

window panes was restricted to a deepish blue.

The Mayfair, unlike most London West End theatres, has a reasonable stock of lighting instruments and so it was possible to light the play entirely from the theatre's own resources. The Mayfair's front-of-house positions are good, with a bar over the stalls seating giving a particularly sympathetic face angle (being a tiny theatre—310 seats—ladder access to this bar is not a problem). As can be seen from the plan, six pairs of instruments on the first stage bar were focused in a conventional fan-setting on the upstage areas (left, centre, and right); and, similarly, six pairs from the foh bar covered the downstage areas. All six areas had a comfortable degree of overlap.

The midstage bar gave a cross-wash and the auditorium side-bars (again set in a left/centre/right two-direction configuration) helped to model the actors from the lower angle. The only instruments that could be called specials were some 123s focused to highlight a couple of key scenes

lights, and subtle changes of emphasis where the lighting balance was cheated so that the audience's concentration was controlled in a subconscious rather than conscious way. The plot worked easily on the Mayfair's two preset LC system, although *Flashpoint* was this board's last show—memory, in the shape of *Duet*, has now taken over.



*"Look kid, I don't say this every day of the week, but you're going places. You got class and you got what it takes."*

*Thanks Sylvia. But I happen to think that I can stick right here with Johnny and still get my name in lights."*

*"If you stick right here with Johnny, the only way you'll get your name in lights is if you change it to Coco-Cola."*

This kind of dialogue will be very familiar to anyone who loves showbiz as portrayed in the *I'm gonna make you a star* type of Hollywood showbiz movie. Alas, they don't make 'em that way any more, but you can still catch a re-run on television most weeks.

The programme of *The Great American Backstage Musical* listed the scenes simply as *Place and Time: New York, London and the battlefields of Europe, 1939 to 1945*. In fact the locations included backstage, onstage, the dressing rooms of tacky clubs and Broadway hits, tea at the Ritz and coffee at a Soda Fountain, entertaining the front line troops (direct hit, next scene field hospital) etc. etc. All the normal stuff that epic musicals are made of. But this was the Regent Theatre—a cinema with a small, no wings, no flies, token stage.

But designer Robert Dein worked miracles of scenic statement. Two portals of black glossed scaffolding lined with black bolton sheeting framed one of the Regent's peculiarities, turning it into an asset. If a small stage happens to have an attractive cast iron balustraded balcony running along the back wall and blocking a significant part of the stage's depth, there is no point in ignoring it. For it will not go away; you just have to use it. And so this balcony became many things. The miniature roll-up cloths for the club stage scenes were hung under it to convey smallness of scale. It became a cross-lit feature of the Ritz. It became the location of the Soda Fountain scene. It became a useful level for dry-ice tanks and flash-boxes. It was only hidden for the Broadway Spectacular scenes when a full height pair of silver lurex tabs made, by contrast, a very big statement.

Within this framework, small cut-outs, mini-trucks and essential furniture were used to suggest location. This scenery had to be small—there was little wing space to store it and, even with a cast of only six, an acting area of about 18 × 16 feet does not leave a great deal of room for lavish scenery.

There were three types of lighting required:

- (1) Straight "play" lighting for the dialogue scenes.
- (2) Atmospheric treatment for the musical numbers.
- (3) More heightened, exaggerated treatment of the musical numbers taking place on stages (the "musicals within a musical").

The lighting rig was a scaled-down version of the type of rig used on big musicals. Pale natural tints from the front, heavyish colour from the sides, and really saturated colour from above and behind.

The Regent is so small that all face light has to come from the front, but there are

#### "FLASHPOINT" — CUE SYNOPSIS

Q1	SSecs.	BUILD WINDOWS (BLUE)
Q2	SNAP	ROOM SWITCH ON
Q3	SNAP	WASHROOM ON
Q4	CHART	CONCENTRATE U.S.L.
Q5	CHART	RESTORE
Q6	CHART	BUILD STANDING ON BED U.R.
Q7	CHART	REARRANGE FOR SITTING ON FLOOR
Q8	SSecs.	FADE TO BLACKOUT

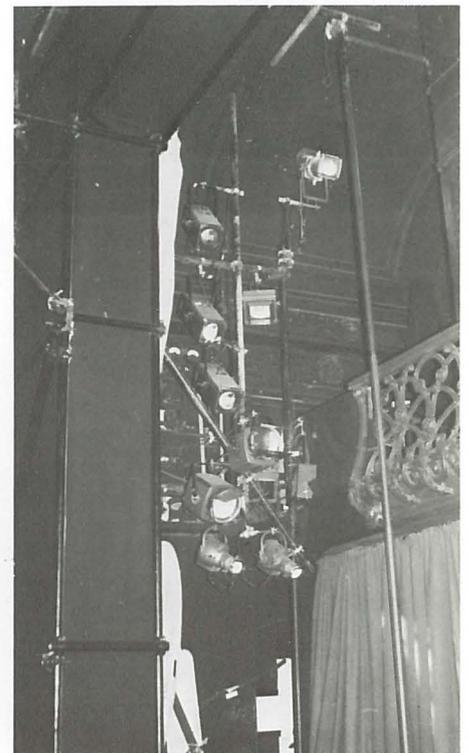
#### INTERVAL

Q9	SSecs.	FADE UP AS WAS
Q10	CHART	REARRANGE TO 3BOOS + DSL
Q11	SNAP	"ARCS" ON
Q12	SNAP	ROOM SWITCH OFF
Q13	SNAP	"ARCS" OUT WITH GUNSHOTS
Q14	SNAP	ROOM SWITCH ON
Q15	CHART	ADD FOR INTERROGATION D.R.
Q16	SSecs.	FADE TO BLACKOUT

in the play—one played standing on the upstage right bed and the other in the down left corner. (Throughout, the terms right and left are used to indicate the actor's left and right, not the audience's.)

There were two upstage bars. The bar just downstage of the back wall of the set gave a simple wash of backlight on the actors, while the last one backlit the windows. The "arc-lights" were pattern 243 fresnels—on stands to give the appropriate horizontal angle for dramatic effect when the window was broken and the room lights switched off.

The cues worked on two levels: naturalistic switching of the practical room



*Backstage at The Great American Backstage Musical, directed and choreographed by Robert Talmadge in settings by Robert Dein at the Regent Theatre. This picture shows the upstage right boom.*

two ceiling bars over the stalls at a good face angle, together with another bar over the balcony and a pair of booms at the balcony sides giving good fill. The stalls ceiling bars were focused straight in with no crossing (yes, perhaps a little flattening but in this particular show it was more important to keep the dialogue scenes tight with minimum light spill on the black portal frames). On such a small stage there was