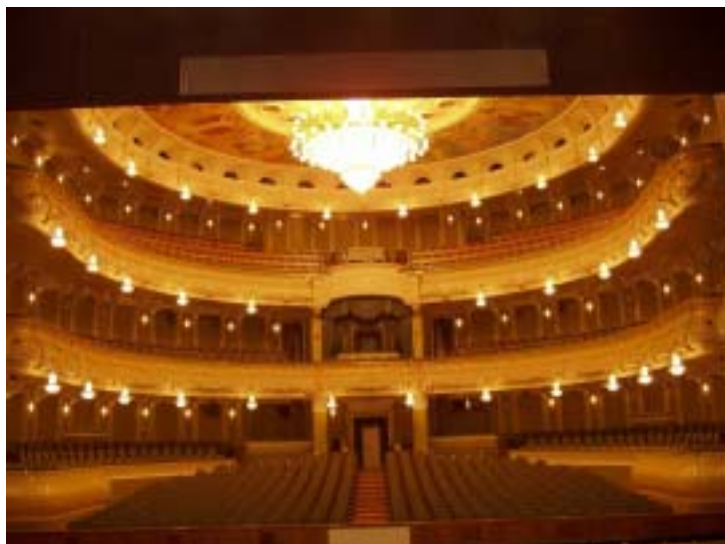


A New Bolshoi *by Alan Luxford*

In 1987 the Government of the old Soviet Union raised the idea about the reconstruction of the famous State Academic Bolshoi Theatre (to give its full name) in the heart of Moscow. The Bolshoi is the oldest Russian musical theatre and represents the pinnacle of Russia and Soviet musical culture. Along with the decision to reconstruct the theatre in



Main Auditorium of the "Branch of the Bolshoi"

1987 it was also decided at Government level to build a new Bolshoi Theatre. This decision was made, as the existing theatre would have to be closed for the duration of the reconstruction, which could take many years. One of the major problems to overcome is the river which is running underneath the theatre is moving the foundations.

As with any large and complex project the paper work for the construction started in 1987. It was not until 1993 that a decision was made to who the general contractor should be. The building work finally started on the construction of the Branch of the Bolshoi Theatre on the 28th September 1995 with a completion date of the September 1997.

System Design

In 1998 I traveled to Moscow to create the lighting equipment specification with the Bolshoi's lighting designer Damir Ismagilov. While there the dimmers (originally EC90SV Reporting) Ethernet and control systems were agreed with the Bolshoi's main power engineer Alexander Ivanov who is now head of lighting at the Bolshoi theatre. It would be 5 years before the vision that they created as a group would be realized. During that time I would become the first individual from the west to be admitted to the International Federation of Artists (member 4192) for my work in designing lighting for Russian theatres.

The collaboration resulted in one of the most sophisticated theatres in Russia with one of the most sophisticated light rigs installed anywhere in the world. The utilization of the theatre drove much of the design as a typical day would have a rehearsal in the morning, a matinee performance in the afternoon at and an evening show with three different performances. As the working height for the sophits varies from 10m to 12m above the stage a moving light rig was the only way to get a quick turn around of these different performances.

At the Bolshoi they use a lot of stage cloths and luminaires have to be provided to light them. Strand Lighting engineered for the Bolshoi 144 custom Coda 1000 watt 4 circuit luminaires, which are double hung on the 7 sophits. In addition we also designed a 6 function Toccata Pirouette which has motorized



The first lighting bridges (sophits) at the new Bolshoi with its large rig of customer made Coda wash lights and Pirouette automated lights

control of Pan, tilt, focus 1, focus 2 and Iris plus colour scroller.

Completing the rig were standard Pirouette 2kW PC units and 1000W Beamlite units all fitted with colour scrollers. A total of 96 units were supplied for the project.

All of the stage lights are controlled by two 550i desks in the main control room (configured as main and back up) and a 520 console acting as a stalls desk.