

TABS

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TABS

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Cover Picture: Ford's Theatre Washington, D.C.
The restoration of this theatre which
was closed for over a hundred years
after the assassination there of
President Lincoln was described in
our last issue (Vol. 28 No. 4)

Lovable

If we had to state the first quality a lighting control should have the answer would be "Lovable". The immediate reaction on the part of the reader is probably that the writer must be tight or, remembering that these words appear in TABS, "What is *he* getting at?" In the first place it must be admitted that your Editor is sitting in a Piccadilly line tube train awash with "Theatre Projects" whisky—but along with the Scotch went a lot of theatre lighting talk—of course! Now the heart of a stage lighting installation is the control and at this moment in time it happens to be the part with which one has only to decide what one wants to do and it can be done. The lantern end—that decentralised mass of inaccessible hot bodies—is another matter! Therefore when deciding what quality above all else a control should have the answer seems to be "Lovable". Why?

Well for the benefit of that large body of persons who have nothing directly to do with lighting controls, particularly those who only have to pay for them, we will explain. The perfect stage lighting control like the perfect organ console, or the perfect car—to come out of the art context—has to be something its operator, player or driver can be in love with. The relationship is that close and intense.

It is significant that when referring to a pianist in action one speaks of caressing the keys, while on the other hand a computer operator punches the thing up. Thus man or woman's whole feeling for a machine they have to put in action can be keyed by whether you are expected to *caress* it or to *punch* it—to love it or to hate it. Of course, the expression "punch" comes from the fact that early computers had to be questioned by punching holes in cards rather than by giving them one up the hooter—as Tony Hancock would have said. But the expression lingers on and with it a strong sense of the computer as foe rather than friend. And quite right too if HAL 9000 in the film *2001* was anything to go by. In real life it is the stories of computer errors which are gleefully retailed

and find their way into the correspondence columns of *The Times*. There's that gas bill which went to the man who hadn't or the electric story with all those noughts. These are the modern successors to the bomb stories which beblitzed our wartime conversations.

If we loved, liked or even just tolerated computers would we pounce on their every little fault? After all a nought is nothing and what harm can a number of nothings do? The trouble is that in computer language "nothing" is probably called "zero". Not a very friendly word that—positively (negatively?) aggravating. "What are you doing Smith minor?" "Zero, sir, please sir!" Not soothing at all, not the kind of remark which turneth away wrath! Really aggravating is the way computers—alone of us—are going to be excused calculating in decimals. The government of the day, and yesterday, hiding behind their monarch's skirts proclaim in the market place, let there be decimals throughout the land; let all my subjects henceforth think decimals on pain of debt. Only computers are excused. Not only this but they have infiltrated quite a sizeable human lobby which utters treasonable remarks. "Binary is better!" they declare and with computer backing binary it will all be one day. Certainly by the time the stage lighting to be discussed at the "Lighting 2000" colloquium actually exists. "Increase a digital increment or decrease a digital increment!" the Joe Davis of thirty years on will request of the computer at his elbow, or rather in his hip pocket, so miniaturised will it be.

Long before then something must have been done to remove the image of the computer as an enemy. Indeed, we hope to do something about this with the computer lighting control system we are working on now. How do we hope to do it?

Firstly, let it be said that it really is a computer—not just a collection of electronic hardware with a magnetic memory. Secondly, we intend to humanise it by making it *lovable*. It must be something to play upon not to punch. It must

look and feel friendly and kind. No trace of the robot from outer space or those grim sleek purring cabinets which contain so much statistical data that we cannot know what to ask of them. No our control will be a jolly control—nice to have about the house. It must leave the lighting operator something interesting to do. Be his servant—perhaps his partner but never his rival.

Will it ever go wrong? Well, to err is human and it is reported that when com-

Stabs in the Front

We are provided with ample evidence that TABS is enjoyed, even looked forward to, in a manner nigh on unique for the house journal of a commercial firm. It is, so our mail tells us, anticipated and devoured from cover to cover—often at one sitting. To facilitate the continuance of such claims we for our part ensure that the content—the number and size of pages—remains small. Thirty-two A5 pages is the lean minimum and forty-four the fat maximum.

With all this approval goes another school of thought which would appear to have conjured up an editor wielding a vitriolic and cynical pen whose fertile invention is directed at *them*. For them this journal would be more appropriately named “Stabs”. Any mention of anything up front is bound to offend someone outside or inside the firm with equal impartiality. If one so much as mentions the word “organisation” in an editorial then—!

From outside the firm the editorial office is occasionally assailed by a letter penned by someone aggrieved or vexed. Every now and then the grapevine comes up with an inspired message “Old (or Young—no generation gap here) Syd Stoggers was saying last night that he was going to ‘do’ you; really annoyed he was, you really have gone a bit far.” Whence comes this vexation is a mystery. Or is it? In the houses of refreshment for Thespian technicians word is passed around, oiled well and matured in transit.

Unfortunately, maturity for ideas of this kind presages not bland mellowness but

puters are programmed to play games they have to be told to lose some of them, otherwise the human opponents sulk. So maybe when our future computer stage lighting control appears we shall have to think up a few faults with which to program it, just to make it less divine. One thing is certain, you couldn’t come to a better place than Rank Strand Electric for verisimilitude in this respect. We have in years past obtained an intimate knowledge of “faults”—unrivalled in the business.

chronic acidity. In next to no time the Editor is assailed by an aggrieved party who is not the less aggrieved because he is suffering from a hangover. This however is to be preferred to an attack of the sulks.

On one occasion stung by some such reproach we carried out an exercise to find out what the then current issue of TABS contained as a stimulus to those *looking for trouble*. A schedule of “calculated insults” was drawn up and we found lethal lines on every page. On some pages several—even the cover was not exempt. Plotting number of cues for insult against page numbers instead of dimmer numbers we got a total of sixty-three on thirty-two pages.

This is no fiction but this particular issue had better remain undisclosed.

Of course, only one of the sixty-three stabs in that particular TABS issue had had the wit to see that he was being “got at”. The trouble was that we did not know he was being “got at” until he told us he had been got at although it was our pen that had done the getting-atting.

Then there is the crime of the discredited or the unmentionable. The vexation of the “stabbed” is as nothing compared with the umbrageous gloom which surrounds those who believe they or their doings, solo or in community, are deliberately not given a credit line or a feature in our pages. In this they attribute an ubiquitous omnipotence to the Editor and his B-loved assistant that one glance at them in the fleshpots they frequent could easily dispel. We do not tell all because we do not know

all. We would welcome good and/or interesting stuff coming in instead of having to voyage afar and seek it out.

What is the truth about this scandal sheet of ours? It is quite simple, your Editor has a taste for the whimsical—whether in situ-

One Hundred and Ten

This month sees the birthdays of two closely related institutions which have never met and indeed are unlikely to have much to do with each other. The Royal Albert Hall is one hundred years old and the Association of British Theatre Technicians ten years old. The Albert Hall is the kind of place a great city cannot do without and the A.B.T.T. enshrines the kind of advice that anyone setting out to build such a hall cannot afford to neglect.

Would the A.B.T.T. if it had then existed have enabled the Albert Hall to avoid some of the design troubles which have taken nearly the full hundred years to overcome? Would that advice on the other hand have prevented the hall from obtaining the undoubted character it has and which we all love?

The Royal Albert Hall suffered right from the beginning from a bright idea of what it should be and an unclear brief as to how it was going to do it. Largely under military command an enormous “Roman” amphitheatre, glass domed to keep out the rain, arose as a Chorus Hall and a temple of music certain from its shape to give acoustic trouble.

What is both pathetic and salutary is to read of the discovery, in the days of the first tests, of the echo—later to become so notorious. Experts predicted that when the place was finally completed the thing would vanish, and since then one idea after another has been tried out but only in the last couple of years really effectively. The biggest attempt prior to this to get things right came during the last world war when the Albert Hall had suddenly to take over from the bombed Queens Hall. It is an indication of those improvisatory times that the special indirect/direct lighting battens we used under the new acoustic canopy were in fact constructed of hardwood. Stage lanterns

or in words—he cannot resist following where these lead. Such writings are neither satirical or facetious, they are certainly not intended to pillory or to hurt. They are written *with malice toward no man. Think but this, and all is mended.*

of the early days often had teak sides, but this must surely be the last recorded use of wood for such lighting equipment.

If the Royal Albert Hall was not quite right for the purpose for which it was designed it has certainly been excellent for a number of other ventures some of them far removed from music. Pageants and other grand forms of open stage theatre, film premieres, boxing and even exhibitions have all been staged there, maybe if not more conveniently then perhaps more impressively than if the place had been designed specially for the purpose.

Then there was the Chelsea Arts Ball. It will come as a shock to the young of today to learn that it was in the Royal Albert Hall rather than anywhere else that students used regularly to make the headlines before the war. The great floats carrying the displays of the various art schools, bedecked with scantily clad females, did a round of the great dance floor to organ accompaniment. Then they were smashed in full view of the audience as rival schools waged war. The occasional removal of clothing *in toto* which sometimes resulted was retailed with relish by the press and by members of our staff whose pleasure it was to light such “happenings”.

What of the ten-year-old A.B.T.T.? It was founded to give theatre technicians an opportunity regularly to meet together and to give authoritative voice to the specialties of their various crafts. The Architecture and Planning Committee alone has advised on well over one hundred plans for new theatres. Other committees deal with scenic materials, stage lighting, sound and safety regulations. Advice is not mandatory—there is no such thing as an “A.B.T.T. approved” theatre plan or piece of stage equipment. The genius can still go his own way—as he always did—in theatre.



Pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Norwich

Tony Mallion¹

It was appropriate that this year's pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Norwich was *Cinderella* as the building had just reopened after its own transformation. The modernisation did not happen at the touch of a wand and in a puff of white smoke—it had taken eight months to complete and cost £140,000.

When the Arts Council report² on the

theatre was published a year ago it put the Norwich Royal into its list of 12 top touring theatres. It was an honour which the theatre had earned in just over two short years. The same report added that, like others, these "Paramount Theatres" would have to be brought up to scratch to attract both audiences and companies. Ten days later the Royal closed and put the recom-

triumphant acceptance of your editor's challenge to produce that rarity—a photograph of the auditorium complete with audience.

²The Theatre Today, Report of the Arts Council Theatre Enquiry 1970.

mendation into practice, opening again on December 17th with a gala performance by the Festival Ballet.

The Royal's success began when the Norwich City Council acquired it in 1967. The year before it looked as if Norfolk was to lose its last big theatre when the owners, Essoldo, applied for a "Bingo" licence.

The council had been preparing plans for a civic playhouse and had also considered adapting another of the city's surviving theatres—the Hippodrome—which was later demolished. These plans had been prepared with repertory in mind but it had been assumed that the Royal would continue to take the large touring companies. Suddenly all this was being questioned.

There had always been a theatre on, or near, the site—the street derives its name from it. The first was built in 1758 by Thomas Ivory and the second, on the exact spot of the present one, in 1826. This lasted with alterations until 1934 when it was destroyed by fire. Its owner, Jack Gladwin, then rebuilt, and the following year the present theatre rose from the ashes.

It seems strange, in the light of modern thinking, that a theatre could have been so badly designed. It was on a not very large site but this was no excuse for the inside. The foyer and entrances seemed to have been designed to make it as difficult as possible to get into the auditorium. The sight-lines were not good in the stalls, the stage was raked, had little wing space, no storage whatsoever, and the circle exit was a tunnel which went across the prompt side wing reducing the available height by half. Naturally the dressing rooms were few, small and cold.

The problem of space was so acute that in the late 'fifties the stage manager, John Bowhill, took a truck to a farm sale and returned with a large chicken-hut. This was fitted out as a green-room cum wardrobe and lasted, with one re-roofing, until the modernisation!

With little competition the theatre flourished, taking on a new lease of life in 1956 when Essoldo took it over and installed full Cinemascope equipment providing a bill of good films and shows.

Ten years later it was a different story.

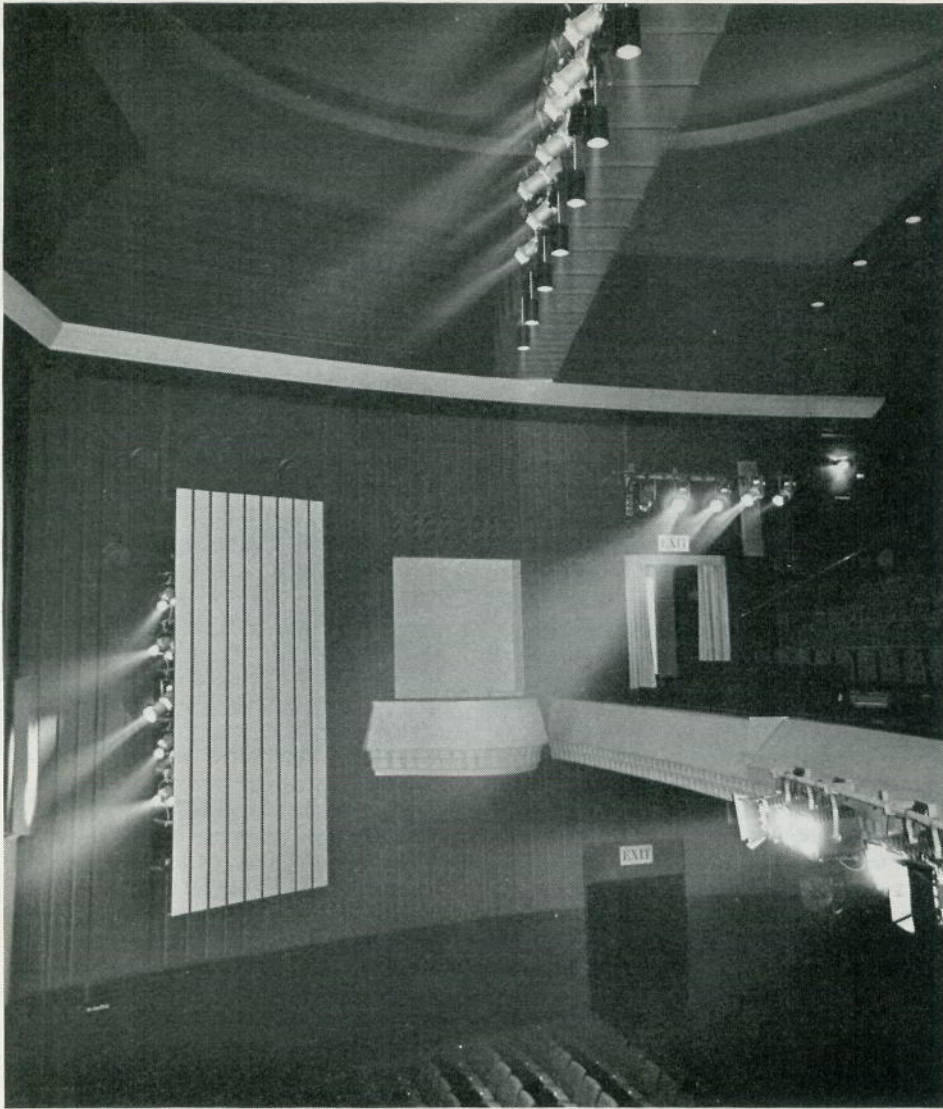
The Royal was becoming unprofitable. Norwich had become an out-of-the-way blackspot on the theatrical map and it was well known among managements that "If you want to lose money—go to Norwich". It was difficult, too, for Essoldo to compete against the cinema monopoly of A.B.C. and Rank in the city.

The council held an inquiry into the matter following the application for the "Bingo" licence, but it only served to show up Essoldo's difficulty. Indeed, their general manager, Mr. H. Lambert, told the inquiry that to re-seat and re-carpet alone—without touching backstage—would cost a sum that they would not recoup in 30 years. The choice open to the council was obvious, they either had to buy it or lose it. The theatre was handed over to them in May 1967.

Significantly, the first stage production in the Royal's civic career was a touring production of *Robert and Elizabeth*. It opened at a bad theatrical time—the end of August. Inside the plaster was peeling, the house-lights were tatty, the front tabs were torn, but the future was brighter. There were high hopes that the theatre would become the home of a rep. company and extensive plans were prepared. A week of "rep. type" plays opened that autumn but poor audience response practically killed off the idea.

The high hopes began to sink until the theatre's own "good fairy" turned up in the form of Mr. Laurie Hill who soon set to work bringing this particular "Cinderella" out of the doldrums. Mr. Hill had been in the entertainment world and was assistant to Val Parnell at the time of his retirement to Norfolk through ill-health. He wrote to the theatre's "caretaker manager", the City Treasurer, Mr. A. J. Barnard, with a few words of encouragement. Less than five weeks later he was booking the productions himself. This was the turning point. A firm policy of well-balanced, good-quality touring companies was established for the theatre and with an assured future the next step was to improve the building.

Several minor improvements were made immediately. New auditorium lights were installed, some new stage lights and a new



View shows the four F.O.H. positions. The decoration has been almost removed from the front of the stalls and boxes.

front curtain and border. In June 1969 the theatre closed for five weeks while the interior was redecorated in a soft violet—a colour chosen to eliminate light-spill and concentrate the eye on the stage.

By September 1969 the amount of the

Arts Council grant was known and the final plans for the modernisation were drawn up. The City Architects, under Mr. David Percival, were responsible for working out the scheme which was to transform the theatre at a minimum cost yet still make it

suitable for the largest of companies.

Obviously, from the stage point of view, the greatest need was that of space. Although the stage manager had always been used to getting a quart of a production into a pint-pot of a stage, storage space and room for trucked scenery was essential. The rake, which was always a problem, and in the case of ballet a danger, had to go. More dressing-room space was also a must along with rehearsal room and a larger pit to take a ballet or opera orchestra.

The crying need at the front of the house was to make audience access a smooth operation and less of a nightmare. The outside of the theatre, which in 1935 was fine, was looking more lavatorial than theatrical with its white tiles.

It is the exterior which shows what can be done on a shoe-string. By an imaginative use of brick combined with the original front and the addition of wooden slats at the top the theatre has taken on a look which blends with the character of Norwich. The main auditorium block bears a strong resemblance to the Norman keep which dominates the city, while the adjoining box-office and entrance have been transformed with metal cladding and glass. The lettering outside, along with the signs inside, have all been designed by art students of the City College.

Six rows were removed from the rear of the stalls and the back wall moved in, reducing the seating from over 1,400 to 1,250. This gave room for a new stalls bar as well as providing space for the lighting control and giving three new entrances instead of the former one. The new lighting control replaced two delightful antiques which added their own illumination in the form of blue sparks.

At basement level, where the stalls bar had been, new cloakrooms and toilets have been installed. The main stairs in the foyer now lead up to a completely new bar area which leads on to the auditorium entrance. The old Chinese bar, which ran underneath the higher circle seats, was completely removed. A piece was added to the far side of the theatre so that the circle can now be entered from both sides rather than from

one as before. In each case exits now lead directly outside and not through the tunnel.

The auditorium now has two new lighting positions. The first is the new bridge which takes a number of Patt. 264s. It is suspended just below the ceiling at a position above the edge of the circle. The other new position is provided on either side of the stage where two screens have been put up to mask the former very 1930-looking fountains. The line of the front of the circle has been altered slightly to improve the sight-lines and here also there is provision for spotlights.

Five Patt. 264s are positioned above each circle exit to provide a further high-level position. The decoration around the proscenium arch has been removed, and although the two boxes remain their velvet curtains do not. The auditorium has been re-carpeted and new seats have been specially designed by Sssh you-know-who!

The stage has been lowered to remove the rake. There is a good tower and 60 counterweighted lines; so as not to disturb these they have remained on a small piece of stage which is still raked. Unfortunately, there was not enough money to remove the exit tunnel but it has not been wasted as it now houses the dimmer bank.

The scenery door, which previously led straight outside, now opens into a large scene dock. This has been arranged so that lorries can back into it to unload. Prefabricated buildings—remarkably attractive inside—house workshop, green room, extra dressing rooms, chorus rooms and the door-keeper's office. The old dressing rooms have all been improved with central heating and showers. A covered way leads from these buildings to the large hall of an adjoining disused church which gives the necessary rehearsal space. There is more accommodation for the orchestra and three of the front rows in the auditorium can be manually removed to give space for a large orchestra.

The cost of these improvements, which also included a new boiler house, was kept down to £140,000. This was offset with an Arts Council grant of £68,000. The building itself cost £90,000 and extra land £30,000.

The theatre is now the responsibility of

a trust which will receive an annual grant for the next five years from the City Council.

So the "Cinderella" of the theatrical world has become one of the most up-to-date touring theatres in the country. There may still be faults to be found, but the

money has been spent wisely—not that any of this matters to theatre-lovers. What is more important than anything else is that the Norwich Theatre Royal is a thriving live theatre and it is the warm sound of applause, rather than the cries of "Bingo!" which echo around its walls.

After Strange Gods

Barbara Berrington¹

When *The Sunday Times* NUS Drama Festival was last held at Southampton its success lay in the three evenings with which it drew to a close. These produced three sturdy and convincing productions—*The Visit* (Durenmatt), *Next Time I'll Sing To You* (Saunders) and *The Crucible* (Miller). These were productions worthy of being staged in the West End to run on equal terms with it and compete on a commercial level—an idea implemented at the St. Martin's Theatre in the following year. On the present occasion, six years later, the Festival was no longer competitive. The plays had been chosen because they were new or because their manner of production showed some marked originality and what people thought of the plays was much more significant than the plays themselves.

It is interesting that the National Press quite failed to capture the mood of this festival or its new turn of mind which is perhaps more important. There was admittedly a lot of student extravaganza to cut through in order to sift out the real trends, but it is clear that there is a strong interest in "experimental theatre". This experimentalising may be concerned with the play or the production or even the theatre itself. *Paradise Lost* (Keele) the one show which expected the audience to sit on the floor, while actors struggled among them from one part of the set to another, was by no means an unqualified success but neither was it a total failure.

¹Till the life force exacted its tribute, Barbara Jameson of "Forget the Snorting Steam and Piston Stroke", TABS, Vol. 27, No. 2.

On the other hand, when someone raised the issue of "Should we treat an audience in this way?" the general attitude was, "We are offering them an experience; they can take it or leave it." It is this kind of feeling which allows the Roundhouse to charge two



Nuffield Theatre—John Ford's Cuban Missile Crisis—Bradford Art College. (Photo Sunday Times)

pounds for a hard plastic seat and a thin foam cushion, yet *Catch My Soul* played to capacity houses there.

One reason for the success of something like *Catch My Soul* is that it goes some way to satisfying the audience's love of ritual. The majority of the students felt that you had to "be committed" to drama and there was a sense of dedication to an ideal, a pro-

fession and a way of life all at once. One group even said, "We have worked at this production until it fills our every waking moment. We are the priests who are to lead you as audience/congregation through the experience." This was clearly also the case with the directors of the experimental groups who came to talk—though they had a far better idea of what the audience wanted from them. They were more mature but also very definitely "committed" and the way they spoke had the same conviction and humility as that of any man daring to state the philosophy by which he lives. At the lowest level this reveals itself in a need for some primitive ritual in a large number of the plays and most of it was reinforced by sound or lighting effects or both.

While the students (and indeed the general public) are fascinated by "lightshow"² practices some of them are afraid that these are being used as a substitute for real originality instead of being complementary to it. The technical advances are of course "new" in a way that nothing else in drama is but mere novelty is not what is sought. The prophet of this new religion is no longer Brecht but Grotowski. Intellectualism yields to entertainment. There was less concern with politics and more with psychology. It was a time for the speaking movement rather than the moving statement and this led to an emphasis on the body. I counted ten naked bosoms (one accidental), six mimes of sexual intercourse and two masturbation scenes in sixteen plays. There were also two plays where a woman played a man and a man a woman, and the acting was too strong to admit of a single titter! There were nevertheless six plays which owed more than a little to dramatised documentary.

In 1967/8 the "speakers" included Lord Goodman. Today instead there are "workshops" run by the directors of the Freehold

²Not that Lightshow exhibition at Olympia but a latter-day form of what the happy few called Colour Music.—ED.

Company and the Young Vic. These directors also conducted discussions as workshops, showing a marked preference for this instead of the intellectual approach of the eminent drama lecturers who had held court in earlier years. Even these hardy individualists found that the students were difficult to "charm"; the directors were forced to be completely honest and never risked a preconceived standard or an easy



Nuffield Theatre—The Mirror and the Star—Barts Hospital. (Photo Sunday Times)

cliché without being shouted out of court. The "discussion" could be halted for reacting a scene in order that a point could be made, not with reference to the text but in relation to what happened on the stage.

There was remarkably little "scenery" used, and costumes, though occasionally splendid, tended often to savour of the rehearsal room. Drapes were much in evidence and this did not seem to be lack of cash. The money was spent on lights and telling props rather than on flats. Some of the best work seemed to come from spartan conditions. The reworking of Aeschylus presented by Essex in *Xerxes* showed three men acting out the whole Graeco-Persian War with nothing but fawn drapes, two small rostra and an empty quiver. On the other hand one of the most fascinating productions was *The Mirror and the Star*—a realisation by "Barts" of Freud psycho-analysing Nijinski, and here a second miniature stage was incorporated into the marvellously oppressive set—a set which

unfortunately had to be cut down from the original to fit into the Nuffield Theatre³.

Seeing the stage not as a centre for imaginative flights but as an environment meant



University Gymnasium—Paradise Lost—Keel Drama Group. (Photo Sunday Times)

the stage varied as a stage. Productions took all forms. Shows went on in half a dozen different buildings and each was stretched physically to do all that it could. In the Nuffield this was of course limited to changing the apron about to give thrust or proscenium form. *Paradise Lost* however went on in the gymnasium. Set and auditorium were inseparable and scaffolding on a truly massive scale produced something akin to York at Mystery Play time.

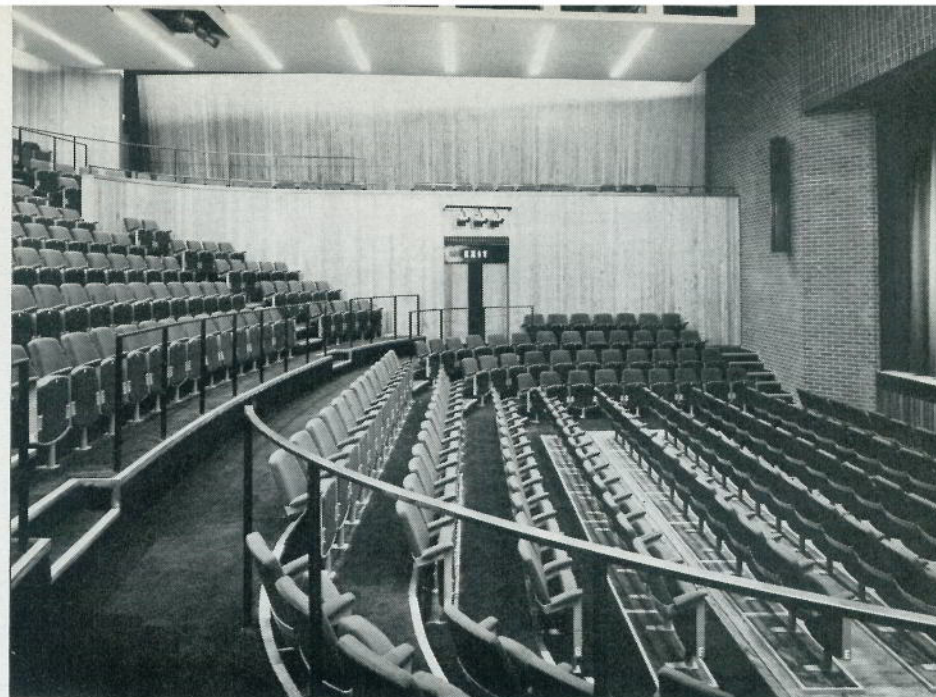
Probably the most successful "theatre" of the festival, was the University Debating Chamber. This was a horseshoe-shaped auditorium with rows of curved padded benches intersected by two main gangways. Everything was golden brown—wood, carpets and upholstery and was down-lit. There was a gallery on four sides at the level of entry into the room and provision had been made for some primitive stage lighting operated by a Ten/20. The lighting positions, barrels hung from brackets by means of clamps, offered only poor angles. Yet there were many comments passed on what a pleasant place it was to enter and one of the most successful plays, *King Herod Explains* (Edinburgh), was played here to an audience of 320 or so seated with an excellent view

in perfect comfort. There is apparently more than one university which uses its debating chamber for this dual purpose of drama and debate. In this theatre as in all the others one paid a standard rate for each seat and chose where you wished to sit in accordance with how early you arrived.

The local flat-floored hall was inevitably pressed into service, acquired seats raked on rostra and ran the gamut from its proscenium to in-the-round. This last, an exciting production of the pop opera *Tommy*, had a set consisting solely of four Zip-Up lighting towers with their huge curved out-riggers and the audience looked down on to a white floor cloth quartered by an appropriate black cross. The lighting was like "pop" colour music with everything from complementary colour mixing to the strobe. This inevitably lacks the subtlety of its "classical" counterpart and needs more



Debating Chamber—King Herod Explains—Edinburgh University. (Photo Sunday Times)



Southampton University, Nuffield Theatre.

lanterns to give variety. Oxford University used about 50 lanterns; the Roundhouse in a similar vein used over 150—not to mention electric torches.

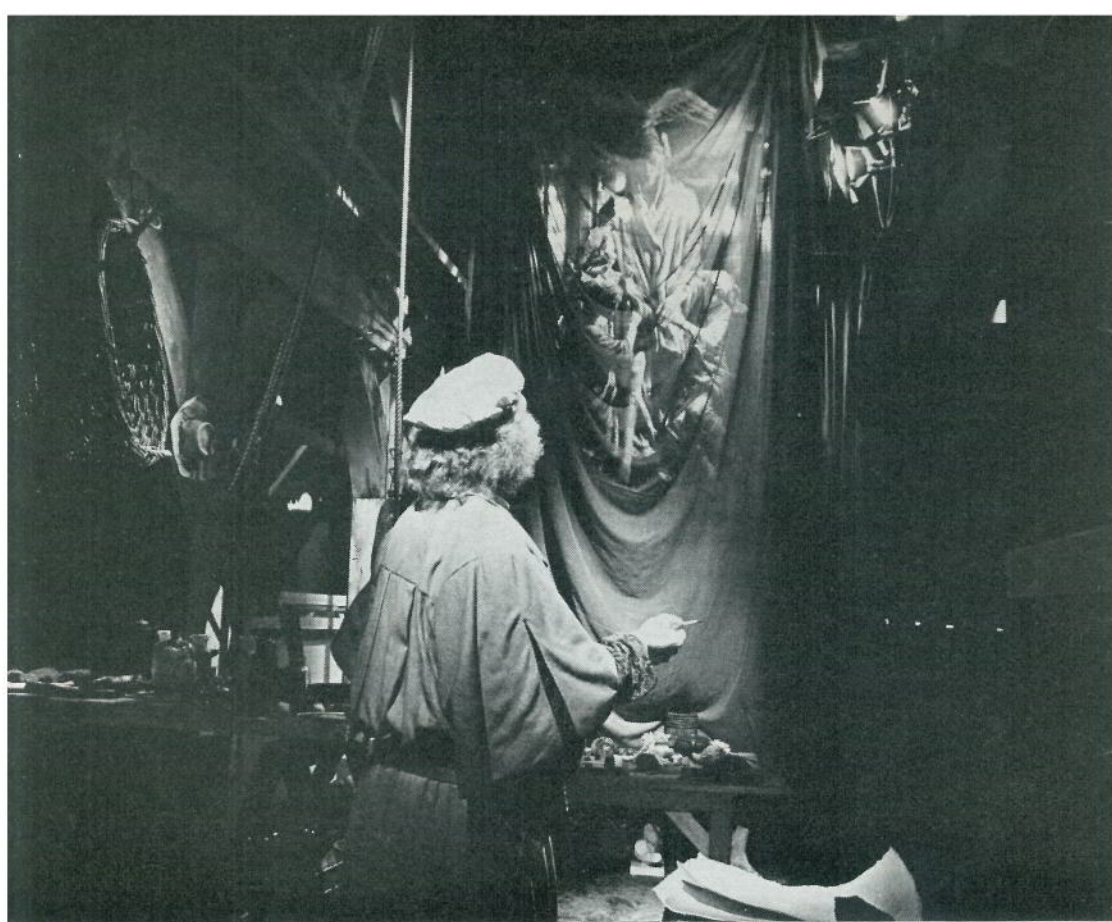
Torches, incidentally, were used at the previous year's Manchester festival by a fringe group. The fringe element of the festival has grown quite amazingly, and being less pretentious sometimes succeeds in a quieter way. The large number of rooms available at Southampton helped this. They included a ballroom, and New Year's Eve saw an odd blend of party/floor show/Punch and Judy/pantomime/dance. The hero of the evening was a conjurer of the fire-eating and razor-blade-swallowing variety who had a way with vanishing cigarettes. Strangely enough the student audience went wild over his performance which had nothing "new" whatsoever but which was simply very well done.

This party had an obvious excuse for the breakdown of the "forms" and could leap from the Punch and Judy convention and then offer a floor show, complete with stripper, without any danger. Each convention "held" within its own disciplines. No-

one touched the girl stripper though she presented herself at two separate tables and a mere twelve inches away. In another more "experimental" play, however, the director was so afraid one of his cast would be stripped by a "participating" audience that he intervened in the action in person. The form of a theatre itself seemed to have no effect. For instance, this last episode took place in the Nuffield and meant that the audience had to run down the aisles and scramble through the proscenium and onto the stage.

There were several "plays" which were undecided about what they were. This was not always the same as what they hoped to achieve. The audience came out on more than one occasion wondering whether it had seen a mime-play-dance-cum-lightshow or been subjected to a "total theatrical experience". This kind of theatre seems very much like baking a cake. You can add the same ingredients, go through the same motions at each performance but the finished product may be light and fluffy or dull and stodgy, and occasionally the ingredients, though well stirred, do not actually blend to form something else.

³ TABS, Vol. 22, No. 2.



Madame Tussaud in Amsterdam

*James Sargant*¹

Madame Tussaud, whose name has been synonymous with wax since the nineteenth century, and has been a theatre critic's cliché for lifeless performance for just as long, opened a new show in the heart of Amsterdam, on September 25th, 1970.

For the first time since Madame Tussaud herself moved from Napoleonic France to England in 1802, two centuries of accumulated experience have been applied to a permanent exhibition outside London, and its unique character is even more Dutch, than the London Exhibition is English.

Madame Tussaud's Amsterdam techniques are new too, pioneered in the London Exhibition during the last four years, which have seen the introduction there of a total environment "The Battle of Trafalgar", designed by Timothy O'Brien; sequences of sound, light, projection and effects—"Heroes-Live" designed by James Goddard; and multi-screen projection and mixed media—"The Battle of Britain", designed by Edward Tuersley. The lighting and sound in each case is the work of Theatre Projects.

The Amsterdam Exhibition, again designed by Timothy O'Brien, this time with lighting by Charles Bristow, includes a "Gallery of the Famous" with Dutch national and some international personalities and a tableau of four scenes on the theme of Rembrandt's life and work together with an introductory museum of Rembrandt ephemera and graphics. Contemporary Holland appears in a series of specially set "Heroes of the Present Time" and on a carousel, whose riders and mounts depict people and movements of present-day Holland. The final theme is Hieronymus Bosch's "Garden of Delights"—more inferno than heaven—where his world is portrayed on rotating spheres and painted shells.

One of the major design achievements in lighting of this exhibition was the flexibility of lighting positions, which was retained up till the very final moment before opening. This was a result of careful liaison between the designer and lighting designer and by the extensive use of Philips light track as suspension and feed. An expensive lesson had been learnt earlier in London that, even though exhibits are basically static, the positions of figures and exhibits are inevitably going to change in the setting-up period from those first envisaged. Thus careful planning for flexibility avoided any last minute need either to run new circuits move their position or abandon circuits as impractical.

The other major design problem in lighting such an exhibition is the need for the longest possible lamp life, taking into consideration that the majority of lamps will be functioning for a minimum of 10 hours a day, 7 days a week, 364 days of the year. Good ventilation around and particularly above the fittings can greatly assist, but this is often extremely difficult to ensure, particularly in the case of fittings recessed into the ceilings of settings. In this particular project these problems were further aggravated due to the exhibition being built in an old converted building, where the majority of ventilation runs were already in existence and the system was nearly up to capacity.

The principal lighting unit of the exhibi-

tion is the Rank Strand Patt.104 Mini-Fresnel, there being 136 with a 12-volt 100-watt source (including four Minilabra) and ninety-seven with a 12-volt 50-watt source. Other lanterns include seventeen Patt.123 500-watt Fresnels, twenty-four Philips spotlights and twenty-one 3-tube fluorescent (daylight corrected) fittings. To provide snow and colour wheel effects there are eight super Kaleidospots (250 watt). A number of other items include a couple of Patt.23's and some 500 or more 15-watt clear bulbs on the carousel.

Perhaps the main achievement of the designer and of the lighting designer is that they have so successfully evoked such different moods and a feeling of space in the eleven different exhibition areas. These are confined to a mere 6,000 sq. ft.



Minilabras on the job

The exhibition has already been seen by 100,000 visitors in the first three out-of-season months, with a flow of up to 600 visitors an hour having proved comfortable. Such is the remarkable nature of the display that the "Madame Tussaud in Amsterdam" exhibition is already established as one of the sights of this ancient international city for so long full of every kind of attraction for the visitor.

¹ Production Controller Madame Tussaud's Limited.

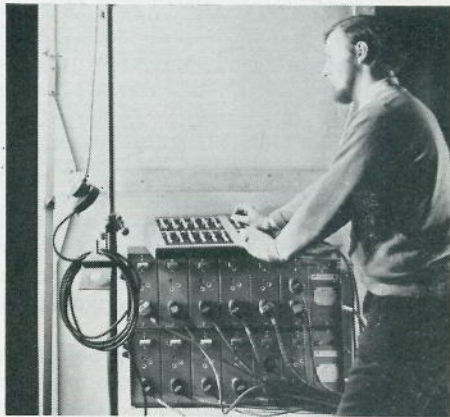
Only Preset Controls will do

There can be no doubt that the lighting of any stage today requires a *preset* dimmer panel to control it. That is, even where there are only a dozen or so dimmers, we still require at least two sets of levers each with its master fader. The stage lighting picture in use at the moment is held on one set of levers while the next picture is preset on the other set. The change from one to the other is then only a matter of operating the master faders on cue. Some seem surprised that this technique, only comparatively recently available to all professional theatres, should be needed for a simple school stage.

The fact is that today's professional production techniques tend to influence school production also. The master in charge subconsciously thinks in terms of what he has seen on the "real" stage. The continuous action flowing from one scene to another cannot be worked on the earlier controls of the era of closing the tabs to change scene or locale. The pauses, to move on and off the large chunks of scenery, gave the switchboard operator time to marshal his unwieldy levers for the next operational spasm—to screw down some handles and release others in the case of a bracket handle control or to find the appropriate bits of wood to move a number of slider dimmers at once. Nor are any of us now content to run levers mainly at "all to full" or "all to half" in a dim scene. Lighting has to be balanced, this spotlight to speak loudly and that one quietly, and those over there to take a middle course. This means dimmers are not just used for fading in and out lights but for holding particular tones at intermediate levels. This is a piece of cake on the simplest of preset controls but infernally difficult on a bracket-handle board except when, as is all too likely, it is impossible.

Lighting must flow and for this a preset control is essential. Anything else is as inconceivable nowadays as a car without a heater—something which at one time was

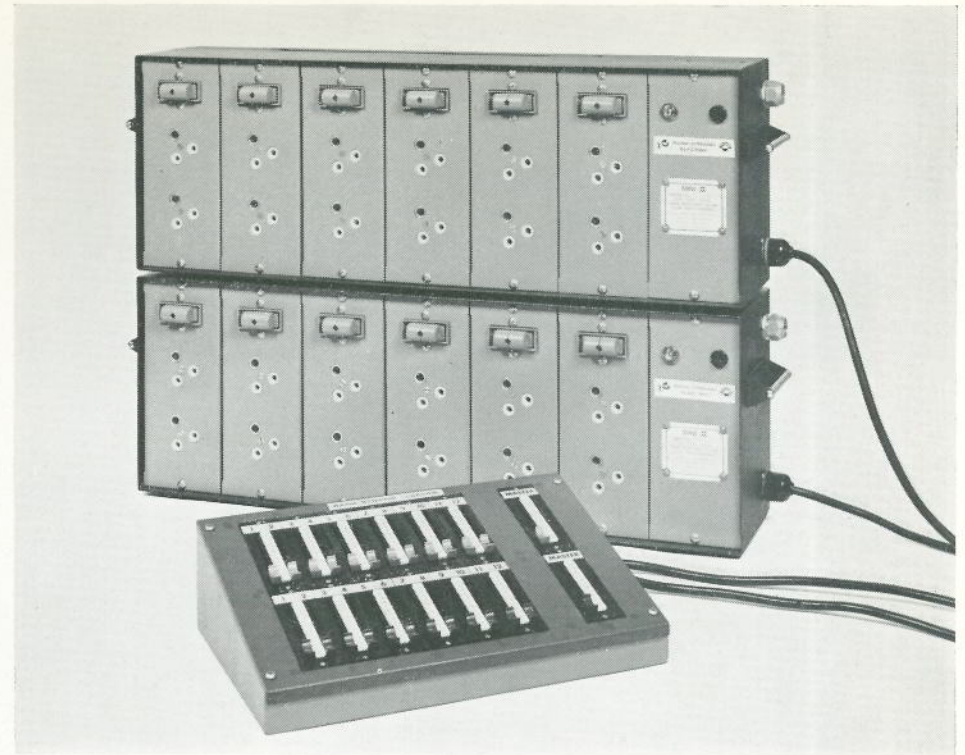
not only not available but we never thought of asking for. From this it follows today when considering a new switchboard it has to be of the preset type even though this may involve rather more expenditure than would normally be contemplated. The way to begin is to cut down on the dimmers but have an adequate control panel. Dimmers can then be added later—especially where as in the case of the Rank Strand Mini-2 it is just a matter of another pack—say a half-dozen at a time. Where the enterprise is very small indeed and there literally is no money then the sole survivor of the direct operated controls of yesterday, the



The Mini-2 racks and preset panel in the wings.

Junior 8, is appropriate but for not more than eight circuits (four dimmers)—unless of course as is sometimes proper it is intended to allow a number of children to "play" the control in concert.

What should happen in those cases where the school already possesses some now archaic contraption—even though it may be but a few years old? In this case it either has to be replaced or the lighting design and changes must accept the rigid discipline of the few things such a control will permit.



Two six-channel 2kW Mini-2 portable dimmer packs with twelve way 2-preset control panel.

The aim must be few but effective lighting changes rather than to attempt something which—even if it comes off by some miracle at rehearsal is certain to fail before the audience. Nevertheless it must be repeated that a Preset control is the only real answer. One will have to be obtained sooner or later and the new Mini-2 is an excellent and relatively inexpensive way of going about it. Each pack has six 2-kW variable-load thyristor dimmers each with two 15-amp socket outlets, so even the smallest arrangement can control a dozen circuits and 12,000 watts of lighting. Compact and light in weight all the equipment is portable—readily carried around and stowed as necessary. Alternatively, it can easily be used to form a permanent installation. Just plug in the lights and connect the mains. Control panels are available to operate up to three

such packs. The dimmer packs can each be separately fed or a common main can be used if available. They can be placed together one on top of the other or decentralised and placed locally with the particular lights they feed. Only the control panel then is common to all, connected to the dimmer packs by plug-in flexible multi-core control cables. For larger installations there is a 20- or 30-channel dimmer rack to which wiring would then be permanently connected, appropriate preset desks are available and beyond is the whole range of Rank Strand control systems—the most comprehensive in the world.

The control panel not only provides two sets of clearly numbered levers with plotting scales and master faders but these levers are the famous Rank Strand finger tip controls—lighting literally at the finger tips.

Super Projection in the Garden at the Garden

We have been claiming something really special for the two scene projectors recently made for the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. "For the first time scene projection with full stage lighting" we declare. "Nonsense," is the retort. "It was done years ago and quite commonly since." But the Director, Peter Hall, in a letter to the Editor of *Tab* has this to say—

"I have seen projection used in theatres all over the world but I have never known it possible before *The Knot Garden* to give performers strong lighting without making the projection disappear. This is why I have always avoided the use of projection as scenery (as opposed to effects)

in the past. There is a further point: the intensity of the projections in *The Knot Garden* gave the visual image a strength which I have not seen achieved before. The images were not atmospheric and pale like watercolours, but strong and uncompromising. I did not believe the problem was capable of solution when we began our experiments. Rank Strand and my colleagues at the Royal Opera House met the challenge. As far as I am concerned, a lot of images will be possible in the future which would have been pale and insignificant in the past."

Each of the two Rank Strand projectors in question provides a minimum intensity of 130 lux (12 ft. candles if you prefer) over

a picture size of 68 ft. by 41 ft. at a distance of 140 ft. The readings above being taken with the transparency slides in the projector. One projector only that is—the second being to cover in-view scene changes.

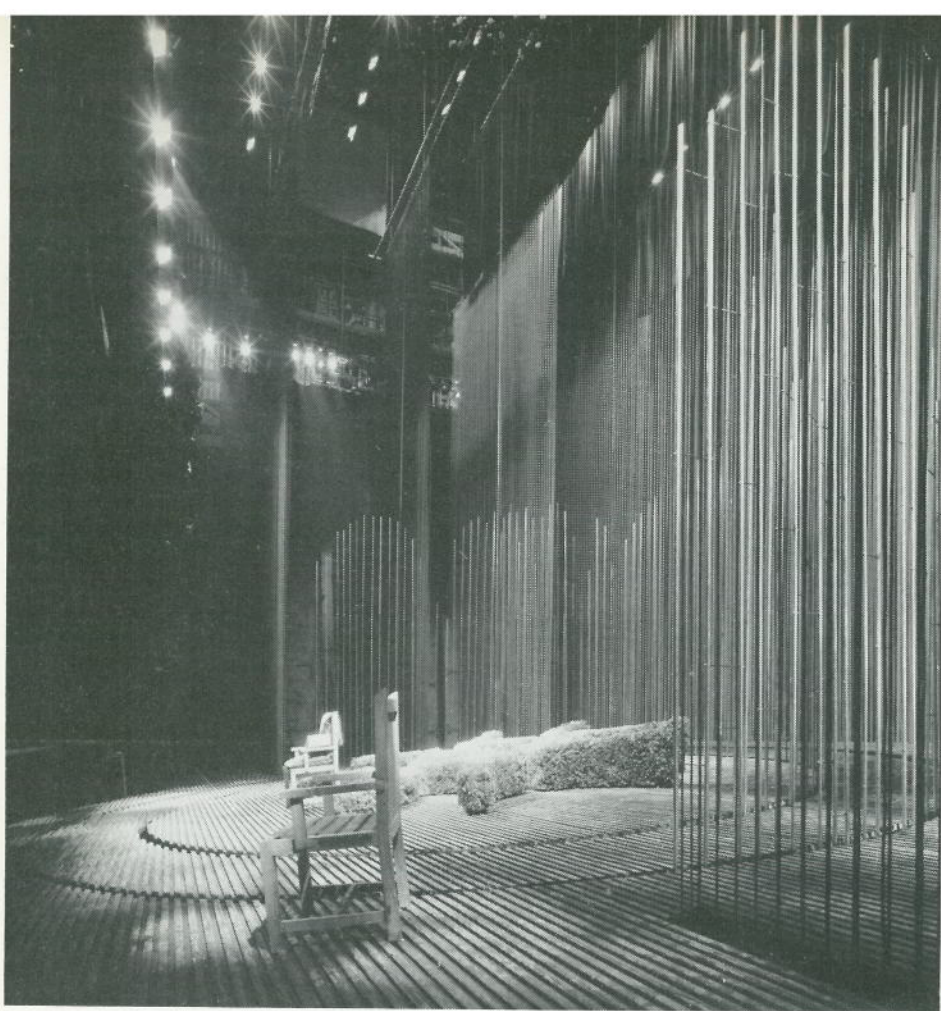
Timothy O'Brien's sets for Peter Hall's production of Sir Michael Tippett's new opera *The Knot Garden*, which had ecstatic notices, depend absolutely on one glass slide in one special projector. The set itself wings and all is composed of nylon ropes, $\frac{7}{16}$ " thick hanging 2" apart staggered in two rows. The basic technique will be familiar to those who have seen the Svoboda sets for *Three Sisters* at the National Theatre. At Covent Garden scene projection on the ropes is everything whereas for *Three Sisters* any projection was an auxiliary to achieve texturing. The actual built scenery used for *The Knot Garden* is slight.

Early on it had to be decided whether

this form of setting could be made to work and resort was made to a model. A well-tried theatre principle except that in this case it was not the usual half-inch scale or less affair but one quarter full size! Building this opposite the goods lift in a warehouse it was possible to raise the Patt. 152 projector used as a scale representation of what ultimately would be used. An idea of the size of the model is given by the familiar Patt. 23 500-watt spots placed down front right of the photograph (p. 19). This also shows the concentric revolves each carrying a series of tubes which appear to intertwine as they take up their different positions. The effect of these free-standing rods is to add to the optical confusion of the ropes. The projection of a scenic slide flat-on from out front makes a teaser which it is impossible for the eye to help the brain resolve. The projected image goes through every-

Projected scenery for The Knot Garden at the Royal Opera House.





The Knot Garden: view of set from the wings of the Royal Opera House.

thing and eventually lands up on the backcloth but is intercepted in part on the way by the ropes and rods.

The result appears solid yet has the true intangible in-depth quality of leafy trees. Thus from such improbably non-naturalistic beginnings one gets an impression of the most realistic leafy glade ever seen on the stage—certainly at Covent Garden. When the ropes are rocked slightly the impression is of the wind blowing the leaves. Such words are tame for such a stupendous *trompe d'oeil* and *coup de théâtre*. Even with one of our rare TABS excursions into colour we can only give a poor indication of the result.

The Royal Opera House not only did not have a suitable projector for this production (nor did anyone else) but there was no projection room for it anyway. To get the necessary near flat-on throw, twenty-four seats have to be removed slap in the centre of the grand tier and a temporary projection room erected. Repertoire is played, so the room with its two projectors has to appear and disappear—the projectors being hidden away under the staircase in the grand crush bar. An operation which takes three hours. Architects and theatre consultants should take warning and note the need for a flat-on soundproof projection position and try to incorporate such a thing in any new theatre

design. There can be no doubt that such techniques may be a common requirement one day.

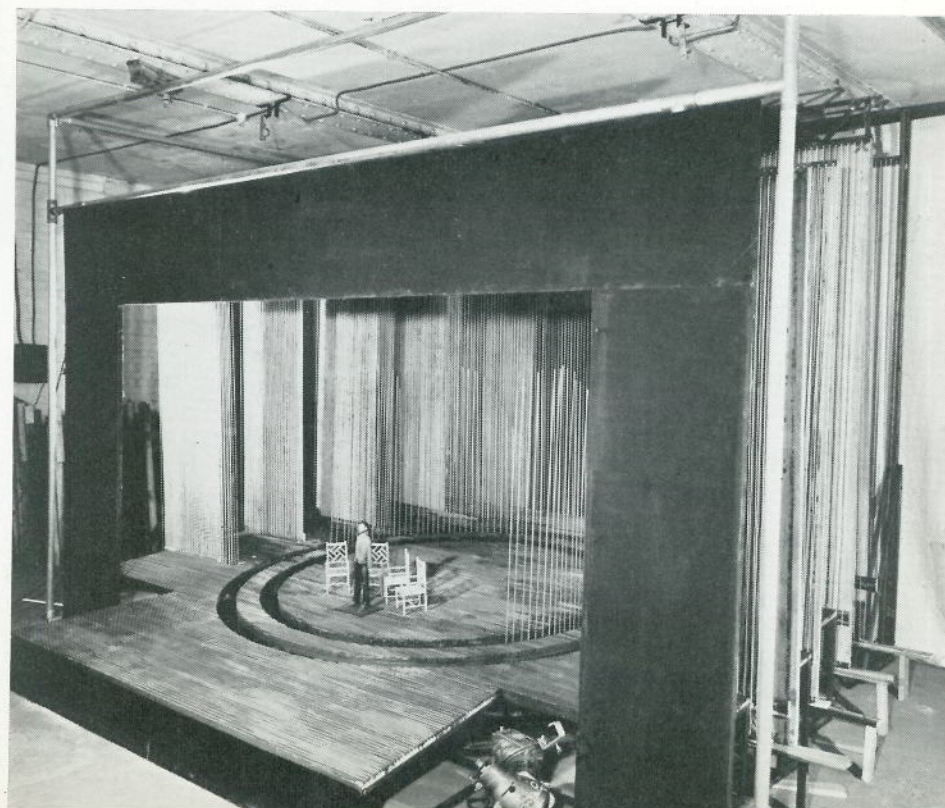
The projection has to be flat-on and near dead level, not because of the distortion problem but to minimise the shadow area cast upstage by the proscenium frame and to ensure that the repeating images on the ropes and backcloth do not appear to descend. Put another way, the projected image is not required on the stage floor so much as in borders overhead and leg wings at the sides. As it is even the largest proscenium opening is going to blank off areas beyond it which the audience looking up from the front stalls will see as considerable blanks. To cover these, six Patt. 752 4-kW standard Rank Strand scene projectors were placed on the bridge and their slides blended in. It is a solemn thought that whereas one of the special projectors does the whole of the vast main picture, three Patt. 752 projectors have to be used for what are virtually

off-stage areas. Indeed for one scene all six are alight.

For the benefit of the technical we now describe the designing of the special projectors in rather more detail than we usually allow in TABS to equipment. R. A. McKenzie who was responsible for the design of these specials and for a large part of the old Strand Electric's optical design through the years writes:

Tests had already shown that the standard Rank Strand Patt. 752 4-kW scene projectors were inadequate, so a Cine-meccanica X4000 lantern with a 2.5 kW Xenon lamp was mounted up with spreader and condenser lenses and a Dallmeyer 8 in. focus $f/2$ "Super Six" objective lens in the laboratory at Brentford. Experiments with this showed that satisfactory projection of 4 in. by $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. slides was possible, but that it would be necessary to use 4-kW Xenon lamps if adequate intensity was to be

The Knot Garden: quarter full-sized model erected for preliminary tests in a warehouse.



obtained. The use of these lamps however made the problem of adequately cooling the slides much more difficult. Filtering out the infra-red energy was not sufficient, since so much visible light was being converted into heat by the slide. The problem was finally resolved by using glass colour slides without cover glasses, and directing a stream of cooling air on both sides. In addition to this, two heat absorbing glass filters were placed in the beam between the mirror and condenser system. The problem of handling the slides was overcome by increasing the glass size to 4 in. by 4 in., leaving a plain $\frac{3}{4}$ in. section at the bottom of the picture slide. Special slide carriers were designed and produced to grip the sides of the slides and leave the bottom and top unobstructed. Adjustable masks were fitted to confine the picture within the stage frame.

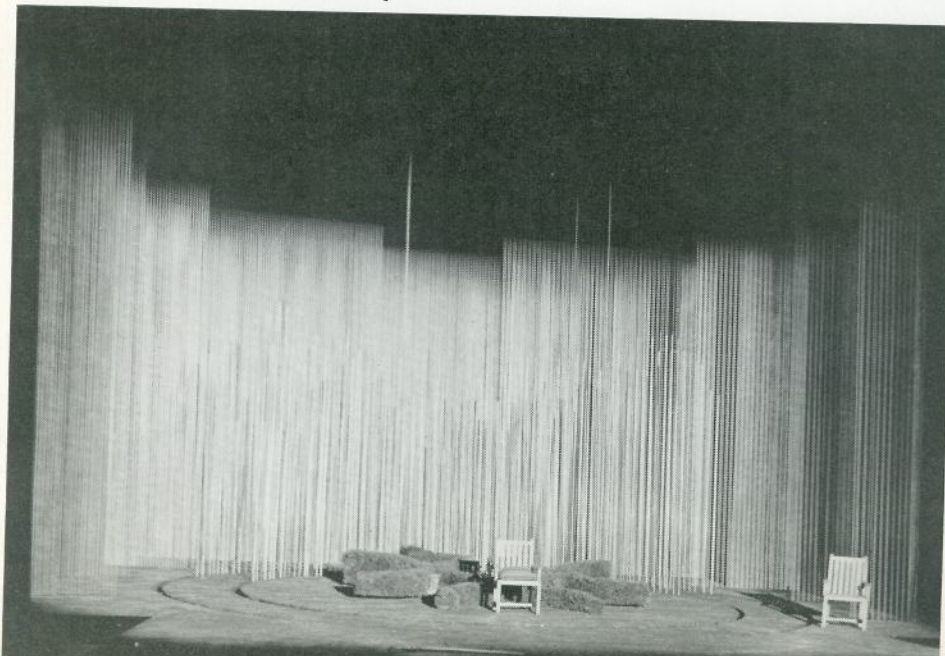
The noise made by the slide and lamp cooling blowers was considerable, so the projectors were housed in a soundproof projection booth in the centre of the grand tier. The booth had to be dismantled and stored after each performance, wiring and ventilation ducting being hidden in the ceiling.

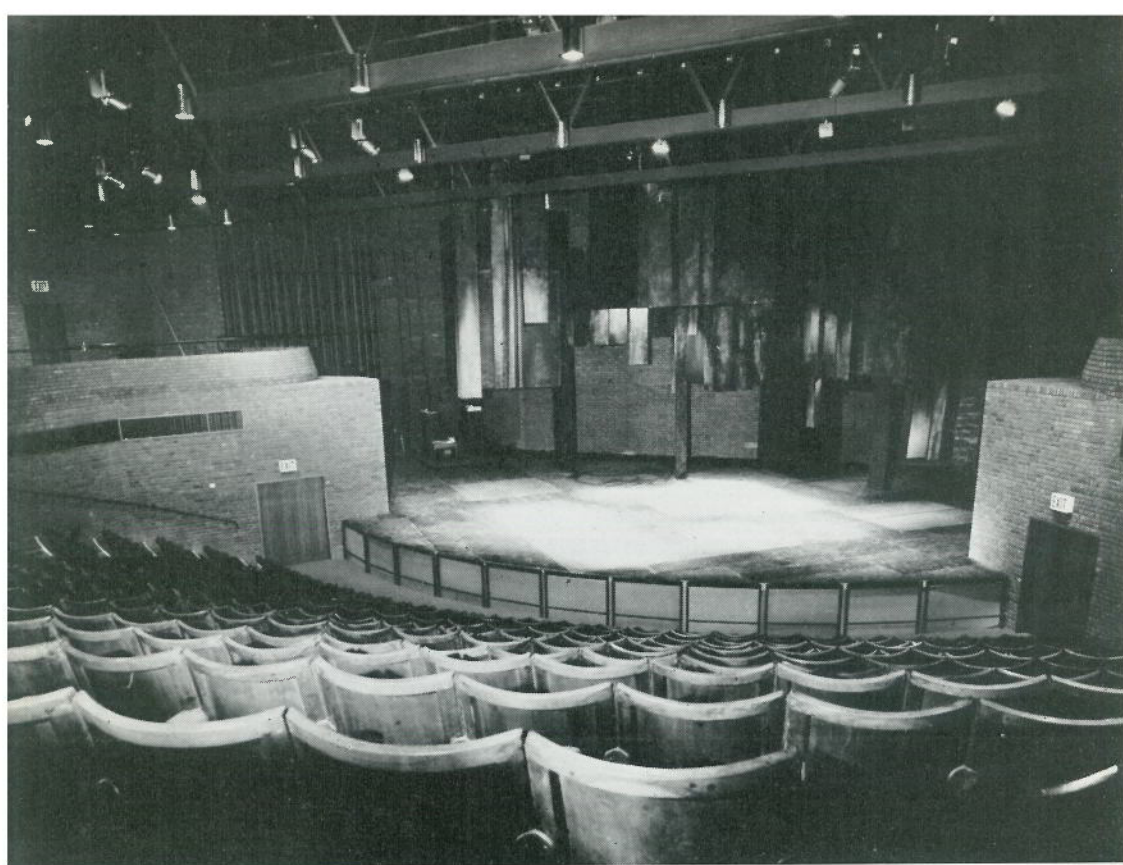
The rectifiers were installed underneath the back of the stalls with remote controls in the projection booth, and enabled the lamp current to be varied between 25 and 125 amps at 33 volts d.c.

The Cinemeccanica equipment was supplied by Rank Film Equipment Limited. The slide projection adaptation and electrical installation by Rank Strand Electric.

The set design is by Timothy O'Brien, with lighting by John Bury. The Technical Director at the Royal Opera is William Bundy. The Chief Electrician is Bill McGee.

The Knot Garden: (below) the set illuminated by only one FOH scene projector without a slide. Note the dark areas at the top which appear deeper from this stalls' view as the proscenium border shadow travels up-stage, the set being 64 ft. deep.





University Theatre, Newcastle

Martin Carr

The principal feature in the open end stage theatre, Mermaid form, is the intimacy of contact between audience and actor which derives from the enclosure of both seating and acting area within a single space—a space in which the walls of the auditorium are seen to encompass the stage.

The limitation of the Mermaid or the Phoenix at Leicester is the lack of scenery handling facilities and the absence of down stage entrances. The same difficulties occur at the Maltings, Snape, on a larger scale, and ever since the opening of these buildings students of theatre architecture have wondered how this form of theatre would work if provided with wings and flying space around and over the stage. Now at

last this has been attempted and the results are to be seen at the new University Theatre at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Fortunately, the University had the good sense to choose not only an architect who is noted for the elegance and style of his design, but one who is also greatly interested in the whole subject of Theatre. Even if one may feel, as I do, that William Whitfield has not produced an entirely satisfactory auditorium design, one cannot help but be aware that this is a distinguished building and a very welcome addition to the limited list of exciting new theatres in this country.

The building is unusually well sited for a University theatre, being relatively close to the centre of the city, and immediately

opposite the Civic Centre. Indeed the restrained elegance of the theatre makes a pleasing contrast with the flamboyance of the Civic Centre, although when additional buildings are completed the theatre will be partially hidden from the public gaze. This in itself will not be the great disadvantage it might seem since the road which now fronts the site is to be reconstructed into a motorway, and the additional buildings will provide useful acoustic screening.

At the moment the theatre is incomplete, and we must await the addition of these extra buildings before we can see it in its full realisation. The missing items are the main foyer and principal entrance, both of which will be at first-floor level, and will provide a direct link with a multi-storey car park. Fortunately the existing building is not entirely devoid of foyer space, although this is somewhat cramped for a capacity audience.

The theatre building is actually a small complex comprising two separate auditoria, the major seating 449 with the end stage, and the minor being a flexible studio space of variable capacity up to a maximum of around 200. The studio has its own public entrance, and ticket office and uses dressing rooms that can be separated from those of the major stage when the occasion demands. Thus the two auditoria can function entirely independently and are in fact separately administered.

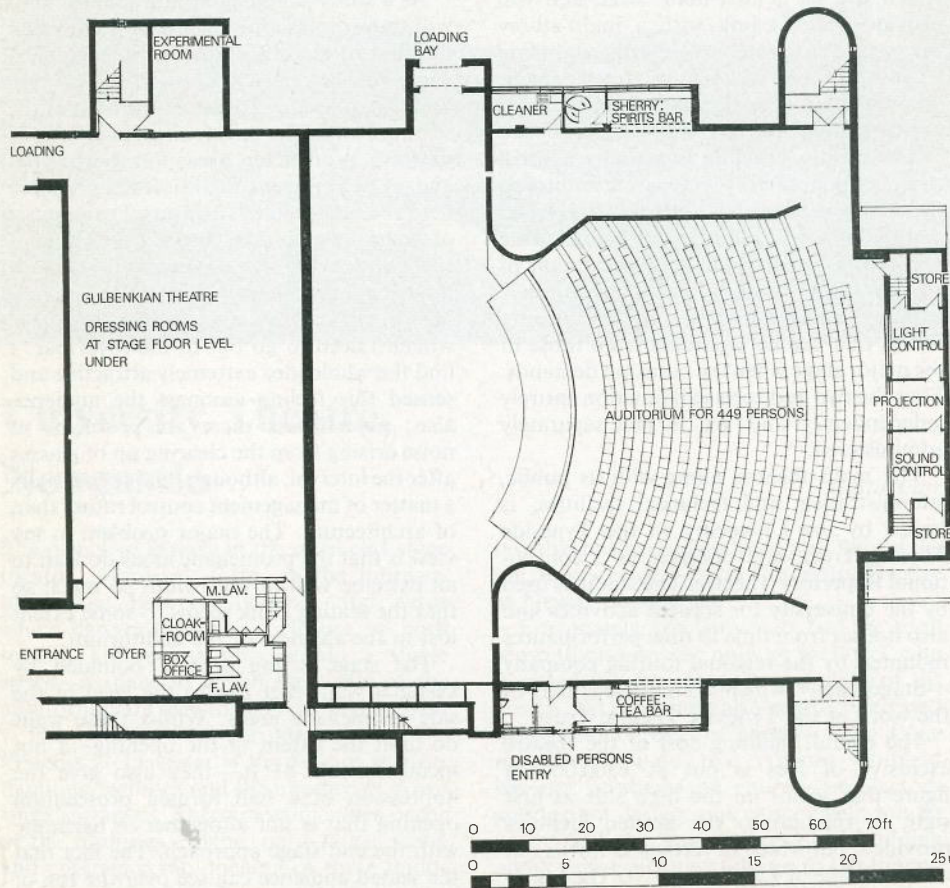
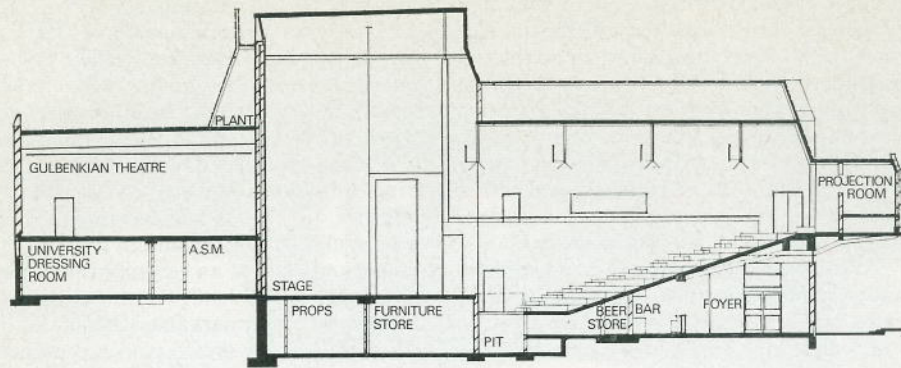
The main theatre, along with its public, administrative, and technical facilities, is leased by the University to the Tyneside Theatre Trust, and operates as a conventional Repertory Theatre. The studio is used by the University for student activities and also houses from time to time performances mounted by the regional touring company—Stagecoach—which is an integral part of the work of the Tyneside Theatre Trust.

The overall building cost of the theatre exclusive of fees is put at £360,000—a figure that seems on the high side at first sight in relation to the limited facilities provided, but which nevertheless works out at an average of £10·7 per sq. ft. The building does not include any workshop facilities and administrative office space is at a premium. Nevertheless, the floor area totals

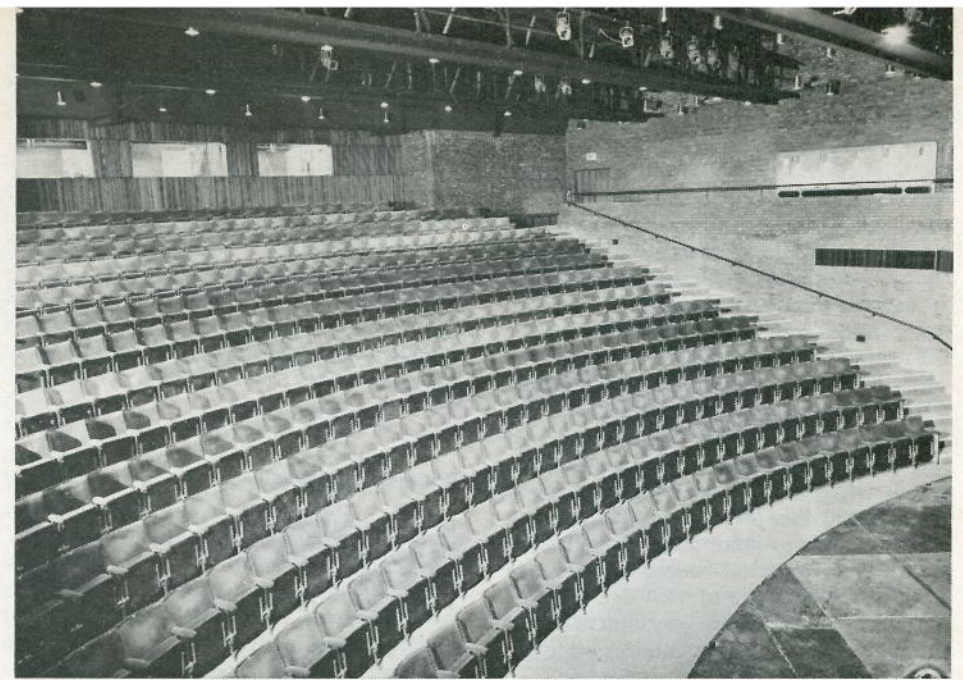
33,660 sq. ft. which is surprising when compared with the Thorndike total of 32,293 sq. ft. Under these circumstances the £10·7 per sq. ft. seems remarkably good value for money at today's rapidly rising building costs, and seems even more reasonable in view of the extremely high standard of workmanship displayed by the Main Contractor (Stephen Easton of Newcastle). The finishes in the public areas are of an extremely high order, and in particular the joinery work is of an elegance rarely found these days. This is all the more surprising in view of the remarkable schedule of only 19 months from sketch plan acceptance to opening.

As a study of the plans and photographs will show, not only is the major auditorium unusual in respect of the open-stage-plus-wings format, but the main auditorium walls are placed well outside the limit of the seating bank. The intervening space is used to form promenade areas on both sides and as refreshment facilities are provided here the audience has the novel experience of being able to take interval refreshment without leaving the auditorium. Only a limited range of wines and coffee is available in these areas, and the hard drinkers will still need to go out to the foyer bar. I find the whole idea extremely attractive and sensed this feeling amongst the audience also; nevertheless there are problems of noise arising from the clearing up of glasses after the interval, although this is principally a matter of management control rather than of architecture. The major problem in my view is that the promenade areas do lead to an extreme wall-to-wall width so much so that the seating bank seems to some extent lost in the vastness of the auditorium.

The stage acting area is bounded by vestigial walls that rise to the level of the side promenade areas. Whilst these walls do limit the extent of the opening—a not inconsiderable 41 ft.—they also give the impression of a half formed proscenium opening that is not altogether in harmony with the end stage approach. The fact that the seated audience can see over the top of these walls and is thus aware of movement of scenery in the wings and the travel of the counterweight cradles produces a conflict



University Theatre, Newcastle
Architects: Whitfield Partners



University Playhouse, Newcastle: lighting bridges overhead and control rooms at rear.

of styles that many people may well find irritating. Personally, I withhold final judgment until I have seen a range of plays performed on this stage. The new Peter Terson documentary *Prisoners of the War* was ideally suited to this stage as one would expect of a commissioned play and the scenery was equally satisfying. Nevertheless I found my eye constantly wandering into the wings and could not help but feel sorry for the stage staff who are permanently exposed to the gaze of the audience. This exposure of the backstage areas can be exciting as an occasional exercise—*Oliver* was a case in point—but as a regular member of an audience I might prefer to find more traditional side masking arrangements the rule rather than the exception. I can see little difficulty in arranging this at Newcastle but the problem of top masking is more acute.

At the moment the whole of the upper area of the stage is exposed from side to side, front to back, right up to grid level—40 ft. The lighting catwalk that lies just forward of the proscenium line is high at roughly 22 ft., and this in itself poses problems of lighting for anything other than a

completely open stage. All might be well if the upper stage areas were permanently dark—utterly and completely—but this can never be the case due to reflections, ghost light and general spill, especially from an orchestra. In consequence one is again very much aware of the grid and its equipment, and personally I see no reason why a permanent front border could not be introduced above the catwalk level to hide all these distractions. With such carefully localised down lighting as already exists one need never be aware of a framed velvet border, and I do not feel that this would in any way conflict with the idea of the single encompassing volume.

On a more technical note, there is an excellent suite of three rooms for control and projection. The principal lighting positions are the four auditorium bridges, seemingly very practical and exceptionally neatly detailed to coincide with the roof trusses. There is an elaborate patching arrangement which allows 336 outlets to be brought back to 80 dimmers, but the patching is divided, there being 160 cords in the dimmer room with further local patching at the end of each catwalk and on

the grid. For economy reasons the patching system uses 3-pin plugs and sockets, but with 3-phase supplies and a tangle of cords the whole arrangement seems not entirely happy. A full counterweight wall frame is fitted with a limited number of sets currently installed. These are operated from stage level. There is an orchestra pit of about 300 sq. ft. area which can be covered to form an apron and when this is in use the full depth of the stage is a staggering 44 ft. The actual playing area is thus equal to that of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The stage riser is 3 ft. which is surprisingly high in a single-tiered auditorium with stepped seating, and whilst one can see that this produces a useful height in the wardrobe and plant areas below stage, it nevertheless seems too high in relation to the angle of viewing. The fact that the fascia panels are very light in colour probably draws the eye unnecessarily to this feature.

The Gulbenkian Studio—now the third theatre to bear this name—is a straightforward rectangle 70 ft. by 38 ft. by 18 ft. headroom with a fixed grid of lighting barrel and a surrounding cyclorama track. There is a control room with 30-way console but for my taste the studio is overlong in relation to its width. The acting areas thus tend to become elongated with a consequent loss in intimacy. Nevertheless it forms a

very useful space and houses a wide variety of activities.

In sum, while I remain to be convinced about the validity of the stage form and its practicability, nevertheless I find this a very attractive theatre, and one which it is a pleasure to enter. I now look forward to the completion of the foyers, and also to the establishment of a “house style” of scenic design and production that will utilise the unusual qualities of the stage to the full.

Lighting Installation

University Theatre:
80-way Strand SP 3 preset
8 × 5 kW
72 × 2 kW JTM dimmers

Patch System:
160 cords feeding 336 socket outlets.
Made up patch system using standard 3-pin 15-amp sockets and short tails.

Gulbenkian Theatre:
30-way Strand SP 2 preset
All 1 kW dimmers

Patch system:
144 outlets located on grid using internally wired barrels.
Patch as above.

Performances Had To Be Given In the Dark

Frederick Bentham

We are about to resolve a trilemma. There is according to the O.E.D. such a word—one up on a dilemma. The “tri” part is represented by the arrival on the editor’s desk of three very different theatre books all of which one wanted to review oneself. Fortunately a line in the first book (page 13 in fact) presented me with my title. All three authors and indeed the present reviewer have had much to do with stage

lighting, the key to visual theatre—whatever its shape and content.

The books themselves are very different from each other. Basil Dean’s *Seven Ages*¹ is the first of a two-part autobiography and takes us up to 1927. Specific mention of lighting there is little, although Mr. Dean was a great pioneer in lighting. Jo

¹ *Seven Ages*, Basil Dean, Hutchinson, London.

Mielziner’s is on theatre planning and Richard Pilbrow’s deals with lighting only.

Perversely let’s begin with this last. Let it be known here and now that this is because stage lighting is TABS’ real subject from which it too often strays and not because it is the only book of the three which mentions the name of Frederick Bentham or Rank Strand Electric! Mr. Pilbrow’s book invites comparison with those of that individual but in fact is very different for it really does concentrate on the *process of lighting*. Like Stanley McCandless’ in 1932 it is based on the lighting process rather than the equipment. Incidentally, it is a much more comprehensive work than the McCandless.

We shall never really be able to resolve which came first in history, the equipment or the need. Latterly I have come to believe that the two processes of stage lighting development have been virtually completely separate—each with its own momentum. Lighting begets lighting and equipment begets equipment and mulishly they will not interbreed. So it may be with the theatres in which the plays and productions find themselves. The playwright did not demand any particular form—not even when he was Shakespeare—but rather used whatever was to hand. So too Basil Dean saw the Schwabe equipment in Germany or the baby spots in America and brought them over here to use. Even the indirect system of lighting which was such a great favourite (and still is!) of his had its origin with Belasco and Hartman. But did it? Fortuny used indirect lighting for the cyclorama and Schwabe had an indirect footlight. There was a climate of indirectness about in lighting. Lamps were put in heavy alabaster bowls to throw the light up to the ceiling in private drawing rooms, while in theatres, cinemas and hotels the lamps were concealed behind cornices. It must have been a reaction from the gas or candle sources which could not be so concealed. So an aloof wash of heavenly light was the thing where nowadays we would go for multiple sources and sparkle. Basil Dean indeed himself used candles:

“... most of the memories of my childhood are as gay and brightly coloured as the

figures in the toy theatre handed down to me from my grandfather. This was a complete model of a nineteenth-century theatre, with sliding grooves for the scenery, trap-door, a roller curtain, fire-pans for burning red, blue and green fire in the wings. There was always difficulty over the blue fire because the little Victorian toyshop round the corner so rarely had it in stock. A row of practical footlights, fed from a trough of colza oil, completed the equipment. The stuffy, sweet smell of that oil lingers in memory as it did in the nursery atmosphere. On that model stage I presented everything, from nautical drama with sinking pirate ships and cutters of the Royal Navy to the rescue, manned by sailors in hard hats and stiff pigtails (*Red Rover*), or a fast-moving panorama of the road to York, contrived by winding a painted back-cloth behind a galloping highwayman on a black horse (*Dick Turpin*), to an elaborate transformation scene at the end of a legend (*The Maid and the Magpie*). I contrived extra lighting effects by the use of candles in the wings. There was also a bull’s-eye lantern with coloured glasses for limelight. Performances had to be given in the dark, so nursery routine was disorganised, particularly when the ‘gala’ performances took place. The gala performance might go on all day long, with results utterly incomprehensible, but this did not seem to trouble my small sister, faithful audience of one of all my play-making. She was content to peer for hours through that little cardboard proscenium. Her small eager face with its ringletted curls lighted by the flickering candles would have made a worthwhile subject for an artist. Yet woe betide her if she tried to interrupt the performance! And woe betide anyone who opened the door suddenly and destroyed my lighting effects! There would be tantrums for the rest of the day . . .

I like to think that I absorbed some of the essential mystery that is Theatre in the long hours I spent playing in that way. And what enchanted hours they were!”

Later on his baby spots had to come all the way from America; they could not have originated here because our lamp manufacturers were so backward. It is the theatre’s misfortune that the technical side, and not sheer perversity on the part of those who design equipment, causes it to depend on advance elsewhere. It has to latch onto something going on in the engineering

world outside and bend it or adapt it to its will. Only in recent years has it been possible to mass-produce certain items for stage lighting itself—to achieve the necessary quantity for this. The acting area floods and parallel beam pageants that formed basic British stage lighting wherever any power was required represented all we could do to provide a bright light with the things to hand in Britain at that time. The first real lamp for baby spots, i.e. 500 watts in a small bulb did not get made here until 1952 and a fine wangle it was to get that! The Americans, as Basil Dean relates, had a 400-watt one in the early 1920s.

It is quite a thought that Mr. Dean was born in 1888, just seven years after there opened the first theatre to claim "... the Entire Theatre Stage and Auditorium, is lighted by Electricity". The early days and the chances which led to his appearance on the stage as an actor are lovingly detailed. The transformation of actor into producer, or director as he is now called, provides us at Liverpool with the Basil Dean we have known, or known of, for so long. Until, that is, one reminds oneself that in 1911 at Liverpool he was 23. In the events that follow and crowd in one upon the other he was still a young man—certainly an "angry" one at times as well! Even when the book closes in 1927 after 333 tightly packed eventful pages he is only 39. These early times read like a novel except of course they are really history and written by one of those who was making it.

Basil Dean could never really be regarded as pro-Strand Electric, and it was only in later life he came to love us, or at any rate us him! Yet he did the old firm a good turn (stand by for the *modest* reviewer in action) with his production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Drury Lane. Not that he used any Strand Electric equipment, as far as I know, but I went there at the age of twelve and it was this production that hit me with the powers of lighting in the spectacular side of theatre. Of *Chu Chin Chow* I only remember scenery and Oscar Ashe's finger nails. Of that *Dream* however I can see the George Harris sets in my mind's eye even now. The change to another part of the wood by front projection (on a

gauze, I suppose). The dawn on a cyclorama, uncovered for the purpose by drawing painted cloth drapes aside, at the end of the long night. The great palace set and finally the fairies arriving to finish off on a lift way up-stage. A terrific cast for all this left the great unsolved mystery as to why this was not the Shakespeare run of all time. That it was guillotined by Sir Alfred Butt after only a few weeks to make way for *Rose Marie* now becomes clear.

What would we, including Mr. Dean himself, think of the lighting of his Drury Lane production now, or of *Hassan* at His Majesty's, or of the many productions at the St. Martin's—above all *Johnson over Jordan* at the New as late as 1939. In memory one can revisit these productions and the lighting is recalled as jolly good. From contemporary press cuttings one finds an occasional remark about his lighting being too dim in his Schwabe-Hasait cyclorama days at St. Martin's, but we read similar notices occasionally for Covent Garden even today with 1½ megawatts on call. The only certain things are that the general level of lights *everywhere* was much lower than today and that there were far, far fewer pieces of equipment used. Also of course that the director did his own lighting. The expert, except in the sense of the manufacturer of the stuff or the electrician who hung and wired it, was not around then.

Richard Pilbrow—also a model theatre enthusiast—belongs to the age of the multi-lantern complexity where a specialist, as he explains, becomes essential if the director is to attend to his proper function. Jo Mielziner as a scene and costume designer who also did his own lighting is a kind of middle man—a not too specialist specialist. Indeed he has put his horizons wider than that, since his present book is about *The Shapes of Our Theatre*² from the angle of a theatre consultant. A role he has played in the design of several theatres including the Vivian Beaumont in the Lincoln Center. If I recollect properly there are 800 stage lighting circuits there, mercifully not all

² *The Shapes of our Theatre*, Jo Mielziner, Potter, New York. \$6.95

for use at once but rather to allow repertoire playing. Though I do not think the Beaumont has been so used yet.

This theatre is described by Mr. Mielziner as multiform to be used as a proscenium theatre and an open-thrust stage. He relates that he "pointed out that to meet the production schedule of a repertory company for a two-hour changeover between matinee and evening, it would be imperative to install expensive automatic mechanical equipment". He stresses that this form of theatre is "designed for dramatic productions of plays only". What Mr. Mielziner and the late Eero Saarinen, the architect, would have preferred was two separate theatres. "One of them would have been pure Thrust Stage and the other pure Proscenium." The committee overruled them and even talked about "a basic multi-use scheme." A "compromise of a dual-form design" was reached, but the "original proposition would have been the wiser decision, and ultimately far cheaper in both initial costs and in subsequent operating costs".

I quote this chapter, "Multichoice in a Single Theatre", particularly because the idea of multi-form loosely called "adaptable theatre" over here bedevils some of our theatre schemes. In America there are numerous examples in existence and much money has been squandered on machinery and bright ideas to make them *work*. The trouble is that when the rheumatic robot has jerked into its various caricatures of theatre forms the question then arises does it really work as a theatre, or inspire theatre work in it? He concludes this chapter with three pages of wisdom on "Uncommitted Theatre Spaces" equally applicable over here.

Jo Mielziner's book is essentially for practical use. While it does, as those of us who have heard him talk would expect, cough up from time to time the telling phrase it is not a literary work. The text is relatively short, there is no loving lingering and little anecdote: on the other hand there is none of the verbal diarrhoea that afflicts most American technical writers. The diagrams are clear and bold. They could easily be passed around a committee to make a point rather than enjoyed for their own sake. They are shorn of detail to be the more

easily understood. They are not plans and sections of buildings as architecture but diagrammatic representations of people within the various shapes of theatre. With their aid the development of the shapes through the ages is rapidly traced, then a survey made of what is around us today followed by advice for the future. Our own Georgian theatre receives, I fear, scant attention compared with the Italian horse-shoe. Nothing indicates a future for it. Perhaps it hasn't one; certainly Mr. Mielziner seems to be a confrontation man at heart. His centre stage project, domed overall, seems rather intimidating. Maybe it is the word "arena" which leads Americans astray on scale—our own theatre-in-the-round sounds (and is) more intimate and homely.

Chapter VI, "The Program", points to the need of making up one's mind as to what is wanted and writing it down as a checklist before the building starts. In what we would call drawing up the brief I like in particular: "The preliminary program should be a statement in which the needs and aims of the theatre are clearly and definitely outlined, and approved by the owner-client. It need not be long or detailed but it must state what the building should *not* be expected to accomplish, as well as what it will be designed to do."

One thing is certain, whatever the shape and wherever it is built, the actors in these theatres will need lighting, and I notice that what I declared earlier in this article would be first lands up last. Richard Pilbrow's book *Stage Lighting*³ is a lavish Studio Vista publication with masses of illustrations and diagrams—lots of them very good indeed. However, in a sense the visual side of the book is so much scenery, the layout-man has been setting the stage rather than illustrating it. There is the same queer whim at work, which all of us technical authors suffer under, that blows up something trivial while reducing something really important to micro dimensions. Not all illustrations are from good quality photographs in the first place. Anyone who did

³ *Stage Lighting*, Richard Pilbrow, Studio Vista, London. £3.15

not see *On the Level* would have little idea what is going on in plates 27 and 28 for example. Some others, particularly from America, are too much soot and whitewash, and then there is the absence of actors. It is said of architecture, and theatre architecture is no exception, that it should never—as it nearly always is—be photographed without the people to which it forms a background. This applies with equal force to stage sets and lighting. The trouble is that it is so very difficult and expensive to do—especially if, as we should, we want colour as well. Yet if someone does not take this problem seriously we are going to be impotent to bequeath to those who follow us the visual feel of the populated theatres and peopled stage sets and lighting of our time. Posterity needs to see what Mr. Pilbrow's lighting for *Brand* at the Lyric, Hammersmith, looked like just as much as we would like to see or be reminded of Mr. Dean's lighting for that *Dream* of his way back in 1923. Why pick on *Brand* of the many productions Richard has lit? Well it was the first of his I saw and some of its techniques appear in this book. I suffered from the delusion that the resources used were simple, but even though they were tending towards multi-lantern that cannot alter the fact that the result, to quote his own words, "gave a staggering impression of misty views of the mountains and fiords of Norway".

Equipment in the book becomes "Part 2. Stage Lighting Mechanics", set rather as lecture notes would be. Very effective it is too as a way of getting a large amount of information in a compact space. Line sketches aid this, and in any case are much better than photographs at this small scale and also allow a non-calendered paper to help the 8 point letterpress. Lots of good things are packed here, including some very helpful aids to "doing" lighting in French, Italian and German.

It is "Part 1. Stage Lighting Design" which will be read rather than referred to. Here we have our leading lighting designer instructing the reader in the way he has come to think about lighting and the way he goes about it. The result is clear and to the

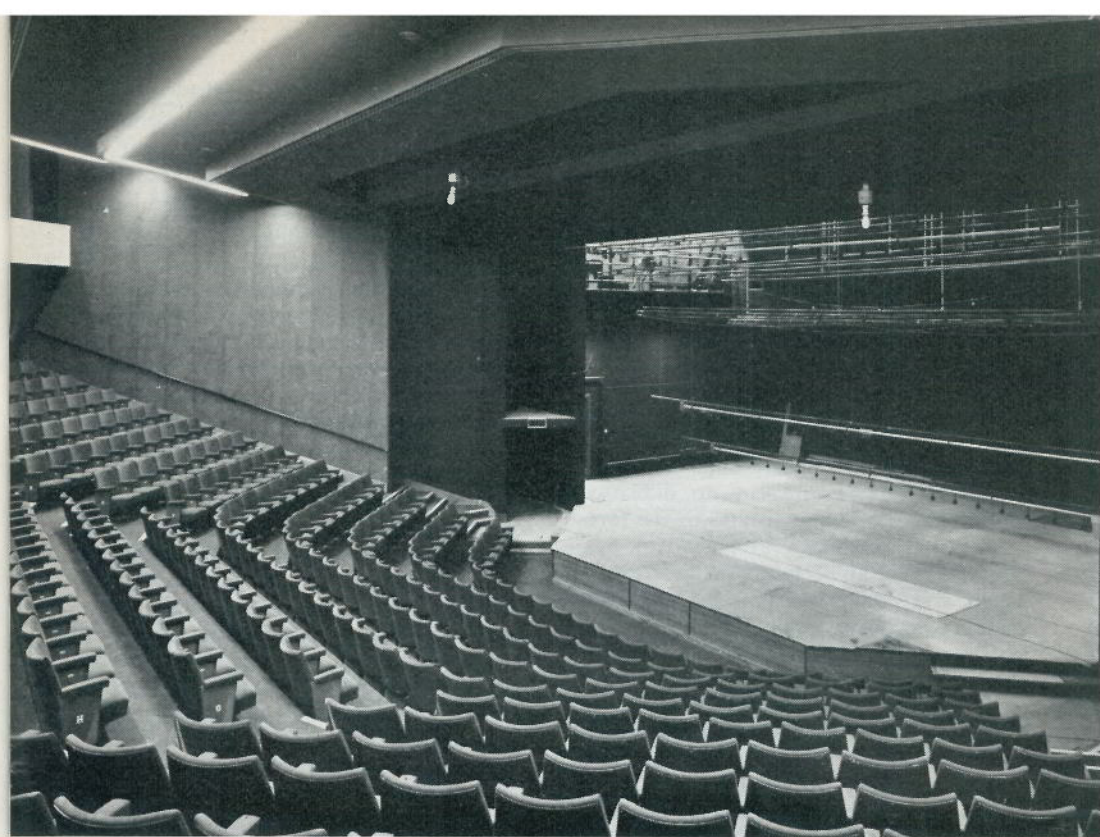
point and, since it is shorn of anecdote and digression, it is not overlong. It tells the would-be lighting designer exactly what he is dying to learn. Other theatre people should read Richard Pilbrow's book but if they find themselves becoming stuck it will simply mean that the actual *process* of lighting the stage is not for them and not that stage lighting is not for them; no one can do without it, not even the man who has to pay for it.

I was particularly glad to note on page 27,

"The motivating light, i.e. the source or sources of light on the stage will often be the key to the lighting composition of a scene. It is important that the director and the designers, both of set and lighting, consider carefully the placing of these sources in relation to the placing of the actors. Even more important is that, once decided upon, *these light sources should in turn influence the movement of the actors.* Behaviour is influenced by light. One sits by a light or by a window to read a book. These considerations are too often forgotten in the rehearsal room."

Elsewhere he says, "It is quite useless for the designer to pursue an idea of his own which is at variance with the director's intention", so let us end with Basil Dean as he began;

"The visit to my first pantomime holds an enchanted memory of a grand mechanical shipwreck. This took place in semi-darkness—'so that the audience won't see how it is done,' whispered my mother. When the lights came up again Crusoe had been washed ashore. He (she, really) lay fast asleep at the foot of a front-cloth depicting golden sands and palm trees. 'He' was spotlessly attired from head to foot in white, complete with feather parasol and the coolie hat from Indo-China, that apparently the part demands. I thought it the most beautiful picture I had ever seen. When my mother asked if I was enjoying myself, my eyes filled with tears and I could not say a word, so she just squeezed my hand. The stage of a theatre is a mysterious place, full of shadows and secrets of long ago. The spirit of make-believe that informs its proceedings can only make its presence felt in an atmosphere of faith and love."



The Shaw Theatre, Camden

Peter Woodham

In "New Theatres in Britain" the Editor says at the outset "A proposal to build a new theatre... provokes the questions 'What is it going to be used for?' 'How is it going to be used?' 'Where is the talent and money to build it going to come from?'—but even more important, 'Who runs it afterwards?'" With the Shaw Theatre it was the third question of talent and money which came first. Briefed to design a new central library for the St. Pancras council, Elidir Davies, architect, conceived the idea of a comprehensive development instead consisting of a library topped with a commercial office block, the profit from which would subsidise not only the library but also a theatre in the same

complex. Such a scheme, he argued, with public amenities financed and permanently subsidised by the commercial proceeds of office blocks has great possibilities and largely through his own efforts the project eventually went ahead.

So the plans included a theatre and it was now that the question "What is it going to be used for?" arose. The original brief was for that most hybrid of animals a "general-purpose hall". From this it evolved to the Shaw Theatre; to be capable of use for conferences, cinema shows, chamber music, chamber opera and professional drama—still pretty multi-purpose. The question is how well it will meet these varied requirements.

As a conference hall it should be ideal. The auditorium is warm in feeling with carpeted walls, the seating is comfortable and the lighting can be adjusted to any shade from red—the colour of the furnishings—to white. The sight lines from the main tier of seats are excellent though in the boxes, which seat 52 out of the total capacity of 503, some head-shifting will be necessary. Bar and coffee-bar are conveniently situated underneath the raked auditorium, and there is a large entrance foyer. For use as a cinema, a 35 mm. projection room is installed although there is as yet no equipment or screen, and chamber music concerts obviously present no difficulty. For chamber opera, a section of the fore-stage is in the form of a lift. At 18 ft. x 6 ft. this allows for an orchestra on the lift of a piano and about five players but more could be accommodated in the stage cellar if necessary, though the acoustics would be doubtful.

When one moves on to the stage to consider its use for professional theatre one's attitude to what is almost an end stage must colour any opinions and I must confess my preference as a stage manager for lots of wing space. Here one has 8 ft. each side, the planned 32 ft. opening having been enlarged at the time of building to 40 ft., though one can reduce this with the house tabs. These present an associated problem in that there is not now room to draw them out of sight between the proscenium opening and the fly galleries, so the track has to turn upstage thereby masking the prompt corner (stage right) when the tabs are open. An alternative position for the prompt-corner desk is provided in the projection room.

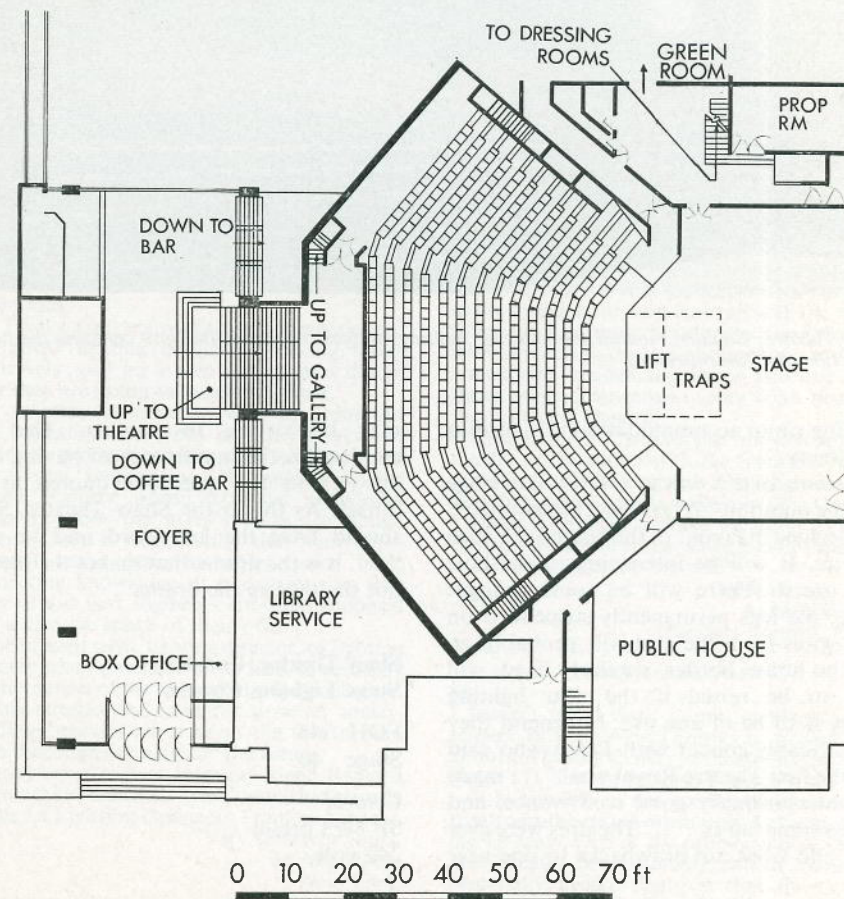
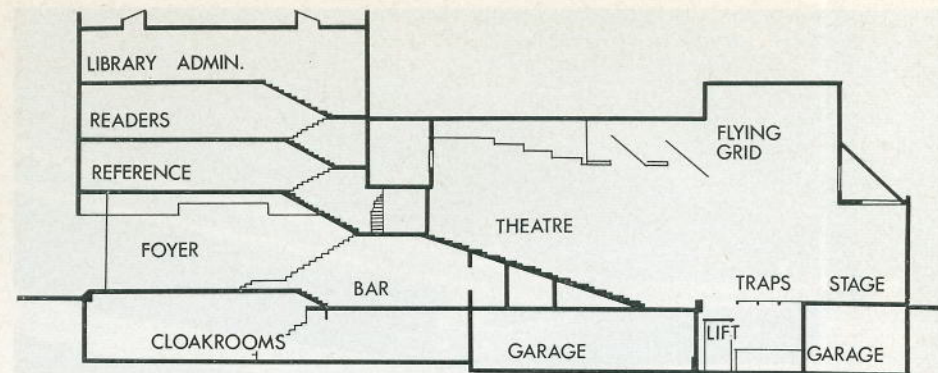
The most regrettable feature of the stage is the roof. Because of the orientation of the theatre and the proximity of a block of flats, planning regulations forbade the building of a fly tower and cut down the height over the rear 12 ft. of the stage to 16 ft. At this height on the side walls there are fly galleries and there is a grid at 33 ft. over the remaining 18 ft. of stage and 4 ft. of the forestage. With a proscenium height of 20 ft. this grid is of limited value though better than none at all. It is equipped with

seven 5-line rope sets, one for draw-tabs in front of the rear stage, the rest for borders. Some pretty hefty flymen are going to be needed to move the bars, although these are thin gauge tube. There are also four hand winches—three for lighting and one for a tab track.

John Wyckham's lighting layout and the equipment are comprehensive and flexible. For the sake of economy an SP 80 control board was chosen, housed at the rear of the auditorium at the level of the gallery boxes. The architect has provided two well-positioned lighting bridges in the auditorium ceiling with 20 circuits each and slots in the side walls with five circuits each. There are four 2-circuit positions in walk-in boxes in the rear wall of the auditorium at gallery level and five circuits in each of the Juliet balconies (where, because of the public gangway underneath, she is separated from her Romeo not only by a family feud but also by a brightly-lit Exit sign). These balcony positions are looped to perch booms but to use these latter the house tabs must be removed. Over the stage are two spot bars of 20 and 10 circuits respectively and a third bar with 20 Patt. 60 floods in four circuits for sky-cloth lighting. A virtue has been made of the break in the ceiling line over the rear of the stage to provide an accessible bar for back lighting while for projectors change-over switches are provided to give four 5 kW outlets, two at fly level and two on stage. Since the total number of outlets greatly exceeds the capacity of the control, a simple patch panel is installed in the auditorium roof whereby one can select 30 circuits from those available on the bridges at the auditorium rear and in the wall slots.

The sound installation, for which David Collison of Theatre Projects is responsible with John Wyckham, promises to be equally flexible. There is a multitude of microphone and speaker positions. The control desk with twin tape decks and talk-back facilities is housed in its own room beside the projection box.

There is no cross-over and no scenery storage, but there is a good get-in, a fair sized prop room, a green room, and the



*The Shaw Theatre, Camden
Architects: Elidir Davies & Partners*



Shaw Theatre, Camden. Auditorium showing lighting bridges overhead. Balcony contains the boxes, projection and control rooms.

dressing room accommodation is luxurious for twenty.

It seems that it was at a fairly late stage that the question "Who runs it afterwards?" was decided in favour of the National Youth Theatre. It will be interesting to see how they use it. There will be some changes made; the legs permanently suspended on fixed wires from the grid will probably go and the house border, similarly fixed, will have to be raised if the near lighting bridge is to be of any use. In general they will probably concur with Pepys who said that the first Theatre Royal was "... made with extraordinary good contrivance, and yet has some faults. . . ." Theatres were ever thus, and what are drawbacks to one user

may be virtues to another. This fact emphasises the importance of having clear answers to the questions quoted at the outset. As this is the Shaw Theatre, Shaw should have the last word and he said, "... it is the drama that makes the theatre, not the theatre the drama".

Shaw Theatre, Camden Stage Lighting Circuits

FOH 46
Stage 40

Control
SP 80/3 preset
240 volt

Correspondence

Design for Lighting

Dear Sir,

In your issue of September 1970, an editorial entitled, "Design For Lighting" quotes a very brief sentence from an address I made to the A.B.T.T. last June. Since this brief quote is out of context, and since, it was the only trivial or facetious comment in my entire talk, I feel that some correction should be made, lest your readers get the erroneous impression that I both underrate the value of the lighting designer in the theatre and the urgent need for more thorough training for these future experts in our theatre. The only reason for my quoted, facetious remark was to point out that in the United States, literally, scores of universities offering degrees in the dramatic departments cover both stage design, costume design and stage lighting with the choice of majoring in one of these. Too many of the less talented or less ambitious students choose the latter, and often for the reason that they do not have any talent to visualise by means of drawing or painting.

The important points in my talk which you omitted were:

1. I always have and will continue to do my own lighting as well as my own designing. This is because I would not dream of even doing a preliminary sketch without determining the location and type of lighting equipment necessary for the most effective realisation of my design idea.

2. I feel a great many of the more experienced and gifted lighting designers working today might very well go a step further and design what they are going to eventually light.

3. Another observation was, to point out that basically, two types of experts create a theatrical production. The first is the person with visual imagination, the second is the trained engineer whose technical knowledge makes possible the artist's ideas. In actual practice there is no question that many professional scene designers enjoy some basic engineering knowledge. It is equally true that many of our best engineers are often endowed with a creative spark of their own.

The present term, lighting director, or lighting designer when practised at its best, is certainly a combination of the two talents. In conclusion, all this stresses the need for a better understanding between all of us in the theatre and more thorough training for the future.

I am pleased to hear from my friend Richard Pilbrow that the British Arts Council has already initiated a Lighting Designers Training Scheme.

Very sincerely yours,
Jo MIELZINER
New York.

Blue for Giselle

Dear Sir,

I am delighted that at last you are making No. 68, the so-called "Giselle" blue, but the ironic

thing is that we do not and never have used that particular blue in either of our two productions of *Giselle*. We have, however, used it in many other productions, both opera and ballet.

The history of this colour and its name is quite fascinating. It started in 1953 when we had a visit from the Royal Danish Ballet whose technical director, Bengt Høeberg, produced a sample of this blue, which they called "Giselle", saying how much they liked the colour but it was impossible to obtain anywhere in Europe.

I approached what was then Strand Electric and one of your rivals. The rival firm expressed interest in manufacturing it and for many, many years did so. To distinguish it from Strand Electric colours we gave it the number 162 and I know that on many occasions your sales department were driven insane by requests for this mysterious 162 which you did not stock.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM H. BUNDY
Technical Director
Royal Opera House.

Circling the Square

Sir,

In asking as I did why so many so-called "theatres-in-the-round" are not in-the-round at all, but in-the-square, I was not really concerned with terminology as Peter Cheeseman suggests. My firm belief is that a theatre which is really in the round, or at least an oval, with the seating following a curve, is far more exciting than one with the seats in the straight lines of a square or a rectangle. Incidentally, this is also true of the thrust stage arrangement (*pace* John Bury and the Barbican Theatre).

Incidentally, I would not myself design a theatre in the round with the front row on the same level as the acting area. We have concluded that that was one of the mistakes at the Questors Theatre. The other mistake we admit to is that the acting area for thrust stage and in-the-round is just a little on the big side!

Yours truly,
ALFRED EMMETT
Questors Theatre, Ealing.

Scenery in the Round

Sir,

I haven't yet, I must admit, challenged your remark in your *New Theatres in Britain* book about not having scenery in theatre-in-the-round (page 13), simply because I haven't had time.

It is possible to use considerable scenery in theatre-in-the-round without in any way covering up seats. One of the problems of an adaptable theatre professionally, which makes me personally dislike them, is that they cannot develop the expertise, the disciplines which lead to mastery of a particular form and it is characteristic that they apply scenic solutions based on clumsy derivation from other forms. Covering up seats in order to have scenery is

quite unnecessary. Scenery can be placed in three situations:

1. On the acting area itself which can be covered with objects, properties, furniture shapes, colours, and built up in a set of composite levels just like, say, a Shakespearian composite set. Our set for *Anna of the Five Towns* had levels all over the stage at 9 in., 18 in., 27 in., 34 in., and ramps from floor to 9-in. levels. This provided us with steps, sitting down levels, table and desk levels and pulpit levels. Providing high levels are carefully placed at the edge of the acting area and do not exceed what I will call the audience's lowest subliminal eye line, then an exciting base for the actor to work on is created. (By subliminal I mean not his actual eye line but enough beneath it so that the mass he is aware of at the bottom of the picture afforded by his eyes does not obtrude.) This process enables you to have highest points where even the lowest placed members of the audience can see over them without visual discomfort. They can of course be placed anywhere, but the higher you go in the centre of the stage the more you are masking actors on the other side of it.

2. Suspended above the acting area can be any number of scenic elements, only limited by one's flying capacity, pocket and the need to get beams of light to the actors through or past them. In *As You Like It* we hung an abstract tree structure shape over a formalised mound in one part of the stage; in *Othello* a great oval hanging piece pierced by coloured gauzes which could be lit in a variety of ways; in *Death of a Salesman* steel beams; in *She Stoops to Conquer* wooden beams; in *Mutiny!* a huge sail; in *Drums in the Night* the shapes of window panes with translucent moons in them.

3. Beyond the acting area either using peripheral stages or exploiting any available surfaces and suspension situations within the audience's viewpoint there are considerable scenic as well as playing opportunities. We have used one, two or three peripheral stages for *Jack Sheppard* (1), *The Three Musketeers* (3) *Sweeney Todd* (1 with the traditional chair), *Fighting Man* (1). The scenic treatment of any area within the audience's direct view when looking at the acting area—that is, beyond it—can provide scenic background whether it is in direct physical connection with the acting area or not.

Obviously, the first condition of scenery in theatre-in-the-round is you must be able to see and hear the actors, otherwise you have failed. I suppose Mary Moore's set for Gillian Brown's production of *Eh?* currently in the repertoire, is one of the most elaborate we have used and is a good illustration of the theatre's scenic potentialities.



One final important point. One of the extraordinary bonuses of theatre-in-the-round is the considerable impact made by any person or object on the acting area. At some other time I would be interested to explore why it is so, but it is a fact. The actor in theatre-in-the-round has enormous power—so aware are we of all his actions. But this is equally true of each object and scenic item introduced into this potent situation.

To sum up, scenery can be used considerably and with immense potency in theatre-in-the-round, and you can also get away with no scenery at all. These are in short, some of its very attractive characteristics.

Yours,
PETER CHEESEMAN
Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent.

This Happy Breed

Our Editorial in the last issue referred to *Lighting Design and Technology*. The Illuminating Engineering Society who publish this journal from York House, Westminster Bridge Road, London, S.E.1. point out that *Design* should read *Research*.

Synopsis

Affection

En rentrant d'une soirée, l'éditeur réveille aux relations existant entre l'opérateur et le contrôle de l'éclairage et imagine le Stradivarius des méthodes futures, le computer digne d'affection.

Lovable

Der Redakteur sinnt auf dem Rückweg von einer Party über das Verhältnis zwischen Beleuchter und Stellwerk und sieht am Ende der technischen Entwicklung die Stradivarius zukünftiger Systeme, den Computer, den man wirklich lieben kann.

Liebenswert

Face à face

L'éditeur et son assistant se lamentent d'être si mal compris par une fraction de leur chel public et espèrent que si l'amour des jeux de mots les conduit à une exagération, ce ne sera pas regardé comme une insulte délibérée, mais comme une excentricité ésotérique.

Stabs in the front

Der Redakteur und sein Hilfsredakteur bedauern, dass sie von einem Teil ihrer geneigten Leserschaft missverstanden werden und hoffen, dass ihre Liebe zur Spielerei mit Worten, die vielleicht manchmal zur Übertreibung führt, nicht als absichtliche Beleidigungen, sondern als esoterische Exzentrität angesehen wird.

Nicht hinterlistig gemeint

Centenaire et décennie

Deux célébrations: le Royal Albert Hall fête son centenaire et l'Association des Techniciens du Théâtre Britannique ses dix ans d'existence. Cette dernière organisation a pour but d'examiner des édifices comme le Royal Albert Hall dans l'espoir d'éviter leurs imperfections sans brider leur génie.

One Hundred and Ten

Zwei Geburtstagsfeierlichkeiten: Die Royal Albert Hall mit ihren Defekten und ihrem hundertjahrealtem Genius und die Association of British Theatre Technicians, deren Aufgabe es ist, neue Gebäude dieser Art zu untersuchen, um die Ersten zu vermeiden, ohne den Letzteren zu behindern.

Einhundert und Zehn

Theatre Royal, Norwich

Ce théâtre inauguré en 1930 est typique de cette époque. En 1967 il fut repris par les autorités municipales et a depuis subi certaines transformations. L'article décrit les quelques améliorations apportées à l'arrière-scène, l'installation d'un nouveau système d'éclairage et le nouvel arrangement de la salle (1250 places).

Dieses in 1930 eröffnete Theater ist typisch für seine Zeit. Es wurde 1967 von der Stadtverwaltung übernommen, die seitdem einige Änderungen unternommen hat. Der Artikel beschreibt Verbesserungen an den Anlagen der Hinterbühne, Installation eines neuen Beleuchtungssystem und Neuanschaffung von 1250 Sitzen.

A la poursuite d'idées insolites

Chaque année à Nouvel An, l'Union Nationale des Etudiants et le Sunday Times organisent un festival dramatique. L'auteur met en contraste le caractère actuel d'une production estudiantine et l'approche plus orthodoxe des années passées. Le festival eut lieu dans cinq auditoriums situés sur le Campus universitaire de Southampton, dont un seul revendique le nom de théâtre.

After strange gods

Jedes Jahr hält die Studentengewerkschaft zusammen mit der Zeitung 'Sunday Times' um Neujahr ein Dramafestival. Die Verfasserin vergleicht die herrschende Stimmung, mit der Orthodoxeren in vergangenen Jahren. Die Veranstaltung fand in 5 verschiedenen Hallen auf dem Campus der Universität Southampton statt, von denen nur eins als Theater bezeichnet wird.

Suche nach eigenartigen Idolen

Super Projection

Knot Garden de Peter Hall est réalisé par la projection d'un seul diapositif placé provisoirement dans une loge sur un jeu de fils et de tringles à env. quatre mètres. L'éditeur décrit l'effet visuel obtenu avec la maquette et au Royal Opera House. Le dessinateur explique comment une lampe à xénon de 4 kW a été montée dans une lanterne cinémecanica à cet effet. Le tout fonctionne avec éclairage totale de la scène.

Régisseur Peter Hall verwirklicht die Oper 'The Knot Garden' mit Projektion eines einzigen Diapositiv von einer provisorischen Anlage in der Loge auf ein Arrangement von Seilen und Stangen 4,2 Meter entfernt. Der Redakteur beschreibt den Effekt und wie er zustande kam, zuerst in einem Modell von Viertelgrosse, dann im Royal Opera House selbst, der Konstrukteur erklärt, wie eine 4 kW Xenonlampe in eine Cinemecanicalaterne extra für diesen Zweck eingebaut wurde. Die Projektion wird mit der ganzen Bühnenbeleuchtung zusammen gesteuert.

University Playhouse, Newcastle

Ce nouveau théâtre, construit pour l'Université, est situé près du Centre municipal. La salle contient 449 places, en gradins donnant sur une scène ouverte. En contraste avec d'autres théâtres anglais du même genre, il comporte une scène et des coulisses spacieuses et un cintre volant. Un second théâtre—studio à usage multiple—contient jusqu'à 200 places.

Dieses neue, speziell für die Universität gebaute Theater hat 449 Sitzplätze, auf einem Rang angeordnet vorne eine offene aber nicht sporn förmige Bühne die besonders seilwärts sehr geräumig ist was bei derartigen Theater in Grossbritannien bisher nicht der Fall ist. Ausserdem ist ein zweiter, mehrzweckiger Studioraum vorhanden, mit Platz für 300 Sitze.

**“Les représentations durent
avoir lieu dans le noir”**

Trois nouveaux livres viennent de paraître sur le théâtre. Cela incita Frederick Bentham à découvrir si l'équipement gouvernait l'art de l'artiste ou si l'artiste déterminait la nature de l'installation. Basil Dean, dans son autobiographie, révèle l'individualiste qui, sans aide, choisit et tire le maximum de son matériel, exactement comme un enfant qui joue avec son théâtre miniature. Jo Mielziner dans "Les formes de notre théâtre" combat l'esprit moderne de compromis et arrive à la conclusion suivante: Si vous ne pouvez dicter la forme du théâtre, affirmez au moins ce qu'il ne doit pas être. Richard Pilbrow dans "Éclairage scénique" résoud le problème en séparant nettement l'art de la mécanique. Ces livres ont pour thème central l'effet visuel. Encore aujourd'hui il est difficile de le capter photographiquement.

**Performances had to
take place in the Dark**

Anlässlich des Erscheinens von drei neuen Spezialwerken über das Theater versucht Frederick Bentham zu erkunden, ob das Gerät die Kunst des Meisters diktiert, oder umgekehrt der Meister die Form des Gerätes. Basil Dean's **Autobiographie zeigt uns den Individualisten, der sich allein sein Werkzeug auswählt und es ausgiebig anwendet, schon als Kind mit seinem Spieltheater.**

Jo Mielziner in "The Forms of the Theater" kämpft gegen den neuen Geist des Kompromisses und zieht die Konsequenz, dass man wenigstens vorschreiben muss, was das Theater *nicht* sein darf, wenn man dessen Form nicht diktieren kann.

Richard Pilbrow löst die Krise auf, indem er die künstlerische und technische Seite in ganz getrennten Teilen des Buches behandelt. Alle drei verbindet der visuelle Effekt, dem die fotografische Technik auch heute noch nicht gewachsen ist.

**Die Vorstellungen mussten
im Dunkelen stattfinden**

Shaw Theatre, Camden

Situé au nord du West-End et centre de Londres, ce théâtre fait partie d'un bloc commercial et d'une bibliothèque. Il contient 503 places, la plupart au parterre. Lors des plans, on ignorait encore que le Théâtre National de la Jeunesse occuperait les lieux. Le manque de place empêcha la construction d'un cintre avec contrepoids.

Dieses Theater liegt etwas nördlich des Zentrums und West End Londons. In demselben Gebäude sind Büro und eine Bibliothek untergebracht. Das Theater enthält 503 Sitzplätze, fast alle auf einem Rang. Zur Zeit des Entwurfs war es noch nicht bekannt, wer das Theater übernehmen würde, jetzt ist es das Heim des National Youth Theatre. Platzmangel verhinderte das Anlegen eines Schnürbodens.

Lettres

Jo Mielziner s'arrête plus longuement sur les remarques relatives aux décorateurs de l'éclairage qui lui sont attribuées par l'éditeur de TABS.

Peter Cheeseman examine la façon d'utiliser la scène dans le théâtre en rond et Alfred Emmet plaide en faveur d'un théâtre rond, ou au moins oval.

Correspondence

Jo Mielziner erläutert die Bemerkungen über Beleuchtungsbildner, die ihm ein früherer 'TABS artikel zugeschrieben hat.

Peter Cheeseman beschreibt, wie es möglich ist, Bühnenaustattung auch in Arenatheater zu verwerten und Alfred Emmet möchte, dass solch ein 'Theatre in the Round' wirklich rund, oder wenigstens oval sein sollte.

Korrespondenz