

required, and the booms are as discreet as possible. They would be even better if special boom arms were devised to avoid the kind of scaffolding modification which has already taken place. And of course it really is time we started painting foh spots to match the decor when they are hung near the proscenium.

The stage has nil wing space but it does have a splendid installation of Victorian timber stage machinery, all restored to working order by David Willmore. But will we ever see it in full production use?

Perhaps we shall. The original instruments movement in music has shown us just how much new we can discover in familiar old works if we attempt to perform them as written. I hope and think that the movement may spread to theatre. It will be over quite a dramatic spread of dead bodies. But certainly not mine. The Playhouse Management say they want to produce as well as to receive: let us encourage them to use their theatre for occasional productions in the style for which it was built.

FRANCIS REID

PENSIONS, 1988 AND ALL THAT

During 1988, new legislation affecting pensions comes into force — and you will have a choice.

- 1. You can do nothing — and rely on the State pension scheme if you are not in a scheme at present.**
- 2. You can take out a “Personal Pension Arrangement”. It will receive favourable tax treatment, but you will have to meet the cost yourself. And worthwhile pensions are not cheap.**
- 3. If you are an employed earner you can join (or stay in) your employer’s scheme and get the benefit of the contributions he pays. This may well be the most economical way of providing for your retirement.**
- 4. If your employer does not have a scheme, you can draw his attention to the Pension Scheme for Administration and Technical Staff in the Arts. This started in 1975, covers a large number of arts organisations — and provides comprehensive benefits.**

He can obtain details from the Secretary to the Trustees, Lawrence Mackintosh, at the address shown below.

(Issued by the Trustees of the Pension Scheme for Administration and Technical Staff in the Arts, c/o 105 Piccadilly, London W1)

Arts Council Promoted

REIDing SHELF

Richard C. Beacham's new study of **ADOLPHE APPIA, Theatre Artist** has been published in the Cambridge University Press *Directors in Perspective* series. The significance of a designer appearing in a series about directors should not be overlooked. Although directors are normally given the credit (or take the blame!) for the concept of a production, the key originator of ideas is often the designer. Since most plays are about human relationships, most acting has to be rooted in naturalism: it is therefore the visual environment which can most readily effect that necessary transformation from reality which enables the deeper layers of a text to be explored. It is virtually impossible to achieve any true theatrical magic without complex collaboration, and in this respect designers tend to be unlucky. The nature of a director's work with actors requires the kind of extrovert determination which ensures that streetwise directors will soon find and acquire the kind of design collaborators who suit their style. Designers are mostly gentle creatures with the self-doubt that is inseparable from an artist's creativity, and they are less likely to sell themselves to the right directors even if they are able to recognise them.

Appia never found an ideal collaborator. At least, not during his life. However his influence has been such that most directors, scenographers and lighting designers have been indebted to him to the point of what amounts to posthumous collaboration. And many (and this is perhaps a little unusual in theatre) have acknowledged that indebtedness.

This new book is full of interest at several levels. It offers a well-researched factual biographical study, placing Appia's work in the context of his period. In examining the difficulties of a theatre innovator it makes us first believe how much more open minded we are now; then immediately wonder whether we really are. It explores Appia's visual thinking, exposing us to both original material and contemporary response. I was stimulated by both text and drawings. Only occasionally does he allow himself a curve. It is then that I succumb totally to Appia the visual artist.

Appia's vision was ahead of technology. Whose vision can even begin to use the technology of today? Or is there an unrecognised Appia in our midst?

To progress today's theatre into tomorrow's, we need to understand yesterday's, and John Russell Brown's admirable