

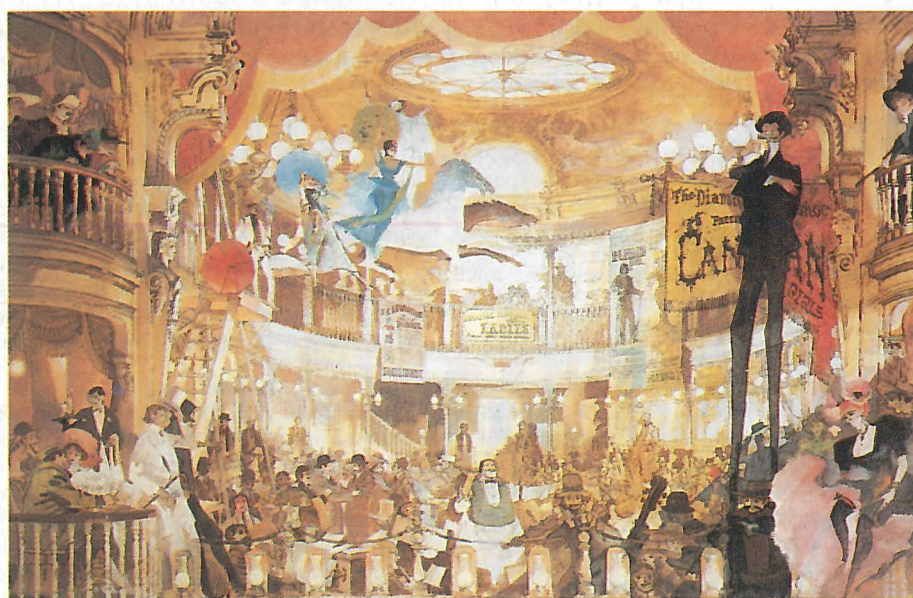


Disneyland Opera House

It is a city with specialised support services, particularly wedding parlours and divorce attorneys. And lots and lots of shows. The concentration of theatres (called showrooms) places The Strip ahead of Broadway and the West End in volume terms. And not just in the number of stages but in anything to do with size whether it be

stage area, machinery, scenes or, especially, number of performers.

Everything, that is, except the lighting rigs which are distinctly undernourished. There is enough wash from the front: visibility is not a problem. But with only token back and side lighting, the pulchritude is



John de Cuir's backloth design for Disneyland's Golden Horseshoe Revue

distinctly two dimensional. Why spend all this money on scenery and people, then minimise the investment by flattening the curves? Any kick line deserves at least one parcan per colour per dancer per position. And that is just downlighters for starters.

But, lighting apart, these spectaculars are great fun. Impelled along by their click tracks, they are delivered with a glossy attack which takes the twice-nightly sinking of the Titanic in its stride. By the end of the evening one is totally convinced that ladies descending from the auditorium's ceiling or papering its walls is perfectly natural behaviour.

I fully intended to add the Liberace Museum to my collection but got my openings in a twist. Perhaps it was a subconscious need to have a reason to go back to this crazy theatric city.

SAN FRANCISCO is not a theme park and it is not Hollywood. Or is it? Where else can you ride the running board of a clanging cable car to the structured fantasy of Fisherman's Wharf to take a boat under a Golden Gate Bridge smothered in dry ice?