

YORKSHIRE TELEVISION HAS FOR MANY YEARS BEEN KNOWN FOR THE CONSISTENTLY HIGH QUALITY OF ITS PROGRAMMES. HERE, LIGHTING DIRECTOR, AND FORMER STRAND ENGINEER, PETER HARDMAN PONDS ON THE FUTURE OF HIS PROFESSION.



Photos: Yorkshire Television

■ Rollicking fun in *Haggard* with Keith Barron — one of the sets lit by Peter Hardman.

WILL THERE BE LIFE AFTER EMMERDALE?

The television lighting director could be a 'dying breed' in Britain, killed off by tighter budgets and changes in policy, according to one of the most respected of the breed, Yorkshire Television's Peter Hardman.

Peter has worked for Yorkshire TV, one of the most active drama, documentary and light entertainment producers, since it was formed 22 years ago. His list of credits covers many of the top-rated shows produced for independent television.

These include *Emmerdale Farm* ('we all do a stint on *Emmerdale Farm*, and take it in turns') to *Rising Damp* and the recently-shown *Haggard*. He is best known, in lighting terms, for his work on light entertainment programmes, such as *Song By Song* and *Let's Face The Music*.

He is currently working on two new runs for Cannon and Ball, a *Playhouse* series, and a new game show, *Casino*, which appears on screen this month and is being regarded as the successor to that other Yorkshire TV gameshow favourite, *3-2-1*.

But he warns, 'Some people think the television lighting director is a dying breed, although personally I am not so sure. Certainly lighting directors in general in ITV have been quite worried about this.

'There is quite a big shake-up going on financially and to produce programmes more efficiently we are now using cameramen to light some of the productions, rather than lighting directors. To my mind what this means is that quality may be sacrificed to bring the price of the product down.

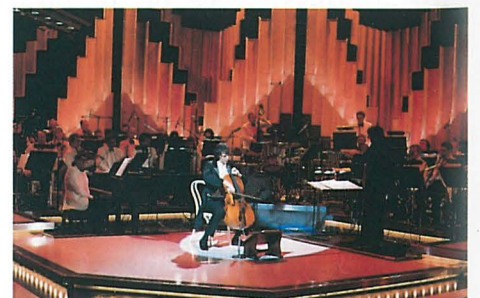
'This is the general thinking throughout the industry now, although my view is that there will always be lighting directors for certain productions.'

Peter began his career assisting his father in lighting amateur productions in Manchester as a boy of 12. He still maintains his links with the amateur side of the business by lending his talents as occasional lighting director for companies such as Prestwich Amateur Operatic Society.

After qualifying as an electronics

engineer and working briefly for Ferranti Computers, he joined the old Strand Electric company in Covent Garden, London, in the early 1960's, learning the ropes as a junior engineer in Fred Bentham's technical department. He remembers that this was at a time when the first SCR dimmer was being developed and the first thyristor dimmers were being installed at the BBC. The electronic memory and the magnetic drum were also in their early stages of development.

Before long, he had applied for a job as a technical assistant with ABC Television, with the intention of becoming a



■ Julian Lloyd Webber faces the music.