

STRANDLIGHT

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Aspects of Lighting

The new Strand PALS automated lighting system makes its West End debut in 'Aspects of Love'.

The central problem confronting lighting designer Andrew Bridge when considering the new Andrew Lloyd Webber musical 'Aspects of Love', currently at London's Prince of Wales theatre, was that there were some sixty scenes, each with its own lighting needs, and no space for a massive lighting rig.

By West End standards very few spots had to fill many different roles. They had to be able to change colour, direction and beam angle to fill the various tasks allocated to them and they had to be able to repeat the designer's choice of settings again and again. In the end the main burden of the lighting is carried by only twenty-six Strand PALS units — thirteen Cantata PC's and thirteen Cadenza PC spots. The rig has 65 PALS colour changers on front-of-house Cantata profiles and a multiplicity of various units on ladders just behind the proscenium, but the PALS controlled units cover the all important acting area.

The Choice

Special consultant Howard Eaton researched the various automated lighting systems available and, together with Andy Bridge and Mike Odam, the production electricians for 'Aspects', selected Strand's PALS. The main qualities of PALS are its reliability and ability to repeat lantern settings continually with great accuracy. It is not a pop concert system for flashing beams around on stage for effect — it is a serious system whose movements are relatively slow and deliberate but are above all reliable and accurate.

How PALS Works

Direction is controlled by separate motors

controlling pan (340° of sideways movement) and tilt (90° of up and down movement) while another motor controls focus and yet another the iris. Intensity is, of course, handled by conventional dimmers while the memory system, in this case a Galaxy 3, provides the repeatability for performance after performance of all functions, including colour changes by scrollers.

In this particular show it was decided to separate control of the selection of circuits and their levels from the PALS lantern

control. This is not strictly necessary as all the lighting functions can be controlled by a single push-button.

Getting The Show On

Although we had already completed a very large television PALS installation (see Strandlight number 7) 'Aspects of Love' was to be the first ever full theatre use. No question here of the opportunity for a quiet little trial set up in mid-Wales away from the London critics and the near

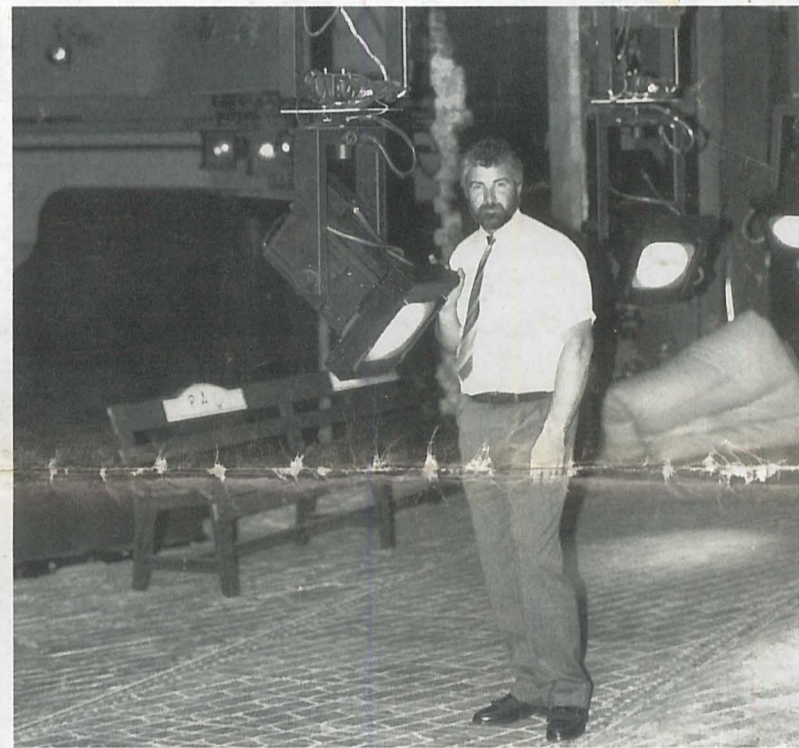
instantaneous word of mouth that flashes in hours around the theatre's technical world. We would be on stage and on trial at the heart of one of the most eagerly awaited and heavily publicised and advance booked shows ever.

We had exactly ten weeks to get the whole installation supplied and up and running. We knew that success would mean instant good publicity within the theatre world not only in the U.K. but around the globe as the various touring companies set forth. We also knew that

anything less than total success could damn the system.

After all, the whole design concept of 'Aspects' depended on few lamps doing the tasks of many. With so much at stake Alan Luxford was put in charge of the project by Russell Dunsire with one simple instruction. "Just see that it all works!". And it does. ■

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Alan Luxford of Strand Lighting on stage at the Prince of Wales Theatre where 'Aspects of Love' is the current success.

Cats - The Show with Impact

When singer Marti Webb takes to the stage in the touring production of Andrew Lloyd Webbers' musical 'Cats', she is well and truly under the influence of Strand.

For an Impact board controls a total of 210 lighting cues used in the production currently at Blackpool Winter Garden's Opera House.

The 3000-seat theatre, the largest in Britain, has been geared up to take even more lighting cues than the original West End production.

A cast of 27 'cats' performs beneath a battery of Lekos, Cantatas, 252 projectors and Act 6 dimmers.

Tour electrician Fraser Hall said, "The average musical has quite a large number of lighting cues, but this production has even more than usual.

"We rely heavily on Strand Lights, but we have a very reliable supplier in Luff Light and Sound."



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Blueprint for The Future

An easy-reference guide providing a blueprint for future theatrical and architectural lighting design, has been published to mark our 75th year.

The 96-page colour brochure, packed with facts, figures, technical specifications on all current Strand products, and expert tips, is intended to become the key reference work for the industry.

Featuring pictures and data from the milestones of Strand Lighting's history, 'The Strandbook' outlines the thinking and developments behind today's market-leading Strand products.

Lighting experts have used Strand's three quarters of a century of experience to come up with helpful hints for lighting everything from an amateur drama to a major television studio production.

On the architectural side, designers are given advice on the most effective way of achieving 'mood' lighting in all situations, from restaurants and showrooms, to museums and airports.

Guidance is also given on the use of filters and colour selections.

The brochure provides the most comprehensive-ever catalogue of Strand lighting equipment, controls and services, with an easy-to-follow index of brand names, local Strand sales contacts and



distributors. A supplementary price list gives current UK costs for all available equipment. 'The Strandbook' is available to all readers at a price of £4.00 per copy, including postage and packing.

To obtain a copy of 'The Strandbook' send a cheque for £4.00, made payable to 'Strand Lighting Limited', to: Strand Lighting Limited, Grant Way (Off Syon Lane), Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 5QD, England. ■