

this. A lighting change was plotted for the end of Act II. The lighting designer, Roger Weaver, had set two fine and subtle states, the first being more or less full stage, the sun coming through the window, the fire lit, the votive candle flickering on the mantelpiece. The second state, very dark and gloomy, nearly night, the fire almost out. The brief was: fade down in twenty minutes.

Now, let's look at the script. The Boyles, Joxer and Mrs. Madigan are in the living room. They are having a little drink, which leads on naturally to a few songs with that Irish sentimentality that is known and feared the world over. They are joined by a neighbour on her way to bury her son, shot by the Black and Tans. They discuss the shooting with bitterness. The neighbour leaves and they try to cheer themselves up, and eventually succeed with some atrocious homebrewed poetry. They put on the gramophone, playing a lively jig, interrupted by the funeral procession passing in the street below. All but Johnny, injured taking part in an earlier republican action, go out to watch. We hear the procession pass. This takes about a minute, while Johnny moodily watches the fire going out. A man has crept into the room. He orders Johnny to report to the Commandant to answer questions about a suspected informing.

JOHNNY: (passionately) I won't go!  
Havn't I done enough for Ireland! I've

lost me arm and me hip's destroyed so I'll never walk right agen! Good God, Havn't I done enough for Ireland?

THE MAN: Boyle, no man can do enough for Ireland. (he goes)

faintly, in the distance, the crowd is heard: Hail Mary, full of grace, etc., etc.  
End of Act II

You can see that during this twenty minutes there are a wide variety of moods, and that the amount of stage area in use also varies. Now the bulk of the fade has to take place after the family has gone out, and must be down to a very low level indeed in less than a minute. This is how it happened.

When the cue was given the only thing that happened was a hand move to take down the level of the lanterns covering the wall at an angle to the window. This enabled the light that was set to shine through the window to register the pattern of the window bars onto the set, where previously they had been largely washed out. The effect of this was to warm up the natural source of light, while removing the diffused component of light in the room itself, giving the impression that evening was approaching. The sunlight lanterns were set at a lower angle than the covering lights, and therefore the shadows lengthened too. By the time this was over, about half a minute, we were into a particularly sentimental song, and the change of mood that the song engendered was reinforced by

checking down, again by hand, most of the warm cover, leaving the fireglow, the warm low afternoon sun catching the two girl singers, the rest of the room cool and a little hard. A moment or two after the end of the song, the mood now subdued, the door is opened and the neighbour comes in. The door to the hall is left open, and light from a reflectorless pattern 60 fitted with 17 plus 60 casts a very long hard shadow into the room, and acts as a back keylight. Chiarascuro effect on the group, centre. During the rest of this scene the edges of the room and the area now covered by the spill from the hall are taken down a trifle and the sunlight lantern and any remaining sunlight cover are quietly removed. The neighbour leaves and closes the door. The artistes have naturally gravitated to the area round the fire, the warmest-feeling place in the room. A little warmth is slowly reintroduced into the centre of the room as the mood lightens, to the area where they are to dance.

They hear the funeral. At the exact moment that the needle is lifted from the gramophone, a tiny drop, just within the edge of perception is made in the general light level, and this starts the remainder of the fade. As the stereophonic funeral passes, pick up and follow the mood of the sound, trying to get the main bulk of it done by the time the sound is panned halfway across the stage, thus leaving a few moments in which nothing at all is happening, except the fire going out and the votive candle gently glowing, trying to reflect the mood of stillness and introspection of the crippled boy. There is now only just enough light by the door for us to see that a man has entered, silently. We cannot see who it is, and in fact we never do see his face as we are now very, very slowly creeping the light on the door area to virtually out. As he leaves, all we can see is the panic-stricken face of the boy in the faint guttering light of the votive lamp. The fade to black takes almost painfully long to wring every ounce out of it.

Now, the important thing is this. All that could have been set by the lighting designer. But in fact it was not. All that had been issued to the operator was the plot consisting of two states. The rest was the unique contribution of the operator, as the result of the trust of the lighting designer. Of course, this was largely done in rehearsal, and eventually evaluated, split up into separate cues and tidied up before the first night. Before we go on, please take a moment to mentally put that cue onto a ratefader. It would probably have looked fine. Done by hand it was made to look magic. I do not object to ratefaders *per se*: but no automatic crossfader with the possible exception of TEMPUS or A.M.C. has sufficiently accessible overrides.

My own definition of a lighting board is this: its an absolutely vital bloody nuisance, that gets between me and my needs.

Fortunately, many of us have now been given the opportunity to thrust into the middle distance the problems normally associated with accurately repeating the plot, and therefore the operability (loveableness?) of any control must be con-

# CUE

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