

HOW WE LIT "Godspell"



by Catherine Simpson

LAST week our school (Market Weighton Secondary) staged our own unique version of the musical

'Godspell' by kind permission from Samuel French of London. It was unique in that it was set in a circus. (For those of you who are perhaps not familiar with the musical it is Mathew's Gospel set to music.) We ignored the curtains and transformed the stage and part of the auditorium into the circus ring itself, and made it really colourful and cheery. We hung red and silver slash curtain along the cyclorama wall and also a trapeze, which played an important role in the production.

God was portrayed as a Ring Master and Jesus as the white faced clown. We had acrobats, jugglers, knife throwing acts and even a lion tamer.

I will have to begin by telling you about the control desks we used. We, in fact, used three desks. One of these we placed in the projection room which operated two Harmony 1000s and the house lights. The other desk we had backstage for controlling our backlighting. The final desk we used was an eighteen dimmer desk with two master controls. We set up our general lighting on the top master and our 'song lighting' on the lower. This desk can operate thirty six circuits. With the two masters, it was very useful for crossfading from one set-up to another.

Now on to the actual lights. The rig-up was as follows.

F.O.H.

8xSPK 500W profile spots. (2 pink, 2 blue and 4 yellow - areas 1 and 2.)
2xPATT 23 with colour change wheels. (areas 1 and 2.)
2xPATT 23 used as box spots. (white - area 1 and 2.)
2x1000W MAJORS (blue - area 3.)

Apron

1xPATT 23 with colour change wheel. (area 3.)
1xMINIM F. (amber - area 3.)
2xMINIM 23 with Gobo projection (blue - area 3.)

Batten

2x500W MAJOR. (yellow - area 1 and 2.)
2xSPK 500W. (pink - area 1 and 2.)
2xMINIM 23 (white - area 4.)

3xMINIM F. (straw - area 1 and 2.)
3xPATT 23 with colour change wheels. (area 1 and 2.)

Backlighting

2x500W floods (blue - area 4.)
2x1000W MAJOR (white - area 4.)
4xMINIM F. on stands (2 blue, 2 red.)
1x1000W flood (orange - area 4.)
Cyclorama unit (red - area 4.)

Projection Room

2x1000w HARMONY (1 red, 1 blue.)
1x23N Follow-spot.

Back of Auditorium

1x1000W HARMONY used as a Follow-spot.

Other Lighting

1xmirror ball lit from behind with 1x23N Follow-spot.

After the gruesome task of listing the lights used I can now begin to explain how we used what. There is no way I can explain everything because it would take pages to do so and you did say that you required short articles!

The show began with the cast making their entry to 'The Entry Of The Gladiators'. To this we added a roving follow-spot from the projection room and the mirror ball and its follow-spot. This led into God's speech. We silhouetted God against the back wall using the 2x500W floods in blue, and the 2x1000W Majors backlighting. The blue floods gave a kind of halo effect which we thought to be very effective and from then on the floods were known as the 'halo'. The show went from this to a complete black-out for the entry of John the Baptist who made his entrance from the back of the auditorium lit only by the back follow-spot. As he mounted the stage we gradually built up the lighting until we had full general lighting by the time the tempo picked up for 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord'.

This general lighting, as I have called it, consisted of two 'quadrants'. These quadrants were a left and a right. Each contained 3xSPK 500W (1 pink, 1 yellow, 1 blue F.O.H.), 1xPATT 23 with colour change wheel F.O.H.), 1x500W Major and an SPK 500W which were both on the batten. These



Alexander Bates cracks his whip.

two quadrants gave adequate lighting for general acting purposes. Included in them, often were 2xMINIM F. downlighters on the batten. These down lit the boxes where a lot of speaking took place.

The songs were fun to light. We chose a colour to suit the mood of the song - sad or happy and so on. To get this colour we used the F.O.H. PATT 23 with the wheels and the PATT 23 and wheels on the batten. If the song had a lot of go in it we changed the wheels to a different colour during the course of the song. If it had more than one verse to it, and there were usually two or three, then we would change colour for the second verse and for the final verse we would put the wheels on to continuous rotation. We found it extremely effective to put all of them onto continuous rotation but one at a time. This provided a very colourful and mixed stage.

The apron had various uses. As well as being one of the singing areas, it was also Hell when necessary. For a



The cast of "Godspell"



Amateurs—please take a bow