David K. H. Elliott
LIGHTING / DESIGN / DESIGN SERVICES

CSF LIGHT PLOT 97.3 is the 1997 theatrical light plot for the California Shakespeare Festival's most recent season, which ran from mid-June through early October. The performances took place at Bruns Amphitheater, an open-air structure in Orinda, California. I have been their Resident Lighting Designer since 1992.

The main function of a theatrical light plot is to convey the design to the electricians. It is a construction drawing that indicates what type of light is to be hung and where it hangs in relation to the theater, the scenery and the other lighting instruments. Various other bits of data may appear as well. In the case of CSF LIGHT PLOT 97.3, there is a unit number with in each lighting symbol, a control channel number appears in a circle beneath or behind each unit, and a short text note indicates the function of the light.

In the drawing submitted, the lighting symbols have been reduced to groups. Each has a record attached to it. Some of the information in the record -the unit number, channel number and note mentioned above- is displayed on the plot. All of the records are displayed in a worksheet -An Inst Sch>Export> and then exported and utilized to create the paperwork that supports this plot.

As all necessary dimensions appear on the drawings and because each sheet may have several scales on it, no single scale is indicated anywhere on the plot. It's not needed. I mention this because it's odd, but intentional.

This drawing makes extensive use of the Saved Sheet function. I couldn't have done this drawing without the Saved Sheet function. (In MC v6, I used Layermap.) Most light plots are printed as a single sheet or, at most, two sheets. Earlier editions of this plot -drafted in a cad program that has since been discontinued- were printed out as one sheet, E size. In an outdoor theater, a document that size is not called a "light plot" any longer, it's called a sail. In addition, in the case of CSF at the Bruns, there's no particular need to have the plot on one sheet. The theater is approached as a series of separate areas in the hanging and cabling of the lighting instruments.

MiniCad 7.0 allowed me to create a different sheet for each area and at the same time conserve common elements and share them across the sheets.

The drawing is laid out on an E size page, but the final working documents are plotted at 50% to produce something more manageable. There is a "gutter margin" along the left hand side of the drawing, which allows me to staple them into a book.

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