

T.V.O.B. DOWN UNDER

by Harry Myers,
Lighting Manager,
A.T.V., Channel 10,
Melbourne.

LIGHTING outside broadcast has changed considerably over the past 20 years in Australia. Initially, the O.B. was only a means of reporting sport and big news events. Today it covers every area in T.V. production. It has become common practice to install television facilities in major entertainment centres.

The light entertainment productions require the Lighting Director to produce studio standard picture quality with special effects. This often presents a problem due to the venue selected. Light entertainment, the variety show is a popular O.B. concept in Australia and invariably means a large installation. Light levels vary from 1000-2000 lux depending on the equipment used. This means in most cases additional equipment is needed to obtain light levels adequate for close up shots on the stage area.

Some photographs of a production 'Australia Day Live' produced at the Melbourne Art Centre, Concert Hall are shown above. The set consisted of stretchable material connected to the battens on the stage area. They represented sails stretching to a maximum height of 13 metres. The diagram shows the position of the sails on the stage.

The production consisted of presenters on prompt and off prompt sides of the stage and musical items on centre stage. There were 16 production numbers live to air. The sails were lit separately with the use of 90 par cans and variations were obtained on the sails with the use of the following:

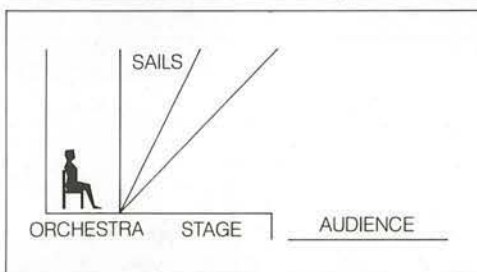
10 - 10kW Spotlights	16 - 1kW Profile spots
20 - 2 kW Spotlights	1 - 4 kW Pani projector
16 - 5kW Spotlights	4 - 1200 W Pani projector
12 - 1.2M Ground row	2 - 4kW HMI

The stage acting area was lit by the following Follow spots:-

- 4 Super troopers
- 2 Ultra arcs
- 2 Pani 1200
- 21 2kW Profile Follow Spots

This production was set up and on air live in 4 days.

Day 1 lighting, Day 2 Production set and light focus, Day



Day 3 Rehearsal; Day 4 Rehearsal/on air live.

The concert hall has a Rank Electronic - Galaxy control System. Additional dimmers were used, a total of 60/5 kW controlled by a 'Duet' system. Detailed plans were prepared and a 4 hour period used to plot the show into the 2 control systems.

The most common drama produced in Australia is the soap opera. A number of these are complete video productions. Channel 10 of Melbourne produces 'Prisoner' which has been in production for 6 years and is a complete video production. The schedule is to complete 2 hours of drama each week in 2 x 1 hr. episodes. This is achieved by the O.B. segments beginning shooting one week ahead of the studio segments. The O.B. covers 10-20 minutes of the 2 hours, the rest is completed in the studio. The O.B. works a 3 day week 6.30 a.m. -

6.30 p.m. when required. Occasional night shoots are made when required. Lighting practice has conformed to HMI equipment. Additional equipment are Redheads, Blondes and Mini-brutes. Colour correction filter is used to maintain colour variations of the light sources. Neutral density filter .3, .6, .9 is in constant use for windows. Tough Spun, Rolux and diffusion are in frequent use also soft reflector boards are used for both interior and external lighting.

In some interior scenes silk scrims have been used over the top of the acting area and lighting has been directed through the scrim. The O.B. is planned on a Friday which includes the survey of the sites. The Lighting Director and Director go to each location for discussions. Tuesday the O.B. production commences and where necessary lighting will be pre-set. There is a Lighting Director and 2 assistants on the lighting crew. There is a 35kW generator truck and a lighting equipment truck. The assistants drive the trucks. The Lighting Director plans and assists the set up and directs the setting of the lights. He then views the pictures and makes the necessary adjustments. This is an efficient operation which has proved very successful.

A feature of 'Prisoner' and of Channel 10's drama productions is the high standard of picture quality. This has been achieved through good communication and an artistic understanding by the technical department.

There is no standard layout for O.B.'s as each location is different in every aspect. How much equipment one needs is dependent on the production and location. The only thing that remains constant is the team effort needed to produce a programme.

In Australia, the O.B. scene has excelled because of the ability of each member of the O.B. crew to understand the job to be done and their willingness to assist each other to achieve the best results. The prime example of this was the last Commonwealth Games in Brisbane produced by the ABC and the new method of covering a marathon event which has now become standard. ■