STRAND COLOUR MEDIUMS

A GUIDE TO COLOUR MIXING

When coloured light is mixed, one colour is added to another, whereas when pigments are mixed the colours are subtracted from each other. The more colours of light that are mixed the nearer the result approaches white; the more pigments the nearer to black.

The three primary colours of light are matched by our 6 Red, 39 Green and 20 Blue (double wattage required). Secondary colours are obtained by using dimmers as follows:

Adding Green to Red — Orange, Amber, Yellow.

,, Red to Green — Light Green, Pea Green, Yellow.

,, Green to Blue — Medium Blue, Light Blue, Blue-Green.

,, Blue to Green — Deep Green, Peacock Green, Blue-Green.

,, Red to Blue — Violet, Mauve, Magenta.

,, Blue to Red — Scarlet, Claret, Magenta.

To obtain tints, all three colours must be mixed; thus salmon pink is the same mixture as orange but with some blue added, steel blue is the same as blue-green but with some red added.

By mixing the primaries in various proportions several hundred secondary colours are obtained. However, for much theatre work the primary system is very wasteful—for example in realistic effects on a cyclorama or sky-cloth. Red, Green and some of the more vivid hues are seldom required. An alternative three-colour system using 5A Orange, 16 Blue-Green and 20 Blue is suggested for realism. This system provides all the more usual sky colours at much greater intensity. Thus, Light Blue is two circuits full up, instead of one full, and the other one third dimmed (30 per cent. light). The primary mixture produces only 65 per cent. of the light of the alternative mixture.

The schedules overleaf show diagrammatically the approximate positions to place the dimmer handles to obtain the colours in the first column. The percentages are of handle travel, 0 per cent. being the " off " position ; 100 per cent. the " full on." The hues are names at steps of one third dimmer travel ; tints (for which no dimmer is taken below 50 per cent.) are named at steps of one half dimmer travel. This is due to the limitations of useful colour nomenclature, the actual number of recognisable colour steps running into hundreds.

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