

# PRODUCT NEWS

You can't have too much of a good thing and the ABTT Trade Show was just that. So before it slips into the limbo of historical events, we are adding some personal impressions and valid comments on products received from Dorian Kelly who you will recognise as one of our most entertaining occasional contributors.

He writes:

## A Personal View

One of the great delights of the 1981 ABTT Trade Show at the Round House was the fact that as in previous shows, I managed to stumble over practically everyone I had ever known in the business. (In some cases the word stumble can be taken quite literally, as the other great delight was the fact that the bar was open all day) and also to meet a few new friends. One person who I was surprised and delighted to see again was Martin Dye of **SUFFOLK SCENERY**, who I last saw in my home town some twenty years ago, he an amateur lighting man of some skill, I an amateur actor of none whatsoever. He now builds scenery to very high standards at competitive rates, and is apparently drawing business from quite a few well-respected names. He was sharing a stand with another East Anglian business **ANCIENT LIGHTS**. Apart from stocking a good range of modern lighting stuff, including those hard-to-get spares from recent obsolete lanterns, like hinges for barndoors and colour frames for S Battens, Jim Laws also has an amazing collection of bits for lanterns I never thought to see again like lenses for pattern 43s and bulbholders for pageants, back knobs for the Mk 1 P23. My optimistic enquiry, however, for 'proper' Grelcos' (not approved type, but nice) was met with a rueful negative. At the stall opposite, *AJS* of Bournemouth showed me their latest import – a new shuttered 15A splitter, reasonably priced and claimed to be shatter resistant. It was however totally unstackable, which will doubtless endear it to the GLC. They also showed me a transparent 15A plugtop which enabled connections to be checked visually. To my eye these looked a little fragile, and had a clipped-on rather than screw-fixing top, which would make me a little wary of pulling a plug on a live circuit from the top of a Tallescope, but there is no doubt that the concept is a good one. I was also very impressed with the follow spot that they import from France. It accepts a 28v. 250 Watt lamp and is very bright. A second lamp is incorporated on a mechanical slider with a changeover switch in case of lamp failure. There is a good grabhandle, and the colour change is more accessible than usual. It is a very cheap unit to run as the lamps only cost about two pounds each, and it

seems to be a very good little lime for a small to medium theatre.

**RANK STRAND** were represented in force with the Galaxy, and their new range of luminaires. I am told that certain features of the Harmony and Prelude series are to be revised before production really starts to roll, but among the things I noticed were the difficulty of fastening the thumb-screws that held the lamp tray in position, and the spring clip that is provided presumably in order to prevent the iris from jumping vertically upwards during performances, but which in practice would produce a lot of burned fingers and swearing from the top of the tallescope. They are a dream to clean and maintain, and the lens adjustment is very positive and simple. The safety chain anchorage point should be moved to a point nearer the trunnion arm to enable the lamp to be sufficiently tipped up to get at the lamp tray. If the Harmony profiles are to be used on the spot bar, then something better than the standard hook clamp needs to be employed as for some reason I found it impossible to lock them off lightly enough to prevent radial movement at the slightest touch from passing french flats, tallescopes etc. And I would like to see the Europlug connectors provided with retaining clips of some kind to prevent them falling out. They are not the most reliable of plugs as any sound engineer will tell you, and I wonder if a plug is needed at all? With the cable completely removable, its a pound to a penny that they will get lost and replaced in a permanently temporary manner by a cable filched from the sound department, (usually a bit of non-heatproof 0.5mm) or just as likely by the cable from the wardrobe mistresses' electric kettle.

At the **CCT** stand I was able to air my favourite hobby horse – why can't someone provide shutters that are lockable in position? I seem to spend most of my mornings halfway up the booms re-shuttering due to careless scene shifting or insufficiently breastlined flown pieces. This usually means a disruption of the mornings' work by everybody, due to the demands for various pieces of furniture or cloths to focus onto. Although they had no immediate suggestions to make on this, I was pleased to discover that they had eliminated another problem with the shutters, the ease with which they could be pulled out altogether. For the problem of the difficulty of cleaning the back lenses, they have no easy answer.

When I first started drawing lighting plans, I used to carve india-rubbers into crude representations of the lantern shapes with variable results, mostly messy. **THEATRE INTERNATIONAL SUPPLIES** have produced a series of rubber stamps for this purpose, and they seem to produce more or less consistent results, and it is certainly a quick and efficient method of producing layouts for one's own use. Personally, I am waiting to see rub-down sheets of each lantern produced (preferably free) by the luminaire manufacturers.

To me, however, the star of the show was undoubtedly the new HMI 1200W follow spot. Bearing a startling resemblance to the

French follow spot, but nevertheless firmly labelled with the **BERKEY COLORTRAN** logo, it has the finest pin-spotting ability that I have ever seen. It is fitted with both Iris and Zoom Lens, and this enables one to conserve light. The Zoom stays in focus throughout its effective range and the Iris really does, by some alchemy, iris right out. There is also a dowsler plate for blackouts, which can also be used to produce a square beam. It does make the basic mistake of not having any side-to-side shutters, thus leaving one with the old problem of how to follow an artiste offstage past the tormentors. Do we stop dead on full spot, wait for him to walk out of it and then fade off, or do we iris to head and shoulders first, or do we keep him in the centre of the beam and splash all over the prosc? And as always the colour magazine obscures the view of the operator from almost every operating position. Why can't the magazine be in the one logical place, underneath the lens? Take five operators, and you will have five preferred positions and five sighting methods, but surely it is not beyond the wits of follow spot designers to produce a suitable viewfinder with crosswires and parallax correction, perhaps using a fibre optic light guide.

## Multi-Scene 1 from Canada

An interesting first product from the Rydez Corporation of Montreal is this portable stage lighting control.

The Multi-Scene 1 is a four-scene console with a unique format. It was designed primarily for touring Rock and Roll shows where quick, versatile control is required.

Scene 1 is a conventional fader-type preset allowing variable channel intensities. Digital latching pushbuttons, with LED indicators provide programming of scenes two, three and four. A clear button for each of these scenes facilitates instant reprogramming.



An independent scene is also incorporated for direct access to any channel via the scene one faders. A blackout switch cancels this function when necessary.

Also featured, on each channel and scene, is a full intensity pushbutton for control of quick scene changes and punches.

Output control voltage is 0-10VDC via an MS series amphenol multipin. The mating connector is provided.

A twelve-channel expander is available and may be patched directly.

Each Multi-Scene 1 is supplied with a high quality flight case and a detachable gooseneck lamp.

For further information contact: The Rydez Corporation, 5997 Laurendeau St., Montreal, Quebec, Canada 4HE 3X3.