TABS

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

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EDITORIAL

Frederick Bentham who is well known as a contributor to TABS and who has been responsible for Research and Development for most of his twenty-six years with the Company, has been appointed to fill the vacancy on the Board of Directors caused by the retirement of L. G. Applebee.

* * *

Stephen Joseph is already well known to TABS readers from his article on " Theatre in the Round ". With so much practical experience of the application of this technique he is obviously just the person to review Richard Southern's latest book.

* * *

Hon. Publicity

Maurice Jackson is one of the founders of John Waddington Ltd., who, generally known now as makers of playing cards, were once solely concerned with publicity for theatres.

He is still very much a part of their organisation, but is linked with A. E. King Ltd. for such theatre publicity work. He regularly lectures art schools on poster design.

* * *

The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

By the time this copy of TABS reaches its readers this new theatre will be open; an event, dare one say it, of rather more importance if rather less publicised than the opening of " My Fair Lady " at Drury Lane at about the same time, or is it? Anyway, Strand have provided the lighting equipment, remote control and associated wiring for both. The scale of the installation is very large in the one case and small but complete in the other. But both pale into insignificance beside the latest monster new theatre or opera house Germany may produce. Your editor in the light of his visits to many of these in Germany, can only endorse over and over again Mr. Kenneth Tynan's comparison between Dusseldorf and Coventry in the Observer recently. One day we must " do " a German theatre for the benefit of the less travelled of our readers.

Meantime let us not fail to appreciate the very real achievement of Coventry and Middlesbrough, for thanks to our very different " climate " for theatre building they must surely represent a much greater expenditure of human fortitude than the several hundreds of theatres, monster or otherwise, civic or otherwise, without which the Germans apparently consider life incomplete. Fortunately for us the Germans also consider virtually all these theatres incomplete without some Cinemoid colour mediums.

Demonstrations

The attendance at lectures this season has been as varied and unaccountable as ever. Between 100 and 120 tickets have been issued for most lectures, while between 50 and 80 people have actually turned up. However, " Lighting the Scene " has proved to be a popular demonstration, attracting audiences of 90 and 100 for its two performances so far. Two new lectures, " Costume and Scenery for Amateurs ", given by Miss Norah Lambourne, and " Planning the Stage ", by P. Corry, have aroused an enthusiastic response, the former filling the house.

We regret that we have had to alter some of the advertised dates, as Mr. Bentham and some of his staff will be engaged in work on the production of " My Fair Lady " at Drury Lane during March and April. " Colour Music " has therefore been postponed until October 17th next, and the " Basic " and " Lighting the Scene " demonstrations will now take place on May 8th and May 22nd respectively.

In addition to the evening series advertised in TABS, we have given fifteen day-time demonstrations, with several others already booked. These have been given to widely differing groups, who have written to us asking for special lectures.

On April 10th at 2.30 p.m. (during the schools' Easter holidays), Mr. Bentham and Mr. Corry are giving a lecture on "Stage Lighting and Staging for Schools ". This has been arranged for members of the teaching profession, who find it difficult to visit our Theatre in term time.

There will also be two demonstrations in the Summer, on Wednesday, July 23rd and Wednesday, September 3rd, at 2.30 p.m., primarily for the benefit of visitors from the provinces and abroad.

Those wishing to attend any of these lectures should apply in writing as early as possible to Head Office, 29 King Street, W.C.2, marking the letter " DEMONSTRATION ". Personal applications can also be made at the Hire Showroom, at the same address, and the Sales Counter in 25 Floral Street, W.C.2.

The recorded lecture has been sent out twenty-four times so far, drawing an audience of 1,200 persons.

The first half of next season's programme will be published in September.

* * *

Exhibitions

At the time this number of TABS goes to press this subject is prominent in the editor's mind but by the time the number is printed it will no longer be news. It is the annual Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition which acts as prompter. This year being its 50th year we are determined that it shall not go unnoticed.

It seems to us that the décor in the Grand Hall is not only the most spectacular thing yet attempted in this exhibition but that it is as perfect an example of the kind of realism which is born of the theatre that we are likely to see for a long time.

The Grand Hall of Olympia has a character all of its own and seems to welcome such a scheme. Our part was to light the Hall in such a way as to give a night effect to the whole area as daylight faded. The photograph gives some impression of the result but does not do justice to the moving cloud effects. Visitors will know that they form a very striking feature of the great west end of Olympia. It is worth noting that standard effects were used plus our latest and most intriguing effect—that of clouds passing across and obscuring the moon; the problem being how does the superimposition of two light projections produce darkness?

We are also contractors for the British Government Pavilion in the Brussels World Exhibition opening in April this year where we are using optical effects on a large Diorama of the Dounreay Reactor and lighting a stage of traditional costumes. Through our many Continental Agents, we have supplied large quantities of standard and special equipment, particularly Pattern 23 spots, but our imagination has been stirred by the achievement of Firma W. Eichenberger (our Swiss Agent) in supplying Strand *Snow* Effects to the *Swiss* Pavilion.

View of the Grand Hall, Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition showing projected cloud effects.

LIGHTING CONTROL VI

by Frederick Bentham

In one part of a previous article the question of the panel layout was discussed. We found that it was necessary to have some eye-catching plan of the controls which would be visually memorable and with sufficient landmarks to enable an operator to move his hands, or preferably fingers rapidly over his control panel.

Regular rows of levers, however nicely numbered or otherwise identified, nevertheless present an impenetrable barrier when there are fifty or perhaps 100 or more. I have always enjoyed laying out the stopkeys of a console in order to provide something visually memorable, and in fact every one of the nineteen Light Consoles except that in the Manchester Palace and the last one (Theatre Polski) was laid out by myself. In the case of Polski, the theatre's consulting engineer (M. Walentowski) laid the job out himself, and I must confess he made a very good job of it.

This question of layout applies equally well to all switchboards and many are the weapons that can be used to obtain something that clicks and is right. There used to be the practice of breaking up of circuits into colour groups, or something of that sort, each with their local masters. Nowadays the tendency is to have some general masters which can affect any circuits over the entire job. The use of colour is mainly to differentiate between two otherwise identical looking switches, for instance a blackout selector and the dimmer selector, black or white for the former and amber for the latter. It may be in the long run that numerical reference is the only thing we can use to differentiate between one circuit and another, because the layout at the stage end varies so much that a good large number is

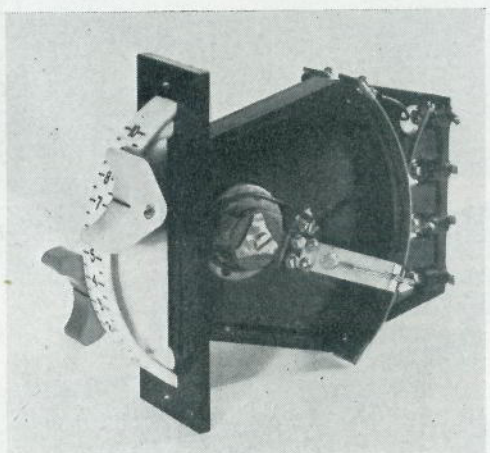


FIG. 1. *Individual twin preset dimmer unit.*

the only thing that is safe. There are too many switchboards in which something called the footlight works some extra spotlight out in the auditorium because the fashion has changed away from footlights to a large number of front-of-house spots. I would say that much depends on whether the theatre enjoys any kind of repertory. I am a great believer in a near permanent layout for every kind of repertory theatre, using the term in the widest sense. I think the specialist rigs for a particular production can only be safely indulged in for a West End long run play, because there is a reasonable amount of time for lighting rehearsal.

The best kind of switch for stage work is that in which the operating lever is a tablet which forms its own label. Unfortunately numbers do not tend to provide eye-catching landmarks, and thus the name of the location of the socket outlet is a help when space allows this to be engraved as well. Abbreviations should always be used otherwise the engraving will be too small.

If we have the panel layout correct, there will still remain the question of the cabinet in which it is mounted. Strictly speaking, the external appearance of the switchboard cabinet should not matter a hoot, and yet it undoubtedly does matter and there are cases where one can say that the whole forms a pleasing well proportioned job which it will be a pleasure to keep tidy; and there are other cases where one can say that the switchboard looked a cheap and shoddy mess even when new and therefore not likely to inspire devotion. Case-work divides strictly between the wood variety belonging to the Light Console and its relations and the metal desk belonging to most switch-

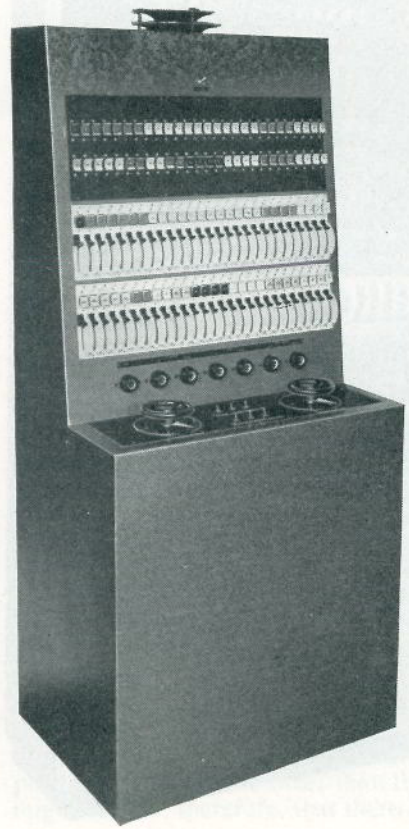


FIG. 2. *Floor mounting choke dimmer control panel.*

boards. These latter desks rely on sheet metal, not only to provide the filling and panelling of the desk but the structure itself. The old type of direct operated switchboard which relied on an iron frame to take the working parts and was clad in sheets of metal merely to fill in and present an appearance of flush panels, was in the earlier days carried over in miniature for remote control boards. This has no place nowadays; purpose designed mouldings which carry all the controls for each circuit (Fig. 1), mass together on a light frame to form their own panels and filling. This arrangement is not only logical but allows the control units to be removed individually from the front for maintenance and inspection.

A common formation for a Strand control desk was shown on page 27 in our issue of " TABS " Vol. 15, No. 2 last September. If this is analysed it will be found to consist of two sloping desks for the individual circuits bridged together by a centre piece for the master controls. Here we have some degree of standardisation; on a small installation one sloping desk would do the entire job (see page 24, Vol. 15, No. 3 December last), and instead of the normal five rows of levers it has only four, or perhaps three, the top row being taken up with the masters. For big jobs we can use two desks. However, a desk with the top sloping at this angle is restricted to a particular limit by watts dissipated on the controls in the desk. It

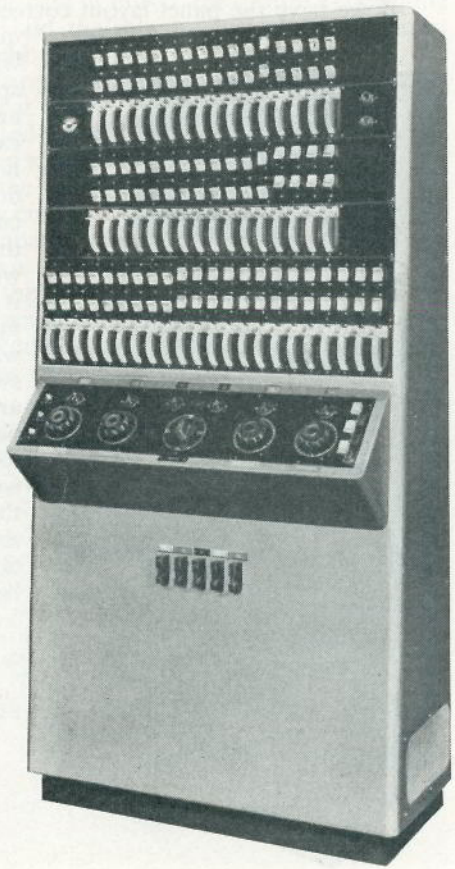


FIG. 3.
Floor mounting choke dimmer control panel. (Whitehall Theatre, London).

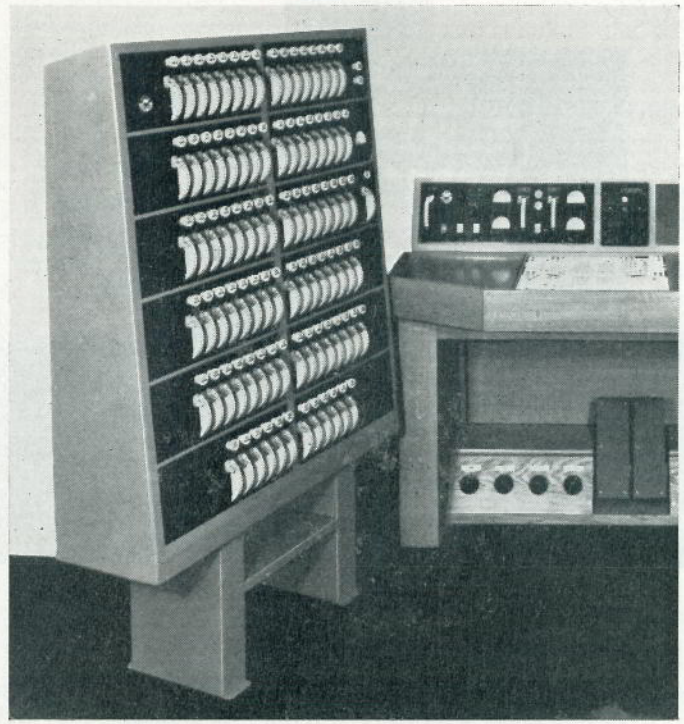


FIG. 4. *Part of lighting control desk, B.B.C. T.V. Theatre.*

is usually undesirable to provide forced ventilation as the fan noise can be rather a nuisance. When we come to the heavier control currents experienced with direct operated saturable reactors, it is desirable to mount the controls more nearly vertical to get the maximum clearance of the air past the control units. Fig. 2 in this article shows a floor mounting control panel of this type for fifty-four ways.

This formation has several practical points, the control potentiometers are near vertical as required and by placing the master dimmers in the table section, sufficient depth is available for the ganged auto-transformers necessary to deal with that particular master load. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the cabinet is utilitarian with few concessions to beauty and the fan, which it was necessary to add to help the cabinet to ventilate, hardly improves the appearance. There are many of these controls giving operational satisfaction all over the world, and in most cases they are in some position where no one other than the operator sees them anyway. It might be said, therefore, that there is nothing to worry about and the

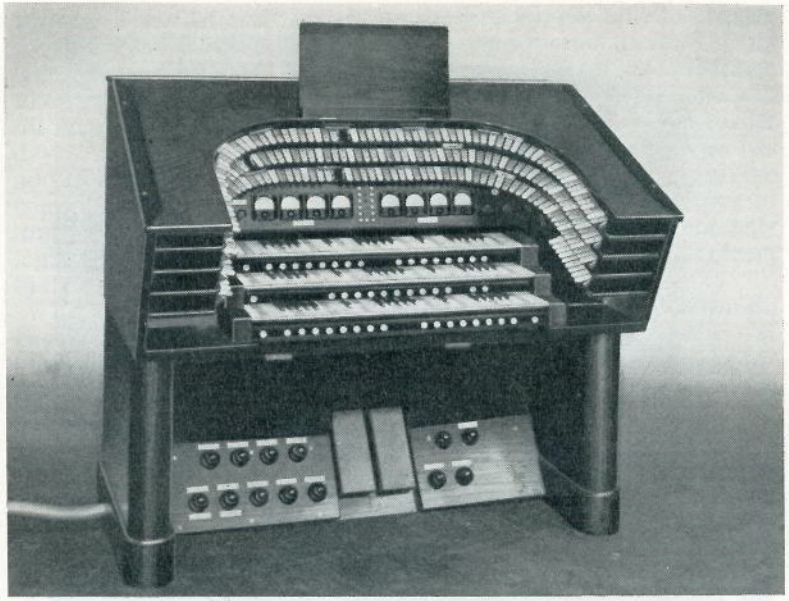


FIG. 5. *Light Console, London Coliseum.*

cabinet could be left alone. However, the writer felt that some improvement should be possible without increasing the cost and the problem was turned over to our Mr. McLeod to see what he as a designer could do. The result of his efforts is the new Strand standard floor mounting cabinet shown in Fig 3.

This is a true engineer's design in which the lines arise naturally from the way of working the material and from the needs of the equipment to be housed. As before, the control levers are on a vertical panel, but the vertical edges of the cabinet are curved, a simple matter in sheet metal, but something which vastly improves appearance. No attempt has been made to curve the horizontals which run into the vertical curves since this always produces an unhappy and complex join, and to my mind one of the satisfactions of the appearance of this cabinet is of the horizontals cutting across the curved verticals and showing the shape. This can be seen particularly in the case of the sloping master control panel. The angling of the control panel brings the master dimmers themselves back on the centre line of the cabinet and makes it possible to provide knee space for anyone standing close to the unit. Further, space for the foot is allowed in the form of a recessed plinth all round the bottom. This cabinet provides most excellent ventilation since it is virtually sealed for its total height. Air is admitted at the bottom and the heat

of any working part inside automatically ventilates the unit since it is a tall chimney in effect.

This cabinet, known as Type C, will take standard choke controls up to seventy-two ways and choke controls with twin preset up to sixty-six ways in this width or up to 102 ways in a unit half as wide again. The particular model in the photograph is in the Whitehall Theatre, London. The slope to the top of the cabinet not only provides an interesting change of angle but serves the useful purpose of being too steep to allow papers and anything else placed thereon to remain there, and thus the ventilation is safe from the thoughtless type of person who will stand things on top of any flat surface.

Another interesting cabinet from the same designer is shown in Fig 4. This in one of the wings to the television lighting control desk at the B.B.C. Shepherds Bush T.V. Theatre. Again, the general structure follows the hints that our particular form of sheet metal working throws out, and the sloped top again appears. This is known after its inventor as the "Nickels Anti-T-Slope" and is intended to prevent people resting their tea cups on the top of the polished cabinet.

When we turn to wood consoles it is difficult to find a naturally contemporary style. The organ console has evolved over a large number of years and its particular formation is hard to beat as a

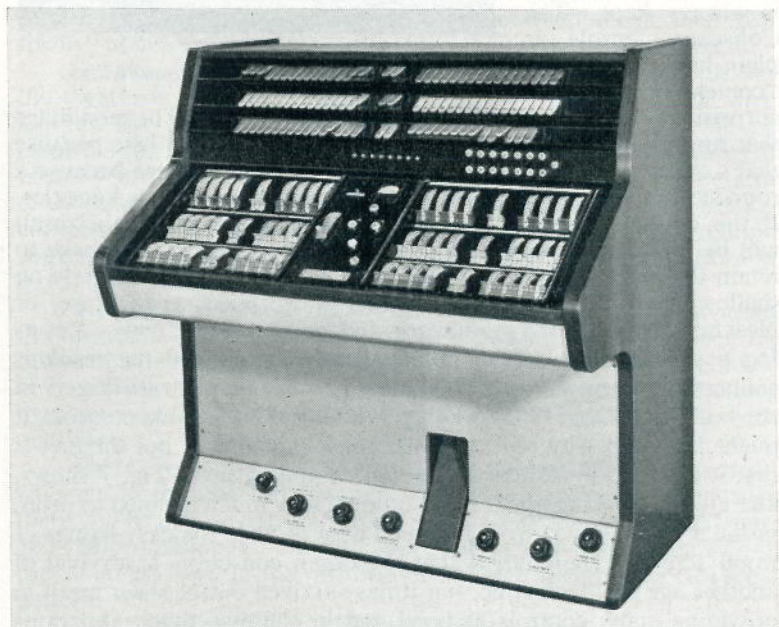


FIG. 6. *Granada T.V. Manchester Console Preset desk.*

means of housing all the controls and their associate gear within one case. Inevitably, however, this form of console tends to hark back to the days when organs were organs and there was nothing to be ashamed of in that. To my mind the Light Console has never looked better than when it used an orthodox Compton organ console as in Fig. 5. This shows the mahogany console at the London Coliseum and the general result is very satisfying which to my mind is proved by the extremely nice way in which this job is always kept. The Coliseum console is plain but it is scarcely "contemporary". It is surprising how difficult it is to make it into this latter. The mouldings that run round under the stopkeys in a console are not there because that's the way the Victorians liked it, but they are there because a rounded moulding enables one to retain the skin on one's knuckles. If this surface is now covered in contemporary Formica the result will be blood scattered over our instrument. We therefore have to retain the orthodox style inside the area of the controls and rely on shallow devices such as sticking bits of Formica on the case, or bleaching some of the woodwork and reshaping the ends. Yet as Fig 6 shows, these minor modifications succeed and the result is eminently contemporary. This should be compared with Fig. 5 in the last issue (Dec. 1957) for they are virtually the same control. It might be asked why not make the console of metal, but the fact is that it contains a very large amount of apparatus as Fig. 7 shows, and all this working apparatus would be very much inclined to drum inside a tin case, nor would a metal case provide the easy fixings of wood screws. The truth is that the organ console is a survival of another age and technique, but it has survived out of sheer merit in providing many controls to hand and in enabling much apparatus to be packed into a small space.

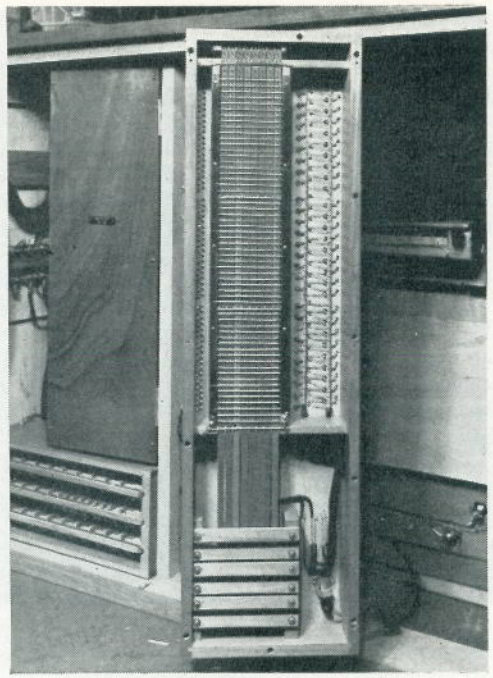


FIG. 7. *Part of interior of Console desk.*

MIDDLESBROUGH LITTLE THEATRE

by P. Corry

The opening of this new theatre in October last provoked a great deal of national interest as it is one of the very few new theatres built in this country during the last twenty years. When that fact is compared with the lavish expenditure on new theatres in all parts of Europe, it is perhaps not surprising that we are often told that as a nation we are lacking in theatrical culture. Nevertheless the plays of our best dramatists are eagerly sought by the European theatres; and although the commercial theatre in Britain is now providing entertainment for a diminishing minority of the population, it is significant that many thousands of amateur societies are performing regularly to considerable audiences, and many of these societies perform in their own theatres; theatres obtained by their own efforts and not provided by the State. Most of the amateur theatres are improvised affairs with many restrictions and inconveniences: a limited seating capacity usually dictates a shoestring economy. Although many of these theatres are doing work of considerable theatrical quality, few would claim that their best performances are consistently comparable with the best in the professional theatre. **The amateurs and their audiences would be grateful for the opportunity** of seeing first-class professional productions in their own towns: at present they frequently travel long distances to see them.

Despite the wailings of the dismal johnnies, who assure us that the theatre is dying, the theatre in Britain is still very much alive. Despite the sentimentalised ballyhoo about the loss of some old theatres, the fact is that most of the theatres that have closed in recent years have failed in their efforts to stand up to the competition of those who sell entertainment to the masses. They are the theatrical corner shops that have succumbed to the competition of the multiple stores, or their owners have found that commerce could afford to pay for the site far more than the theatre could earn.

The theatre is not dying: it is *changing*. Some of it is invading the fireside screens of **millions,** many of whom have never seen the inside of a real theatre. Among these millions are many who could be lured into the real theatre, there to find that they can get something that can never be had from a screen, whether it be little or big, wide or narrow.

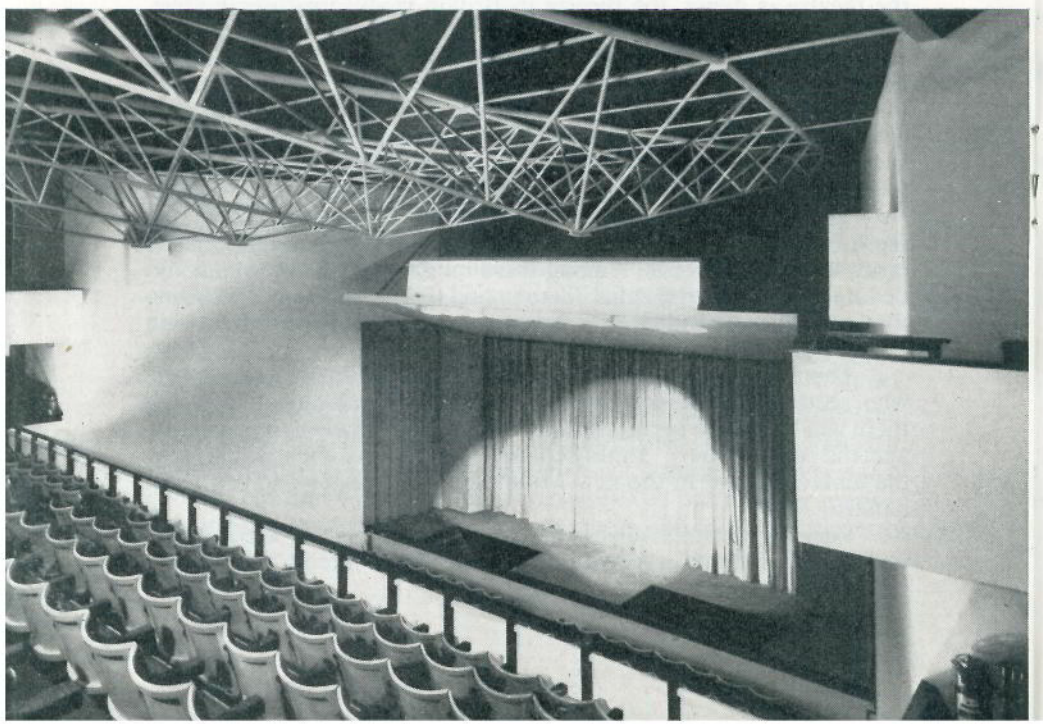
There are many theatre people, both professional and amateur, who see in the changing pattern a possible development in which there will be a close harmony and co-operation between the amateurs and the professionals. In this change the initiative must come from the amateurs, and in the new Middlesbrough theatre one can see a pattern.

Very importantly, this is a real theatre. It is not a converted warehouse or chapel. Already, it has the unmistakable atmosphere

and " feel " of a theatre. It is small enough to have an attractive intimacy, yet large enough to meet the requirements of a small professional company. There is a seating capacity of 500, with perfect sight-lines. The most remote members of the audience are less than 60 ft. from the front of a stage that is 40 ft. deep and 70 ft. wide. The fact that there is a proscenium opening (26 ft. × 14 ft.) might be disturbing to those who have a phobia about picture frames, although the "frame" is by no means emphatic. There is an orchestra pit which is covered at auditorium level when not in use. This space can be used to extend the seating, or it may be occupied by a removable apron stage, giving access to back-stage, through side boxes at stage level. There are upper boxes at circle level and these may be used as acting areas or for seating. If desired, the apron stage can be extended into the auditorium to create an open stage for Elizabethan type productions.

There is not full flying height above the stage. A choice had to be made on economic grounds between a large plan area with a height restricted to 24 ft. from stage level to the beams carrying the grid-pulleys, or a much restricted plan area and a grid at about 30 ft. with access above. The decision, very rightly, was in favour of the large stage area. The full-flying space is desirable, but it is very costly and its usefulness is occasional, whereas the large stage area is constantly required. Limited flying is possible and cloths

View of auditorium and stage from the balcony. Photograph by courtesy of "The Architects' Journal".



can be " tumbled ", if necessary. The back wall of the stage is plastered to form a cyclorama, and the need for back-cloths is, therefore, minimised. Suitable beams at ceiling level are positioned to accommodate three-line sets of suspension, operated from a fly-gallery.

The building is attractively designed in a contemporary manner, making the most economical use of modern materials and building practice. It is rectangular in form and as the overall width of the stage is much greater than that of the auditorium, there are excellent dressing-rooms, storage and passages in the spaces between the auditorium and the outer walls. There is a spacious entrance foyer, to which the bar forms a balcony at the circle level. The brick piers that support the circle form boxes at the rear of the raked ground-floor.

The lighting of the auditorium is extremely simple and efficient. Partially concealed tungsten lamps provide a good level of illumination and there are no conventional suspended lighting fittings. The stage lighting is extremely flexible. This is remotely controlled through a Saturable Reactor system. The control cabinet is in the projection room at the rear of the circle and operates fifty-four chokes situated below the stage. There are eighty actual lighting circuits, and of these, fifty-four may be selected for any production, by means of a " patching " panel of plugs. Of the eighty circuits, twenty are in F.O.H. positions so that when an open stage is used it can be lit from varied angles. The stage lighting equipment consists almost exclusively of spots and floods.

The theatre has cost £50,000 to build and equip, and it has started its life free from any debt or mortgage. The raising of the funds has required prodigious enthusiasm and effort for many years. In addition to the considerable funds raised directly by the Little Theatre organisation substantial contributions were obtained from fifty local industrial companies, and £5,000 from the Middlesbrough Corporation. Contributions were also obtained from several of the large charitable Trusts. On the opening night, only £2,000 remained short of the total cost, and that sum has since been obtained from the members.

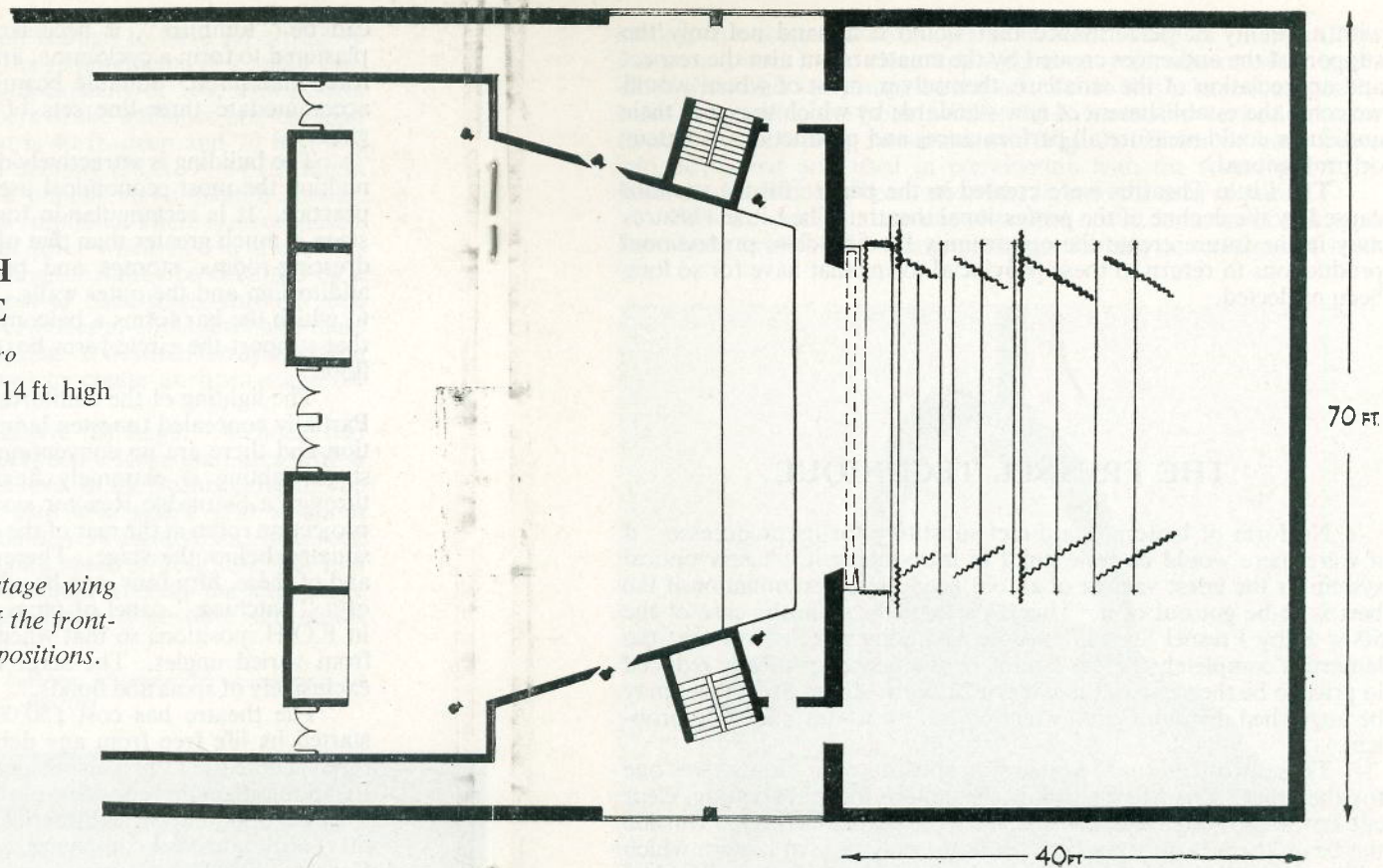
Since opening the new building, the theatre has increased its subscribing membership, from 2,000 to 3,000. Under the direction of a professional producer, it is presenting its own productions, but the theatre is also made available to other amateur and professional companies during its own company's rehearsal periods.

The Middlesbrough Little Theatre may well prove to be the prototype of the provincial theatres of the future, theatres provided by the local amateurs with the assistance of the local communities, and being regularly used by professional touring companies during those periods when the amateurs are rehearsing their next productions. One would like to think that a future National Theatre will provide touring companies presenting plays, ballet and possibly operas, without the lavish mounting of a London production, but

MIDDLESBROUGH LITTLE THEATRE

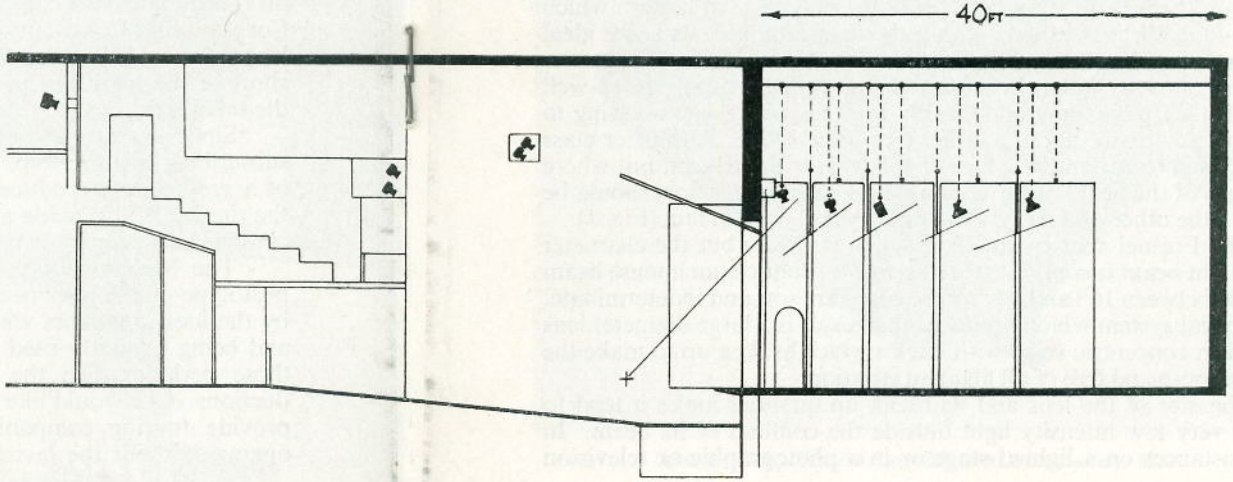
Designed by Enrico De Pierro

Proscenium opening: 26 ft. wide × 14 ft. high
Seating: 500
Stage lighting circuits: 80
Dimmers: 54 Saturable Reactors



PLAN

Showing ample stage wing space and some of the front-of-house lighting positions.



SECTION

Showing principal lighting positions.

with a quality of performance that would command not only the support of the audiences created by the amateurs but also the respect and appreciation of the amateurs themselves, most of whom would welcome the establishment of new standards by which they and their audiences could measure all performances and productions, amateur or professional.

The Little Theatres were created in the past to fill the vacuum caused by the decline of the professional theatre. The Little Theatres may in the future create the opportunity for first-class professional productions to return to these provincial towns that have for so long been neglected.

THE FRESNEL TECHNIQUE

No form of lantern is a direct substitute for its predecessor, if it were there would be little point in introducing it. A new optical system or the latest variant of an old needs some examination if the best is to be got out of it. This is particularly so in the case of the 500w Baby Fresnel Spot introduced last September. Now that the lantern is completely die-cast and in consequence drastically reduced in price to be the same as the Pattern 23 Baby Mirror Spot, there may be anguished decisions as to which to use for to-day's lighting problem.

These two lanterns are in no way substitutes or alternatives one for the other. The Mirror spot is the lantern for real spotting, clear cut coverage—often exactly shaped to a particular area. Outside the beam there is no stray light. It is the only type of lantern which will confine all light exactly within the area required. It is the ideal lantern for use from the auditorium.

On the other hand, because the edges of the beam are so well defined, they may show undesirably in cases where one is trying to build up an area of lighting rather than pick it out. A diffuser glass can be used to soften the edges of the Mirror Spot beam but where the edges of the beam must be completely indefinite, resort should be made to the other optical system—the Fresnel Spot in fact (Fig. 1).

The Fresnel spot is equally efficient optically but the character of the light beam is *completely different*. It produces an intense beam variable between 16° and 40° whose edges are soft and indeterminate. The optical system which produces this result is a large diameter lens formed in concentric steps with back surface broken up to make the beam smooth and free of all filament striation.

The size of the lens and its break up qualities make it tend to scatter very low intensity light outside the confines of its beam. In most instances on a lighted stage or in a photographic or television

studio, this scatter is too slight to matter. However, there will be cases on a dark stage close to a wing or a cyclorama or other backcloth when this stray must be cut off. To do this a barndoor attachment is clipped to the front in either the horizontal or vertical position to suit the particular circumstances (Fig. 2). Either or both doors can be moved and used in conjunction with the focusing on the lantern to confine the beam and stray light to the area required.

Fresnel spotlights are not of course novel, lanterns of this type have been available for many years particularly in wattages of 1000

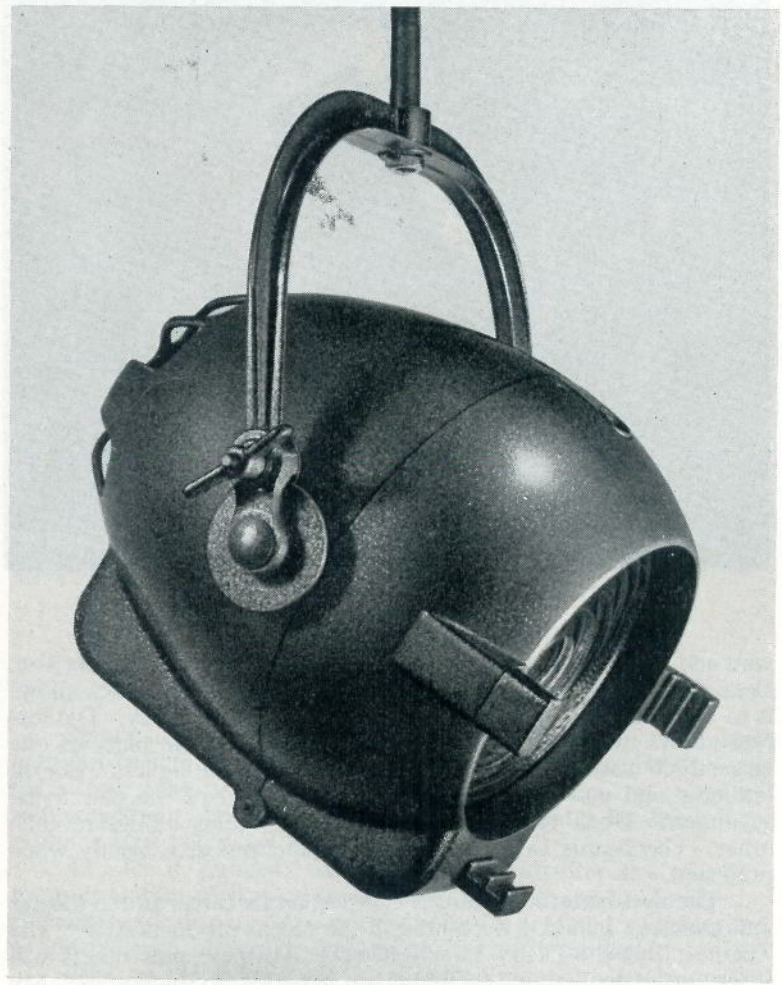


FIG. 1. *Baby Fresnel Spot* 250–500 *watt Pattern* 123.

FIG. 2. *Baby Fresnel Spot with Barndoors.*

watt and over. What is new about the Pattern 123 is its compact size, clean appearance, light weight, and die-cast construction which allows it to be produced in quantity and therefore inexpensively. The low cost allows two small 500 watt lanterns to be used in place of one larger 1000 watt size. This has the advantage of taking less space on one axis and also of allowing the beam spread of the pair to be asymmetric when required by putting the beams alongside each other. The beams can, of course, be superimposed exactly when preferred.

The new lantern has already started on its career in the theatre and over one hundred were used in the recent production of " The Tempest " at the Drury Lane Theatre. All these plus others will form part of the lighting for the much heralded production of " My Fair Lady " at the same theatre in April. The professional theatre

will use the new lantern by the hundred and a new fashion largely replacing that of banks of acting area floods is likely; it is nevertheless the amateur theatre that will benefit most. The Baby Fresnel Pattern

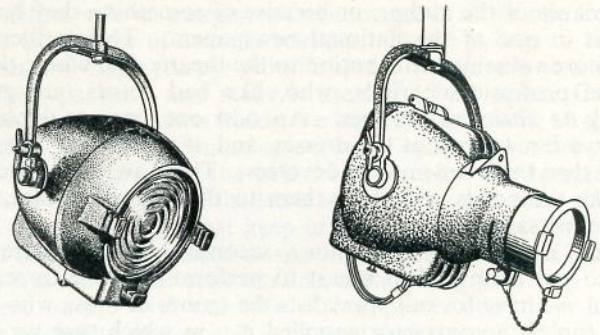


FIG. 3. *The Pattern* 123 *Fresnel Spot is shown here with its companion lantern the Pattern* 23 *Baby Spot.*

123 and the Baby Mirror Spot Pattern 23 will form a most versatile and adaptable pair (Fig. 3). What one cannot do the other can. These, supplemented by some flooding equipment can banish the larger lanterns altogether from the small to medium stage.

The lamps used by the Pattern 123 are 250 or 500 watt class " T " projectors with medium prefocus caps and in consequence no lining up and adjustment is necessary when inserting a replacement. For continuous use in display, exhibition and shop window work, a 250 watt class " B " lamp can be used.

Burning position of the lantern can be any angle between vertical pointing downwards and vertical pointing upwards. Special attention has been paid to the ventilation in the tricky vertical positions.

HON. PUBLICITY

by Maurice Jackson

Before I start this article, let me say that the formula laid down may not be infallible, but it has served me very well professionally for a long, long time. Further, the type who asked me to write it said something about preserving my amateur status by doing it for nothing, so if you don't like it . . . !

As I see it, publicity for an amateur production lies mainly in the preparation of printed information to be issued to members of the society for display or re-distribution to a potential audience and, in consequence, should be directed at that outer perimeter.

What is the interest of this broader potential in an amateur society's production? The big majority want to see one or another

of the acting section doing a job (whether to applaud or to make a moo doesn't matter). Others go to be seen there, others to make it an occasion for a party and yet others to stay behind and go behind ; to bask in the magic of the theatre. Some, alas but few, go to see a play because of the author, or because of something they have read about it in one of the national newspapers. Their criticism is a much more valuable contribution to the theatre as a whole than that of some professional critics, who, like bad actors, are generally listening to their own voices. An odd one goes to look at the scenery, a few to look at the dresses, and, if there is an orchestra or pianist, then there are musical devotees. These are the buyers—now let's take the goods and show them to the best advantage. What have we for sale?

First, a play with an author ; secondly, a place where we are going to put it on ; then a cast to perform it and a director. In addition, we have for our specialists the names of those who painted the set (unless a contractor supplied it ; in which case we have to be discreet, because he's a pro.) ; those who designed and made the dresses ; the back-room boys who lit the production ; and the musical accompaniment. Then we must do something to tell everybody when we are producing and how much we expect them to pay for their seats. All these items concern the poster and the hanging card (called professionally a Box Office Card).

Now all posters, with a very few traditional exceptions, are based on double crown. This is a printer's term for a sheet of paper 30 in. deep by 20 in. wide. We can work to this proportion in making out our copy for all items of publicity because our hanging card should be 15 in. deep by 10 in. wide, and our pamphlet, if we issue one, should be $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep by 5 in. wide (this is called, professionally, a Throwaway). In all cases it will be noted that the depth is one and a half times the width.

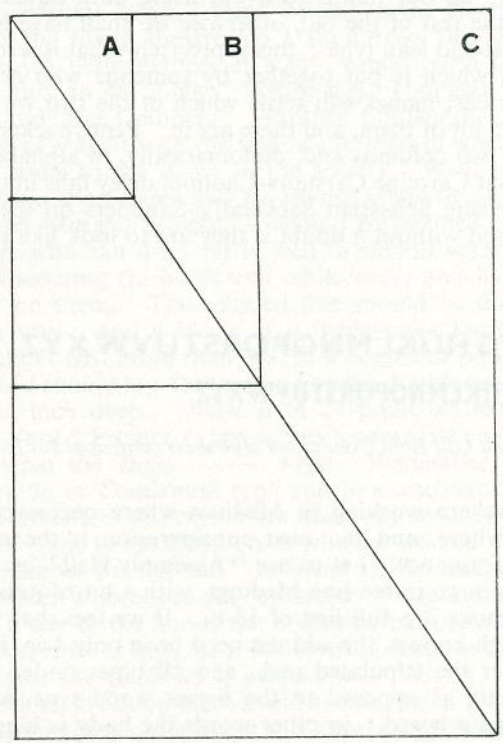
In making out copy for any of these items, we take an ordinary sheet of quarto writing paper ; first, because it is roughly 10 in. by 8 in., and secondly, because we should do our copy in pen and ink. On this sheet we pencil a space, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep by 5 in. wide, over to the left-hand top corner, so that we can make remarks concerning our copy in the right and bottom margins. Then we take this pencilled area as being our double crown and work our type sizes in one to four proportion. Here I have the advantage of knowing type sizes, but if we work with double crown in mind, sizes are simpler, and we can tell the printer to reduce our copy in proportion for the smaller bills and leave him to his own craftiness.

So let's find a title, determine its size and then set everything around it in proportion to the relative importance. Type face, by the way, should be Sans (i.e., sans-serif ; in other words a plain straightforward type without any fancy bits and pieces). There are two kinds of Sans ; one, the ordinary Grotesque, and a second, designed by the late Eric Gill in the 'twenties and called, naturally, Gill Sans. To the printer one is simply Sans and the other Gill (to

me one is anathema to the other ; basically alike, they just don't mix, so I always specify one or the other).

Shall we be difficult and pick as our title, " The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker "? Clearly, with only 18 in. of width and leaving an inch either side as margin, we cannot get it all in one line or it will look like a row of anæmic soldiers. To me it begs to be set in three lines and displayed pyramid fashion. This means that we take " Mr. Pennypacker " and make it the full 18 in. wide. Counting the space between the two words, we have fifteen letters, so they can be about $1\frac{1}{6}$ in. wide (we must save a bit of space to put between the straight-sided letters, i.e., the two " Ns "). Now the temptation is to say that, if the width of the letter is $1\frac{1}{6}$ in., we can make the depth 3 in. or 4 in. ; but we must keep in mind that at least 50% of our 30 in. of depth is better used as spacing, so let's make it $1\frac{2}{3}$ in. deep. This is what the printer calls ten line, a line being $\frac{1}{6}$ in.

There we are with one line of our poster copy in a lettering which is not quite square and isn't long and scrawny ; it is technically called Medium. Above it we put " Remarkable " in the same



"A" is our pamphlet (one eighth size) in exact proportion to " B " and " C ", the hanging card and double crown poster respectively.

size and above this and slightly smaller, say in 1 in., or six line, we put " The." All, mark you, in Medium type ; not a silly little " The," square and squashed. It is after all the definite article, so let's see it.

THE REMARKABLE MR. PENNYPACKER

THE REMARKABLE MR. PENNYPACKER

A comparison of Grotesque and Gill Medium settings about one twelfth the size of our finished poster.

That's the title and the rest is comparatively simple except for one thing. Most printers who have Medium Sans type have it only down to 1 in. letter ; so, when we are going below this size, we have to have square type or what is known as Condensed, which is a little less robust than Medium. Having used Medium for our title, we should make up our minds to avoid using both Square and Condensed for the rest of the bill, otherwise we shall have a lot of long lines of squat and lean type ; this is precisely what is wrong with the average bill which is put together by someone who is in a hurry. Usually our cast names will settle which of the two we should use. If there are a lot of them, and there are in " Pennypacker," we might set them in two columns and, diplomatically, in alphabetical order. If we find that Caroline Carstairs-Cholmondeley falls in the left-hand column opposite Sebastian Sackerville-Saunders on the right, then it's Condensed without a doubt if they are to look like two separate names.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Gill Bold and Gill Bold Condensed alphabets compared for length of line.

Now we are working in Medium where necessary and Condensed elsewhere, and our next consideration is the name of the place of performance. Let us use " Assembly Hall " as an example. This can again go in ten-line Medium, with a bit of judicious letter-spacing to make it a full line of 18 in. If we feel that the location is well enough known, the address need be in only ½ in. letter. Here we are under the stipulated inch, and all types under an inch are made in metal as opposed to the bigger wood type, and all have what is called a beard ; in other words the body is bigger than the face so, if the type is five-line, it only prints a four-line face. This is not a mathematically accurate statement, but it is near enough for our purpose and, as in everything in print, there are the usual

traditional exceptions (this is to stop some text-book taught advertising agent's nark from writing a filthy letter). Then the size of these metal types is referred to in points—12 points to a line—so 5-line is 60 point, 4-line 48 point, and so on. Anyway, if we want to print a ½ in. or three-line face, we must stipulate 4-line type to get it.

There's the name and address of the place where we want the customer to come and view our goods. We ought to tell the plutocrats that there is a park for their cars right opposite. We also want to make a statement about our fully-licensed bars, in case some charming, inoffensive ticket-buyer has been dragged away from his usual quick couple at the local (by his wife). These two statements can be made left and right in one line of 30 point (two and a half line) which will show a 24 point (2-line) face. A nice full-length 12 point (1-line) rule under that lot gets rid of our heading trouble.

Next we must say that we are giving three evening performances at 8.30 (don't say " Evening performances at 8.30 p.m."; it couldn't be " a.m.", could it?) and name the days and the dates. Personally, I hate abbreviations which I think belong to the cinema and have no place in the living theatre, so I should do this in two lines. " Three evening performances at 8.30 " would be in 60 point and underneath this, in 48 point, " Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 19th, 20th and 21st October." Another full-length 12 point rule and we have now dealt with the important items of where and when.

So we come to the name of the society. Well, what do you think? If it's a short name and we are not going to add " Operatic, Dramatic and Musical Society," I should be inclined to get one of the members who can draw fairly well to submit some suggestions of designed lettering (in black and white only) and have the committee vote on them. The selected one should be decorative but in a simple way ; and a block of it, technically known as a line block, shouldn't cost more than 30s. to a couple of pounds for each size of job and should last for years. For the double crown it should be about an inch deep. Under it in 24 point we have the word " presents " (not " Present "; the society's name is a collective noun, no matter what the *Daily* ——— says). Remember, please, that we are working in Condensed type and in consequence we should stick to capital letters to achieve the necessary readability.

Here we come to the question of whether we add " By arrangement with Samuel French Ltd." or some similar acknowledgment. I have never seen a licence to play as issued by this admirable organisation but, if use of the line is not a contractual obligation, I think we should forget it. I imagine it has crept in because someone once wanted to give the publicity a professional flourish. In fact, the techniques which are adopted to avoid such a line in the professional theatre are sometimes quite bitter and always ingenious.

We have already set our title, which is the next item, so we had better re-cap and see how much depth has been used so that we can determine how big those actors' names are going to be, so :

" Assembly Hall," 10 line ; address, 3 line ; cars and bars, 2 line ; full cut-off rule, 1 line ; times and days, 4 line and 3 line ; another cut-off rule, 1 line ; name of the society (1 in.) 6 line ; " presents," 1½ line ; title, 6 line, 10 line and 10 line. All this adds up to 57½ lines, ignoring the beard on the various lines of metal type. If we add 75% for the spacing through it, we get 100 lines which, at 6 lines to the inch, tells us that we have used 16½ in. of our 30 in. depth.

The author's line underneath the title should be in 48 point and, at the bottom of the bill, the prices of admission should be in 60 point. Above these prices should be a nice panel of 6 point (½ line) rule enclosing a line, also of 60 point, saying, " The New Theatre, London Success." These together including their spacing total another 4 inches, so we have 9½ in. for our cast, director and scenic designer, and to cover the costumes and lighting. That gives us about 5 in. for type and the balance for spacing. Of these thirty lines we have sixteen names double-columned to eight lines of 48 point (36 point face) a similar line for the director and 36 point over for the odds and ends. This isn't too bad, because we can borrow a bit of depth from the generous allowance for spacing if we find we need it.

Now let's give it to the printer and ask him to give us a black press proof in half the time he was going to say it would take. We can then show it to the committee with confidence because we have a well-spaced job that can accommodate one or two more lines of acknowledgment which we might have to add for political reasons and, if necessary, we can make those cast names just one size larger if we hear any significant sniffs.

Back to the printer, marked clearly with corrections to spelling and with a note that we should like our hall, our title and author and our line referring to the London theatre in the second colour, if we are printing in two colours. We won't bother about the hieroglyphics the professionals use to correct their proofs ; for every one of those that the printer gets he gets ten the way we do it.

There you are and, if you think I know anything about it, and you would like to raise a point or two, write to the Editor and I will endeavour to elucidate. Like the boys I mentioned earlier on, I love listening to my own voice.

PATTERN 23 W. A NEW USE

The Pattern 23 in its various forms has been in general use as what is known as a profile projector. That is to throw a shaped or patterned beam of light on to the floor or on a wall. This has been done with purpose-made masks slipped in instead of the circular or adjustable masks.

One of our readers, J. B. Dalton, of " Moorfield," Ryton-on-Tyne, must be thanked for another suggestion. He made a cloud slide on mica and used it successfully in a Pattern 23 W. We have experimented on these lines and now offer this service, which can be useful for small stage work where some irregular picture like a cloud can help in giving credibility to a sky cloth. Although we have tested such a slide for permanence, we would ask that it should not be used for periods of longer than half an hour at a time. The front plano-convex lens of the lantern should be reversed so that the two lenses of the 23 W are ball to ball ; and to put the slide slightly out of focus the lens jacket should be moved forward rather than back. The coverage of the projection is about 9 ft. at 10 ft. direct throw, but projection from the side with consequent distortion is still effective.

If so used for one scene the spot can, of course, be used through a window or door in other scenes quite usefully when the front lens should again be reversed for the 23 W.

Hand painted cloud slide on mica projected from a Pattern 23W Spot ten feet from the skycloth.

ADIEU TO SNUFFING CANDLES

by John Kennedy Melling and Ann Gloria Nolloth

(*Concluded*)

Contemporary with South End, and linked to it by the ubiquitous Thornton, were the Theatre Royal, Windsor, and the Theatre, Chelmsford, where he had companies before he visited South End. Of the architecture of these, it may be noted that the Windsor Theatre was built by Thornton in 1793 in the High Street, replacing the one built 25 years earlier; it was described as " small but pretty " and " small but elegant," and had boxes, pit and gallery, with a small orchestra pit, and Doran describes it as follows. " In the old cosey theatre at Windsor, where each part of the house might have shaken hands with the other, the King and Queen used to retire at the end of the third act, to take tea, and then the Windsor or Queen's ale used to circulate in the gallery." Thornton led the Royal way to the entrance, " (carrying wax-lights and walking backward with the well-practised steps of a Lord Chamberlain)," according to one writer, and " bowing with all the grace that his gout would allow," according to another. Chelmsford, in its announcement for Saturday, October 11th, 1794, stated: " The Theatre will be illuminated with wax. N.B. Moon-light nights ";

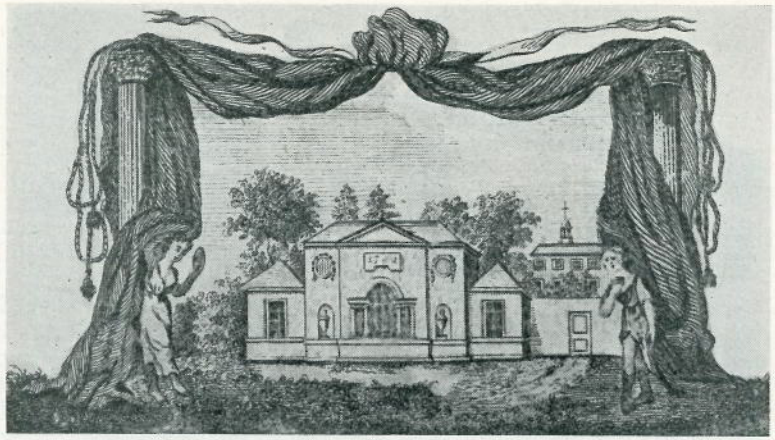
Print, dated 1885, *of Theatre Royal, Windsor* (*reproduction of* 1805 *original*).

Print, dated 1885, *of Theatre, Reading* (*reproduction of* 1805 *original*).

a reminder that tallow could still be used in theatres, and that audiences obliged to walk home from a performance that might end at midnight would welcome the moon's protection in town and country, for these were the days of long programmes and dauntless footpads.

A prophetic note on theatre-lighting was struck by George Colman the younger in *Random Records*, describing an amateur performance in 1780 in the long, low-ceilinged former kitchen at Sir Watkin Williams Wynn's home, Wynnstay, North Wales. There were no floats, but overhead lights on a beam over the stage " on that side of the arch nearest to the stage, so that the audience did not see the lamps, which cast a strong vertical light upon the actors." Agreeing that this was more natural than the floats, he nevertheless argued " if a beam to hold lamps as at Wynnstay were placed over the proscenium at Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatre, the goddesses in the upper tiers of boxes, and the two and one shilling gods in the galleries, would be completely intercepted from a view of the stage . . . some ingenious architect may hit upon a remedy "!

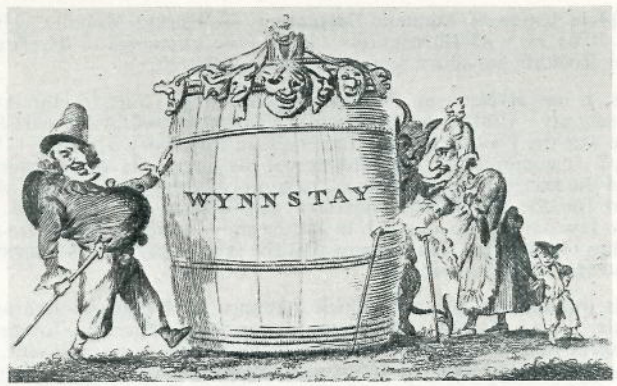
The " invisible candle-snuffer " was a very necessary adjunct to the stage in these times; this worthy (in country districts he was often an ostler) could amble on to the stage, ignoring the action of the play, to attend to guttering candles, often in answer to the call of the audience, who would cheer his performance as much as some twentieth-century concertgoers applaud the attendant who raises the lid of the grand piano for a soloist.



Print, contemporary, of the Theatre at Wynnstay.

A note of the productions will help in understanding the difficulties of staging. Southend may be taken as typical of the somewhat decadent period through which both the " Majors " (the two patent Theatres Royal of Drury Lane and Covent Garden), the " Minors " (the Haymarket, and transpontine playhouses, such as the Surrey), and the Provinces were passing. At first, Southend had such " Lane " and " Garden " successes as *Inkle and Yarico Slyvester Daggerwood* and *The Devil to Pay,* but by the 1830's the lurid, often poorly-written or poorly-translated melodramas demanded by London audiences could be seen in Southend's seasonal theatre: M. G. (" Monk ") Lewis' *Timour the Tartar, Raymond and Agnes, or The Bleeding Nun* and *The Fate of Frankenstein* were among the Gothic horrors performed. Apart from Oriental or Ruritanian lavish spectacle, animals were brought on to the stage. An actor would sing a comic song, or recite, from the back of a real Jerusalem pony (probably borrowed from the nearby beach) or an ass; performing dogs were a popular attraction, and on Monday, July 31st, 1837, Mr. Wood and his famous dog Bruin acted in *The Grateful Lion* (a story of Androcles) with Bruin having top-billing for his performance in a real lion's-skin—it was the fashion for papier-mache heads to be supplied for these canine heroes, who were also used to kill Claudius in *Hamlet* by leaping at his throat. The titles of plays were freely altered, sometimes to include the name of Southend as an added attraction, and comic songs, requested by the audience to be sung by the comedians who were firm favourites (as were to prove twentieth-century seaside revue comedians), often featured the town's name. Performances were frequently bespoken by local organizations or worthies, and the local Prittlewell Band sometimes added to the

entertainment of the evening. In the earlier years Southend proved a nursery for many actors and actresses destined to become famous on the London stage, and leading London players did not disdain to appear in Southend, but in the latter years the Theatre Royal, Southend, deteriorated until it and many others found " Their candles are all out."



Ticket of admission to Wynnstay Theatre.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Medieval Theatre in The Round.

By Richard Southern. *Faber & Faber.* **45/-.**

Richard Southern is a scholar of the theatre who takes a keen interest in current practice. His book is intended to be of interest on an academic level, and to guide the adventurous experimenter. The book succeeds in being immensely intriguing. The description that Mr. Southern puts together of a production of the mystery play "The Castle of Perseverance" is masterly. It reads, itself, like a latterday mystery—clues and all.

The British theatre has a wonderful history. Our own appreciation of it is limited, and our own theatre suffers from the poverty of our knowledge. We have come to identify the whole idea of theatre with a very small set of conventions. We practice theatre in a narrow way. And the price we pay for this restriction is that people—our audience—have come to believe that the cinema and television are " better ". The situation is never beyond repair. We must make the theatre come alive again, in all its immense scope and its thousand various ways. Is there an experimental theatre in London? There ought to be dozens of them. And several in every important town and city in the country. We must start them now, grateful for the knowledge that theatre historians are re-finding for us.

The theatre that Southern writes about in this book was a large, open-air theatre in the round, with peripheral stages. The shape of the theatre can be deduced from the play, as can the shape of the Elizabethan theatre from Shakespeare's plays. If, as I believe, there is an important connection between the architecture of theatres and playwriting, clearly to-day's architects have immense responsibilities. This book of meticulous scholarship must be read. So must a dozen other books that every discerning student has

almost certainly got on his shelves. Of course, reading is only half the battle. We must entice architects into the theatre—particularly the experimental theatre. If a few of us get as excited about the theatre as Mr. Southern so clearly is, the enthusiasm may spread. It may, eventually, even be spilling over into the audience. And people will go home and kick in their television sets. That'll be the day!

Stephen Joseph

A Complete Guide to Amateur Dramatics. *By* Harald Melville. 310 pages ($5\frac{1}{4}$ ins. $\times$ $8\frac{1}{4}$ ins.) 48 Illustrations and 71 Line Drawings in the Text. Published by Rockliff, Salisbury Square, London. Price 30/–.

Yes, it has arrived—an Encyclopædia of Stage Craft for the Amateur. I purposely say " Craft ", and to quote the words uttered by Herbert Prentice when he was the Producer at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre—" What is the play? It combines all the activities of the composite whole, namely the words of the text, scenery, costumes, make-up, effects, lighting, etc." A pretty big field for the enthusiastic amateur, particularly for the small Society where so few have to do so much to get the show running, and where so little money has to go so far. This means that the greater part of the impedimenta is arrived at by " Do it yourself ".

It is this type of effort to which guidance is of golden value and it is this guidance that Harald Melville conveys in this publication, for he covers every aspect that the amateur is likely to meet. He has a pleasant way of ramming his points home, by referring to episodes in his long career in the Theatre, which emphasises the point he is making. To me this is an excellent method for instilling in the reader's memory the particular point. The example, even if it is ancient history, will be remembered far easier than the plain statement of facts. I am **greatly impressed by the quality of the** illustrations and the extremely fine line diagrams and drawings. Mr. Melville mentions in his introduction the measure of the word " amateur " which in some people's minds get confused with the word " amateurish ". The latter implies lack of doing anything well, whilst the former strictly means doing something without personal gain. This is an important point, and I am sure that if every Dramatic Society were to possess this book and employ the principles Mr. Melville has laid down, they will never be accused of being amateurish.

I must however disagree with him on one very important point. In the section on Stage Lighting, he describes the method of additive colour mixing and its use on sky cloths and cycloramas. He does infer that this method should be used in Battens and Footlights used for lighting other positions of the acting area; at least it appears to read that way. The method should be confined to the lighting of the cyclorama and sky cloths. It is quite unsuitable for any other purpose in the Theatre. Colour used in either Battens or Footlights should be confined to the pastel shades. The use of what Melville describes as Primary colours will if two or more are used at full intensity, produce prismatic colour to the edge of all shadows.

To finalise, this is a book that has long been wanted, with the various sections of Stage Practice under one cover. Its value to the amateur (and the professional) is outstanding and it should be in the library of every Amateur Society.

L. G. Applebee

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