS OF THE WELL KNOWN
STRAND ELECTRIC



AND ENGINEERING COMPANY LIMITED

Being at all times anxious to afford to the public (whose servants they have the honour to be) the greatest assistance which lies within their power, have pleasure in submitting for general approval

A COMPLETELY NEW

GLOSSARY

OF
TECHNICAL TERMS
THEATRICAL TERMS

Compiled with Due Diligence and Repeated Research

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LIGHTING THE PLAYS

in the principal theatres throughout
His Majesty's Kingdom

Commencing Nov: 1st 1947, and thereafter so long
as supplies shall last!

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TO BE HAD from the Box Office (Mr. L. Jordan) at 29, King Street,
Covent Garden, or The Stage door (Mr. J. Ashman) at 24, Floral Street, Covent Garden or
through the posts.

! The Electric light is install'd throughout the Premises
which are well alred & fires kept as frequent! as the
climate requires and the Economick Situation permits.

BONNETS ALLOWED
Book early! God Save the King!

Smudgehaw & Fowlem, Steam Printers, The Hut, Waterloo.