

THE FIRST COMPLETE NEW RANGE

by Michael J. Dyer, C.ENG., DLC, MIEE.

It might seem an unwarranted statement to call the range of new lanterns now becoming available from Rank Strand "the first new lantern range". However, despite all the work done over the past sixty years by a succession of lantern development engineers within the Strand Electric and Engineering Company and its successor Rank Strand, it is in fact the very first time that the Company has produced a complete new series of luminaires, arranged in families for complimentary use together, at any one time.

This range of lanterns which is now available worldwide from Rank Strand comprises a number of constituent parts and it may be worthwhile to consider the reasons that they came about and how they form a new family of Strand Lanterns which will most certainly become a familiar sight wherever Lighting for Entertainment is used, over the next few years.

When the original design specifications were drawn up, some years ago now, a number of people in Strand sat down to consider seriously the use to which luminaires are put. The common starting point appeared to be the throw distances, that is the distance from the luminaire to the area or people which it is illuminating. These throw distances fall into a number of easily defined groups and hence families of luminaires could be specified, before going to the drawing board, to fit in with the various areas of use. For example it is necessary to have a usable amount of light (measured in lux), at a throw distance of say between 5m and 7m for a small venue; for a much larger venue a higher figure of lux would be required and the throw distance may be up to 20m. In both these cases the diameter of the puddle of light produced by the spotlight needs to be approximately the same, because the whole idea of artistic lighting for entertainment is to use spotlights of all the various types to illuminate the acting areas or people, from a number of angles, and with varying colours and intensities.

The first lantern in the range has already been seen in many parts of the world and is called the Minim. This very compact 500 watt Fresnel Spotlight is intended for use in the very small entertainment venues but more particularly for use in display lighting in exhibitions, art galleries, museums etc. etc. and for use also where traditional lighting facilities for entertainment are not readily available such as clubs, pubs and discos. The Minim bears a strong family resemblance to the first of the full range of new Strand Luminaires which are called Preludes.

The musical definition of prelude, that is "something which comes before" is a name which fits its purpose very well, as this range of small

lanterns comes before the major professional lanterns of the Harmony range, and form in themselves a complete family suitable for use in smaller venues as well as complementing big lanterns in major auditoria.

Within the Prelude range, as one would expect, there is a Fresnel spotlight and a P.C. spotlight. These two units are not only complementary but lend themselves to the different lighting styles practised by different lighting designers in varying types of productions and geographical locations.

The three Profile spotlights in the range provide all the necessary hard edged spotlights for use in small theatres etc., two having fixed beam angles and one being a variable. The considerable flexibility demanded of modern theatrical lighting equipment has meant that the variable angle spotlight is a unit that will certainly find grateful users who cannot afford to buy specific equipment for specific jobs, and also allow those last minute changes of mind on focusing lights with which even the best lighting designers distinguish their work. The Prelude 30 (that is the 30° Profile spotlight) closely approximates its performance to the well known Patten 23 and although the Patten 23 will continue to be available for a while from Rank Strand, the advantage in new installations of having an integrated family of equipment including a spotlight of this nature will be obvious to our discerning purchasers. All the normal facilities of Profile spotlights such as beam shaping shutters, the availability of iris diaphragms and gobo holders, plus readily available lamp adjustment etc. are included for the Prelude family.

The Harmony range which completes the introduction of new spotlights at this time shows clearly the importance which Strand put to the one-kilowatt range of theatrical lighting instruments. As well as the Fresnel and P.C. spotlights of outstanding performance, no less than four variations of Profile spotlight are available. The ability to select a Profile spotlight of medium or narrow angle or two with a variable focusable beam, must mean that within the Harmony family every requirement is catered for. Spotlights in the Harmony range have a family resemblance of their own, not dissimilar to Prelude but somewhat more "professional" looking and bolder in their square lines.

Harmony in Music is a combination of sounds — in Lighting it is now a combination of Creative Luminaires.

The purpose of this article is not to describe in detail the specification or performance of all these various units, this is more than well catered for in the technical literature available from Rank Strand; but I would like to point

out some of the unique advantages of these units to the people who will be using them all over the world for many years to come.

The robust construction using high pressure die-castings and purpose-made extrusions ensures the ultimate in rigidity and hardwearing properties that can be built into a spotlight. The smart family image means that any rig adorned with these musically named instruments will indeed be an attractive asset to a theatre.

The whole of the spotlight range is designed with the latest international safety codes of practice in mind and even legislation which is as yet but a figment of the bureaucrat's mind has been taken into account. It is particularly interesting to note that the outside surfaces of the luminaires have been designed to run much cooler than the current units which are in use in theatre and television lighting, in order to comply with Health and Safety At Work directives both in the U.K. and in Germany. It is anticipated that in addition to the German Standards Approval which all the new Strand spotlights hold, Standards Authorities in many countries will pass these spotlights as satisfactory for retail sale within their own areas.

To ensure complete safety of operation even in the most unskilled hands the mains lead is detachable, and it is necessary to unplug this lead before access can be obtained to the interior of the luminaire for re-lamping. Every luminaire is supplied complete in a carton with its removable mains cable, in many cases together with the moulded plug suitable for use with the local approved type of socket outlet. A lamp is included with every spotlight and these are 500 watt in the Minim and Prelude range and 1000 watt in the Harmony range. 650 watt lamps for the Prelude range are for enhanced performance where a slightly greater output is needed and for the discriminating and more professional users.

Alongside these distinguished lanterns, a new Parblazer, the Parblazer-4, offers the flexible unit much loved by pop show lighting designers, and many traditional designers as well, giving the facilities expected of a luminaire designed to house Par 69 lamps operating at 120 or 240 volts.

The unique advantage of having families of lanterns ranging from small displays of spotlights to major opera house focus spots is the result of the very considerable investment in research and development, personal design efforts, tooling and factory facilities that has been made by Rank Strand over the last two years in developing what must surely be the first ever complete new range of spotlights from anywhere in our industry. I hope that you will see these units on



Michael Dyer joined the Engineering Department of Strand Electric from Loughborough University, where he read electrical engineering — after completing a Management Training Course with Pirelli Grand Cable Works Ltd.

He subsequently joined Rank Film Equipment, being responsible for selling both luminaires and control systems to television studios. He was promoted to Overseas Sales Manager and circled the globe many times, his orbit touching Japan, Australia, Hong Kong, the United States and South Africa. In all these, and many other ports of call, evidence of his passing hangs aloft in studios, and glows multicoloured and cathode ray green in various control rooms.

Three months ago he was further promoted to the role of Marketing Manager where he is responsible for all new product development in Strand.

their many demonstration venues throughout the world, and will send for either general or fully detailed technical literature on the range or on the part of the range which is of particular interest to your applications in the business for which we all work: Lighting for Entertainment.

All the lanterns in this new range, apart from the Parblazer-4, are supplied complete with a lamp.

