

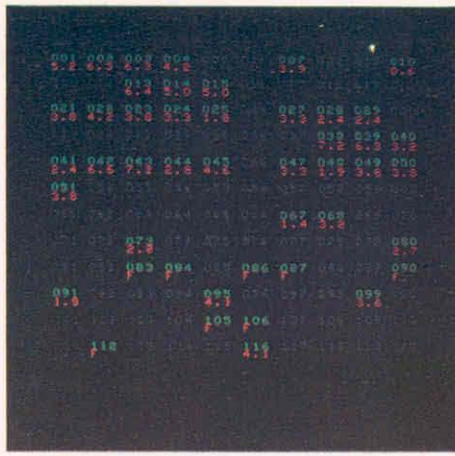
The new lighting control installation at Glyndebourne has been made possible by a most generous grant from the Corbett Foundation of Cincinnati, Ohio.

through this period until the long awaited thyristor became available in practical form and (I quote myself writing in the Glyndebourne 1964 Programme Book) *for the first time it became possible to envisage a control designed in terms of the artistically desirable rather than the technically possible.*

My 1964 Glyndebourne Programme article goes on to describe the hunt for a new system . . . .

The planning and installation of the new equipment has taken nearly three years. It began with a month's tour of opera houses: not only to the obvious centres such as Vienna, Salzburg, Berlin, Hamburg, Stuttgart and Frankfurt but also to a number of the smaller but superbly equipped theatres including those at Mannheim, Münster, Gelsenkirchen, Nürnberg, Brussels and Liège. With the aid of the magic passwords "Glyndebourne", "Ebert", and "Rennert", it was possible not only to examine the equipment thoroughly by day but frequently to spend the evening in the control rooms watching it function under performance conditions.

But the overall impression was disturbing: certainly the engineering was everywhere superb, but in its application there seemed to be a failure to take advantage of the freedom made possible by modern science. In place of the expected re-thinking of control requirements, there seemed to be only miniaturisation of the old ideas and a proliferation of knobs which did things that *could*



be done rather than things which *ought* to be done.

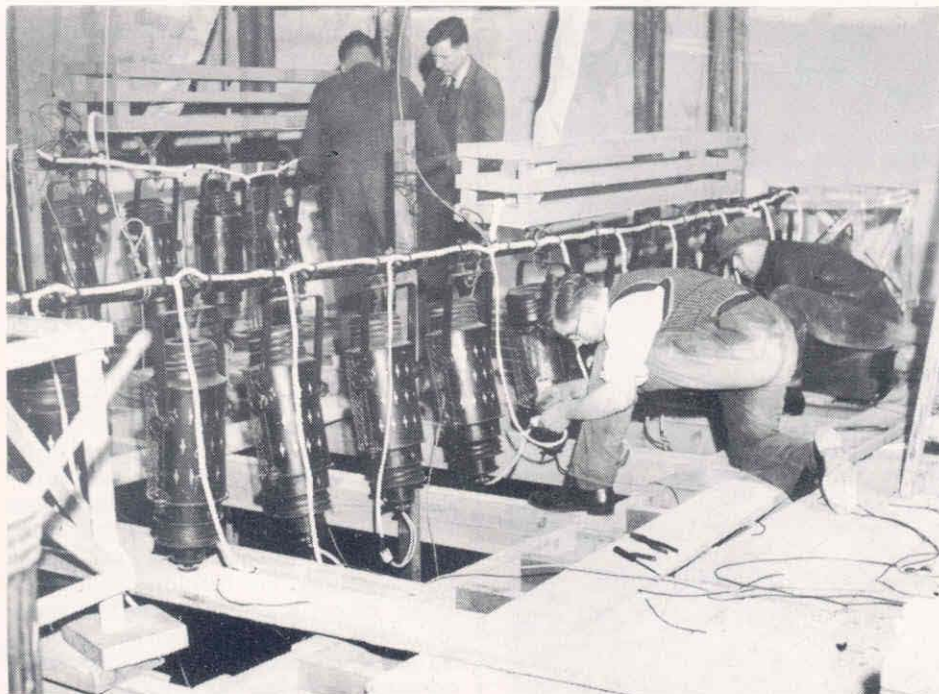
It became obvious that we should have to establish the exact requirements of lighting control at Glyndebourne and have a system

specially built to make these artistic requirements technically possible.

Having read the literature of all six European Manufacturers, we examined the products of five and had discussions with four. The decision to place the order in London was not taken for patriotic reasons alone: in lighting as in everything else Glyndebourne shops internationally. It was only in London, however, that we found the ideal dimmer available as a production model (elsewhere it was still under laboratory development) coupled with a willingness to build control desks to our specific requirements.

## THE THYRISTOR REVOLUTION

The system that evolved was fully described in TABS Vol. 22 No. 2 (June 1964).<sup>\*</sup> Basically it consisted of 120 thyristor dimmers (all 5 kW) controlled from a 4-preset 3-group desk. Live preset levers were indicated by internal scale illumination. The group switching operated through a relay bank to eliminate flicker (it was a couple of years before diodes removed group-switch-flicker from all systems) and as the grouping did not change until the relays were energised, changes of grouping could be preset one move ahead. The 12 preset



Cyclorama horizon floods (1 kW tubular tungsten lamps) being rigged at the time of the addition of the massive permanent cyclorama. These floods were in use until 1973.

<sup>\*</sup> This issue of TABS is out-of-print but Xerox copies of the article are available from the TABS office for control enthusiasts.