

AVAB WITH A FRENCH ACCENT

BY ELLEN LAMPERT

What do the Chaillot Theatre, the Comédie Française, and I.M. Pei's Pyramid have in common? The answer is Avab lighting controls installed by Robert Juliat, the French company that illuminates Paris. Founded in 1920 as a supplier of lanterns for the cinema, the company soon began to manufacture stage lighting for the live performances seen between the films. This activity quickly became the major part of their business, and over 70 years later Juliat is responsible for the lighting systems in many of the major theatres in and around Paris.

"We have a history of working with certain theatres, like Nanterre and Bobigny, known for their work in contemporary production" says Patrice Bouqueniaux, technical director at Juliat, who is also in charge of maintenance for the lighting equipment at the Avignon Festival each summer. For Avignon, Juliat has recently revamped the systems in many of the spaces used for the Festival. The new systems include portable Juliat Digiracks housing up to 240 circuits in the bigger theatres such as the Cour d'Honneur and the Aubanel Gymnasium. These systems represent the marriage of Juliat's advanced digital dimmer technology with the AVAB controls. Avignon is also equipped with eight AVAB 202 boards, provided by Juliat, who serve as the French distributor of AVAB. "Having the same board in several theaters is more practical, we can move them around as needed, and replace them quickly in case of a problem," says Bouqueniaux. Avignon is serviced by Texen Lighting in nearby Aix-en-Provence, one of the dozen distributors for Juliat in France. "We have a unique system of distribution, with a network of agents all over France," according to Bouqueniaux. "Many of them are former technicians or technical directors who work directly with the theatres."

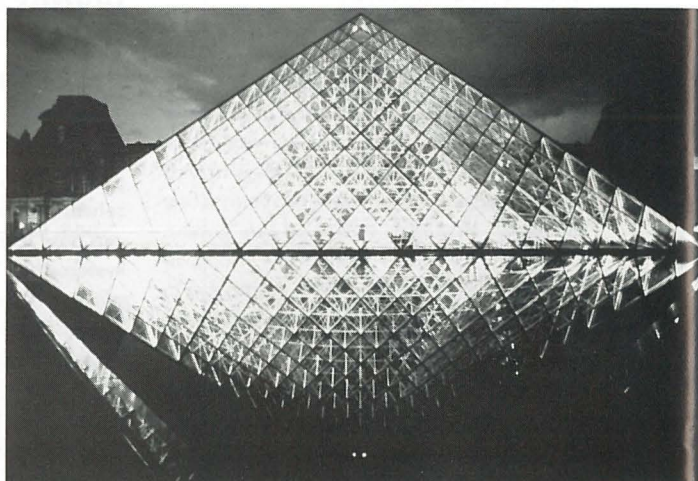
Juliat offers a range of services from concept to installation of its systems. Recent installations include the main theatres at both the Chaillot and the Comédie Française, both of which are now outfitted with three AVAB Expert boards, which are the first Expert boards produced, and the first installed anywhere in the world. "These theatres had extreme confidence in Juliat," says Jean-Louis Pernette, the company's marketing director. "They chose the AVAB Expert before it really even existed. They were willing to take a chance on a new product." At the Comédie Française, Juliat supervised a complete renovation of the lighting equipment, replacing the old ADB equipment with AVAB boards, installing new cable, and interfacing the system with special software made to order for the project. Moving into the Comédie Française and the Chaillot represents a transition for Juliat, bringing them into the more traditional circle of French theatre. "This marks the first alliance of technology with traditional theatre in France," says Pernette. Juliat also provided AVAB 202's for the rehearsal halls at the new Opéra de la Bastille.

Juliat first brought AVAB into France more than ten years ago, and according to Pernette, Juliat has since installed approximately 400 AVAB boards in France, with AVAB's competition in the French marketplace coming from ADB and Strand. "We have enjoyed a long-term faithful relationship with AVAB," says Pernette, "and work very closely with them." The AVAB boards are often paired with Juliat lighting instruments, one of the most popular being the profile spot with HMI lamp and plano convex lens.

Juliat recently branched off into architectural lighting, including the I.M. Pei Pyramid at the Louvre Museum (below), where they used an AVAB 211 to shed light on archaeological ruins and an AVAB 202 for its auditorium.

Juliat s'est diversifiée dans plusieurs projets d'éclairage architectural y compris la Pyramide de I.M. Pei au Louvre (ci-dessous), où ils ont utilisé un AVAB 211 pour éclairer des ruines archéologiques, et un AVAB 202 pour l'auditorium.

Juliat arbeiten sie auch in der Architekturbeleuchtung, so z. B. für die I.M. Pei Pyramide im Louvre (unten). Dort benutzten sie einen AVAB 211 um archäologische Ruinen zu beleuchten und einen 202 für das Auditorium.



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Moving off stage and into the architectural arena, Juliat has recently had a hand in lighting some of Paris' newest monuments, including the I.M. Pei Pyramid at the Louvre Museum of Art, where they used an AVAB 211 to shed light on the archaeological ruins unearthed on the building site, and installed an AVAB 202 with digital dimming system in a multi-purpose auditorium. Other projects include the new Institute of the Arab World which graces Paris' left bank, and *La Traversée de Paris* exhibition at La Defense, where the lighting is also controlled by an AVAB 202 and digital dimmers.