

■ Moscow — St Basils' Cathedral by night.

# THE IRON CURTAIN ALSO RISES FOR STRAND

**W**ith the attention of the world in recent months having focussed on the raising of the Iron Curtain, Strand Lighting engineers have themselves been in the spotlight with three major theatre and television projects in Russia and Bulgaria.

At Varna, on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast, the famous Opera House reached the end of a six year refurbishment programme which also included refitting of lighting rigs.

Service engineer Antony Bridges had the enviable task of spending two weeks in the popular holiday resort last August and commissioning a Gemini 2, following installation of a range of Strand luminaires, including Cantatas and Cadenzas.

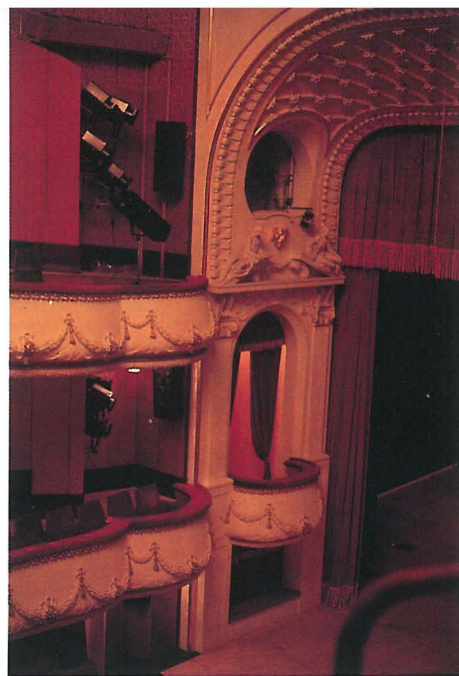
Inclusion of infra-red controls for the Gemini 2, as part of the project, has made Varna one of the most up-to-date entertainment complexes in Eastern Europe.

## FRIENDLY

He also instructed the resident lighting staff at the opera house in the use of the Gemini 2, a task made easier by the fact that a word-perfect interpreter was on hand and that the naturally friendly Bulgarian people were all keen to demonstrate their command of English whenever possible.

But he explained, 'There are very noticeable cultural differences. For example, the Bulgarian people do not understand the word "unemployment" because they cannot grasp the concept of there being more people than there are jobs. That just doesn't happen in their country.'

'Also, food is more widely available in



■ Varna Opera House — interior.

Bulgaria, so that Russians who go there on holiday feel almost as if they are going to the prosperous West.'

In marked contrast to Bulgaria, a later six-day stint in Moscow was conducted at the worst possible time of year — in November, when the weather was both wet and grey.

Strand's Moscow project, working for electronics giant Ampex, was to instal and commission lighting for a new television studio, A P Novosti. Once again, in addition to setting up a Gemini 2, with PIP dimmers, part of Antony's task was to train local staff in its use.

He said, 'When you are using an interpreter while teaching a technical subject, you are bound to lose something in the translation. We overcame the problem by going through the whole process in easy stages, allowing the Russian operators to try their hand as they went

■ A P Novosti — a studio lighting rig. Control is now by means of a Gemini 2.

