TABS

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

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The above will be at 6.30 p.m. in the Head Office Theatre each day. Entrance to the Theatre is at 29 King Street, W.C.2, from 6.15 p.m.

Those wishing to attend should apply in writing as early as possible to Head Office, 29 King Street, W.C.2, marking the letter "Demonstration".

We are grateful to Miss Norah Lambourne for the opportunity to repeat her lecture of last spring. This proved very popular and taxed our theatre capacity with the result that many had to be disappointed.

A new lecture this season is that to be given by Dr. Richard Southern. This lecture will carry further and in more detail the subject of the fabulous new theatre building in Germany and elsewhere introduced to our readers in the last issue of TABS.

Dr. Southern is this country's best-known authority and author

on theatre planning and building. He will make a selection from his unique and all embracing collection of photographs and plans. These will be projected on the screen for him to describe and comment upon.

Correspondence

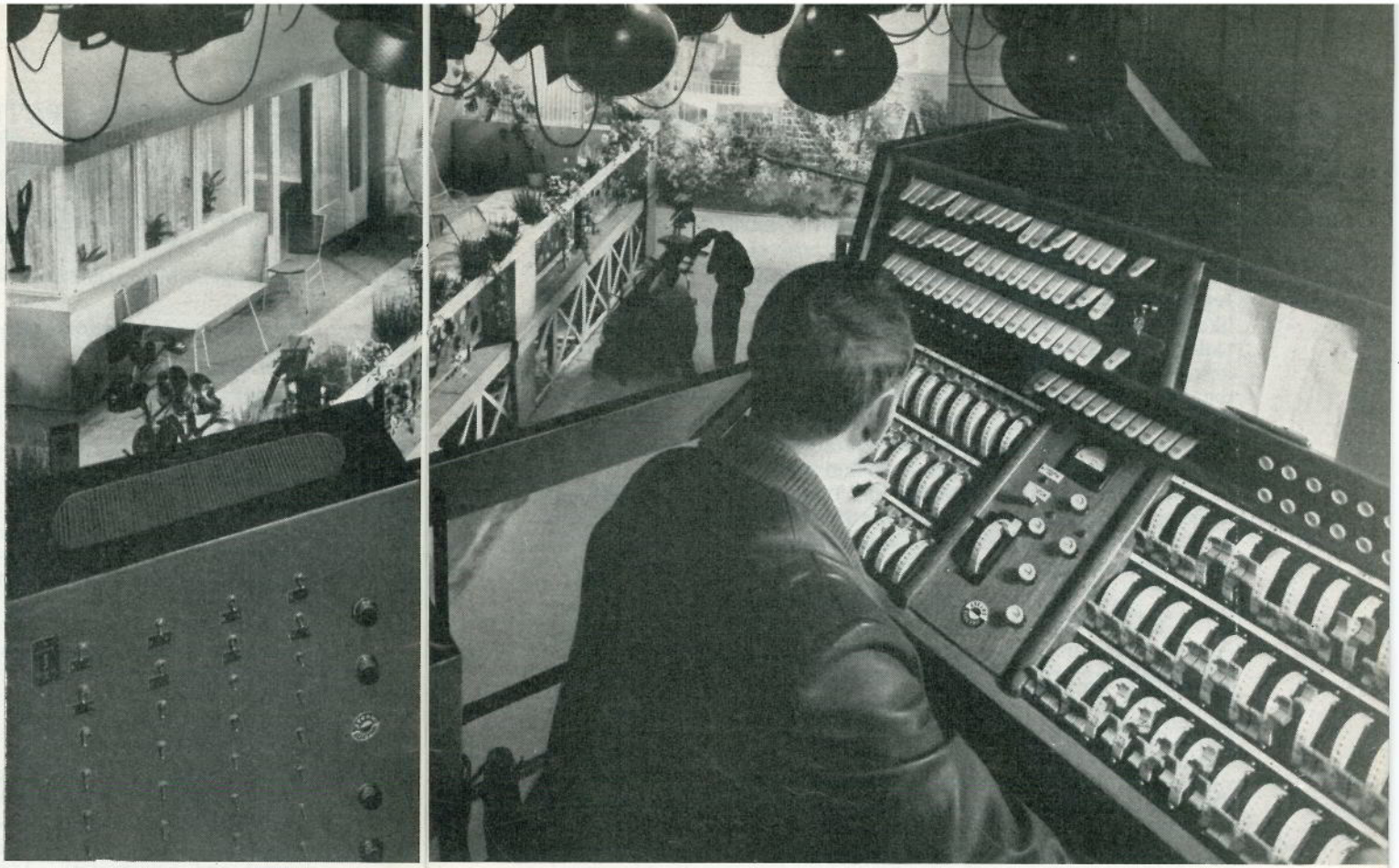
We welcome the opportunity to publish letters which pick up controversial points in our articles. We are endeavouring to introduce new authors but inevitably there are two regular and prolific authors, one from the North, the other from London, who shall be nameless, who tend to occupy a disproportionate amount of space. If you do not want these two pundits to get away unchallenged with everything they put on paper, here is your chance to put your point of view, as Charles Brewer has done in this issue.

We would welcome also letters of general interest within the peculiar orbit of " TABS ", as the only journal in Britain, perhaps anywhere, devoted to stage lighting and all that springs therefrom. In addition to letters for publication we welcome your comments and criticism. Praise, when due, is rather pleasant as well.

Television

" TABS " is, of course, published in the interests of the theatre, particularly the amateur theatre, and we feel that television should take but little place in it. However, technically the theatre has benefitted due to the intensive use of our lighting controls in television studios. And those who are interested in switchboards will welcome news of them.

We derive particular satisfaction from the completion of the new studio for Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Cologne. The interest lies in the fact that the British equipment supplied under our auspices is the auxiliary production equipment: — lighting control, patching panel, lantern suspension hoists and lanterns. The cameras and the associated apparatus, transmitters etc., are German. It is in fact this lesser-known side of television production which



View of new Cologne Television Studio showing operator at the Strand lighting control with a scene set in the background.

enables one to assess the scale and up-to-dateness of production technique.

Television studio production usually begins on the assumption that the methods of the cinema studio will suffice when it comes to lighting. These methods are archaic not as regards the lanterns themselves but as regards rigging and electrical control. Nothing resembling the centralised switchboards common in some form or other in the theatre virtually since the first use of electricity, at the Savoy Theatre in 1881, exists. Quick rig and strike of television lighting layouts, everyone of which is certain to be different from its successors and predecessors, becomes essential. To this end, a system of short motorised suspension bars each with four outlets first introduced by the B.B.C. at Riverside is commonly preferred. The large number of circuits involved requires inevitably some way

of selecting just those required for today's production and thereby keeping the number of control ways (channels) within reasonable limits. The switch and dimmer controls follow the lines of those to be found in any of the larger theatres. These will be familiar to those who have read our recent series on dimmers and lighting control.*

A Tragedy of Errors

As all too many have pointed out, our printer, or that is who we like to convince ourselves was at fault, went mad over the captions to Figs. 5 and 6 on pages 16, 17 and 19 in our last issue. However, it seems unlikely that anyone can be suffering under the delusion that our centre spread of a German stage is the switchboard in the same theatre. Less obvious is a slip on page 30 where " Dai " became " Dia " and whereas lots of *kind* friends pointed out the first fault, it was left to your editor to find the latter.

While on the subject of the *mêlée*, we should like to acknowledge the photographs, Fig. 6, page 19, as by courtesy of Siemens-Schuckertwerke AG Erlangen and straigten out the caption to cover *eight* presets instead of *four* as stated.

A Reply to Mr. Edward Kook

Mr. Garten whose article appears on the next page was born in Austria, lived in Germany working as a playwright and dramatic critic. He has been in England since before the war as a teacher and writer, and has produced school plays in Oxford. He has written two books on German playwrights, Gerhart Hauptmann and Georg Kaiser.

The Illuminating Engineering Society

The Colour Music items in our spring programme, although open to any applicant, have been included as Strand Electric's contribution to the above Society's Golden Jubilee Year (1959). Colour music, or at any rate, the " lighting-ballet " form we subscribe to, illustrates lighting as an art requiring the eye and hand of the artist. This art is, however, absolutely dependent on engineering and this may be said of all artificial lighting. The existence of a society, which is a meeting place for and gives authority to engineers qualified in the specialist but wide field of illumination, is of paramount importance even to ourselves, who practise mainly on the lunatic fringe—lighting for theatre and television—for entertainment. We congratulate " our " society on attaining their first fifty years.

The Flying Dutchman

We would like to draw our readers' attention to the new production of this opera by the Sadler's Wells Co., which is an outstanding example of the proper use of optical effects. We hope to carry an article on these effects in our next issue.

* See " TABS " Vol. 13, No. 3; Vol. 14, Nos. 1 and 3; Vol. 15, Nos. 1, 2 and 3; and Vol. 16, No. 1. Back numbers of the above are available on request but Vol. 15, No. 2, is out of print.

THE GERMAN THEATRE—A REPLY

by H. F. Garten

I read with interest Mr. Edward F. Kook's account of his recent tour of German theatres, admiring his expert knowledge of stage equipment, general lay-out, and technicalities of every kind. But I disagree with his introductory remarks about the lack of artistic freedom in the German theatre, due to its dependence on state or municipal subsidies. My own impressions are very different.

My life as a theatre-goer is fairly evenly divided into twenty years of German, and twenty years of English theatre. I am thus in a position to make some comparisons. There is no doubt a fundamental difference between the two.

Mr. Kook notes with regret that " revivals only were performed ". To support this view he remarks: " What I was seeing and hearing were the operas of Wagner, Verdi, Puccini only." The example is not a happy one, for the operatic repertoire all over the world is conservative, concentrating as it does on a comparatively narrow range of familiar works. Moreover, many German opera houses are usually far more enterprising than, say, the New York Metropolitan, since they offer a fair number of modern and unconventional works.

However, it is certainly true that the German playhouses show a far greater number of " revivals ". It may be said that in Germany the basic function of the theatre is different from that in other Western countries. While in this country, as in America, a "revival" is usually considered a regrettable stop-gap, and the performance of " new plays " is the prime ambition of every playhouse, the German theatre sees its main task in the constant renewal of the great drama of all periods and nations. A student of drama in this country may spend a lifetime without ever seeing one of the masterpieces (with the exception of Shakespeare and an occasional Chekhov) on the living stage. The craving of managers, critics, and public alike for " new plays " is, in my opinion, the curse of the English theatre. Since not more than two or three really worth-while plays are written and performed in any year, the rest must necessarily be of inferior quality. This leads to a sad lowering of standards, as far as the value of the plays is concerned. How many of the plays one sees performed day-in day-out would one wish ever to see again? How many of the public know, or even care, who is the author of the play they see performed (unless it is by one of the two or three who have made their name)?

I have no doubt that the general standard of acting in England is of a higher quality than in Germany. But the use these actors are put to is greatly inferior. The Germans go to the theatre as we go to a concert—not merely to be entertained but to have an artistic and emotional experience. They take drama as an art-form as seriously as we take music. And who would dream of filling our concert halls with nothing but " new " music?

It would, however, be wrong to assume that the German predilection for " classical " drama closes their minds to modern works. On the contrary. The important plays of modern authors—German and non-German—appear as a rule much sooner on the German stage than on ours. The most recent works of Cocteau, Sartre, Camus, Anouilh, hardly known by name in this country, have been staged in the German theatre; the same applies to the latest works of Tennessee Williams and the last plays of O'Neill, which only now are finding their way on to the English stage. Many of these find a wider echo in Germany than in their country of origin—as, for instance, the plays by Thornton Wilder.

This keen interest in serious drama is deeply ingrained in the German character. But it can only be met by a theatre financially stabilised by regular subsidies. And this brings me to the second point.

Mr. Kook implies that a subsidised theatre must lack " the completely free atmosphere " he finds in England and America. This is certainly true of a totalitarian state, such as Eastern Germany and the other communist countries, where a strict political censorship is imposed on all cultural activities. But it does not apply to a liberal society such as Western Germany. To my knowledge, no " censorship " or " restrictions " are attached to the generous subsidies granted to most German playhouses. I would venture to say that, on the contrary, the comparative security of their financial basis gives these theatres a far wider scope in their artistic work, detaching them, to some extent, from the hand-to-mouth existence of the commercial theatre. I should think that the hard dictate of the box-office imposes far greater restrictions on creative freedom and experiment—as both the London and the New York theatres know only too well.

It is certainly true that at the moment Germany is sadly lacking in new playwrights. But this is in no way due to the financial system of the theatres. On the contrary—every promising new talent finds greater support in a theatre not entirely dependent on the fluctuations of its box-office takings.

In order not to seem biased, let me add that Germany has, on the other hand, no amateur theatre comparable to the English. I have often wondered why this should be so. I believe that the English (strange as this may seem) are as a nation more naturally gifted for play-acting than the Germans (perhaps as compensation for their proverbial restraint in normal life). This is certainly an invaluable asset of the English theatre. But I would wish that our amateur theatres would show greater enterprise in their choice of plays and not content themselves with the repetition of well-proved " hits " and an arbitrary pick from those endless lists of " 3 m., 4 w." Then, and only then, could they make up for what our commercial theatre so sadly neglects—the promotion of great drama, old and new, from every corner of the world.

GOLDEN LEGEND AT GLOUCESTER

A letter from Charles Brewer the Producer

I was very interested to read Mr. Frederick Bentham's article *Son et Lumière Again* (Tabs, September 1958) and it is most impertinent of me to cross swords with someone of his experience, as I hope you will let me do, on certain of his arguments and contentions. After thirty-two years of radio-writing and producing I am probably prejudiced in favour of the ear, while he perhaps leans towards the eye.

His ideals as expressed on page twenty-five are excellent; and I am glad that in paragraph six he allows that events which took place elsewhere than in the backcloth should sometimes be included. But I do not necessarily agree that these should be covered by the narrator. In the first place, the strongest impression I took away with me after seeing Greenwich in 1957 was that not one single historical personage portrayed in the programme aroused my sympathy, horror, amusement, or any emotional reaction whatever. This was due to the fact that immediately one began to be interested in the story of the building and its characters the scene cut, in order that the lighting should not remain static. In fact, I came away feeling that I could not care less about Greenwich and its history. That may have been because Greenwich, as Mr. Bentham rightly says, was the last site that should ever have been chosen for *Son et Lumière*. But if *Son et Lumière* is to " evoke the emotions locked up by history in a building or locale " (Mr. Bentham's own definition), then one must allow the personalities who have toiled, suffered or died to make that building what it is to arouse the sympathy of the audience—human calling to human. One cannot achieve it alone by music, coloured lighting and a Fitzpatrick Travelogue.

There were two instances of this at Gloucester, where Mr. Bentham says there was too much speech. Most of the beauties of the Cathedral are the direct outcome of the prosperity resulting from pilgrimages to the tomb of Edward II murdered at Berkeley Castle. I was pressed to restrict this sequence to a dinner given to the King in the Cathedral precincts and his eventual funeral. The result would have been complete audience disinterest in the man and what his death produced, no matter how strenuously Valentine Dyall (the narrator) might have attempted to whip up horror in the minds of the audience. Edward II was a "poor type", but I am sure that my insistence on including a brief extract from Christopher Marlowe's dungeon murder scene in *Edward II* which underlined the horror and physical misery of the conditions in which the poor wretch was kept and the slimy duplicity of Lightborn, one of the assassins, did mean something to that section of the audience which wished to use its intelligence—even if the only accompanying effect

was the lightning of a thunderstorm. Again, in the Martyrdom of Bishop Hooper, I was pressed to restrict this to the final tragedy at the stake near the Cathedral (with the reflected flames on the Cathedral tower). This would have left the sympathy of the audience only partly aroused, whereas the brow-beating in London by his fellow-bishops and the repeated pressure brought upon him to recant and surrender his religious beliefs, with only a faint blue fabric backcloth, " evoked the emotions locked up by history " in a far more adequate manner than lighting and music alone could have done.

To ensure that the dramatic essential of Climax attains its full impact—and to this I agree that lighting and music can contribute a very great deal—one must have to precede it those other dramatic qualities of Conflict and Suspense which only the inter-play of words can provide.

I have a feeling that much more use could be made in *Son et Lumière* of *vocal* music (perhaps Mr. Bentham would support this —he unconsciously suggests his agreement with his reference to Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Handel's *Messiah*, and his approval of our final sequence at Gloucester from " I know that my Redeemer liveth ", representing the religious recovery after the Civil War, to the final heartfelt uplift of the Hallelujah Chorus). The most important point, however, would have to be that the lyric or libretto should continue the story or set a mood in more pronounced fashion than orchestral music.

I was surprised to learn from Mr. Bentham that the *Unfinished Symphony* " did not seem happy in a cathedral close "—and that, after many years of Three Choirs Festivals and numerous Hallé, Bournemouth, Birmingham and London Symphony orchestral concerts in the Nave of the Cathedral. The *Unfinished* has been performed several times in the Cathedrals at Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford (Three Choirs) besides many other works by Schubert.

Mr. Bentham was of course perfectly right to criticise the leaving-on of the lights after the final peal of bells had ceased. After reading his criticism we introduced an effective quick fade of all lighting. I feel the " black-out " must be very sparingly used. To me, it brings back a strong smell of the black-out at the end of a frequently unfunny revue sketch.

But, Mr. Bentham, Heaven forbid that television should ever lay its penny peep-show paws on *Son et Lumière*, whether external or internal. I can think of nothing more dreadful than to try to squeeze Gloucester Cathedral, whether the outside or inside, into a 21-inch monochrome goggle-box. The climax of any *Son et Lumière* production should be the provision of a spectacle that completely dwarfs and over-awes the audience, an illuminated backcloth—if externally, stretching upwards to the stars—emphasising the dignity and wonder of the building and instilling a sense of puny, personal insignificance in those who behold it.

AMERICA SAW US

by William Bundy

William Bundy, who is Stage Director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, contributes some notes on the tour of the Royal Ballet in the United States, 1957/58. It will probably be a revelation to read of the difficulties behind scenes of touring a company even as distinguished as the Royal Ballet. Mr. Bundy has had a wide range of experience in the theatre, Old Vic, H. M. Tennent etc., before joining the Royal Opera House where he was first Chief Electrician, then Stage Manager of the Royal Ballet before his present post which covers all technical control of that famous stage. Incidentally, he spent some time with Strand Electric and was in fact the supervising engineer for Strand's first full preset control, the Wood electronic system, in the National Theatre, Iceland.

During the early part of 1957, I was concerned as Chief Electrician in preparing electrical equipment to be taken from the Royal Opera House for a twenty-one-week tour of America by the Royal Ballet Company. At the end of June, nine weeks before the opening night at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, I was asked if I would go with the tour as Stage Director. This was a great surprise, but a chance of gaining enormous experience. Some of this experience I would like to tell you about in this article.

The tour was planned to play five full length (three or four acts) ballets and eight one act ballets in eighteen cities during the twenty-one weeks. After the New York Season the route would be through the Eastern Seaboard States, the Middle West, Texas, California, Canada, back across the Middle West to Chicago into Canada, then back into the U.S.A. and finally to finish in Montreal on January 24th this year. The length of time spent in each town varied from five weeks (New York), three weeks (Chicago), ten days (each Los Angeles and San Francisco) to between three and seven days each in the other fourteen towns.

The first major problem was that of packing and shipping forty-five tons (about 17,500 cubic feet), of scenery, props and about 1,400 costumes from the Royal Opera House to the Metropolitan Opera House. The 150 sixty-foot-long backcloths, cutcloths and borders had to be folded into forty foot, rolled and wrapped in waterproof covers. The 24′ × 8′ flats were nailed face-to-face to protect the painted surfaces. The costumes, wigs, shoes, props and electrical equipment were packed into eight container vans. The electrical equipment, by the way, did not include any actual lighting equipment, but was mainly electrical props such as chandeliers. We planned to use the Met. equipment in New York and for the tour hire everything except Cinemoid, which we took out.

Before shipping, every piece of scenery had to be labelled with a number and the props, costumes etc., down to the last shoe, wig or sheet of colour, listed and valued for the innumerable cus-

toms inventories needed in London, U.S.A. and Canada. Although now after three American tours and numerous European tours, the R.O.H. organisation has had a great deal of experience in the work involved in shipping out everything for a foreign tour, it is still a very major operation, complicated by the fact that most of the work has to be done while the stage and staff of the R.O.H. is occupied by rehearsals and performances of a heavy combined Opera and Ballet Season.

During late July and early August, the complete shipment was cleared through Customs and sent to London Docks, only to become involved in a dock strike after about half had been embarked. To get the remaining half to New York in time, we had to take it to Liverpool by road for shipping on the Britannia. Needless to say, during all this complicated movement by road it rained, and we found on unpacking that some cloths and flats had to be touched up in the Met. because of water stains. The seven days delay in the arrival of the second shipments threw the first week's rehearsal schedule badly out of gear.

After a short London season, the ninety-six members of the company, including the ten on the staff, flew to New York. There we were joined by the ten American technicians and the orchestra which would tour with us, making our total strength about 160.

After a week's rehearsal in New York, during which most of the damaged sets were repaired, we opened what became a very successful four weeks season. The Metropolitan Opera House felt in many ways very familiar. The stage and production organisation is very similar to the R.O.H. The electrical layout again was similar to Covent Garden, with the one main lighting bridge, mobile perch spots and Fly Gallery spots. The switchboard at first seemed very complicated. It is an early reactor board, with two presets. The complications came during lighting rehearsals, but after getting used to laying out the equipment to suit the presets, it became easier, and the performances were very smooth.

During this New York season we began to plan the rest of the tour, the first job being the rail-roading. This involved five different railroad companies, and at a very long and tedious meeting in New York with all the railroads we planned the movement of our special train with its nine seventy-foot scenery trucks, five sleeping coaches, and a dining car from New York through to the end of the tour in Montreal. This, by the way, covered planning even the number of breakfasts to be served during each move.

These arrangements were most admirably kept all through the tour and even under the worst weather conditions.

Arrangements also had to be made for the hire of the electrical equipment for the tour. We had to take everything except the battens and footlights for all the dates, except San Francisco and Chicago which were the only true theatres where we played. The rest of the places were cinemas, music auditoriums, two ice-rinks and a very peculiar American institution known as the Shrine

Post American Tour! The latest full length ballet, **Ondine,** *Act 2. Ship leaving harbour. This set is wrecked at the end of the Act. Photo courtesy The Covent Garden Opera.*

Temples. All the places—at least most of them—were between 3,000 and 6,000 capacity and could also accommodate our full size scenery. For lighting apparatus we planned two spot bars, two bommerangs, all the equipment used on the stage, switchboard and two following arcs. For all the spot bars, booms and stage spots we decided on the American Elipsoidal spot 750W. This seemed the most versatile small unit to use and it obviously would be simpler to use one type of unit throughout. It was not 100 per cent. satisfactory for the high key side lighting for which I had always used pageant lanterns, but at least it was not too bulky. The other snag was that it very quickly went out of alignment and we seemed to waste a lot of time realigning all the pipe lanterns at each date.

Whilst we were in New York we received the bad news that the Boston Opera House was condemned—which was to be our next date. Rather than cancel the week we agreed to play at the Leows State Cinema. This was a nightmare as we were the first stage show to play there in twenty-two years. The stage was thirty-one feet deep and the O.P. wall tapered from front to back, making it possible to hang a sixty-foot border in front and only forty-foot

backcloths. Naturally there were no counterweights and all the hemp lines had to be renewed. As they were new it was very difficult to keep any cloths trimmed level. With only sufficient dressing rooms in the theatre to squash the girl dancers into, all the male dancers dressed on the stage of a classical repertory theatre next door, came down a fire escape through a public passage way, and in through the stage door. We stood packing cases and bits of scenery in the alley-ways under waterproof covers and hauled the big sets in and out as we needed them. It rained and rained, and on the whole, this was a most ghastly week.

After Boston, the Music Hall, Philadelphia—a large hemp line house where we played in six days three full and eight short ballets, with two matinees thrown in. My memory of these is of moving scenery in and out of the theatre night and day—once more in the rain.

Then Washington, and another thirty-four-foot deep cinema stage with the back of the stage cluttered with enormous speaker horns. Two memories of Washington—finding the stage hands on point duty; they were nearly all policemen by day and stage hands at night. Then the trailer extension fitted to the lorry, which enabled our cloths to be transported at sixty-foot, broke its coupling in the middle of an early morning trip to the railway station, and broke most of the top and bottom battens in the cloths as well.

Next the Cincinatti Music Hall, where we arrived at midnight to find a complete concert set—three grand pianos and the dirt of ages on the stage. There wasn't enough room to bring in one basket, let alone all the sets, props and costumes of *Sleeping Beauty, Lac des Cygnes* and *Coppelia*. The dressing rooms were full of double basses, tymps and all sorts of musical instruments—cases belonging to the local symphony orchestra. We had to have all this removed before we could play our three nights there. I suppose my " all black decor " hotel room there could have coloured my memories of Cincinatti.

St. Louis Neil Auditorium was an enormous building with two stages divided by a steel curtain. On the large stage the Royal Ballet danced *Sleeping Beauty* whilst in the larger auditorium behind the steel curtain thousands were yelling their heads off at "All Star Wrestling "—both male and female. St. Louis was very pleasant although the scenery had to be brought up three storeys by lift from the lorries which could drive straight into the basement.

Then Texas, where even the rain was bigger than anywhere else. First Dallas, where one of the stage hands wanted to take me on a 250 mile round trip just to eat the best steak in Texas. Then we went on to Houston where again there were twin auditoriums in the same building and I could see through the window of the iron door and watch the circus instead of *Swan Lake*. Although we travelled across Texas and stayed in two towns, I was very disappointed not to see either a steer, cowboy or an oil well.

On then by a two day and night train journey to Los Angeles

and the Shrine Auditorium with a proscenium opening of 100 feet and a deputy sheriff as the Stage Door Keeper. The most stringent fire precautions I've ever known were carried out here and a lot of our sets had to be resprayed with a fire proofing mixture.

Next San Francisco—a most fascinating and beautiful city with its lavishly equipped Opera House and most efficient staff. Here it was a great joy to play in a real theatre again and have time to repair some of the damaged scenery and to see and enjoy this most interesting city.

Seattle, our next date, was very rough and I can remember a very cold, enormous arena with a tiny stage built at one end. I have clearer memories of drinking very exotic drinks in a Chinese bar in my hotel. Maybe drinking " Breath of the Western Wind " is the reason I cannot remember much of the theatre.

For our first crossing into Canada we went on to Vancouver to what used to be a variety theatre now converted to the Orpheus Cinema. This is a tiny stage, but large auditorium. The stage has been spoiled by installing a curved Cinemascope screen which blocked off the first six feet of the grid. The orchestra pit was also tiny and part of our orchestra over-flowed into the centre and end aisles. I had sympathy for one poor soul sitting in full evening dress on the end seat with the tympanist practically playing in her lap. Another $2\frac{1}{2}$ day train ride brought the company to Minneapolis and the Northrup Auditorium, this being on the University Campus about four miles out of the city. This was a bitterly cold stay—twelve degrees below zero—and the lanterns were too cold to handle after being brought in from the unheated railway trucks to the theatre.

After Minneapolis we went on to Chicago to play a three weeks season over Christmas and the New Year. This was the third and last true theatre we played on the whole tour. The stage is well equipped and it was possible to drive the lorry with scenery on to the stage and unload. Again, as in New York, we could find the necessary workshops to repair and repaint the most badly damaged pieces of scenery. The peculiar feature of this stage is its grid which is 120 feet high. This could be rather tricky because if a cloth is taken up or lowered too fast, the swinging forward and backward is very difficult to steady and with counterweight rods on nine inch centres, very bad foul-ups can happen.

After Christmas we began to feel that the end of the tour was in sight, and as we had finished playing two of the full-length ballets and two small ones, we packed these and shipped them home.

After Chicago we were to play the most difficult dates and we could also expect the worst weather of the tour, but only three weeks and four dates remained. First came Detroit and the Masonic Temple. This just brings to mind a back alley behind the theatre, full of rats and hoisting all the flats two storeys up by block and tackle, and breaking a lot of the rails in them.

Toronto, the second Canadian town we played to, was my

first experience of an ice-rink. A stage had been built on the ice at one end and curtained off from the 6,000 remaining seats by some very thin material. Here two things are remembered—removing a window so that we could get the cloths onto the stage, and all the girls dressing in a tent erected behind the stage. It was a great thrill, however, to see on each of the three nights we played there that the house was absolutely full.

Next, back into the U.S.A. to play Cleveland. Here once again we had the two stages divided by a steel curtain, but this time no circus or wrestling. We used the larger auditorium for storage. After Cleveland back to Canada to the Forum Montreal, the second ice-rink. Again a stage had been built up on the ice very similar to Toronto, but somehow this was much colder. For the first time I wore fur-lined boots for a lighting rehearsal. Here, each night after the performance we packed the show for shipping home and from here the company flew home.

I went back to New York to complete the shipping back to England and followed the company by air a week later, only to arrive back to find London Airport closed by fog. My plane was diverted to Prestwick, and I arrived twenty-four hours later by train.

A tour of this scale is probably the hardest work one has to do, but it is the most valuable and fascinating experience. The difficulties of trying to stage big productions in places not designed or equipped as theatres are enormous, but the sense of achievement after completing it is tremendous.

I didn't see much of America, except for hotels, trains and theatres, but I met and worked with a lot of people I liked, and hope to go back and see them again one day.

* * *

SPOTLIGHTING

by William Lorraine

Most people today are quite used to seeing beams of light converging on to the stage from all angles. Spotlighting, in recent years, has become the basis of all stage lighting, be it amateur or professional. There are varying opinions and some producers prefer to light where possible without the beams of light being apparent, but the majority of theatregoers seem to accept the intrusion as an integral part of the performance. However, I do feel great care should be exercised when using spot lanterns at the perch position, especially when coloured or black return wings are used. The beam should be so directed and masked that it does not strike the masking flats. If it does it can be most annoying to the audience as, however concentrated our interest is in the play, stray light hitting a wing piece does draw attention away from the stage. I mention the perch particularly as possibly this position is the worst offender, but Front of House lanterns and in fact any spot lanterns should be so directed as to serve their purpose without their beams being unnecessarily conspicuous.

A small stage in New Zealand showing spots concealed in auditorium ceiling and spots with compartment battens over the stage.

For many years scenes were lit very readily, using flood type apparatus (footlights and battens). Unfortunately, as this type of equipment is non-directional, the actual scenery received equivalent illumination to that on the artists. It is also more difficult to produce a gradation of mood, especially when lighting interior scenes. Today it is usual to find in the Front of House a number of spot lanterns which, when carefully set, cover the whole of the down-stage area, and in fact replace the lighting previously achieved by the footlights. The Front of House positions are among the most important, if not the most important lighting positions in the theatre. Spot lanterns placed here can cover practically the whole of the stage, but great care should be exercised when deciding on the physical positions. Too much direct front light has a tendency to flatten the ultimate effect especially if it should be placed too horizontally. If some of the equipment is placed to the sides of the theatre auditorium, cross lighting is possible, which considerably enhances the overall stage picture.

Today, F.O.H. lighting is vitally important as the tendency in production is to move the action down stage, the actors eventually being placed so far down stage that it is impossible to light them with any other apparatus. By moving the acting area down stage the artists are usually so far down stage of the No. 1 Spot Batten position that the only lighting possible must come from the F.O.H. There is still the producer who likes footlights (and for very specific purposes I agree) but they only produce the most unpleasant rising shadows

Part of Auditorium at Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, showing F.O.H. Spotlight positions.

on the artists' faces and light admirably the ceiling of the set. The more usual and correct type of Front of House lantern is the controlled beam mirror spot, fitted with adjustable shutters to enable the lanterns to be set to cut off unwanted stray light; for instance, it is possible, by carefully setting the shutters, to produce a straight cut-off on both the horizontal forestage and the vertical proscenium opening. When using the shuttered cut-off, great care should be exercised to set them to overlap, as otherwise dark areas may appear as an artist crosses the stage; i.e. the intensity would fall off as the artist moved out of one beam before walking into the next. The easiest way to overcome this is to get someone to slowly walk across the stage checking carefully that he is covered and does not drop into unwanted shadow.

Moving up stage we come to the No. 1 Spot Bar position, which should be used specifically for the stage acting area and suspended as far down stage as is possible. Should you be using a No. 1 compartment type Batten, the spot lanterns should be suspended immediately above, thereby saving as much space as is possible also, considerably assisting masking problems. From this position you should be able to completely cover the whole action taking place on the stage. The English theatre has for many years used spot lanterns fitted with plano convex lens giving permanently hard edge, but in recent years you will find a number of producers using a frost medium, together with their chosen colour to soften the edge. Today, the use of Fresnel lenses is becoming more and more popular. By using spot lanterns with soft edge beams a more even gradation of lighting is possible, for instance, a scene lit to represent daylight needs reasonably even distribution all over the stage. By this I do not mean even intensity

all over, but that the beams of the various spot lanterns merge into one another and, as with the F.O.H. lanterns, you want to avoid any dark gaps as an actor moves from one to another unless, of course, specific shadow areas are necessary for dramatic effect.

By the way, never use a frost on a mirror spot otherwise you lose, entirely, the effect of the shutters. A diffuser ***glass*** is essential when the edges of the beam must be softened.

Front of House and No. 1 Spot Batten are the basis of all good lighting in the theatre, but of course many other positions are required. Perches are useful for lighting that awkward area down stage which cannot always be covered from the spot batten or F.O.H. Then there are booms for cross lighting (but do keep the lanterns reasonably high, the lowest lantern at best 6 ft. from stage level), effects lighting, sunlight, moonlight, etc., etc., also a fairly recent innovation " Back Lighting ", i.e. lighting from up stage to down stage.

However much or little apparatus is at your disposal, it is absolutely vital that the equipment is maintained and above all cleaned regularly to obtain good results. It is NOT necessary to have dozens of spot lanterns to light a play, a few can achieve excellent results if used with thought and care, and remember a **lantern needs to have its spread (beam angle) adjusted to give** the results that the lantern is capable of. Don't just switch it on. Use it; make it do as *you* wish.

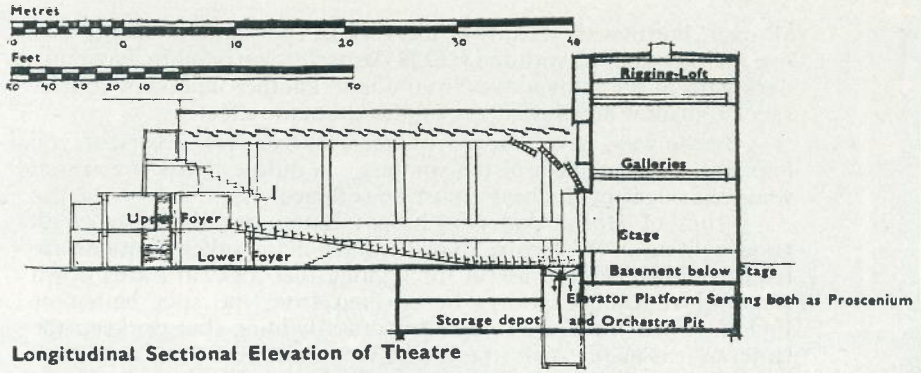
* * *

A NEW THEATRE IN COPENHAGEN

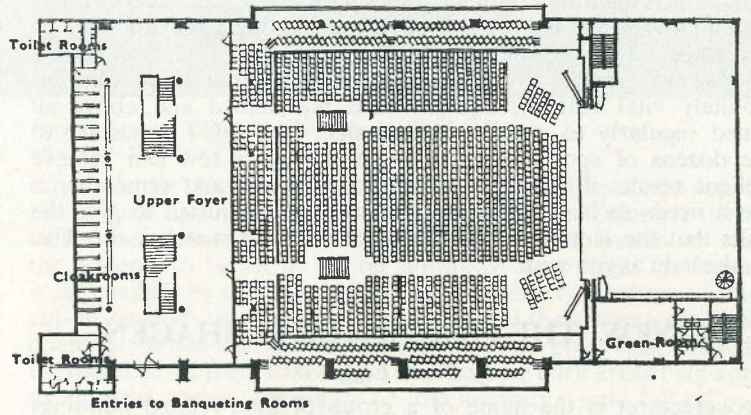
by Brian Legge

Falkonercentret is the name of a group of inter-related buildings consisting of a 17-storey first-class hotel, a cinema, a commercial school, shops, offices, and a theatre for which Strand have recently supplied the stage lighting equipment and remote lighting control.

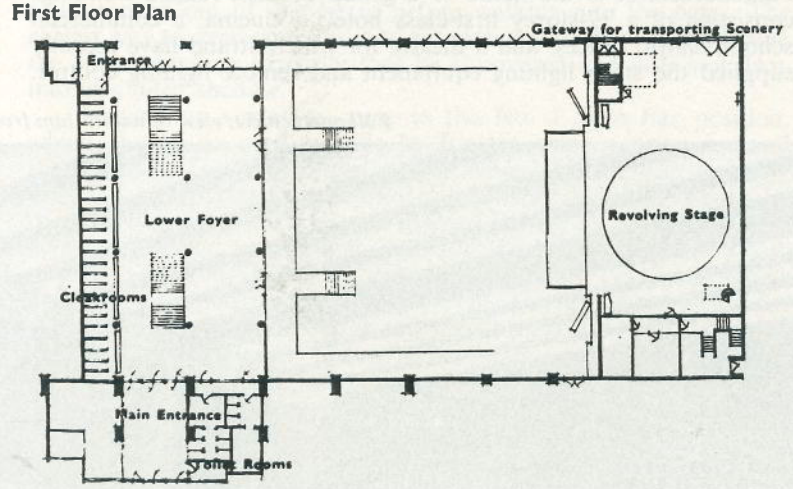
Falkonercentret, view of auditorium from stage.



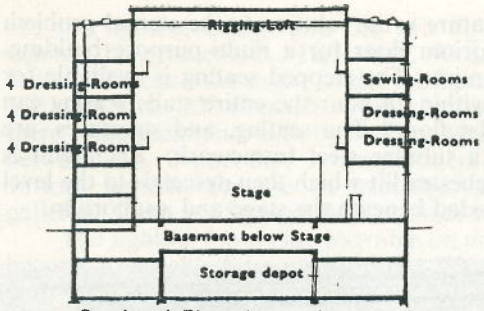
Longitudinal Sectional Elevation of Theatre



First Floor Plan



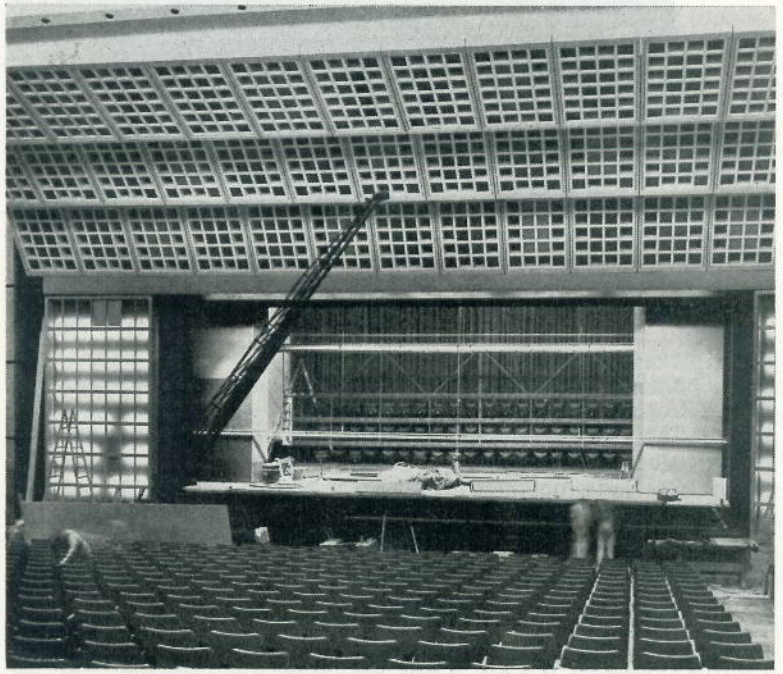
Ground Floor Plan



Sectional Elevation of Stage-building

The whole project is privately financed in contrast to the majority of other large theatres in Scandinavia which receive State aid.

The theatre seats over 2,000 and is the largest in Copenhagen. The auditorium can also be used for exhibitions, etc. The proscenium opening is 50 ft. wide and 20 ft. high with a stage depth of 44 ft. The stage is provided with a 39 ft. diameter revolving stage and over 50 sets of counterweighted scenery lines. There is a large orchestra lift which can be raised to stage level to provide a forestage of 10 ft.



Falkonercentret, view of proscenium before completion.

A very interesting feature is the solution to the eternal problem of a raked or flat auditorium floor for a multi-purpose building. Here there is no compromise. The stepped seating is available for stage presentations, but within an hour the entire stalls seating can be removed, leaving a flat floor. The seating, and staircases, are constructed in units on a tubular steel framework. Each unit is wheeled in turn to the orchestra lift which then descends to the level of the storage space provided beneath the stage and auditorium.

System CD/TH/II Control Desk installed at Falkonercentret, Copenhagen.

The 120-way lighting control is the most recent development of the Console-Preset. The control console is situated in its own room at the rear of the circle, giving the operator a perfect view of the stage. Two Dimmer Banks with a mixture of electro-mechanical servo-operated transformer and resistance dimmers are situated below stage level. In addition, the Stage Director is provided with a small panel to enable him to control 14 pre-selected lighting changes for concerts and other presentations not requiring the full facilities of the control desk.

At each side of the auditorium, at high level, there are 12 Extra Long Range Mirror Spots each fitted with remote colour control (Patt.93N./CCU). Over the orchestra/forestage there are Patt. 76 Acting Area lanterns. The next principal lighting positions

are the lighting bridge and the two lighting towers immediately behind the proscenium. Here Patt. 93 and 53 Mirror Spots, and Patt. 58 Pageants are used. Under the lighting bridge are twenty-four 500 watt Patt. 123 Fresnels wired in adjacent pairs to twelve dimmers. The cyclorama is lit by 60 Patt. 49 1,000 watt Floods situated between No. 2 and No. 3 compartment Battens. In addition to various lanterns for use on telescopic stands, and from the fly galleries, there are Sunspot Mirror Arcs at the rear of the circle.

The lighting towers are movable on and off stage, and therefore become a variable false proscenium. The Stage Director, complete with cue board, etc., has what is virtually a small office in the base of the stage left tower.

As a technician I can only regret that some of the 9,000 sq. ft. of foyers was not forfeited for the benefit of increased wing space on stage left, and additional depth to the stage.

Having seen this hall, I cannot help regretting that the place will only be used for touring companies and therefore on most occasions, as I saw, there will be little time for lighting. (Editor.)

* * *

COLOUR MUSIC

Below and on page 24 we print two reviews of the performance played on the Light Console in our demonstration theatre on October 17th. Mr. P. Corry, who writes the first review had, in fact, never seen one of our colour music demonstrations before, whereas Mr. L. Stokes-Roberts, not only knows our pre-war work in this direction well, but also took part from time to time as a member of the Strand Electric. He was, later, Organiser of the *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition, is a Governor of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, and is now Chairman of a group of engineering companies.

Mr. P. Corry writes—

On October 17th in this year of grace, the Demonstration Theatre was occupied by a star performer, an enthusiastic audience and persistent ghosts of the past. Commingled with the music of Tchaikovsky, Wagner and Stravinsky were persuasive echoes from the nineteen-thirties. Frederick Bentham was in reminiscent mood and his performance could, with some justification, have been subtitled "This Was My Life". He looked back to his first fine raptures—they were never careless . . . with a quizzical affection that was almost avuncular. The frontispiece was a slide of the original Light Console, with a youthful Bentham at its keyboard. The console itself had been rescued from a dusty retirement to share the limelight with its creator and its sleek successor. Some members of the audience, for a brief moment of time, were freed from the disturbing consciousness of their expanding girths and greying hairs.

They were grateful for the revival of memories, and it is now only in retrospect that one is able to view the performance with detached appreciation.

As Bentham himself suggested, " Colour Music " does not correctly describe this subtle mating of music and light. The colour is but one medium of expression in a composite translation into visual pattern, not of the music itself, but of the mood of the music, an expression of the emotional and intellectual reactions of a lighting artist to the stimulus of the music.

This performance, always coolly competent, was essentially reflective in its more emotional passages. On occasion, there was an almost adolescent idealism and delicate fantasy when one expected florid sensuousness; and there were rather tentative flashings of too respectful a rhythm, instead of the dramatic boldness that the crashing chords demanded. The mature technician was, I suspect, faithfully recalling the emotions of his immature self, and was not attempting to express the emotions of maturity.

In the finale, that accompanied (or was it " accompanied by ") the first movement of the Tchaikovsky Sixth, maturity took over in its own right. This was a visual conception of mathematical purity, the conception of a technician able to express the factual form in terms of abstract suggestion. And maturity released from a need to evoke emotional memory, performed with uninhibited authority.

Despite all nostalgia, not because of it, the whole performance was a tantalising delight. A delight to see the creator of the Light Console using it, once again, skilfully and sensitively, for the purpose of its creation. Tantalising to realise that his unavoidable pre-occupation with the realities of commerce must continue to deprive us of an overdue extension of his repertoire and artistry. In the absence of which, we are grateful for the recollections, all of which were enthusiastically received by the audience.

The Demonstration Theatre stage lacks space for the fullest freedom of such performances and it would be a joy to witness a new light composition by Bentham with the acreage of the Coliseum stage at his disposal.* That could, in fact, be a justifiable addition to a Command Performance in the Jubilee Year of the Illuminating Engineering Society. Justifiable not only as recognition of lighting's contribution to the art of the theatre, but as entertainment in its own right. The idea is commended to Her Majesty's advisers.

* *This suggestion is technically possible as the photograph on page* 29 *of this issue shows.* (Editor.)

Mr. L. Stokes-Roberts writes—

I do not know if it is a general trait of the British people, but so far as I am concerned it is the rather stupid and, perhaps, farcical things that I remember.

My chief recollection of Colour Music is an event at the *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition, 1939. Here the Strand Electric erected a great tower called the Kaleidacon on which it was possible to

play a series of coloured lights. A well-known organist, Quentin Maclean, was accompanied by Mr. Bear of the Strand Electric on the Light Console. This tower was situated in the middle of a considerable sized pool. On, I think, the second or third day, to the strains of some Venetian music, a gondola was launched and at the same time the music and the lighting commenced. On board was a rather large and well proportioned vocalist. Something must have gone wrong with the works and the gondola sprang a leak. To see this rather large body slowly sinking to the depths of the pool to the accompaniment of Colour Music is a thing which has never left my memory.

It was actually several years previous to this that Frederick Bentham had first conceived the idea of Colour Music. I think that his inspiration was, perhaps, the rather gaudy and garish lighting effects of the cinema in those days. We can all remember those very bright reds, greens and purples which accompanied the playing of the mighty Wurlitzers.

What is Colour Music?

I think to my mind it can best be explained as a ballet of light. In other words, to the accompaniment of music, lights are played in a sequence on a scene. The scene can be curtains, cyclorama or, in fact, any setting one wishes. What must be remembered is that by the alteration of the lighting colours the operator really tries to give his feeling of what the music means in the same way as a choreographer designs a dance.

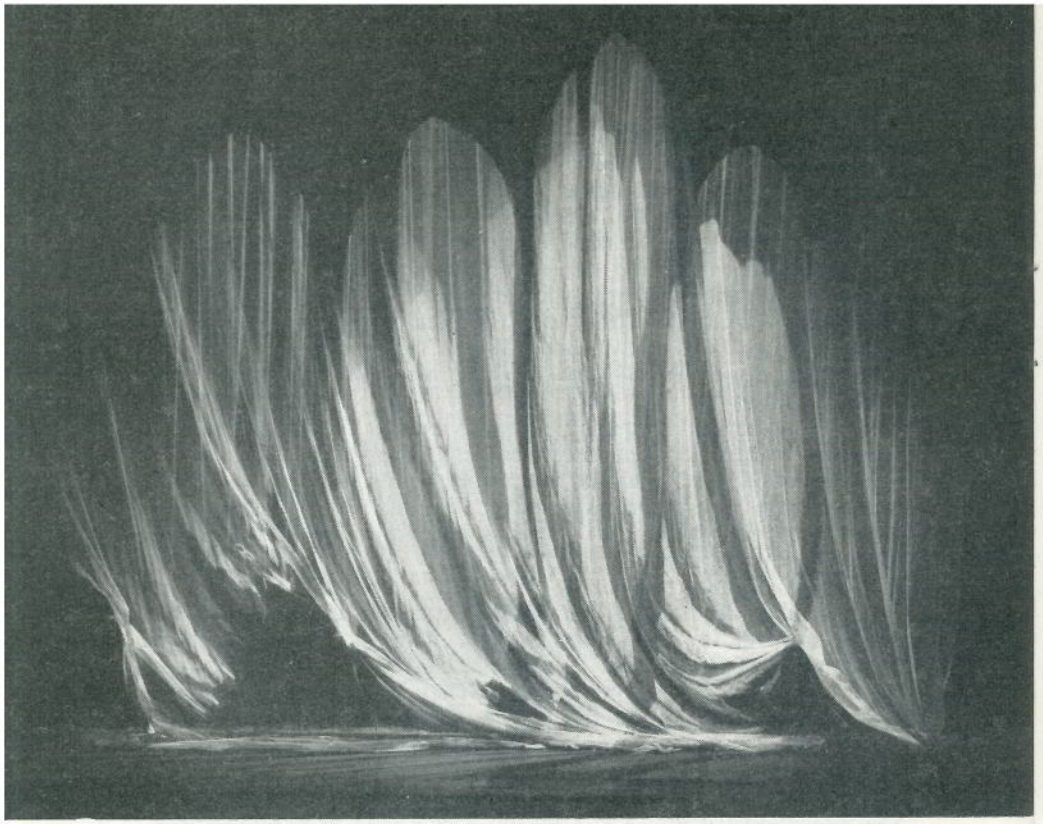
Experiments have, of course, been tried to get a direct linkage between a note of music and a colour on a type of harmonic principle, but these have been a complete failure.

From Frederick Bentham's idea of Colour Music one point is most apparent and that is that even by the most simple arrangements of coloured light it is possible to provide an exciting accompaniment to a great piece of music.

Whereas certain pieces of music merely need an over all change of lighting to provide a theme, on others it is best to link certain instruments and passages to certain lighting effects. This means that some form of plot, rather lighting plot, is necessary. Mr. Bentham's original way of going about this was to score the music in the normal way in bars and under each bar of the music have four other staves where each stave represented a colour. The position of a colour was shown by a graph line covering the graduation of the stave. He now uses magnetic tape to record a running commentary on what he is doing against a background of the music. This acts as a reminder when playing a piece after a lapse of time.

Many experiments were tried out including an attempt at simulating the jazz of those days and a series of baby spots could be almost run up and down or across a pair of tabs in time to the music. Another very successful effect was a method of calling a light from one side of the stage and answering it from the other.

Many demonstrations were given during the late 'thirties, cul-



Gauze setting lit as part of Colour Music sequence.

minating in the Kaleidacon. On the outbreak of war, somewhat naturally, this new art came to an abrupt and sudden halt. The Demonstration Theatre was bombed and the console, itself, was moved to the Palladium where it stayed for many years.

An interesting facet of the war years was the installation of a console and complete lighting equipment at the Lisbon Opera House. Mr. Bentham went out to instal this and due to the war only one opera was presented as there was no other company. To fill the gap for several weeks, Mr. Bentham gave recitals of Colour Music at the Lisbon Opera House. This, in the middle of a world conflict, is something which, I feel, will go down to posterity. Here, again, an amusing incident arose as many of the Portuguese thought that the console was playing the music. To make it quite clear that he was only controlling the lighting, Mr. Bentham arranged to have a record player close to the console and made a great point of selecting the record and handing it to an attendant to put on the turntable before the recital started.

After the war everyone was so busy designing new types of switchboards and carrying out installation work which was long overdue that Colour Music, unfortunately, became rather lost in

the dim and distant past. It was early this year that the idea of once again carrying on this art was conceived. The first recital took place at the King Street theatre on Friday, 17th October, before a full house and a most enthusiastic audience. Many were there, including the writer, who had seen these demonstrations before and there were others who came to try and find out what it was all about. An interesting factor of the recital was that, as Mr. Bentham said, there was nothing new. He had merely taken what he considered a good all round choice of music and settings which had been performed nearly twenty years ago. The opening number was done on gauze curtains as an accompaniment to Wagner and consisted in a slow build up to a mass of different colour which, with the music, then faded to nothing. Pieces showing the effects possible on the Cyclorama and also using projectors were given. The highlight of the evening was the first movement of Tchaikovsky's *Pathetique* Symphony. For this there was a cubist setting of shapes on which spots were directed in various colours and, perhaps, the most impressive of all were the vast coloured shadows sweeping in and out of each other on the Cyclorama behind.

Where does all this lead?

When one thinks of the diminishing cinema audiences, perhaps this might well be something to resurrect with a cinema organ in order to promote a new art and to stave off the falling audiences. To my mind, however, the greatest future of Colour Music lies in the television field. Colour television is, surely, not many years away and once this is practicable it should be possible to have Colour Music as a scenic accompaniment to a great many shows. This would not only be economical from a staging point of view, but once again would be something new and novel for this ever growing audience.

It seems a long way away from that little Demonstration Theatre in Floral Street in the mid 'thirties, but to my mind here is something new and novel which is both artistic and exciting and which I, for one, hope may well prove a great entertainment of the future.

* * *

A Sound Letter

We regret space does not permit us to publish a letter from William Walton of Stagesound Ltd. He points out that the main reasons for Mr. Bentham's complaints on some of *"Son"* quality when used *"avec Lumière"* is the difference between direct recording of an orchestra or re-recording from a commercial disc and probably not a good one at that. He should know as he recorded all tapes used for *Son et Lumière* in this country this year.

* * *

NEW CINEMOID COLOUR

No. 45 DAYLIGHT. This new tint is similar to No. 17 but bluish. It is also a photographic colour temperature filter for use in front of tungsten lamps.

THE LIGHTING CONTROL AND ITS OPERATOR

by Frederick Bentham

The photograph (Fig. 1) shows the Light Console being " played " by its inventor in 1936. The caption in those days was " lighting control at the finger tips ". The insistance on " playing lighting on an instrument instead of working it from a switchboard " has been dominant in all the thirty years or so I have been mixed up with this subject.

FIG. 1. *Original Light Console.*

The instrumental nature of controls for which I have been responsible, or which belong to my " school ", is obvious. However, it takes two to make an instrument—designer and player. It is in the latter that one has been defeated. In 1955 I had to write at the end of Chapter VI of my book *Stage Lighting* (published by Pitmans):

"Until some artist works out his own lighting seated at the console keys, we shall get no further in the full expressive use of the large stage-lighting installation. The instruments are there but the production system does not provide the pattern to enable them to be used fully extended."

In 1957 I was able to revise this and say:

"In television the ideal, above sought in vain in the theatre, becomes feasible, because each production usually has only one performance. Thus the lighting supervisor, using his screen monitors and controls, can carry out and modify his own lighting right up to and including the actual moment of transmission."

In view of the recent one-day conference of Television Lighting Supervisors (held in April and October each year in the Strand Electric Demonstration Theatre) and also of my recent demonstrations of Colour Music, it may be of interest to amplify these remarks.

Twenty-five years ago I was convinced that the future of stage lighting lay in the lighting designer sitting at his console and painting the stage with light and working out his own changes directly therefrom. This was my own method.

FIG. 2. *London Coliseum. Light Console in box at rear of Stalls.*

First I used to set up a rigid layout of spots, floods, etc., the characteristics, angles, effect and colour of which were firmly fixed in my own head. Thereafter there was a minimum reliance on re-direction or change of colour in addition. It would be the dimmers manipulated by the fingers of the lighting designer which welded the various lanterns into an expressive whole and related them to the ballet or opera in question.

Although on the console, dimmer intermediate positions could be plotted, I never attached any particular importance to this except for the opening lighting. Once the curtain went up or the blackout was removed everything would follow memorably from each other. The action on the stage and the music would evoke the same changes; if not exactly, then so near as to make no important difference. In any case, the change would be related to the intensity of emotion felt at the moment and would be better related to present performance than if tied by plot. This technique I was able to put into large scale practice for the first time when lighting opera in Lisbon in 1940.

Of course, I suppose the biggest influence on me in the 'thirties was the writing of Adolphe Appia on the production of Wagner. On the ballet side, the two great symphonic ballet experiments of Massine *Les Presages* and *Choreatium* both inspired and vexed me.

The former set to Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony and the latter to Brahms' Fourth both, in my opinion then, failed due to the lack of any real use of lighting. Lighting played with inspiration could have followed the music away from the puny figures on the stage.

Such lighting methods with opera and ballet may reasonably be swallowed but what of straight drama? This to me was Shakespeare plus the style of productions put on a little previously at the Cambridge Festival Theatre and described so well in my bible of the time *Stage Lighting*, by C. Harold Ridge, published in 1930 by Heffer of Cambridge and now out of print. Obviously my approach to lighting still held in that form of production.

Of course, plays performed in box sets realistically lit did not require or lend themselves to such treatment, but at that time—twenty-five years or so ago—such productions seemed on the way out. They are still on the way out together with the proscenium stage if you listen to the right wrong people today!

The box set production technique with meticulous cues set in motion from time to time by signals from the stage manager still dominates the professional stage at any rate. Because such productions form the majority, it remains the recognised practice applied willy-nilly to all productions, box set or not, naturalistic or not.

The other factor working against any such high-flown ideas, as I used to have, is the great boundary between the man who lights the show and the electrician who is expected to carry out the lighting night after night. Because the latter always controls the lighting, even where the switchboard has a good front-of-house view of the stage, the man lighting the show does not work out

his lighting at the board and he does not work it for the first night or any other night. Yet, if lighting sequences are not conceived in terms of the control then there will be no flow or rhythm to them. A sequence becomes chopped up into a series of changes.

The indirectness of control is tantalising. When Mr. Joe Davis of H. M. Tennent Ltd. says "up a little" to the switchboard operator, it is bound to be followed by "down a little" or perhaps as a change by "up a little more". This does not mean that Mr. Joe Davis, who has certainly lit more productions than anyone else in the country, does not know what he is doing; it is the switchboard operator who does not know what Mr. Davis is doing. The operator cannot read his mind, and if Mr. Davis were using the dimmer levers himself a few almost instinctive quick movements of the levers and the thing would be right. The present process is like trying to direct a blindfold driver by word of mouth instead of taking the wheel oneself.

Yet often with several productions up and down the country to light almost simultaneously in different theatres, all with different controls, most of them out of sight of the stage anyway, how could Mr. Davis adopt any other procedure. The same goes for anybody else who "does" the lighting.

Of course a German lighting director resident in his magnificent opera house with its repertory based on local (not toured)

FIG. 3. *B.B.C. Riverside* 1. *Lighting supervisor using monitor to set lighting. Photo by courtesy B.B.C.*

productions could easily do this, but that is another story. A repertory team based on one theatre has great advantages, as far as the technical side of production is concerned anyway, in any country.

So far so hopeless, but with television all the work towards playable controls comes into its own again. In B.B.C. studios such as Riverside and in a number of others such as Granada, Scottish, Wales and West, Southern, etc., it has become the practice for the lighting supervisor to operate his own control console. The studio is, of course, manned by electricians, but the man who decides what lighting result is required manipulates it himself.

The lighting supervisor works on the particular production as part of the production team; he makes his layouts and plans on paper and the lanterns are rigged accordingly. He then enters the studio prepared to adjust his lighting to suit the result seen on the monitors, and one of the means to this end is the lighting control itself. Selecting the output of any camera channel in use he can, as in Fig. 3, examine and monitor its quality using his dimmers. He is painting a photographic picture with lighting, taking into account both the technical and dramatic requirements. Every means possible must be provided automatically to lock up the effect once set because there is little, if any, time for writing a plot. Nevertheless, the lighting supervisor will continue to work or be responsible for the control during run-throughs and final production on air, ready to adjust or modify as circumstances dictate.

This is where we came in, and the control facilities which the theatre has been given so little chance to use have now come into their own in the television studio.

BOOK REVIEW

The Theatre.

By Helen and Richard Leacroft. *Methuen & Co. Ltd.* **10/6.**

This is one of the Methuen "Outlines", excellently printed and presented, and although the publishers describe the series as "A reference library for boys and girls", this book about the theatre, must appeal to any theatre lover, of whatever age. In a thoroughly readable and interesting manner it traces the development of the theatre from Osiris to Alfred Emmett: or, if you prefer it, from the dramatic funeral rites of Ancient Egypt, to theatre in the half-round by the Questors of Ealing. The book is lavishly illustrated, mainly by reproductions of drawings by Richard Leacroft, most skilfully executed with a wealth of informative detail. This is not surprising since he has the qualifications of architect and scenic artist as well as those of the historian interested in theatre research.

There is a very understandable pre-occupation with the development of stage machines and scenery: lighting receives progressive but not very comprehensive consideration. It is a book that would be welcomed by any student of the drama and it could well be a popular solution to the inevitable Yuletide problem, that quest for whatever it is that is "just what I wanted".

P. Corry

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