

mikes we used were AKG D1200's, plus a radio mike.

The system certainly proved its worth – and the skill in its operation of course – in the quality of the recordings that were made. In some cabarets live and recorded sound was mixed, without any difference in quality discernable, even to members of the company who knew how it was being done. The problem of recording was that the studio was the Main Lounge, and open to passengers at all times. The sessions therefore had to be arranged after the dancing had finished at 2 am. Once we had experimented, and arrived at the optimum positioning for miking band and singers, the results proved comparable with any demo studio. All the more impressive since we were asking something of the equipment which it had not been installed to do. One advantage of living above the shop was that when we finished at 6 am, we had the choice of a 30 second stroll home to fall into bed, or a half hour wait for 'early bird breakfast served poolside'.

In addition to the sound rig in the Main Lounge, we had a portable H + H 6 into 2 desk with built in amp and speakers, for occasional cabarets in the smaller Forward Lounge, or out on deck for Tropical Nights. The Forward Lounge had an air of improvisation, with sound at preset level and lighting controlled by trip switches in a cupboard in the corridor outside! Furthermore, since the ship was originally Swedish all notices and labeling of breakers and switches was in Swedish and Greek only. Arrangements for Tropical Night usually followed this pattern: Firstly, an argument between the cruise office and the band, who did not want to play outside and take the chance of getting their equipment wet and electrocuting themselves. Secondly, elaborate efforts on our part to see that the H + H was rigged so that it would remain dry whatever happened. Thirdly, a torrential downpour which put an end to the whole thing. The cabaret was then re-scheduled in the Main Lounge, which the stewards tastefully decorated by dumping all the portable greenery they could lay their hands on around the outside of the floor, between the artist and the audience, so that he or she could neither be seen nor lit properly!

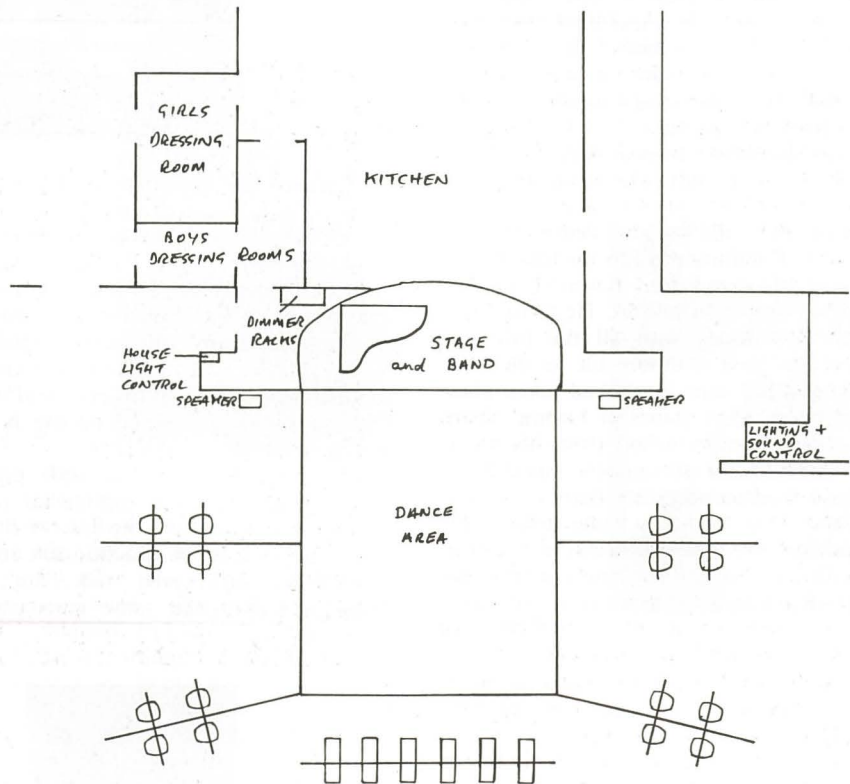
The problem of theatre standards versus cabaret thinking manifested itself in many ways, aided and abetted by the language barrier. On various nights decorations were put up by the stewards, who obviously regarded the sprinklers as an elaborate suspension system, installed with paper-chains and flags in mind. I found one day that each of the lamps on the booms had a delightful plastic garland draped over it. Dozens of balloons descended at the end of the final show, and these were rigged on lines which passed in between the lamps on the booms. I always had a vision of the waiters tugging at the lines and the booms collapsing to the floor, while the balloons remained resolutely aloft.

The dressing rooms also had drawbacks, the boys room being hived off from the kitchen, through which the artists had to pass



in order to enter stage left. The plumbing was always causing trouble throughout the ship – sometimes it appeared to be sinking from within. On three occasions water leaked through the dressing room ceilings on to the costumes (via the light fittings naturally). The costumes then had to be rushed to the Chinese laundry in the bowels of the ship, to be cleaned and dried. By the way, it wasn't just Swedish, Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese I couldn't speak,

but Chinese as well. The final, and worst flood occurred during a cabaret. As I dashed through on my way to the houselight controls, situated on the opposite side of the Lounge to the board, I found two plumbers watching helplessly as boiling water cascaded like waterfalls into three plastic dustbins. Fortunately this was at the very end of the season, and most of the costumes had already been repacked elsewhere into the 14 skips in which they had arrived.



NAVARINO MAIN LOUNGE

