

# Edinburgh Traverse

The Traverse Theatre opened in 1963 in an old tall building at the Lawnmarket end of Edinburgh's "Royal Mile", that historic High Street running from Edinburgh Castle to Holyrood Palace. The building, which was once a 17th century nobleman's house, and had more recently been a crumbling brothel ("Kelly's Paradise"), housed a new theatre club with the two-fold aim of promoting the work of new playwrights and expanding the frontiers of theatre techniques. The theatre was called the *Traverse* because of the shape of the stage: the audience were *transverse* to the stage and the stage *traversed* the auditorium.

The Traverse was, perhaps, an inevitable result of the Edinburgh Festival—not the official programme but that amorphous fringe of performances which seem to habit every hall, gallery, and warehouse, every romantic nook, every alienation cranny. The Traverse took the concept of a *performance space* from the festival weeks and added it to the more conventional scene of Edinburgh's all-the-year-round theatre experience. And the Traverse spawned other similar theatres up and down the country, sometimes with name, sometimes with just inspiration. To read the lists of past productions is to understand why the Traverse has been called one of the great single influences since the oft-quoted landmark of "Look Back in Anger".

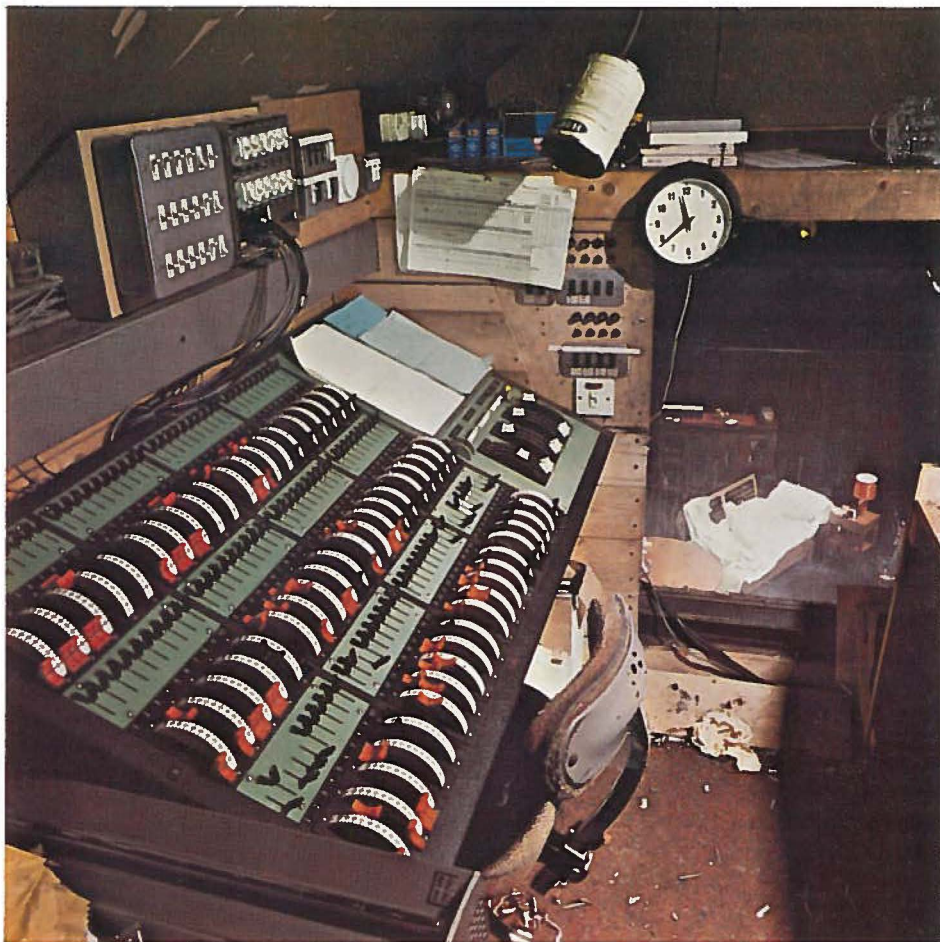
1968 saw the Traverse move into new premises in the Grassmarket. Another old building, another 18th century skyscraper, but this time large enough for an adaptable performance area with triangular seating modules capable of forming any type of playing space, including the original transverse stage.

During the Festival, the Traverse gives a daily half-dozen performances of a half-dozen different productions; the first at 11 a.m., the last beginning after midnight. To cope with this sort of situation and to allow for exploration of the frontiers of space stage lighting, the all-over pipe grid has something approaching a saturation rig controlled by a Threeset 40.

## New Filters

Recent additions to the Cinemoid range include some useful pastels: a *straw tint* (73), a positive *lavender* (71), and a delicate *green tint* (77) which is paler than 38 and should be useful in subtle sunlight and gaslight mixtures. *Pale golden rose* (75) is basically rose but has a touch of gold: possibly just the thing to revive tired old scenery with a cosy glow. *Medium red* (64) is a true red but lets through a lot more light than the traditional No. 6 primary red.

F.R.



Threeset 40 control

Photographs by A. L. Hunter.

