

(Cover picture)

**Barbican Theatre** The view from the flying control position looking across to the No. 1 lighting bridge and down into the stalls. The rig is the initial 1982 commissioning rig and the photograph was taken before the masking for the first season was installed.



#### CONTENTS

<b>A Gold and a Silver for Britain</b> <i>Robin Don</i>	4
<b>One Year On</b> <i>James Sargant</i>	8
<b>Multiplexing in the Theatre</b> <i>Ian R. Fueggle</i>	12
<b>Oliver Messel at the Victoria and Albert Museum</b> <i>Charles Spencer</i>	12
<b>How Safe is your Theatre?</b> <i>Alan Todd</i>	15
<b>NoTT 83</b>	17
<b>Stockholm's Other Gustavian Theatre</b> <i>Francis Reid</i>	18
<b>Books</b>	22
<b>Letters</b>	22
<b>Product News</b>	23
<b>Between Cues</b> <i>Walter Plinge</i>	24

Cue is an independent magazine published bi-monthly by Twynam Publishing Ltd.

Available on subscription  
UK £10.50 per annum (6 issues)  
Europe and Overseas £13.00

#### Editorial Board

James Twynam (Managing)  
Francis Reid  
Jeremy Twynam

Editorial,  
Advertising and Subscription Office:  
Twynam Publishing Ltd.,  
Kitemore, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8HR  
Telephone 0367 21141

## TECHNOLOGY: To be feared . . . or embraced?

Theatre enjoys something of a love/hate relationship with technology. Have we not all known moments when the simplicity of two planks and a passion seem infinitely more desirable than a hi-tech stage whose delights can be increasingly complex to integrate — even when free from malfunction.

Fear of technology was openly expressed by many of the participants at NoTT 83. It is not difficult to understand their concern. In the age of the chip, microprocessing is an inevitable theme of exhibitors' displays and conference debates.

Yet theatre technology is not exactly a new concept — earlier stage carpenters exploited their own century's knowledge of mechanical advantage to produce both sophisticated flying and wing substitution techniques that were not only labour saving but could achieve a degree of sophisticated timing that now taxes the skills of a computer programmer.

So why the fear? Perhaps it is a fear of the unknown: the replacement of visible hardware with invisible software. Theatre people tend to be sensualists, responding to the touch of tangible objects. To pull a rope, push a flat, or heave on the wheel of a grandmaster can be much more satisfying than initiating a programme by touching a button.

Theatre exists as soon as people are placed in an environment — they interact with each other and with that environment. These interactions can involve a complete range of sophistication from a solo on a stool to a multi-media spectacle: theatre exists in many many forms, all valid within their own terms of reference. Many of these forms have always been dependent upon technology and will continue to seek ways of developing the desirable into the possible. Partly for humanity in removing excessive physical drudgery, and partly for efficiency in releasing maximum time for rehearsal and performance — but primarily to explore ways of extending the nature of theatrical experience.

Provided that we always seek the desirable rather than the merely possible, surely theatre has no alternative but to embrace technology.