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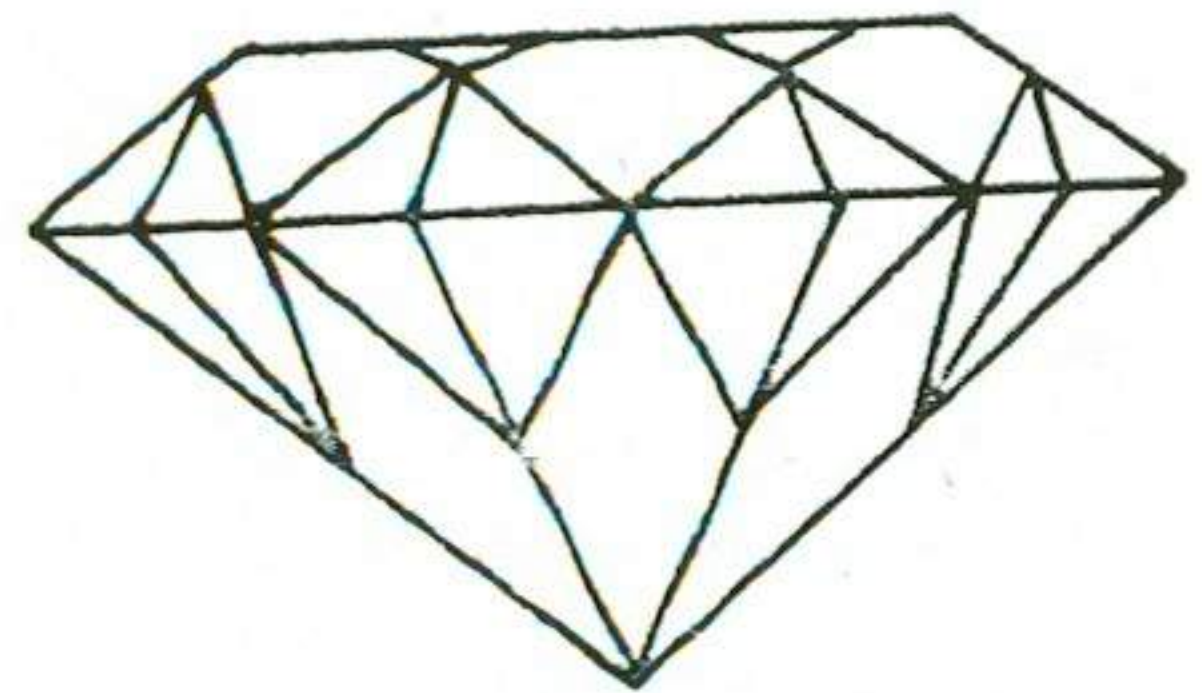
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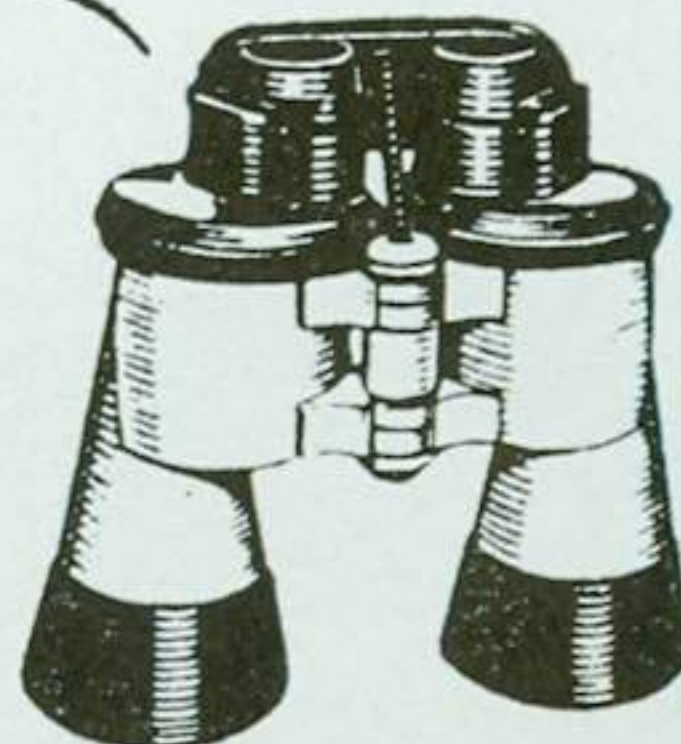
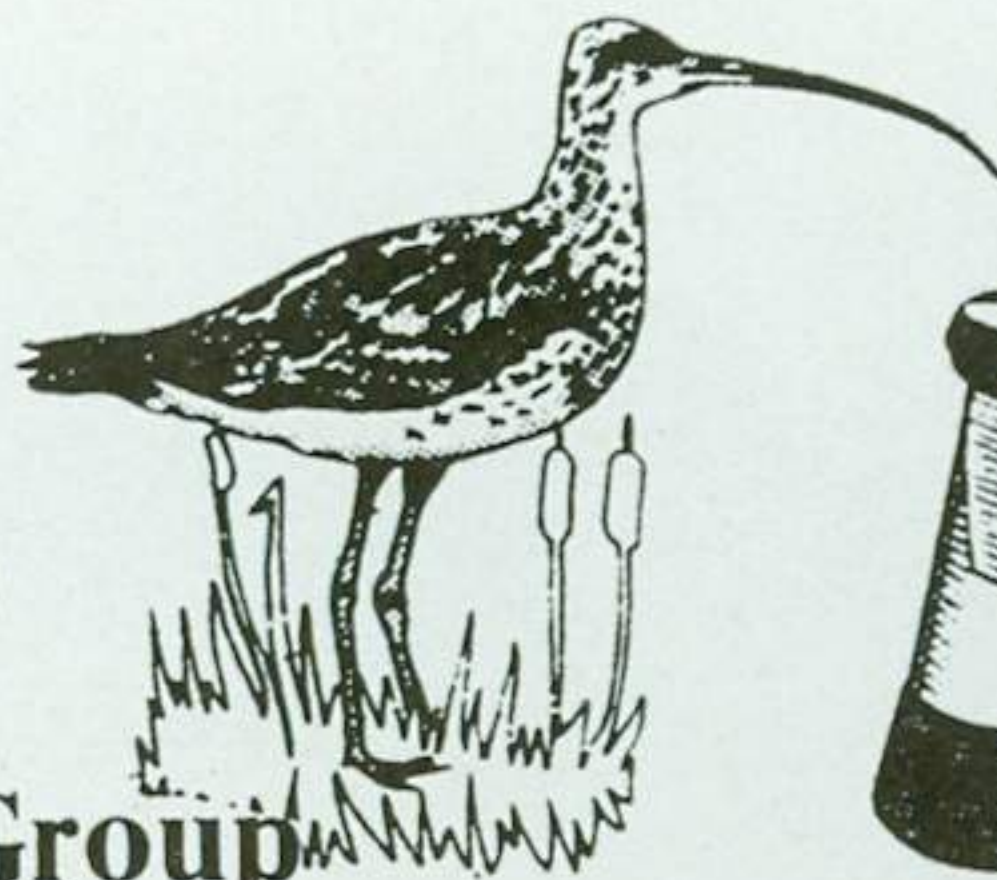
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ALL GREEK TO MOST OF US

by Eric Shorter

Do you yawn or tremble at the sound of Greek tragedy? Perhaps you do not know enough about it to be certain. I sympathise. Greek tragedy is scarce on British stages.

And with good reason.

Even the keenest playgoers have trouble in coming to satisfactory terms with a style of drama, which is almost beyond our imagination, yet was once very popular and is still highly imaginative, poetic, powerful, vivid, and (in its appeal to both thought and feeling) theatrical.

Full of shocking events, cruelty, jealousy, lust, greed, vanity, self-pity and all the other unattractive aspects of humanity which seem to thrive today as buoyantly as 2,500 years' ago, Greek drama is every bit as sensational as anything in our more lurid modern plays. But with the sensation it brings (as more modern plays do not) a nobility of vision, a grandeur of conception, a lyrical force, to remind us that human beings are not entirely contemptible.

But, as I say, the plays are seldom staged in Britain. Why? Translation is the main challenge. Who can find a language to match the ancient Greek?

Nor is it just a matter of literal translation.

What about translating the circumstances in which Greek tragedy (or comedy, come to that) was first performed? How can we hope to reproduce those ancient amphitheatres? Even if we could, how can we hope to reproduce the atmosphere?

Moreover, there is the style of acting.

The Greeks did not go in for naturalistic acting any more than did the Elizabethans. They had no cinema or television. They had only these huge, open-air theatres. So acting was broader, louder, clearer and not cluttered up with psychology like so many modern plays from which spectators come out saying: "What was that about?" or "I'm afraid it was way beyond me".

Greek tragedy was seldom beyond the Greeks. What is all Greek to us was crystal clear to them. They had the background knowledge. They had the hang of the legends. They knew before a play began who was who.

On the other hand, unless we are the beneficiaries of a classical education, we do not. We have heard of certain figures from classical legend. We may even know something about them. But they have had to be learned. They mean nothing naturally. They do not belong to anything within our own culture as they did for the Greeks.

Even our own William Shakespeare, whose refurbishings of medieval history yielded so many exciting plays which are still acted with such zeal that certain zealots attempt good-naturedly to bring them on the television screen (*Richard the Second* has just reached us as I write) still writes about people and places which remain outside the general knowledge of many playgoers.

How therefore to bridge the gap between the classical writers of ancient Greece, the Elizabethan dramatists

continued overleaf

who brought to British drama a reputation under which to some extent it still sails gloriously round the world, and the playgoer of today?

Well, Shakespeare is relatively easy.

However hard he may sometimes be to understand, we make an effort to understand him. He may not be immediately enjoyable but at least he is familiar.

Millions of books have been written about him, and even if we cannot all read his plays with pleasure they are usually carefully staged.

How forbidding therefore seem Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes by comparison. Just think how sensational and saturated in sex and violence are their plots. And how rarely they are staged with much success. Why?

Not for want of plot. Didn't Oedipus inadvertently marry his mother and wipe his father out in a quarrel at a cross-roads, not knowing it was his father? And didn't he then, years' later, start to worry about what happened, and, learning what he did, choose to put out his own eyes?

The Oedipus of Sophocles may not have suffered from an oedipus complex but he surely exercised an appalling influence over mankind, including Freud.

Then there was Euripides. He also wrote a lot of plays. They create a certain stir when acted. And the one that still creates perhaps the greatest stir is called *Hippolytus*. But how often do we have a chance to see it? You may remember it concerns the uncontrollable desire of Queen Phaedra for her virginal stepson who not only fails to desire her but also basically despises sexual love. So Phaedra commits suicide out of shame and leaves a note which makes her husband, Theseus, believe that his son,

for all his celebrated celibacy, seduced her.

Now, what is to be made of such a scenario? Well, Racine made a good deal and the French have relished his makings ever since. And there have been plenty of translations. But always there are obstacles to our easy understanding.

The Greeks counted on the gods for dramatic motivation and a chorus of elders to comment. And they were obsessed by ideas of personal virtue.

The actors wore masks. A sense of religious observance and of ritual prevailed.

The gap you see, is wide. Yet if it cannot be bridged it can be judged worth trying to span, if only psychologically. For those Greeks wrote highly actable plays about matters of constant moment to thoughtful men.

Britain used to insist on poets as translators and actors with resonant voices. On a big stage in togas or tunics they held forth. It was a bit of a bore but it worked if the actors were good.

But how much shrewder is David Rudkin's version of *Hippolytus* by Euripides for the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford-on-Avon. When it comes to translation it isn't poets we need. It is playwrights. Mr Rudkin is a playwright of sensibility.

Nobler names may have turned to the translation of the ancients. Gilbert Murray and Ted Hughes span recent generations.

But Mr Rudkin (who wrote *Ashes* and *Afore Night Came* neither of them conspicuously poetic) has found in *Hippolytus* a theatrical poetry which is also highly actable. Has he opened a new door to the Greeks?

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KEITH NEWTON

Your complete entertainment guide
from Monday to Saturday

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Vol. 3 No. 8

English National Opera North

January 23 25 27

Forum Theatre, Billingham

Orpheus in the Underworld

An operetta by Jacques Offenbach

Libretto by Hector Crémieux

English version by Geoffrey Dunn

Orphée aux Enfers was first performed at the Théâtre
des Bouffes-Parisiens Paris on October 21 1858

The first performance of this production was at Sadler's Wells Theatre on May 17 1960

English National Opera North gratefully acknowledges the support of Shell UK Oil and the Short Loan and Mortgage Broking Co Ltd who have contributed substantially to the Company's funds by means of covenant, and of Trident Television and Yorkshire Post Newspapers Ltd, who have made substantial donations. It is also most grateful for a large contribution from the Yorkshire Arts Association towards the initial cost of promoting the Company in their area.

No Smoking in the Auditorium Please

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From the Theatre Director

So we enter 1979 with an entertaining line-up of shows already arranged.

The Desert Song is one of the all-time favourites. Written in the Twenties with music by Sigmund Romberg it has all the ingredients to make a very pleasant evening in the theatre. The musical numbers are particularly strong with 'One Alone', a definite 'top of the light music pops'. Our production is a new one, and will leave Billingham for an extensive British tour. Who better to play the Red Shadow than the most famous of all to have played the part — John Hanson. With innumerable musicals, radio and T.V. shows, concerts and records behind him, John is still in great voice and this must be his favourite part. We believe we will have full houses throughout the run. Heavy advance booking certainly indicates this.

Our play season through March, April and May brings farce, comedy and drama; the writers — Frederick Lonsdale (remember *On Approval?*), Dave Freeman (remember *A Bedfull of Foreigners?*), Michael Redgrave and David Turner; the players — Terry Scott, Leslie Phillips, Nyree Dawn Porter, Cathleen Nesbitt, Barbara Murray, Gerald Harper, Leonard Rossiter and Anne Stallybrass.

And this is just a taste of things to come. Negotiations are in progress for a new musical which will go from here to the West End, and for other great artistes in famous plays.

In the concert field we have the Pasadena Roof Orchestra in a return visit, and the first visit of the fabulously talented and successful Stephane Grappelli with the Diz Disley Trio.

After a too lengthy absence we bring classical ballet back in June, and two of the most loved ballets, *Coppelia* by Delibes and *Giselle* by Adolphe Adam. The latter was danced here some years ago by Scottish Ballet to packed houses. More of these in future notes.

While we deal with all the shows to be fitted in before the summer recess, our minds go roving into the Autumn and, indeed, into 1980. But early 1979 will do for now in these notes.

Happy theatre-going.

LES JOBSON

Please no smoking or photography in the auditorium.

The Management reserves the right to refuse admission to the theatre and to change, vary or omit, without previous notice, any item of the programme.

Coffee is available during the interval in the restaurant area.

Drinks for the interval may be ordered before the show commences.

For quick and convenient exit after the performance theatre patrons are advised to leave by the emergency exits.

Historical Note

Offenbach, *Orpheus in the Underworld* and the Paris of the Second Empire by Joanna Richardson

The supreme composer of Second Empire Paris was Berlioz; and he, alas, was not appreciated in his lifetime. Yet, in some ways, Berlioz belonged to an earlier age: he was a great Romantic, living on in an era which scorned Romantic values. He was too profound for an epoch which concentrated largely on pleasure. Long before Delibes wrote the music for *Coppélia*, Paris revelled in the waltzes of Olivier Métra (1839-89), and in those of Waldteufel and Strauss. It revelled, above all, in the work of Offenbach. The *opéra bouffe*, it has been said, was the one original art form bequeathed to posterity by the Second Empire; it corresponded to the Parisians' taste for farce and to their indifference to good music. Second Empire music is really summarised in the unappreciated grandeur of Berlioz and the triumphant frivolity of Offenbach: of this German composer who expressed the spirit of *la vie parisienne* . . .

Yet though Offenbach's operettas played to full houses, his theatre did not prosper, because he was a bad businessman. He had lavish tastes, and it never occurred to him to economise. It soon became clear that only a resounding triumph would save him, and in 1858 he set all his hopes on the new operetta, *Orphée aux Enfers*, which he was composing. The sets were designed by Cambon, the costumes by Bertall and by Gustave Doré; Offenbach even worked at his operetta in the hotel bedrooms where he had to stay to escape his creditors.

The first performance of *Orphée aux Enfers* took place on October 21 1858. It was not the success that he needed. Then, a few weeks later, a thunderbolt fell. It was hurled by Jules Janin, the critic, from his Olympus, *Le Journal des Débats*. *Orphée aux Enfers*, he said, was a profanation of sacred antiquity. All Paris became convinced that mighty issues were at stake, and everyone felt it incumbent on him to see *Orphée* and to judge for himself.

Henceforth *Orphée aux Enfers* was performed to a full house every night. Offenbach was saved. As a critic wrote: "When everyone finds what they want in a work, the general public and the connoisseur, there is no longer any doubt of its value. Jacques Offenbach is modern. His music is daemonic, like the century we live in — the century which rushes on, full steam ahead."

The music of *Orphée aux Enfers* set Paris dancing. The *voltigeurs* marched to it, and its waltzes and galops became the rage, from the Tuileries to the smallest suburban taverns. After the 228th performance, the cast were so exhausted that the operetta had to be taken off. However, in April 1860, it was staged again at a gala evening at the Italian Opera. The Emperor had consented to be present on condition that it was on the programme!

From *La Vie Parisienne* by Joanna Richardson,
published by Hamish Hamilton.

Production Problems: Victor Borge

Just because the plot of *Orpheus in the Underworld* is complicated, don't think it was simple to put on. The day of the premiere, a gas main burst, and they had to use candles instead of footlights. Then the soprano suddenly decided that her costume in the finale wasn't flattering enough, and Offenbach had to run all over Paris looking for a genuine tiger skin. Later, a rejected librettist showed up, trying to convince the composer to let him rewrite the plot, the piccolo player developed a fever blister and had to be replaced, the censor dropped by to wonder how come the fellow who played Jupiter looked so much like Napoleon III, and to top it all, a friend of Offenbach's rushed in to demand that the composer drop everything and act as his second in a duel. It was a miracle that everything did come together on schedule, and Offenbach himself conducted the premiere, on October 21 1858.

Surprise! It wasn't a hit at all, and might have closed down had it not been for Jules Janin, the most influential critic in Paris. Janin wrote column after column denouncing *Orpheus* as immoral, indecent, scandalous, shocking, and a profanation of holy and glorious antiquity. Naturally, the operetta at once became the toast of Paris. The audiences went especially wild over the cancan, a rowdy French vaudeville dance to which Offenbach gave a whole new career. It bubbled and bounced, and within a matter of months, it had become for Paris what the waltz was in Vienna — the throbbing heartbeat of a fun-mad city. *The idea of the cancan*, said Mark Twain when he visited France, *is to dance wildly, as noisily and as furiously as you can, to expose yourself as much as possible if you are a woman, and to kick as high as you can, no matter which sex you belong to. It is a whirl of shouts, laughter, furious music, a bewildering chaos of darting and interminable forms, stormy jerking and snatching of gay dresses, bobbing heads, flying arms, lightning flashes of white-stockinged calves and dainty slippers in the air, and then a grand final rush, riot, terrific hubbub and wild stampede.*

From *My Favourite Intermissions* by Victor Borge,
published by Doubleday & Co. Inc. New York, 1971.

The Story

Act One

Shepherds and shepherdesses enter and remark on their idyllic existence, followed by Calliope, mother of Orpheus and, in this classical story, the Ministry of Information. She is obviously slightly disillusioned with her daughter-in-law Eurydice, and we learn from Eurydice that *she* is rather more than slightly disillusioned with her husband Orpheus and has fallen in love with a shepherd. After an argument with Orpheus, during which he plays his latest Violin Concerto, Orpheus goes off to give some lessons to his pupils and Eurydice goes in search of her shepherd, Aristaeus.

Aristaeus now enters with some swooning shepherdesses and renders a pastoral ballad. Eurydice finally catches up with him, warns him that Orpheus has discovered about their secret meetings in the cornfield and has filled the latter with poisonous snakes. When Eurydice is accidentally bitten by one of these snakes, Aristaeus reveals his true identity — Pluto, Lord of the Underworld. Eurydice is fascinated by this interesting news and immediately agrees to accompany Pluto to the Underworld. Her farewell message is read by Orpheus on his return and he expresses delight and relief that he is rid of Eurydice at last. Calliope is scandalised by this turn of events, however, and insists that they both set off for Olympus to plead with Jupiter to command Pluto to return Eurydice. Reluctantly Orpheus complies with her suggestion.

Act Two

In Heaven, the gods and goddesses are snoring soundly. In turn, Cupid, Mars and Venus creep in, trying not to disturb the others, and find a suitable cloud on which to sleep. Eventually Aurora decides that it is time for everyone to get up, and causes the Sun to rise; horn fanfares announce the arrival of Diana, goddess of Hunting, who tells everyone of her adventures in the woods. Jupiter sends everyone off to work. Juno, his wife, complains of his marital infidelity and mentions a mortal called Eurydice. Jupiter denies his involvement, but Mercury confirms Jupiter's suspicions concerning Eurydice and Pluto. Pluto is brought to Heaven to explain his behaviour but he is interrupted by the entrance of all the gods and goddesses, in militant mood. Mercury then announces the arrival of Orpheus who plays his violin in order to win the sympathy of the gods: Jupiter decides to go to Hades to see Eurydice for himself. The immortals go with him on the Hades Underground train, on which Orpheus and Calliope are left when the others alight at Hades.

Act Three

Eurydice is very bored with Hades. Even the arrival of John Styx, Pluto's valet, does not cheer her. She is locked in the bathroom when Jupiter arrives disguised as a golden fly. She is enchanted with the little talking creature and kisses it, whereupon Jupiter appears in his usual form, much to her surprise. However, she agrees to disguise herself as a Bacchante and to escape with him during the party that is to be held that evening. Meanwhile, Calliope and Orpheus, still trying to get to Hades, are stuck in a lift.

The party guests are entertained by Eurydice (in disguise) and everyone takes part in the dancing. A tune on a violin announces the arrival of Orpheus and Calliope, and Orpheus demands to have Eurydice back. Jupiter decrees that he may have her back on condition that he does not turn to look at her as they depart from Hades. They turn to go . . . but what happens next? Further arguments as to who should have Eurydice are unresolved . . . or are they?



A caricature of the composer

Orpheus in the Underworld

Characters

Calliope, <i>Muse of Poetry,</i> <i>mother of Orpheus</i>	Shirley Chapman
Eurydice, <i>wife of Orpheus</i>	Sandra Dugdale
Orpheus	Peter Jeffes
Pluto, <i>Lord of the Underworld</i> <i>(in Act I disguised as Aristaeus, a shepherd)</i>	Nigel Douglas
Calliope's Chauffeur	Christopher Lackner
Venus	Rosemary Ashe
Mars	David Scrivens
Cupid, <i>Venus's son, the god of Love</i>	Susan Lees
Aurora	Marian Darby
Jupiter, <i>father of all the gods</i>	Thomas Lawlor
Juno, <i>his wife</i>	Sheila Rex
Diana	Hilary Western
Vulcan, <i>Venus's husband</i>	James Thornton
Hebe	Joy Naylor
Apollo	Adrian Clarke
Minerva	Joan Edwards
Ceres	Enid Adrian
Mercury, <i>Jupiter's messenger</i>	Keith Mills
Pomona	Angela Sorrigan
John Styx, <i>the dead king of Boeotia</i>	Bonaventura Bottone
Lift Man	Paul Wade
Janus	Alan Gorrie
Iris	Alison Jack
Flora	Vivienne Bailey
Saturn	Galloway Bell
Neptune	Mark Savege
Engineer	Mark Lufton
Bacchus, <i>god of Wine</i>	Bruno Tonioli
Caller and The Pianist	Paul Wade
Chloe	Glenda Nicholls

Shepherds and shepherdesses, pupils of Orpheus, gods and goddesses, devils and furies, etc.

Conductor	John Pryce-Jones
Producer	Wendy Toye
Designer	Malcolm Pride
Lighting	Mark Henderson
Associate Producer	Hugh Halliday
Staff Producer	Jonathan Clift

There will be two intervals of 15 minutes.

Costumes by Vivienne Champion, Diana Belli, Michael Kennedy, Madeleine Oates, Wendy McCullough, Carla Wilsher, Lal Burnham, Anna Watkins, Roma Wilson.

Adhesives for wardrobe and scenery by Copydex.

Rosemary Ashe *soprano*

was born in Lowestoft and studied at the Royal Academy and London Opera Centre. Whilst at LOC she sang Suzanne in Offenbach's *Robinson Crusoe* and Cephise in Lully's *Alceste* at Sadler's Wells. Her other roles include Marzellina, Despina, Norina, Papagena and Zerlina. She made her Purcell Room debut in 1977 and recently appeared in *Kismet* in London's West End. She regularly features as a soloist with leading choral societies and is well known for her performances of 20th century works.

Bonaventura Bottone *tenor*

studied at the Royal Academy of Music and then joined Welsh Opera for all. In 1975, after a season at Glyndebourne, he joined Phoenix Opera to tour Austria and Yugoslavia singing the role of Pyramus in Lampe's *Pyramus and Thisbe*. Other roles include Arturo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) for Northern Ireland Opera, Bardolpho (*Falstaff*) for Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and Ismael (*Nabucco*) for Opera Rara. His many appearances at the Wexford, Camden and Batignano (Italy) Festivals include singing in Sesto Bruscantini's highly praised production of *La Serva e L'Usseiro* (Wexford 1977).

Shirley Chapman *mezzo-soprano*

was born in Manchester but was brought up in Canada. She joined SWO/ENO in 1961 and sang a variety of roles including Orlofsky, Dorabella, Lady Essex (*Gloriana*), Iolanthe, Suzuki and Flora (*La Traviata*). She created roles in *The Violins of St. Jacques* and *Lucky Peter's Journey*. Recent guest appearances have included a performance at the Vienna Festival and Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Scottish Opera.

Nigel Douglas *tenor*

was born in Kent. He studied at the Vienna Music Academy, making his debut with the Vienna Kammeroper in 1959 as Rodolpho. He established himself in the German-speaking countries in a wide variety of leading roles, including many operettas, and since his Peter Grimes at the Edinburgh Festival of 1968 he has sung in many Britten operas, including *Owen Wingrave* and *Death in Venice* at Covent Garden, and *Billy Budd* with the Welsh National Opera. He has a repertoire of over 70 roles which he has sung throughout Europe, and he frequently presents his own programme on Radios 3 and 4.

Sandra Dugdale *soprano*

comes from Pudsey and, after studying in Leeds and at the Guildhall, sang Despina on the Glyndebourne tour. Roles with SWO/ENO include Olympia (*The Tales of Hoffman*), Blonda, Adèle, Patience (also at the 1975 Vienna Festival), Varvara (*Katya Kabanova*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Gabrielle (*La Vie Parisienne*). She has also appeared in *The Kiss*, *Maskarade* and *The Nose* on BBC TV, sung with Scottish Opera and at the Wexford Festival and three roles in the British premiere of *Julietta* for the New Opera Company.

Joan Edwards *mezzo-soprano*

was born in London but now lives in Bingley. She studied at the National School of Opera and won a scholarship to study in Vienna but went to Covent Garden to sing in *Die Walküre* under Solti. Then she joined the English Opera Group to sing in Britten operas with the composer conducting, including Lady Essex in *Gloriana*. She has performed widely in the North of England in opera, concerts and oratorios.

Peter Jeffes *tenor*

studied at the Royal College of Music. In 1976, having been awarded the Decca Scholarship, he went to study with Paolo Silveri in Rome. He made his operatic debut at Glyndebourne and has since sung Count Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*) for English National Opera and with most leading British orchestras. He has appeared in France in *Tancredi* (Rossini) and as Rodolfo on Dutch TV and has performed in many concerts in Germany, Holland and Belgium.

Christopher Lackner *bass*

was born in Christchurch, New Zealand. After spending six years as a boy chorister in Christchurch Cathedral, he continued his musical studies at the Nelson School of Music, and then Auckland University, where he graduated in 1974. His major New Zealand success was to win the 1974 Mobil Song Quest, the nation's premier radio vocal contest. He studied for two years at the London Opera Centre. Roles sung there included Collatinus, Bartolo, Antonio, Colline and Simone. He recently received the annual award from the Opera Club in London.

Thomas Lawlor *baritone*

studied in Dublin before being awarded a scholarship to the Guildhall. He joined D'Oyly Carte in 1960, singing all the major bass-baritone roles. In 1971 he joined Glyndebourne appearing in a number of operas including *Eugene Onegin*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Così fan Tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *The Cunning Little Vixen*. With ENO he has sung in *Patience*, *La Traviata* and *Julietta*, and in *La Bohème* at Covent Garden. He has also sung with Kent Opera and EMT and at the Camden and Wexford Festivals. He makes frequent broadcasts on radio and television.

Susan Lees *mezzo soprano*

was born in Wolverhampton and trained at The Royal Academy of Music. She made her operatic debut at Glyndebourne in *The Magic Flute* in 1973, and in *Iphegenie en Tauride* at Covent Garden the same year, where she also sang in *Jenufa*. In 1975, she made her debut for ENO in *Manon*, *La Traviata* and *The Magic Flute*, and also sang in *La Belle Hélène* and *La Vie Parisienne* at the Coliseum. She sang Sandman in the BBC production of *Hansel and Gretel*, has given various recitals at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room and abroad, and has broadcast for radio in opera and from the Promenade Concerts.

Keith Mills *tenor*

comes from Worcestershire and went to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, before going to the Royal Northern College of Music. At College he performed in *L'Heure Espagnole* (which also toured Scandinavia) and sang Loge in the RNCM production of *Das Rheingold*. In 1976 he joined the ENO Spring tour.

Sheila Rex *mezzo-soprano*

was born in Garforth, near Leeds, and after studying at the Leeds College of Music sang with the Carl Rosa Company and then Sadler's Wells Opera (*Hansel and Gretel*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Peter Grimes*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Il Trovatore* and *The Tales of Hoffman*). With English Opera Group she toured Holland, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Russia.

David Scrivens *bass*

was born in Bolton, Lancashire. He worked as a structural engineer until in 1970 he won a scholarship to study at the Royal Manchester College of Music. In 1971 and 1972 he sang in the Glyndebourne Festival chorus and in March 1973 he joined Scottish Opera. He has sung many parts with the company including the Second Armed Man (*The Magic Flute*), Fiorello (*The Barber of Seville*), Njegus (*The Merry Widow*) and Antonio (*Figaro*).

Paul Wade *tenor*

comes from Huddersfield and first studied there before going on to the Royal College. Whilst still at the RCM he was invited to join the English Opera Group and has sung in many of Britten's operas. In 1970 he created the role of Aurelius in the English Opera Group production in Purcell's *King Arthur*. He has appeared regularly in opera for both BBC and ITV and has been involved in many sound broadcasts.

Hilary Western *soprano*

was born in Cardiff and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the London Opera Centre. She has appeared at the Wexford and Glyndebourne Festivals and has sung the roles of Mimi in Angers, Frasquita in Toulouse and Fiordiligi in Grenoble. She has performed a considerable amount of oratorio and given many concerts throughout the UK including contemporary works and electronic compositions, notably *Pierrot Lunaire* for Ballet Rambert. Last summer she played Kate in the Festival of London's production of *The Yeoman of the Guard* at the Tower of London.

John Pryce-Jones *conductor*

won an Organ Scholarship to Corpus Christie College, Cambridge, before joining WNO in 1970 to conduct *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Aida*. In 1972 he went to South Africa where he conducted opera, ballet and symphony concerts. He returned to WNO in 1974 to conduct *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein* and later *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*. He has frequently conducted for the BBC Welsh Orchestra and London Studio Strings and often gives recitals, particularly with his wife, the soprano Hilary Thomas.

Wendy Toye *producer*

began her career as a dancer/actress, appearing in shows, films and cabaret, and with the Sadler's Wells, Rambert and Markova-Dolin Ballet companies as a soloist and choreographer. She choreographed many shows and films before going on to direct musicals and straight plays, and established her connections with SWO/ENO with a number of productions for them. Since then she has added to her work television and a variety of feature films, shorts and documentaries.

Malcolm Pride *designer*

was born in London and trained for the stage at the Old Vic Theatre School. He designed his first stage production for an Arts Council tour of *The Merchant of Venice* and his first London production was *Cavalleria Rusticana* for Sadler's Wells Opera in 1952, for whom he has since done much design work. He has also designed for the RSC, The Old Vic (including the company's final production *Measure for Measure*), the Chichester, Bath and Chester Festivals, for many West End productions and for television.

Mark Henderson *lighting designer*

was born in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. He started work at an Arts Centre in Newark, and from there moved to London Contemporary Dance Theatre. He then worked with William Lougher Dance Theatre and Margot Fonteyn as lighting designer before returning to LCDT. He has toured extensively with LCDT, Kent Opera and English Music Theatre and has worked frequently at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London. Recent work includes lighting design for *Transformations*, EMT and *Lady From The Sea* at The Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester.

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David Greed (*Leader*)
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Christopher Clift
Joy Davis
Rosamund Kitchin
Valerie Leary
Alison McAlister
Sylvia Spary
Stephen Shulman
Dorothy Whitford

Second Violins

Rupert Scott
Deidre Moody
Julie Gelson
Fiona Love
Heather McKeown
Eileen Spencer
Susan Thompson
Paul Udloff

Violas

David Thompson
Ronald Willoughby
Ian Killik
Ian Davies
Judith Gairdner
Diana Hall

Cellos

Antonia Wickham
Ian Rudge
Nicholas Boothroyd
Andrew Fairley
Jean Wilkens

Basses

Edward Thomas
Phillip Cooper
Martin Vigay

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David Moseley

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Elizabeth Parry

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Karen O'Connor

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Howard Rogerson

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Rosemary Ashe
Fionnuala Hough
Alison Jack
Hilary Jackson
Elizabeth Lockwood
Leonie Mitchell
Joy Naylor
Lilian Roberts
Angela Sorrigan

Mezzo-sopranos

Vivienne Bailey
Marian Darby
Joan Edwards
Joyce Ellis
Ann Hetherington
Maria Jagusz
Susan Lees
Vyna Martin
Eryl Royle

Tenors

Brian Cookson
Philip Edwards
George Haywood
Stuart Horner
Keith Mills
James O'Neill
Michael Royle
Paul Wade
David Wilkinson

Basses

A Galloway Bell
Adrian Clarke
Stephen Dowson
Alan Gorrie
Christopher Lackner
Ronald Leishman
Mark Lufton
Mark Savege
David Scrivens
James Thornton

Chorus Master

John Pryce-Jones

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Jennifer Dawson
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Diary

Billingham

Tue Jan 23
Wed Jan 24
Thu Jan 25
Fri Jan 26
Sat Jan 27

Forum Theatre

Orpheus in the Underworld
The Magic Flute
Orpheus in the Underworld
The Magic Flute
Orpheus in the Underworld

Hull

Tue Jan 30
Wed Jan 31
Thu Feb 1
Fri Feb 2
Sat Feb 3

New Theatre

Orpheus in the Underworld
Hansel and Gretel
The Magic Flute
Orpheus in the Underworld
The Magic Flute

Ashton under Lyne

Tue Feb 6
Wed Feb 7
Thu Feb 8
Fri Feb 9
Sat Feb 10

Tameside Theatre

Orpheus in the Underworld
Hansel and Gretel
Orpheus in the Underworld
Hansel and Gretel
Orpheus in the Underworld

Stratford upon Avon

Tue Feb 13
Wed Feb 14
Thu Feb 15
Fri Feb 16
Sat Feb 17

Royal Shakespeare Theatre

The Magic Flute
Orpheus in the Underworld
Hansel and Gretel
The Magic Flute
Orpheus in the Underworld

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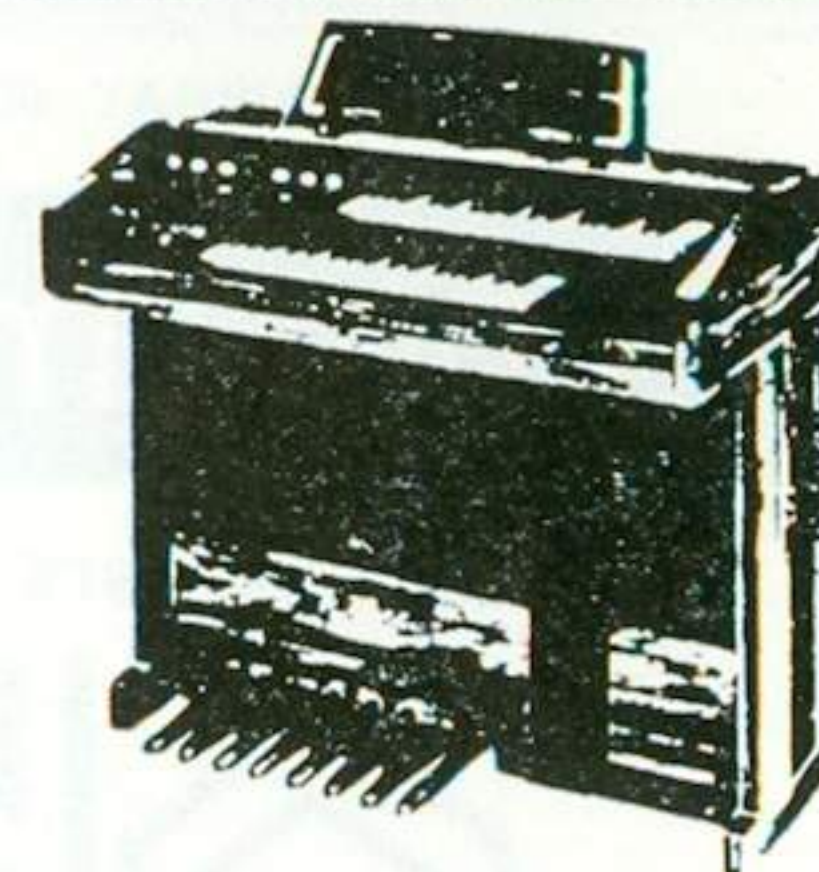
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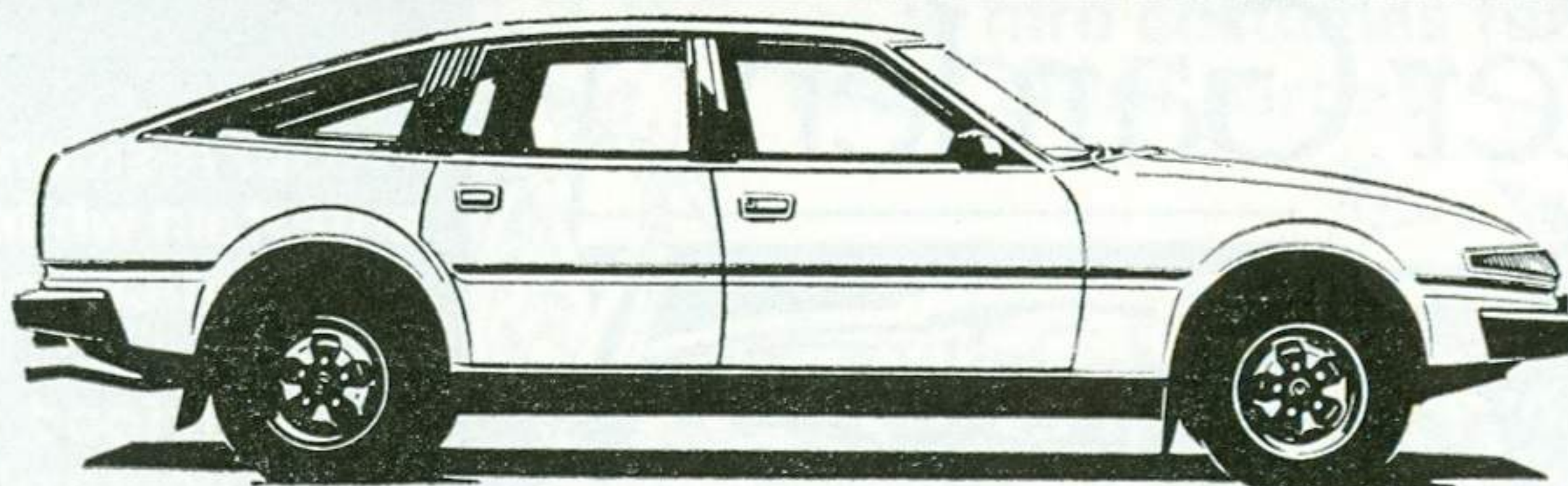
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MY UNCLE'S THEATRE ~

238 reps

by David Kirk

I am always reading in the heavy Sundays and the trade papers how much healthier the theatre is today than it was in my Uncle's time. A glance at the Stage Guide for 1946 does not seem to confirm this, for it lists 238 repertory theatres.

Even then I think there are some missing. Such as the Little Theatre, Redcar, known out of season as the Literary Institute and not to be confused with the Redcar New Pavilion, which only ran repertory in the winter, because the Arcadian Follies were in residence from May till September. Two live shows in Redcar in the summer! I'd find it unbelievable myself, if I hadn't had a girl friend who was at the Literary Institute one post-war summer with something called the London Repertory Company. Hard wooden chairs with racks on the back for prayerbooks, a trestle stage, but a pretty ambitious programme for the time: Priestley, Emyln Williams, Noel Coward, and Somerset Maugham, as I remember.

I'm quite certain about Priestley's *Dangerous Corner*, because one Sunday I took my girl friend down the coast to Saltburn for tea at the Alexandra Hotel. For all I know this may now be one of those places with three grills, two doubles bars and a lot of fake Victoriana, but then it was all potted palms, leather suites, and family parties having tea in the lounge. We settled down on a settee in a bay window overlooking the promenade, from which we were immediately spotted by my Uncle Jim and my Aunt who were holidaying at Saltburn. I don't know how my Aunt got my

Uncle Jim to go away for a fortnight and leave the Optimist, who ran the Rep. in our home town, to do so without his advice and support. I think he paid for his regular weekly booking for the fortnight before he went, because he'd never have forgiven himself if his holiday had thrown the Rep. into liquidation. I expect he also wrote a long letter of advice and suggestions before he left. Anyway he never went further than Saltburn which, though I know nobody will believe me now, in those days had a repertory company of its own in the summer months. So he could visit that for two nights of his holiday, pop across to Middlesbrough and see the melodrama company at the Theatre Royal for two more, or pop down the coast to Whitby (which seems theatrically more believable even today). If he got really bored or anxious, he could always pop back home for the night (only an hour by train) and make sure the Optimist was doing nothing too rash or foolish, released from his scrutiny.

So of course he'd been to see *Dangerous Corner* at Redcar. My Aunt had spotted me as we sat in the bay window, but my Uncle had spotted my girl friend as having played Olwen Peel in the play. He was up the steps through the swing doors of the hotel, and settled down beside us in a flash, in spite of the fact that he'd already had tea in their lodgings and had no intention of paying for another one at the Alexandra.

My Uncle took the keenest interest in the casting of the Rep. Removed from London and the centre of established stars, it was only

continued overleaf

natural that he should look out for new planets rising on the peripheries of the provincial firmament; and if, according to him, many of them rose in our local Rep., well, that was where circumstances had placed him to watch. Not everyone would agree with his choices. There was the daughter of a Rector of Birkenhead who had manifestly good intentions but such unmanifest talent that my father (normally a more than kindly man) said she would have been better occupied with a curate and good works back in her father's parish. My Uncle used to write his proteges long letters packed with professional advice gleaned from his memories of Ellen Terry and Mrs Patrick Campbell. I later found that he used to write similar letters to the curates who ran the outpost of the town's parish church near where he lived. He would challenge their sermons on abstruse doctrinal points just, as he said, "to keep them on their toes". But he invited the actresses round to tea and read to them from Shaw, Agate and A. B. Walkley. My Aunt confined herself to seeing they had sufficient to eat and asking whether their digs were all right. I suppose she thought it did no harm and kept my Uncle, who had no job, from being bored. And it made no difference because, in spite of all my Uncle's suggestions to the Optimist that the current favourite should play *Candida* next month or *Judith* in *Granite* three weeks later, the Optimist's wife, who was a far better actress and adored by her husband's public, played these leads as she did all the others.

On his holiday visits to other companies my Uncle naturally saved the programmes, noted on them his opinions of the artists, and if possible got acquainted with them in cafes and suggested they should write to the Optimist for employment at the Rep. when their summer season ended. Returning home, he would deluge the Optimist with letters pressing the

claims of some new find spotted at Saltburn or Whitby. "A genius! The sort of girl to draw the town. Most fetching creature since Gladys Cooper," said my Uncle, ignoring the Optimist's protests that he was fully cast and quite happy about it. So now he was quickly deep in conversation with my girl friend. "Saw you as Olwen Peel. Excellent! Magnificent!" My Uncle's penetrating voice rumbled over the lounge, ignoring the other occupants, residents and family parties having tea. He ran rapidly over the rest of the company and settled on the young man who had played the effeminate Gordon Whitehouse in Priestley's play. "And your pervert," he boomed. "Very fine! Deeply satisfying!" Family tea parties froze, for this was 1947 in the unpermissive North - Kenneth Tynan had not even got as far as university, and Paul Raymond was still doing his mind-reading act (fully clothed!) on the halls. My Uncle ignored all this and leaned forward across the table. "In fact", he said, "the finest pervert I've ever seen". It is impossible to imagine today the chill that rang through that Saltburn hotel lounge. But my Aunt was equal to it and rose quickly. "We must go, Jim", she said. "Time for church" "Ah!" said my Uncle, also rising an anticipatory gleam in his eyes. It was after all Sunday and the theatres were closed, but a new church and a new curate were better than nothing.

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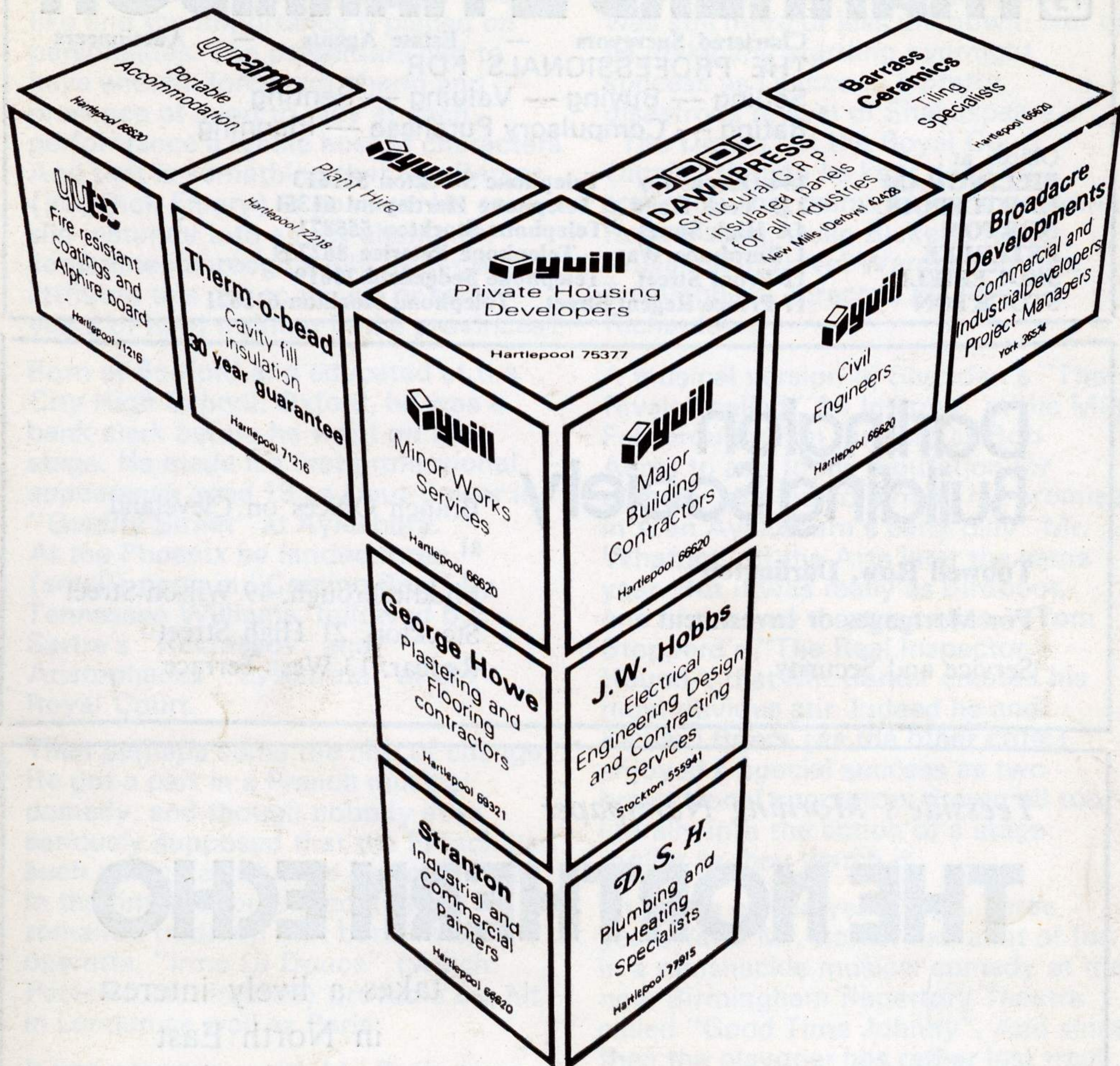
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