



Showing basic booms rigged with additional specials for ICE (Photo: Jem Wilsher).

when they realise that we do intend to use all this equipment and haven't just brought it over as ballast.

However in spite of the size of the rig it does not take too long to get up, and because we have our own memory board—a Thorn QT120 with “floppy disc” (a great system)—we do not have to spend hours lighting; we only have to look at it during the dress rehearsal, and balance a few things out. The item that takes the longest amount of time at the moment is focusing, about five hours at the start of a new date and three on a change of programme. When doing performance weeks we work very long days but never any all-nighters. The money that has been available to the lighting side over the past few years has all gone on the most important facet of the rig the luminaires and the control. There has not been the same amount to spend on the rigging and cable side. Consequently this is not as sophisticated as we would like it to be. We cannot yet afford to crate all the spot-bars and we do not have room on the wagon for this yet. We have many TRS cable tripses but no multi-cores; our patch panels are home made affairs—but we have it all organised in such a way that if necessary it is possible to get it in, up and on in about 16 hours. In a performing week we do two programmes changing over on a Thursday. Each programme has three twenty to thirty minute dances in it. The average amount of specials for one dance is about thirteen overhead and four on the floor—therefore for one programme there will be forty to fifty lamps hanging overhead in addition to the basic rig, plus another ten to fifteen on the floor. There are eighteen circuits available for “specials” for each dance as we have a three and four way “patch” system (although this can be increased to twenty-five circuits with the loss of some of the upstage basic circuits). All the “patching”

is done during the intervals or before the show. There is no in-show repatching so as to avoid errors. There are two intervals of twenty minutes each. During these all the spot bars come in to floor level to facilitate colour changes. All the lamps on the booms are colour changed, and there can be anything from one to twenty units to be re-focused on the floor. But there is rarely anything to re-focus on the bars as we think it is better to hang a lot of equipment and have a patch system—than have long, long intervals whilst re-focusing off the telescope. We try very hard to stay within the twenty minute interval time.

Next year, if all goes well, we should be performing at the London Coliseum within the English National Opera seasons—rather on the same basis that the Royal Opera and Ballet work together at the ROH. Our rig at the moment is designed for a 11m width and 10m depth stage and a theatre to ourselves for one week. This would be completely changed at the Coliseum. The width is around 15m and the depth seems about two miles!! Also the rig will have to go up and down in around 2 hours from the time the lorry doors are open. As well as having to work within the ENO opera seasons with their massive sets etc., etc. To cope with this John B. Read (our main lighting designer) is designing a new and much enlarged basic rig, which will be much more flexible than the present one—so, we hope, cutting down on the need for so many specials. All the spot bars would be divided into sections and flight-cased fully rigged, same with the booms. The control would be up-graded to 120 dimmers with a sixty circuit patch system. The whole system would be completely fed by multi-cored cables; connections to dimmers would be by multi-pinned connectors. If all goes to plan we could have a very nice system here. Maybe when we have done it in 1980 the editor will allow me to describe it in more detail.

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