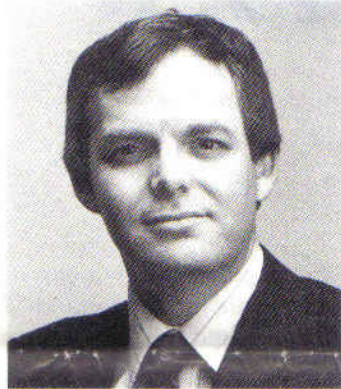


plement of scrims and diffusion material.

In the seminars there were a number of topics that were discussed. Among them the need to experiment and to observe how light behaves when it illuminates a subject under different lighting conditions. And how to make use of the properties of light when it is moulded and shaped with a sense of purpose. The use of indirect, bounced, and diffused light was stressed to create pictures with soft qualities and smooth tonal values.

Often, when a professional attempts to pass on knowledge to novices it (the information) seems like a volume of unintelligible technical jargon. One of the most important tasks of the instructor is to de-mystify all of the technical jargon and translate it into readily understandable language. It isn't necessary to simplify information unduly; what is required is that the information be made plain and straightforward.

Sony of Canada Ltd. APPOINTMENT



Patrick G. Whittingham

Arthur N. Demasson,
President and
Chief Operating Officer,
Sony of Canada Ltd.,
is pleased to announce that
Patrick G. Whittingham,
formerly General Manager,
Communication Products
Group, is appointed Vice-
President, Sales and
Marketing, Communication
Products Group. The
appointment is effective
February 1, 1989.

Nurturing the Creative Lighting Process

One of the factors that complicates teaching the broad discipline of lighting is the proliferation of terms. For example, explaining there are often several names for the same piece of equipment. The meaning is based on the context in which it is used.

Such is the case with "scrim".

A scrim can be bobbinet material that is used as a staging element in a set and appears visible or invisible depending on how it is lit. A scrim can also describe a wire mesh mounted in a circular metal frame. This, as we know, is used as a dimmer that does not reduce color temperature. Rather it reduces the light output of a given fixture by intercepting the light in a given proportion, one or two stops. The amount of the light reduction is a function of the weave of the mesh. The more dense the weave the less the amount of light that passes through it.

Lighting is most often thought of as lighting alone. But creative lighting for the entertainment field involves the selective and deliberate use of shadow. Shadow gives our subject form shape and depth, and helps to separate our subject from the background. It was important to teach the students about the psychology of shadows and how the proper use of shadow gives the viewer visual clues as to dimension and distance.

Color is also a useful adjunct to the selective use of light and shadow. Color can be used to further enhance the illusion of depth and form. Equally as important is the ability of color to facilitate the creation of the illusion of a specific time of the day or the year. For example, a golden orange color on a set of actors confers the illusion of late afternoon, about the time of sunset. If it is a deep reddish orange this relays to us the visual clue that the time of year is autumn.

The light blue color that we have all become accustomed to from watching television is portrayed as being moonlight. A single deep shadow lends credence to our assumption that the blue light illuminating our subject is indeed moonlight.

Shadow, it was explained, can also be used to reduce the amount of light falling on a background to create a range of tonal values within a picture. A range of tonal values in a scene serves to create visual harmony and balance. Shading the background also allows us to control the exposure so that the

background doesn't become overexposed with respect to the foreground.

Projected patterns can also be used to reinforce an idea that we are trying to convey to the viewer. A pattern can be used to illustrate a particular venue or an abstract pattern can serve as an amorphous background to highlight our subject. For example a spot, colored or otherwise, could be used on a background behind our subject to create a cameo effect. A variation on this theme would be to leave our subject in silhouette against the lighted backdrop to create a sense of mystery or, perhaps, foreboding.

The affect is, to a large extent, dictated by the context in which it appears in the story. Moreover, through skilful lighting we can create the stage for a scene or an event that occurs in a story. We then manipulate our characters to suit their surroundings.

At the outset of the thirteen weeks of production the students sought help on a regular basis, punctuating our discussions with questions about how to light particular scenes in the drama. But as they gained confidence and experience I functioned purely as a resource person, offering suggestions when the situation merited some further direction than what had already been established. I still function in this capacity, although this particular project is completed and most of them have gone on to other courses of study. During the process I came to the realization that most of the students, if given the opportunity and the support in the form of a non-judgemental opinion, could produce pictures of good quality. As a result of their success I felt that I had fulfilled my role as an instructor, at least part of it anyway. The most difficult part of being an instructor would come later, in evaluating the students' work in order to determine a grade.

One of the biggest hindrances to becoming a good lighting person, besides a lack of knowledge, is the fear of experimentation. Experimenting is the only way to learn what will and won't work. Considering that every working situation brings to it, its own set of variables. During the course of the 13 weeks, the students experimented with most of the techniques that we discussed in the initial lighting seminar. I am glad to say that almost without exception the lighting that I saw in the finished product showed a sense of direction, was purposeful, deliberate and was executed with a degree of skill than can only improve with further experience. →