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Shown here is the original sculpture by Bohuslava Schnircha above the Prague National Theatre. The gold replica shown on the front cover was won by the British Team at the Prague Quadrennial of Theatre Design, see page 6.

Curtain-raiser	3
Autolycus	4
British Stage Designers bring home the Golden Triga by John Bury	6
Lighting by the Book by Francis Reid	10
Lighting in the Rock'n Roll Business by David Kerr	14
Symphony in Red by Chris Baldwin	18
Give Forms and Images a Breath by Adrian Dightam	20
Saved from the Slot Machines	25
Product News	27
Correspondence	28
Now is the time for all good men by Mervyn Gould	29
The ship is more than the crew by Dorothy Tenham	30
Between Cues by Walter Plinge	31

CUE

Technical Theatre Review

September - October 1979

Curtain-raiser

This is Cue 1. Overture and beginners, please.

Without wishing to dwell on or in the past it would be disingenuous not to take this opportunity to record this magazine's debt (and your debt) to TABS/Stage Lighting International, and all the people who contributed to it, over a run that makes that of "The Mousetrap" seem like a nine day's wonder.

With Rank/Strand acting as the benevolent angel, Tabs built up a record of backstage activities that ran all the way from vaudeville to audio-videoville, from Burlesque to Burl Ives, from Stratford . . . on Avon . . . atte Bowe to Ontario. Some back numbers, it is rumoured, now have a fascination for collectors akin to that of souvenir programmes for royal performances at Convent Garden or even early Pirelli calendars.

If, over the next thirty years, CUE doesn't manage to provide the same sort of inside information service it will all be your fault. Luckily, nowadays (quite apart from the milling millions of instant critics any performance on any stage anywhere provokes into attention, outrage or apathy) there are far more professionals, working within far more disciplines in technical theatre, to carry the can.

The trouble with the theatre today is that there's an awful lot more of it about. There just aren't the losses there were in the fifties and sixties to bingo and ten-pin-bowling. Despite V.A.T. (everybody out on the streets, Thursday, and deconsecrate Mr St John Stevas), despite the apparently inexorable alternative of subsidy or subsidency, theatres are being opened, re-opened or re-furbished all over. Locally and vocally the Save-Our-Theatre Movement is in full cry and fine nick. In the most improbable places leisure-centres are rising and, with them, civic pride, administrative neurosis, and, of course, the rates. Conventions and conferences (known to some of their audiences as the real meaning of the "theatre of cruelty") have become computer-controlled spectacles.

It's all theatre. It's all technical theatre. It's all show-business in the slippery grip of a rapidly changing technology. And thank your lucky apprenticeships, your friendly neighbourhood union, or your grasp of the principles of the alternative economy—it's all yours.

So are the pages of CUE. Look on them, and contribute to them, as the minutes of your meetings, your memoranda to management, your confessional or your club.

And remember, as Groucho Marx once said, "all the jokes can't be funny".