

Give to Forms and Images a Breath

ADRIAN DIGTAM

"The lighting throughout the evening was exemplary. I do not know how LCDT achieves this, but I wish that every other ballet and dance company in Britain would go and study the subtleties and beauties of light in shaping bodies in movement which seem commonplace with LCDT." *Clement Crisp, Financial Times, 17 May 1979.*

Although that fabulous review says nothing about the technical side of our operation, it does convey exactly what we are striving for in the lighting of LCDT. Fortunately the lighting of our dancers is a high priority in our company's policy and it is very, very important to our Artistic Director Robert Cohan, and has been that way over the last ten years. In that time our lighting has become highly sophisticated. There was a time when we would light with 10 Patt.23's and a Junior 8 control. Today it is a 240 lamp (average) completely self-contained rig with its own 80-way memory control. But always the sole objective has been to light the dancer as beautifully and as effectively as possible—whatever the mood. I think it works! We are all aware that the lighting should not take one's notice away from the action, and that the review above may imply that this hap-

pens—but it does not. It's just that you cannot ignore it. A lady from the Guardian once asked what the secret was; I said there was no secret, but we worked hard (most technicians do), we gave lighting designers as few restrictions on the rig as possible, and within reason: e.g. if there is room on the spot bar hang a lamp, if the bar is full move upstage to the next one, if there are

no more bars—No! We bought the right equipment and put it in the right places and use hundreds of different filters. We are very careful about focusing. We spend a lot of time over it in the belief that a designer's lighting will only be as good as the technician's focusing (I was fortunate to work at the National Theatre for a while where the standard of focusing is very high—and it is this technique that I still practice today), and last but not least the three of us on the lighting crew take great pride in our rig and standards, and we strive to keep them up. The other "secret" is that we employ the very best designers in this field—and they of course make the main contribution.

This is a time of change for us—we are about to change the design of the rig totally next year. The present lighting rig has evolved over the past ten years to the two-part system that we have at the moment; a basic rig which stays the same wherever we go, and a "specials" rig for those lamps which are hung specially for a particular dance. The basic rig is made up of twenty ADB 1kW fresnels spaced over four spot bars which give a downlight coverage over the whole acting/dancing area. These are coloured in that old dance favourite—Cinemoid 61. There are also nine ADB 1kW fresnels with CCT auto-colour changers spaced over the first three spot bars; which give an alternative coverage to the former—the colours used are 17, 817, 858, 842 and open white. On both ends of each of the four main spot



ICE. Choreography: Robert Cohan. Music: Morton Subotnick. Design: Norberto Chiesa. Lighting: John B. Read. (Photo: Jem Wilsher.)



MASQUE of SEPARATION. Choreography: Robert Cohan. Music: Burt Alcantara. Design: Norberto Chiesa. Lighting: John B. Read.