

THE MAKING OF 'TIME'

TIME took about three months to build. The massive set is constructed in steel, built in sections and reassembled in the theatre. The work in the Dominion was done over a period of five weeks when the theatre almost took on the appearance of a small foundry, working on what must have seemed at times like a substantial proportion of British Steel's annual output.

The existing building underwent many radical changes, being virtually torn apart and reconstructed to create the complex staging. It was completely rewired to accommodate the demanding requirements of the lighting desk and a specially designed computer was installed to control the 48 hydraulic functions that move the set to the split second timing necessary to ensure that no one on stage comes to any harm. It also operates the revolutionary technique used to create the appearance of Akash. The theatre did, however, contain one enormous existing asset.

The Dominion first opened its doors in 1929. It was an extremely large theatre, originally seating 2800 and designed to present lavish musical comedies and variety. The architect had installed a large lift under the stage to accommodate these presentations and when the *TIME* design team were planning the operation of the set they uncovered this original lift. It was a little rusty after so many years unused but when rebuilt proved quite equal to the task of moving the *TIME* set.

Dave Clark first approached John Napier to ask him to design *TIME* shortly after he had finished work on *Starlight Express* and he has worked on the designs over the intervening two years, with the back-up of a team that includes Paul Mackay, the production manager, Mike Barnett, the chief design engineer and Andrew Bridge, the lighting designer. The script obviously presented them with a tremendous challenge to translate the often apparently filmic directions into practical form for the stage.

When the audience enter the theatre, the auditorium appears to be no different from any other conventional theatre. The set has been designed specifically to create this illusion so that when the transformation happens it has the maximum impact. . . .

All will be revealed in *TIME*.