

lighting session," insists Chelton. "I then offer the whole to the director in the theatre."

Chelton's lighting apprenticeship included a passage through the Theatre Projects stores and design office, an institution for many young designers in the late 1960s and early 70s. This helpful entry to the profession offered by Richard Pilbrow's hire operation has led not only to the uniformity of lighting style in London's West End today, but also to the perpetuation of the belief that handling equipment is a good way to learn lighting design. (A hypothesis not all agree with). "It was Pilbrow's aim to demystify lighting," Chelton remembers. "He separated the hardware from the software and used the former to process the latter."

After stints as assistant electrician at Nottingham Playhouse and chief electrician for the RSC's 1967 and 68 UK tours, Chelton returned to London "because I needed to be streetwise. It helped to have credibility in the relationships with those up the ladder, and those tucked away in the box."

### **The Royal Opera's *Un Re in Ascolto* benefitted from Chelton's interest in HMI, high wattage discharge lighting.**

This desire to move on from electrician to artist was based firmly in Chelton's recognition of his own abilities. "Design was what I wanted, and after four years of freelance technical work I knew I had mastered the easy bit. I understood the basis for a working team in the theatre."

For Chelton, a new line of interest lies in the lighting of television drama. Having just lit his first straight television play on location he feels that he has more control over "the product" and that the framing elements allow for the exploration of better and more exciting lighting styles. The tapestry of dynamic lighting that he has learned to weave in the theatre is contained rather than restricted by television. Television to Nick Chelton allows for better management of his art, and thus, to better art.



KATIE VAN DYCK

4

#### **A SELECTED NICK CHELTON DESIGNOLOGY**

##### **THEATRE**

Royal Court: *The Farm, Life Class, What the Butler Saw, Bingo, Gimme Shelter, Byrthrite*

West End: *Three Sisters, The Bells of Hell, The Rear Column, Season's Greetings, Shirley Valentine, Curtains*

Broadway: *Shirley Valentine*  
RSC: *The Way of the World; Love's Labour's Lost, Antony and Cleopatra, Julius Ceasar, The Wizard of Oz*

Royal Exchange, Manchester: *Heartbreak House, Don Carlos, Don Juan*

Lyric Hammersmith: *Medea*  
Chichester Festival Theatre: *A Little Night Music*

##### **DANCE**

Ballet Rambert: *Prelude and Song, Ghost Dances, Berlin Requiem, Concertino*

Sadlers Wells Royal Ballet: *Wand of Youth, Gloriana*  
London Festival Ballet: *The*

##### *Seasons*

Cologne Tanz-Forum: *Cantata*

##### **OPERA**

Kent Opera: *Orfeo, Engene Onegin, Ulysses, La Traviata, The Beggars Opera, A Night at the Chinese Opera, Count Ory, Peter Grimes*

English National Opera: *Orpheus in the Underworld, Doctor Faust, Tosca, The Stone Guest, Pacific Overtures, The Barber of Seville, Rusalka, The Magic Flute, Eugene Onegin.*

Scottish Opera: *Don Giovanni, Oberon, Carmen, Iolanthe, Billy Budd*

Welsh National Opera: *The Makropoulos Case, Ernani*

The Royal Opera, Covent Garden: *Salome, Tannhauser, Samson, Un Re in Ascolto*

##### **TELEVISION**

Jericho/Channel 4: *Family*