

## Drum Revolve

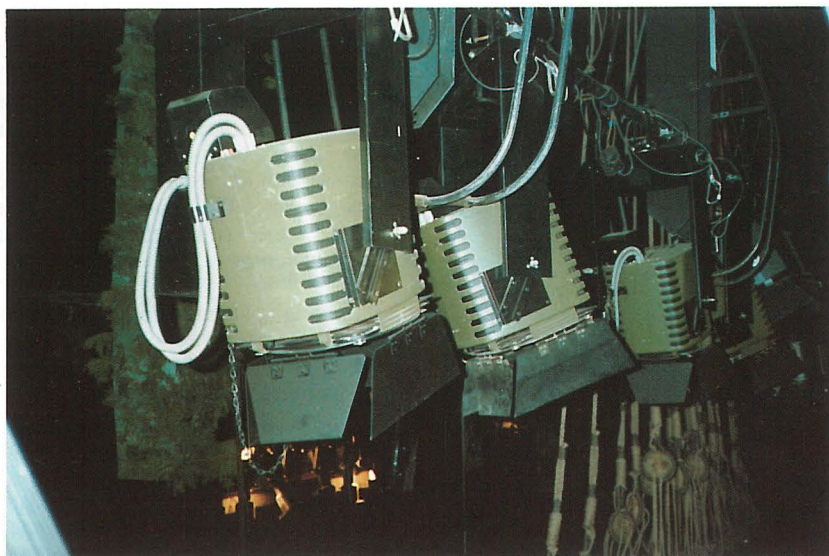
The other special feature of the Olivier theatre is the revolving stage containing two elevators able to lift scenery from below – stage storage into the acting area. This enormous structure extends for three floors below stage and is capable of several complex movements to turn and lift standing scenery. It now works completely as intended though completion and commissioning was not easy and involved major redesign, particularly in respect of safety features. The work was completed five years ago but integration into production schedules was approached cautiously and took some time to be accepted. The elevators were brought into regular use to change scenery between shows when the main scenery lift failed some years ago and remains available for this use whenever required. The revolve is regularly used as part of several current productions. Combined use of revolve and elevators is being considered for use in a production early in 1988. As with other systems, the main changes introduced by the NT engineers were concerned with provision of backup drives and control and devising safe methods of work. Clutch coupled secondary drive motors were added to the two elevators and a capstan-like cable hauling system devised for emergency drum rotation. Three television cameras give the operator views of danger areas and a digital selection device has been added to improve the accuracy of position set-up. In the future Ian Napier hopes he will receive approval to change more of the old analogue control system to modern digital micro-processor components and to complete the link up with the computer flying system so that complex combined changes can at last be presented.

## Lighting Rigs

Lighting rigging in all theatres is on well designed catwalks and galleries wherever possible and these continue to be well used. In the Lyttleton there has been little change but two major changes have been made in the Olivier.

First, although extensive, the FOH lighting bridges left gaps in important positions towards the rear of the circle and it has recently been found possible to fit in new bridges within the petal-like ceiling structure. At the same time the exposed side 'toblerone' lighting booms were thought distracting and fell out of favour and alternative suspensions and masking added for side lighting along the tops of the splay side walls.

The major change, however, has been in the over-stage rigging. Because of the shape and height of the Olivier stage the original design provided television-type short power-hoisted lighting bars interleaved with the scenery flying system. These worked well but even when rigged from the tallest tallescope available the lightning hung well below the optimum height; it being imprac-



The remotely controlled Patt 243s on the Olivier No.1 bar.

ticable to focus by guesswork and then raise the hoist further. The answer had to be a bridge and this was added last year. Fixed two-thirds the way up stage at fly gallery level the bridge provides direct walk-on access to three lighting rails pointing down stage and two on the up stage side. Permanent wiring was installed by Show Contracts Ltd. connected back to the original dimmers. Downstage, ten remote control Patt 243s are hung on six of the remaining short hoists giving easily adjustable main cover. Mid-stage, long bars can be hung on scenery hoists when needed. Surprisingly, the remote control Patt 243s are the originals delivered in 1978 and no new units have been purchased, the main reason being that nothing was available at reasonable cost. Perhaps things will now soon change if the Strand and Charlie Paton PALS co-operation announced in CUE 49 comes to anything. The other short bars remain but as their dimmer circuits have been diverted to the new stage bridge they find little use.

Overall, lighting policy has been to provide a saturated fixed cover with space for specials allocated to each show. Two colour cover is retained in the Lyttleton but recently the Olivier has changed to single cover with remote colour change on every lantern. Few if any of the original CCT and Strand lanterns have been scrapped but there have been many additional units purchased. The Olivier now has 75 2kW Strand Cadenza profile spotlights as basic cover and 69 1kW Harmonys for steep secondary washes. In the Lyttleton 76 2kW Cadenzas have just been purchased as basic cover. Lack of rigging space will probably prevent further additions unless more rails can be added. When necessary, changeovers between afternoon rehearsal and evening performance can now be completed inside two hours.

## Decorative Lighting

At the time of opening the architectural press spoke appreciatively of the lighting



The Olivier Drum Revolve controls. The VDU on the left and electronics crate top right were added to give digital position input and greater safety. Three television screens out of picture on the right add views of understage areas to the direct view of the stage from the perch.

treatment in auditoria, foyers and externally though some of the public found it rather dark, especially in the bar areas. Richard Pilbrow and Tony Corbett of Light Limited were credited, with the architects, for the design. Regular visitors will know that over the years many additional lights have been added, unobtrusively, to meet the needs of exhibition and to fill dark spots, but the concept remains largely unchanged despite the need for theatrical precision when relamping the many low voltage Par 36 fittings. The maintenance electricians and management deserve congratulation for the care they take with this. Unchanged also is the programmed switching and dimming