

surprisingly, this topic appeared throughout the conference as a problem, probably *the* problem, common to all media.

ROCK & ROAD

Richard Pilbrow had assured us that we had something to learn from rock lighting and now Richard Dale, discussing *Pop and Road Show Lighting* gave us some indication of the state of an art that has matured in the last decade. Straighter forms of theatre have embraced the par can, and rock rigging techniques will and must influence our whole approach to touring – although theatre has not yet expanded its multi-lantern techniques to the point, reached in rock, where 1000 par cans can be used to light a stage 40ft × 20ft. There were some interesting video recordings of show excerpts. All exciting lighting, but so kinetically restless that climaxes surely become increasingly difficult to achieve as the performance progresses.

The informal part of the conference (called *lunch*) was stimulated by all this good talk and show lighters from all fields – human eye, single camera, and multi camera – formed animated groups, discovering common ground. (And some of us agreed that the absence of beer showed a lack of humanity on the part of the Barbican; and that if this expensive plonk was the best that a wine marketing man could blend, then they ought to secure the palate services of a theatre consultant for their cellar).



TECHNOLOGY

Technological Papers was the general heading for the afternoon sessions and, with most of the speakers for the remainder of the day declaring affiliation to manufacturing organisations, there were some thinly veiled marketing presentations. However some of the summaries of developments of the last decade or so were

mildly educational in a way that provides a useful interlude among the more thought provoking stuff.

North America's Doc Joel Rubin and Mid Atlantic's Martin Moore in a double act tried to provoke the lamp manufacturers into revealing any new illumination magic that might be waiting in the wings. (An old technique originally pioneered by Fred Bentham who subsequently spent a couple of decades trying to explain to the lamp industry that fluorescent tubes presented certain shortcomings in their ability to control light direction). But there seems to be no revolution in prospect – although there is considerable promise in the new C.I.D. (Compact Iodised Daylight) lamps with a source of size and shape that permits mounting into *integrated optics*. Following the success of par lamps, some of us lighting designers are perhaps looking a little more hopefully towards the lamp manufacturers than to the spotlight manufacturers for our future optics.

Remote controlled luminaires continue to develop although their cost-effectiveness has some way to go before there can be any significant breakthrough. However Mario de Sisti showed how motor sizes are shrinking – even if at least one theatre lighting designer found the development of motorised barndoors (4 independent motors) to be perhaps a little bit of an overkill at a time when pan and tilt accuracy remains a problem for long throws.

COLOUR

Michael Hall gave a good round-up of the state of the filter world. One sentence in the programme summary of his paper has given this lighting designer cause for thought (and that is what conferences are for). The sentence which will doubtless lead to a CUE article by yours truly is *Diffusion as a method of qualifying light has been in use for many years in film, and more recently in television, but never fully explored in theatre.*

Good to hear that CCT who have so successfully updated mechanical colour change can also be serious about the way-ahead possibilities of adding discrete colour steps to memory controls as explored by John Schwiller in TABS some five years ago.

The first day ended with a topic that has always been a set piece of TV lighting discussions: single point suspension or bars. Not something for a theatre man to get mixed up in: rather a time to muse how lucky the TV chaps are that (a) they don't have to share the grid with scenery and (b) the camera, unlike the human eye, doesn't look up there.

SECOND DAY

The second morning brought a couple of enjoyable commercial moments. There was a manufacturer who informed us, with straight face, that he considered his product to be too important a development to be kept for rental only and that he had a moral obligation to make it available for sale. And

there was an audio visual presentation in support of an advanced control system that caused much hilarity. Particularly the portentous music and an unseen lighting designer whose voice became increasingly incredulous as his operator told him of the wondrous tasks that the machine could perform. Particularly as most of these tasks could have been performed on a 2-preset mini. Fortunately a distinguished light organist who happened to be present was able to assure us that the system was really rather good despite its AV presentation.

Robert Simpson gave a state of the art presentation on computer controlled carousels and raised a big laugh, when dealing with access times, by declaring that many AV producers seemed to have an ambition to make bad movies rather than good AVs.

R. M. Thornton-Brown demonstrated new advances in sound controlled light. But to this pair of eyes the results were still inferior in timing to the operator 'hands on' technique demonstrated in Richard Dale's video recordings of rock shows.

There have been developments in power distribution for heavy current locations. For a moment it looked as if there might be ungentlemanly disagreements about relative merits, but the overall message was clear: increased life expectancy for electricians.

INTERNATIONAL

Noon and an international hour to precede lunch. Denis Irving's easy style and good slides to bring us up to date with stage and tv (yes, pictures of kangaroos and the bush too) in Australia. Oz is a country with good lighting sense. They have never flinched from the price of top imported memory systems, yet one is frequently impressed by the sensible simplicity of many of their locally manufactured add-ons. Today it was an eminently clean MMS patch module with two numerical columns: one for channels and the other for circuits. Push the desired combination and hey presto! No pilot's manual required.

Every good conference, like every good show, likes to be able to produce a *Star is Born* headline. Well it was Mr. Arnon Adar, an Israeli designer at work in Germany who explained the current German situation and how he was dealing with it. His technique might be loosely classified as 'psychological' and, with his charm, he can only win. Everyone but everyone was enchanted by the sensible things he said and the super way he said them.

Strawberries for lunch and back for discussion. Your CUE correspondent soon got it on to the subject of training (predictably) and left before lighting control (perhaps also predictably but certainly in this case unavoidably and certainly without any sense of deprivation).

A good colloquium. Perhaps, inevitably, elitish. Concentrating on ideals, big budgets and top talents. Whereas the real lighting problems are more mundane and are about training (sorry!) lesser talents to work on small budgets in routine circumstances – but to the majority of the audiences. Perhaps another time?