

Between Cues

The thoughts of
Walter Plinge

Porno Plinge

My note on Plingular aliases in last CUE brings a reminder from Chuck Levy that Walter Plinge's cousin is *George Spelvin* – a name which can be feminised with some ease: actress *Georgina Spelvin* starred in porno films for some years. Chuck wonders how many people got the joke! I wonder . . . can any Ballet company claim a *Georgina Spelvina*?

Georgian Scaffolding

It was the first time that I had sat in the front row of a Georgian theatre pit. I felt isolated. *Isolated!* An uncomfortable experience for one who has long gone public on his commitment to the audience/-audience relationship benefits of the Georgian theatre form. Then latecomers took a stage-box. *Click!* The corner of my eye had a bridge to the stage. I was no longer alone. In the interval I took the other stage box. It felt good. It had to: The evening was in the British tradition of opening a new theatre with a new play. However Tom Foster's Mackintosh-influenced architecture papered the cracks in the tentative dramaturgy of the opening entertainment.



But the real excitement of London's new TRICYCLE THEATRE is not the shape (although that's lovely) but the escape from the tyranny of concrete. The joy of older theatres was that they could be modified by their users with simple tools like saws, spanners and brushes. This building must be the new number one on any Theatric Tourist's London itinerary (number two is the use of the N.T.'s foyers) and, in offering applause to the Tricycle team, let us not forget the GLC Licensing Authority whose progressive attitude has made it all possible.

Teatro Tanger

In Tangier most things are negotiable. And there is rarely a shortage of entrepreneurs with whom the deal can be done. But, surprisingly, the *Gran Teatro Cervantes* had no competing corps of clamouring concierges. So I failed to get inside to inspect what might, just possibly might, be an essay in Franco-Moorish fantasy. It took a big plate of couscous, a wind and string band of tingling timbre, and a belly dancer of musical muscularity to restore my spirits.

Carol Hall

For a number of reasons the musicals *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* and *I'm Getting My Act Together and Taking it on the Road* come easily together in the same paragraph. For one thing I caught them on the same day, the first (on Broadway) at the matinee and the second (off-Broadway) in the evening. For another thing, Carol Hall, *Whorehouse's* composer and lyricist, demonstrated versatility by delivering a starring performance as the lady who is

trying to get her act together (the act being 'Heather Jones and the Liberated Man's Band'). With one show about a brothel closed to improve a politician's image, and the other about a soap opera heroine preparing to undermine the domestic contentment and aspirations of a nation's women, there is ample scope for a marathon essay on the potential examination question 'compare and contrast contemporary attitudes to the female role in society as portrayed in these musicals'. I will spare you all that, because what really matters is that they are both terrific shows. *Whorehouse* is all cheerful attack and marks the integration of Country & Western Music into a formal dramatic format. *Getting My Act Together* is certainly the most brilliantly constructed and entertaining and stimulating exposition of feminism that has ever come my way. It must be seen in London, but only if it can be given the 'overlooked' style of staging that it gets on the traverse stage at the Circle in the Square. (Remember how *The Club* fell apart when it transferred from that theatre to a 'played-out-front' production style in London).

Inner Parts

I like my music small: I like to hear the individual threads. So I was much pleased in a rather unusual way by my gramophone the other day. Curiosity had led me to listen to a disc called *First Chair Solos* in a series *Music Minus One*. Got it? Right, this was a recorded accompaniment for practising soloists. The pleasure of listening so clearly to inner parts was magic – something that I miss now that I no longer work in opera houses where one of the joys is to eavesdrop on the orchestra rehearsals held, without singers, in an empty auditorium with the Iron down.

Mini Turn

I will now perform a U-turn. When timed faders were first added to small two-preset lighting controls, my reception was rather toffee-nosed. But these simple controls may end up in situations where the operational hand on a manual master is untrained and unsympathetic. Under such conditions, the braking effect of the timer can ease the visual pain that the audience might otherwise suffer.

Printer's Light and Shade

This paragraph is a filler. It has been written to fill up space. I dislike too much white space between items: the thoughts in this diary are throwaways and to-have one's thrown away thoughts printed as a black island in a white sea (or even in a white pond) is to give them an emphasis beyond their importance. Just as spotlighting an actor in surrounding black can, alas, stress his mediocrity. Like one of those ballet evenings when the intervals are longer than the dancing. So I am scared of oasis printing and that is why I have written this extra paragraph.