

Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

April 1999

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

Mad For It

- Focus on Manchester

Midas Touch

- ITV's Who Wants to be a Millionaire?

A Cut Above?

- Neil Diamond at Wembley

Trading Places

- Profile of Elstree Light & Power

Piccadilly Circus

- Rock Circus Relaunched

Another Fine Messe

- Frankfurt Musik Messe

Setting Sail

- The Arc in Stockton

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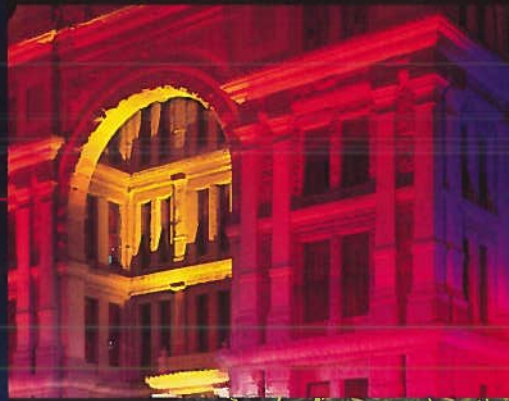
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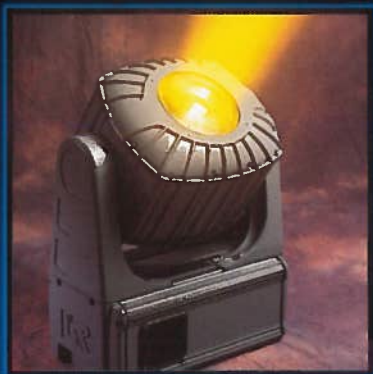
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Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

April 1999 Volume 14, Issue 4

Lighting & Sound International – published monthly by the Professional Lighting and Sound Association.

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Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

The magazine is available on annual subscription: UK £50.00.
Europe and rest of world £65.00 (US\$104.00) Airmail £90.00 (US\$143.00).
Single copy price £3.50 plus postage.

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Lighting & Sound International is published monthly for \$104.00 per year by The Professional Lighting and Sound Association, 38 St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3UT. Periodicals class postage paid at Rahway, NJ. Postmaster, Send USA address corrections to Lighting & Sound International, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ, 07001.

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Published from the PLASA office:
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BN21 3UT England.
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Internet: <http://www.vlps.com>



P&O Group to Sell ECO

The P&O Group has outlined its intention to dispose of its property, construction and exhibitions divisions in order to concentrate on its core business of cruises, ferries and ports. The group's building business Bovis will be floated on the stock market and its investment in Earls Court Olympia will be sold.

ECO is currently London's leading exhibition business with in excess of 100,000sq.m of exhibition space and is, of course, home to the PLASA Show which takes place at Earls Court 1 in September each year (pictured right is last year's event). ECO also has two conference centres and related hospitality and media facilities and is the only major vertically-integrated exhibition venue and services provider in the UK, owning P&O Events, which organises the PLASA Show, P&O Exhibition Services and Beeton Rumford.

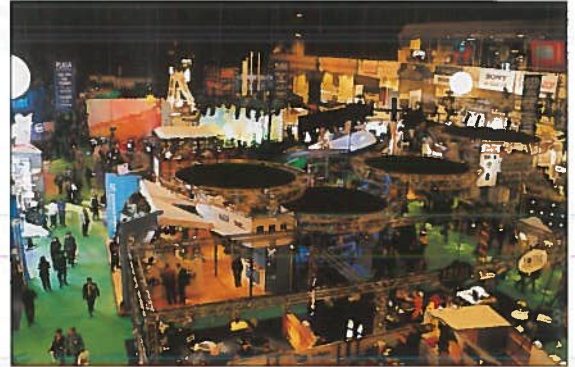
The move has come as no surprise to financial institutions, since P&O have signalled their determination to streamline, and both Bovis and ECO have performed well, with the latter turning in an operating profit in 1998 of £24.5m - a rise of 3% on 1997. (The P&O Group overall saw its pre-tax profits rise 14% to £415.9m in 98). ECO also owns a 30% stake in the Intex Shanghai 12,000 sq.m exhibition centre, where PLASA Presents Light & Sound Shanghai is taking place this month. In addition, it has a 32% stake in

Quantum Publishing, which publishes 18 business titles and organises four exhibitions.

If the price is right, buyers will be swift to emerge, indeed some may already be waiting in the wings, for ECO hosted over 140 exhibitions or events and over 120 conferences in 1998, attracting 3.25m visitors and 32,000 exhibitors and the signs are that exhibitions and events will continue to be long-term growth markets. ECO also stages major concerts and special events, recently providing the setting for the opera Aida and concerts by Eric Clapton and Rod Stewart.

The announcement comes against the backdrop of the ongoing development of the ExCel Centre in London's Docklands. The biggest exhibition complex in the capital itself, it is being built in phases with the first scheduled to open in 2000. The first phase will include 66,000sq.m of exhibition space, 24,000sq.m of conference and banqueting accommodation, and parking for 5,000 cars. Three hotels with 1,000 beds will be added in later phases and the completed complex will have 110,000sq.m of exhibition space, a 2,700-delegate conference centre, a 14,500 sq.m trade mart, 150 serviced apartments, and 20,000 sq.m of shops, bars and restaurants on the dockside waterfront.

PLASA is one of the four major trade shows that takes place at ECI each year and as PLASA owns



the show, its future is safe-guarded. Matthew Griffiths, MD of PLASA commented: "We see the sale as a very positive move for ECO as it will allow it to concentrate all its business activities on exhibitions and should lead to further investment in the halls. We look forward to a very successful 99 show."



With the February issue of L&S I we mailed out a reader registration card. It is important that you fill in the details on this form and return it to the address on page 5 as soon as possible. If you have mislaid this form please let us know.

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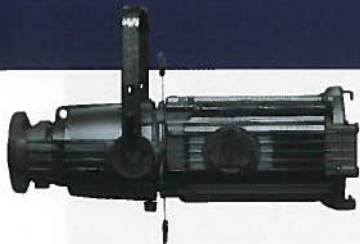
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TOTP Studio, Berlin

Driving through Berlin these days, it's not that easy to detect where The Wall once stood, as the separation between East and West has become nearly transparent.

Yet there is something about the new Top of the Pops studios at Hauptstadtstudio Berlin Adlershof in the heart of 'Media-City' in old East Berlin that stirs up memories of former times. Perhaps it's the enormity of the complex itself, or the East German hoist system above the three stages which dates from 1973 (100 hoists at 60 kilos each!), or perhaps the host of Russian equipment still in use around the complex that once served as the nerve-centre of East German television and film production for so many years.



At first glance, the three music sets look very familiar, a reflection of the modern BBC version in London. But take a peek behind the scenes and things are definitely different. Indeed, in an industry where the newest gadget is often perceived as better, the only items at Hauptstadtstudio that are post-1989 are the lighting and sound equipment. The belief that everything made in East Germany prior to 1989 is of poor quality is hard to overcome, yet in its day, Adlershof was seen as state-of-the-art, and most of the equipment is still functional and used today. Studio Hamburg bought the studio in 1998 and plans to invest further in the facility. Now in its 20th week, the TOTP show German-style is undoubtedly one of the most successful music shows in Germany. The show is produced by Me, Myself and Eye Production Co, is broadcast by TV station RTL and has attracted an ever-increasing audience since its introduction. The lighting equipment is predominantly Martin Professional with lighting supply divided between Procon, Helicon and MediaTec, with Procon as the main supplier.

Some 72 MAC 500s and 36 MAC 600s are used throughout the three stage set-up as both back and front light, while some MACs can be found sitting directly on the stage. Thirteen PAL 1200 effects lights are also incorporated in the lighting design, and in a unique use of MACs and PALs together, the backdrop for the main stage is backlit using two PALs and two MAC 600s to create the TOTP logo. 24 ETC Source Four 575Ws also feature on the rig, alongside 22 Pani/Niethammer 1 and 2kW Profiles and four High End Cyberlights and Digiflash, and a battery of Pars. An expanded Wholehog II desk sits at the helm with all 2000 DMX channels in use. The production requires speed, service and quick turnover times and lighting supplier Procon rose to the challenge; it took only four to six weeks to coordinate production, with 14 days used for build-up and programming. And with different performers each week, this fast pace includes new programming and a host of new gobos weekly.

Raising Standards

Production and technical managers in arts venues are beginning to assert themselves within the 'management team' in a way that would have been unthinkable 20 years ago.

This view, put by TMA vice-president Ken Bennett-Hunter, was well received by an audience of over 170 at the Raising Standards Conference at Nottingham Playhouse in mid-March. He was one of a panel of speakers which included National Theatre chief executive Genista McIntosh and Louise Jeffreys, head of theatre at the Barbican. Much of the agenda was covered by smaller break-out sessions presented by some of the leading names in the technical field. John Pitt, head of production at Birmingham Rep, discussed Lottery Stabilisation funding and Paul Cockle, production manager on the Millennium Dome show, illustrated how the development of the show has brought forth a massive arts training project. Other sessions were led by Joe Aveline of AETTI and Tony Bond of Theatre Technical Training Services. Metier had organised the day in association with Arts Training Central, with support from TMA, and their chief exec Duncan Sones provided an update on NVQ standards.

Light Jockey Contest

Clay Paky and Pulsar deserve full credit for establishing the Light Jockey contest as one of the highlights of the calendar and still the only recognised international contest of its kind.

The contest runs in parallel in six different countries: UK, Italy, France, Germany, Holland and Denmark - combined with a free training programme. The UK contest kicked off in March with the first heats taking place at 5th Avenue in Cambridge with the main heats to be hosted by York and Crawley clubs - Ikon and Diva.

The newly refurbished Ministry of Sound will host both the UK semi-finals and final. This year's contest introduces a new world semi-final to be held at the end of August in Italy. From the six semi-finalists, the three best will then qualify for the world final to be staged in London.

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Strand Europe's managing director Georges Kiener (left) and general manager Ivan Myles are pictured with Stage Electrics' David Pearce, Maurice Marshall and David Whitehead.

Beyerdynamic GmbH Reach 75

The Millennium year will also be an important landmark for beyerdynamic GmbH as it enters its 75th year of business in Heilbronn, Germany.

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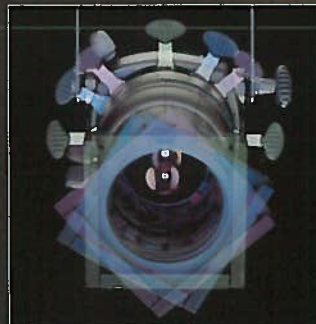
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Time + Space

A full house saw Johnny Vaughan of *The Big Breakfast* (pictured above) open the Society of British Theatre Designers' new show, *Time + Space*.

The event, organised by Kate Burnett and Peter Ruthven Hall at the Royal College of Art, opened on Monday March 22 and ran until April 10th. 140 set, costume and lighting designers and a handful of architects contributed models, plans, costumes, photographs and slides to a packed set of galleries.

The ALD has a slide presentation featuring the work of 20 of their members, and Simon Corder, Mark Jonathan and Ian Sommerville are among the lighting designers with their own exhibits. From the show will be chosen Britain's exhibit for the Prague Quadrennial of Theatre Design, which takes place from June 7th-26th in the capital of the Czech Republic. The PQ exhibit will



be shown afterwards in the Theatre Museum in London, while the full *Time + Space* exhibition is in demand from galleries around the country, following the huge success of its predecessor, *Make Space*.

Also present to welcome the exhibition was Adrian Noble (also pictured), director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, who spoke warmly of his relationship with the design community.

A catalogue of the exhibition is available for £16.95 (£14.95 to ALD, SBTDM members). Check out the website at www.theatredesign.org.uk

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MegaScreen Puts Unitek in Picture

Unitek Displays have launched the third generation of their Megascreeen.

The new modules are significantly slimmer and lighter creating a screen almost half the original's weight and depth and requiring less rigging manpower. The new screen has already been signed up for the Melbourne Grand Prix, Italian pop singer Zucchero's European tour and this year's Crufts show at the NEC.

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Catatonia on Tour

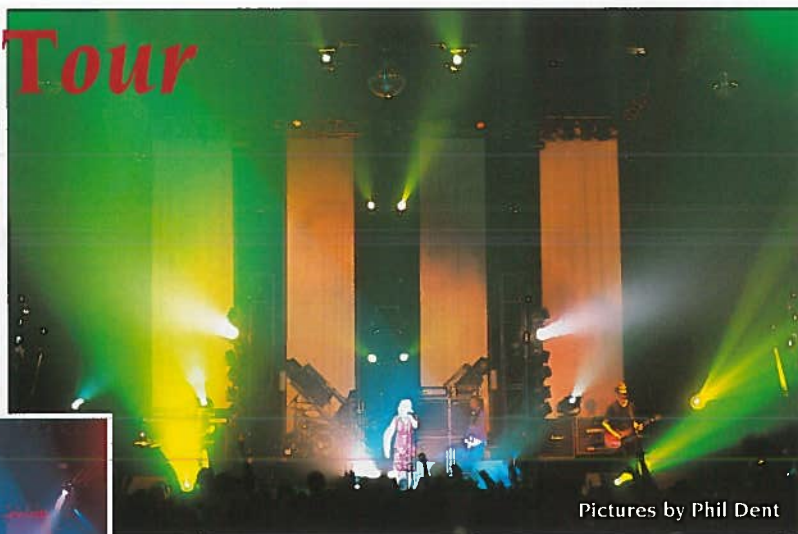
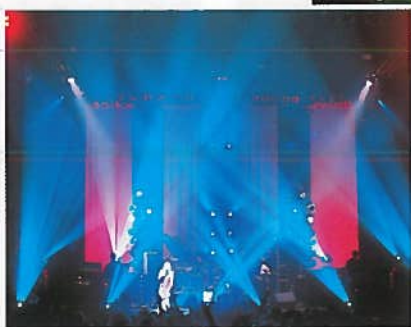
One of the breaking bands of the year, Catatonia are among the freshest sounding and most exciting groups currently touring.

Their distinctive vocal sound, led by the strange and weirdly wonderful voice of Cerys Matthews, renders them instantly recognisable. Despite their current success, however, there has been no quick route to overnight fame.

The group, formed in 1993, first came to the notice of a wider audience with the release of their debut album *Way Beyond Blue* - as well as their biggest hit at the time,

You've Got A Lot To Answer For, in late 1996. Although both were well received by the critics, neither made much of an impact on the charts. Recognition finally came in 1998 with the Number 3 hit, *Mulder and Scully*. Their second album *'International Velvet'* followed and eventually rose to the number one slot. Today, they are riding high in the charts with *Dead from the Waist Down* - a track that some feel is their best to date.

So it couldn't be a better time to be on tour. And this is a production that has taken in a range of venues across the UK and Europe. Lighting designer Jonny Gaskell (of *Verve* fame) has a box truss rig supplied by LSD. Automation-wise LSD have rented in *Starlight Mk 5s* and *Clay Paky Golden Scan HPEs* from *SpotCo*, and from their own stock there's *High End Studio Colors*, *ETC Source Fours*, *Molefays*, *Colormags* and *Deathstars*. The



Pictures by Phil Dent

system also features nine mirror balls and four strip-like screens suspended from the back truss onto which Barco

projectors relay a mix of footage. Gaskell is sharing control with Luke Loosley (Avo Diamond II desk plus a Sapphire) and as Gaskell is also busy with *Orbital*, Loosley is running the whole show on nights when the two tours conflict.

Skan PA have supplied a *Turbosound Floodlight* system for the main FOH rig with FOH engineer Helen Garrett doing the mixing honours. Control is currently through a *Midas XL200*, but with the mix becoming increasingly complex and channels in short supply, this will soon be replaced by *Midas'* new *Heritage 3000* - a 30 bus console with an additional 27 x 8 output matrix.

Further *Catatonia* shows are planned for the summer under canvas in *Langollen* and open-air in *Margam Park*, *Port Talbot*, where they will play to up to 30,000 people.

Five to Try

E-mail contacts for PLASA, its publishing arm and show organisers

5

1. Editorial for *L&S!*, *S&CS!* et al
ruth@plasa.org

2. Technical Standards (PLASA members only)
tim@plasa.org

3. Association Services
norah@plasa.org

4. Mailing list updates for PLASA Publications
sheila@plasa.org

5. Details on the PLASA Show in September
plasa@eco.co.uk

Make sure you also visit the PLASA website where there's a host of information on the entertainment technology industry.
www.plasa.org.uk



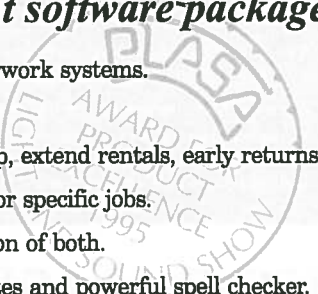
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PLASA Attains Trade Mark Status

The Professional Lighting and Sound Association's company secretary Shane McGreevy shows off PLASA's registered trade mark certificate.



The attainment of trade mark status is seen by PLASA as another step towards becoming a household name within the entertainment and presentation technology industry, other affiliated industries and government. PLASA currently offers advice and information to any of its overseas members wishing to register a brand in the UK.

PLASA - +44 1323 410335

RE Fan Blasts into UK Market

AC Lighting has launched the new RE Fan II from US manufacturer, Reel EFX Inc. The RE Fan II incorporates the same durable motor that is used by the original RE Fan and features an adjustable speed control and a one touch 'blast' button.

However, of key interest, is that the design allows the user to adjust the beam focus of the unit. Totally variable from 10 degrees to 45 degrees, the beam of the RE Fan II has a maximum velocity of 20 miles per hour at a distance of 10 feet, whilst drawing only two amps electrical current at 200-240 volts.

AC Lighting (UK) - +44 1494 446000

Audio Alliances

When, at the end of the year, we come to take stock of the significant developments of the past few years, the latter part of the century will surely be known for the number of acquisitions and mergers that changed the face of the industry.

One of the key players in this respect is the Production Resource Group. Its audio division is expanding in the west and in Europe with key alliances and the addition of more industry names to its employee roster. The latest news from the Group is of a strategic alliance with Electrotec, one of the key suppliers of concert sound in the US and Europe.

The original company, Electrosound, was formed in the UK in 1974 and provided concert sound equipment. In 1982 it changed its name to Electrotec and in 1989 sold its lighting division. Today, the company concentrates solely on concert sound systems and continues to expand its multi-million dollar inventory of equipment.

An alliance has also been formed between Burns Audio and ProMix, the cornerstone company of the PRG Audio Group. Known for his service on large-scale projects, company founder Bruce Burns is an important asset to the PRG Audio team. Finally, Larry Estrin, founder of Best Audio, joins the PRG Audio Group as a senior advisor. Well known for his management of audio services at events such as the Superbowl and Olympics, Estrin will serve as consultant for ProMix on large-scale projects.

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Club Class



Club Class, voted club of the month by *Mix Mag* and *Sky Magazine*, celebrated its second birthday by inviting *Le Maitre* to supply a range of its effects for the event.

Staged at the well-known Maidstone dance venue, *Atomics*, *Le Maitre's* Neutron Pro Hazer was supplied exclusively for the night, which featured performances from Boy George and Pete Tong.

Royal Marines at the RAH

The Mountbatten Festival of Music 1999, held in February at the Royal Albert Hall, saw the Massed Bands of HM Royal Marines perform a Charity concert in aid of the Malcolm Sergeant Cancer Fund for Children.

The production was managed by a team from the Royal Marines Band who oversaw the entire lighting, sound, recording, editing, mastering and marketing of the event. The lighting, supplied by White Light and The Moving Light Co, included 127 Pars, 40 ETC Source Four Profiles, 14 High End Studio Colors, 14 Martin Professional Mac 500s and four Strong Super Troupers. Control for the rig was provided by both Jands and ARRI desks.

The sound system, supplied by B&H Sound, comprised a Meyer central cluster, controlled by a 40-channel DDA Q2 console. In addition, special effects were provided by Just FX and the event was recorded by B&H Sound's mobile rig.

VDC's New Directory

VDC have launched their 1999-2000 catalogue.

In addition to the expanded manufacturing section, is the latest on offer from the Van Damme OFC cable range - this includes the Green series digital multicores, the Brown series multiquad, Red series video multicores, plus the full resistor colour code for the standard mic, patch, install and quad cables.



Harkness Under New Ownership

From 1st April, Borehamwood-based Harkness Hall will operate under a changed management board structure.

The team of Ian Sim, Jonathan Price, Dave Harrison and Colin Clark will now hold executive directorships for sales/marketing, finance, production and engineering respectively. John Lawton and Chris Hitchens have retired from their executive positions, but will remain with the company.

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Crescent Theatre

A building consortium were so intent on building an office block on the site of the long-standing Crescent Theatre in Birmingham, that they offered to build the Theatre Trust a brand new home just 200 yards away.

With the aid of National Lottery money, the Trust was ready to lay down a fairly high spec for its new 324-capacity theatre. Stagetec, LMC and Stage Electrics worked together to carry out the supply and installation of all the stage lighting, sound and communications equipment for the theatre.

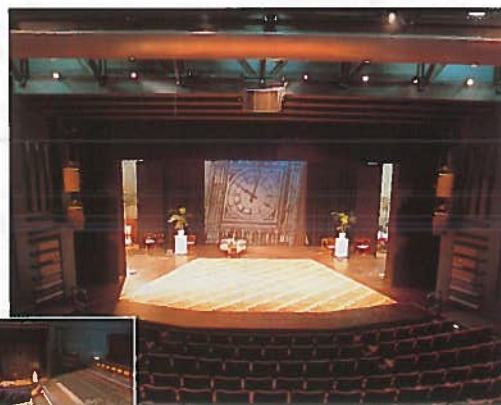
Stagetec handled much of the infrastructure work which included a custom-built working light and non-dim control system, stage manager's desks for the main auditorium and studio space, full show relay, background music and paging system throughout the building, infra-red systems for the hard of hearing in each space, Metro Audio intercom system and a large quantity of both lighting and sound/comms outlet boxes.

Working to a spec put together by head of sound, Ken Clarke, LMC nominated the local branch of

Stage Electrics to carry out the installation. The building did not facilitate a run-of-the-mill proscenium arch/auditorium design and LMC had to make provision for the theatre to operate virtually in-the-round, thus the speaker system had to be rotatable. A pair of Martin Audio Wavefront W3s are flown to either side of the proscenium arch, with EM251 subs underneath. Three EM76s form the central cluster while a fourth EM76 is flown on the reverse side of the proscenium. Two more full-range EM26s are used for spot coverage as left and right gallery infills, and four W0.5 floor monitors form the stage effects.

Since each proscenium speaker needs to receive its own amplifier feed, LMC turned to three of the new BSS Soundweb DSP networking devices, as they had for the refurbishment of Coventry's Belgrade Theatre. The speakers are powered independently by Crown K1 and K2 sealed unit amplifiers. In addition to the main drive rack there is also an auxiliary rack containing standard processing devices, such as the Klark Teknik DN504 compressor/limiter and Yamaha SPX 990, as well as a Tascam CD player and cassette deck.

Right, the Crescent Theatre's auditorium and inset Ken Clarke at the Soundcraft K3 desk



The main rack, switched via an EMO switcher, contains the amps and Soundwebs, as well as a patch bay

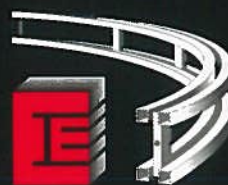
for all the tie-lines and a speaker patch for the effects speakers. Engineers will have the benefit of mixing from a Soundcraft K3, with six stereo and 25 mono inputs, plus two matrix modules.

The existing lighting rig - mostly Strand lanterns - was transferred from the original theatre, but new Strand LD90 dimmers and a 530 control desk were spec'd for the main auditorium. The original dimmer and control equipment were then redirected for use in the Crescent's new studio theatre.



“We were delighted with the system and the show went really well - the doors moved majestically. David Edelstein and the Triple E team pulled out all the stops to build a track system to our specification within a limited amount of time.”

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Belgo Opens in Islington



The Belgo Bierodrome in Islington is the first in a new roll-out programme from the successful Belgo Group.

The traditional 4,000sq.ft Belgian-styled site was designed by one of Belgo's original owners, Denis Blais, in conjunction with architects, Tim Bushe Associates, at an investment of around £500,000. Bristol-based sound system manufacturers, Thunder Ridge, won the contract following their work at top London venues such as Momo's, The End, The Vibe Bar and The Met Bar. The 4kW system - Thunder Ridge's MX and V-Sub series

loudspeaker enclosures - was installed by London-based hire and install company, Mainline Sound. A long thin building, the space comes off axis along two thin corridors, fronted by a bar. Here the requirement is for high SPL, and this is provided by a pair of MX 850s and V-Subs. The mono system is driven actively from a single BSS Omnidrive Compact.

The remainder of the venue is divided into four sound zones, with coverage provided by 11 MX 250s, run full range. The Omnidrive not only allows zoning control, but its time alignment function enabled Thunder Ridge to get round the complexities presented by the tricky building shape.

The lighting elements are no less interesting, the main focus being the 'wagon wheel chandelier' designed by the architects using rolled steel sections hung on stainless wires with projecting halogen bulbs. There are also a couple of other quirky features, notably the ground level bar, obscured from the exterior of the building by a full height internally illuminated translucent Reglit glass wall.

Belgo expect to roll out the Bierodrome concept, planning to 20 to 30 bars across the UK while continuing to develop their successful Belgo restaurant concept alongside.

Pop Code

The end of the consultation period for the revised version of the Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Pop Concerts and Similar Events has been set as May 4th, 1999.

The draft document is now available and represents the culmination of considerable work by groups of representatives from within the Authorities and Events Industry over a period of some 18 months. Its current status is that of a working document which may undergo changes as a result of the consultation process prior to final publication which is scheduled for September this year.

Copies of the draft are available from the Health & Safety Executive - but comprising nearly 200 pages, the recommended way to examine its content is to browse it on the Internet

www.mf-popcode.co.uk

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News Round-Up



PLASA'S Runaway Success on the Road

The Professional Lighting and Sound Association (PLASA) has just completed its second successful series of Roadshows during March, with meetings for members and non-members alike held in Brighton, Knebworth and Bristol.

The southern meetings followed three very well-received events held in Glasgow, Manchester and Birmingham last autumn, and were attended by more than 50 PLASA members, as well as by several companies considering joining PLASA, and members of the press. Within one week of the roadshows, PLASA has already received three new membership applications from companies impressed by what they saw. The roadshows are staged with the aim of increasing awareness of the Association's activities, as well as the vital task of establishing stronger lines of communication between the Association and its members. Some of the key areas covered included training and education initiatives, PLASA's revised Constitution, a proposed PLASA archive document, overseas trade development and the dissemination of standards information to the membership.

The events were praised for the opportunity they provided for members to come 'face to face' with PLASA and air their views on a number of issues. Matt Lloyd of Stage Electrics who attended the Bristol event commented: "I was very impressed by the range of services that the Association offers which I was not fully aware of before attending the roadshow. It was also a very good opportunity to meet the team behind PLASA who make it all happen."

His sentiments were echoed by Pulsar's Derrick Saunders who attended the Knebworth event: "Both my colleague Jane Monk and myself were very impressed with the presentation, the main points of which although well covered in PLASA's 1999 yearbook, made the words take on a whole new meaning. I for one would definitely attend again and will encourage my colleagues to join me."

A further series of roadshows will take place later in the year and details will be announced in *Lighting & Sound International* nearer the time.



Matthew Griffiths, PLASA's managing director, addresses members and prospective members at the Knebworth roadshow in Hertfordshire.

Laser Course at Loughborough

The second successful Entertainment Laser Association (ELA) approved BTEC Laser Operator's course was held recently at Loughborough University.

All 14 places were filled by those eager to learn and further their knowledge concerning the fundamentals of safe laser use and operation. Attendees came from a wide variety of sources and abilities, ranging from complete novices to practising professionals. Many of the country's laser companies were represented, including Laser Grafix, Laser Hire, LCI, Laser Innovations and Laser Electronics. All ELA companies received funding subsidies for trainees sent on the course.

The intense four-day course held at The Laser Centre at Loughborough covered a comprehensive array of topics including mechanical and electrical installation, event planning, venue/EHO perspectives, laser and light show design, programming, associated hazards, MPE demonstrations and calculations, ELA safety policy, legal issues and running of laser show productions.

The course ended with a full practical session and a two-hour written examination. The course sets rigorous standards and has a 70% pass mark. Modules of the course were presented by the country's leading laser experts, including Dr Daniel Clark. ELA's Keith Flunder, who took several of the courses, comments that they were extremely impressed with the response and quality of the trainees. The next Laser Operator's course will take place in September, and the five-day BTEC Laser Safety Officer's Course will take place at Loughborough in May.

Further details available on +44 (1509) 210835.



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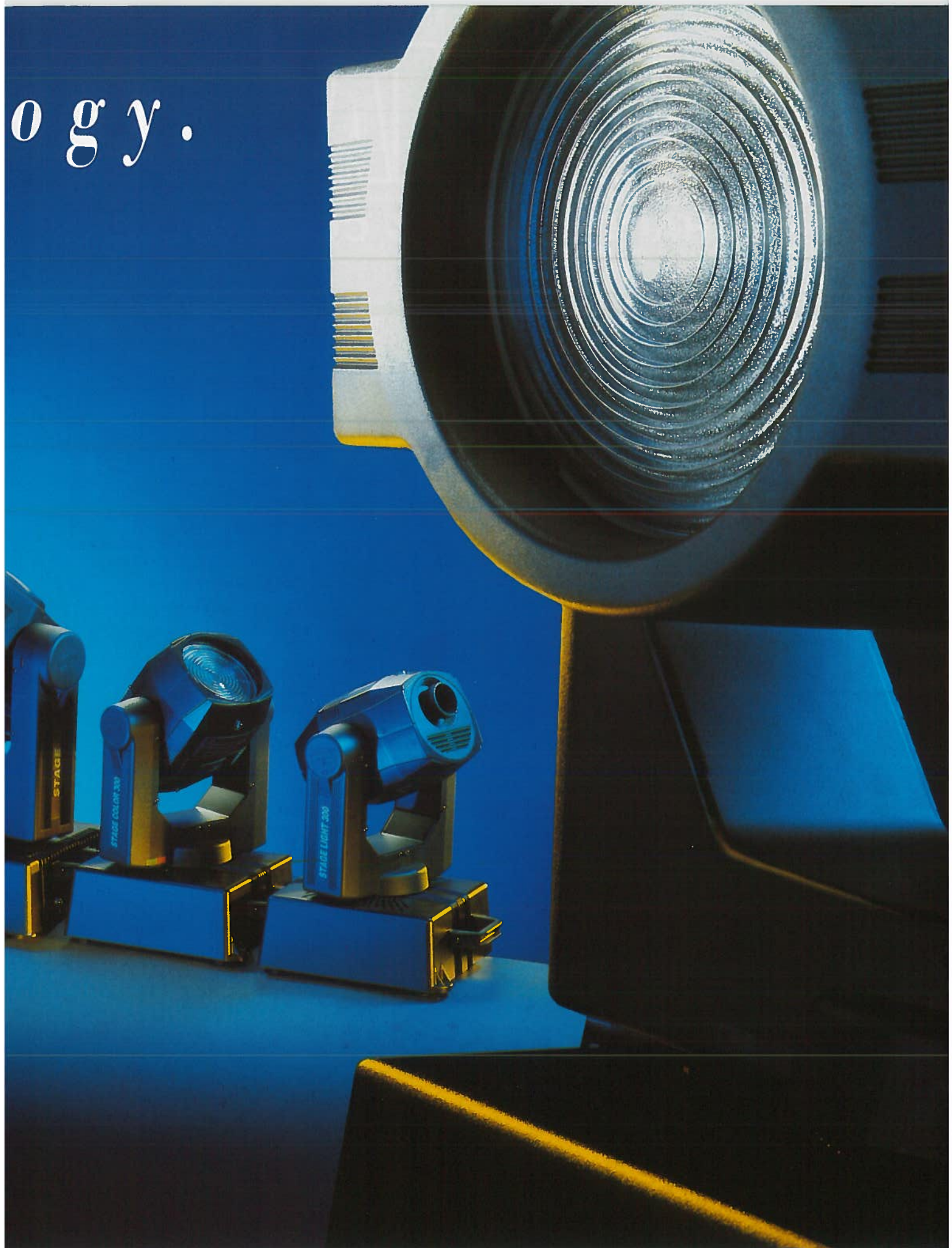
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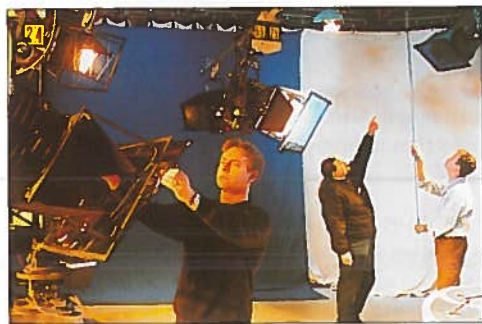
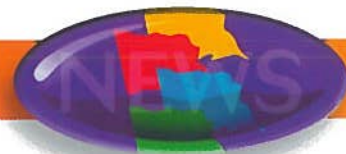
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Lighting the Way

BBC Training & Development offers Location Lighting courses.

A new training course on Location Lighting is to be staged this summer by BBC Training & Development at its prestigious Wood Norton centre near Evesham. Location Lighting is now available as two accessible five-day modules, running in July. Delegates can choose to attend just one module, or the complete 10-day course. The emphasis is on developing practical craft skills and a better understanding and awareness of location lighting. Since Module 1 assumes little prior knowledge of location lighting, this part of the course is also suited to relative newcomers to the craft.

The exercises themselves cover a whole range of possible lighting situations where delegates can enhance their technical and artistic skills. On the technical side, typical topics include light sources, colour temperature correction, use of reflective materials, grip gear, modern lighting equipment and the use of colour. These are then intertwined with practical exercises looking at subjects such as basic portraiture, interview, drama and feature lighting, as well as the challenges of night lighting.

Wherever possible, guest lighting directors are invited to become involved in the training, giving delegates a wider appreciation of day-to-day lighting issues. Course manager, Tim Wallbank, says one of the main strengths of the lighting training at Wood Norton is that it is not tied to any one manufacturer. The range of lighting equipment is impressive. Two large TV studios dedicated to training are fitted with a wide selection of Satchler and ARRI lamps. One studio is driven by an ADB Vision 10 lighting console, the other by a Strand Galaxy console. There are also moving lights from Martin Professional and Vari-Lite, as well as HMI lamps from various manufacturers.

For more details on any aspect of lighting training, contact BBC Training & Development, Wood Norton, on +44 (1386) 420216.

History of the Industry

PLASA is embarking on a project to archive the history of the Association and of the growth of the entertainment technology industry in general.

The archive will chart the development of the discotheque industry and the formation of the British Association of Discotheque Equipment Manufacturers (BADEM); the growth of technology into all areas of entertainment, and BADEM's subsequent metamorphosis into PLASA.

If you have any photographs, magazines, show catalogues, memorabilia or would simply like to contribute your memories of events within the industry, L&SI would like to hear from you. We are also looking for people who would be willing to assist in the research - please call Ruth Rossington on +44 1323 642639 or fax details through on +44 1323 646905.

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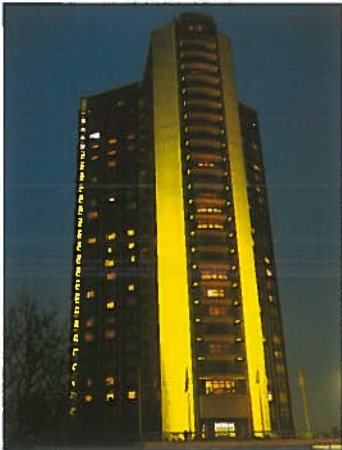
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and architectural landmarks. Lighting fixtures used included High End ECIs, Studio Colors, Cyberlights and Studio Spots, all of which were situated on the fourth floor balcony at the front of the hotel. Lightfactor's Bill Jones oversaw the demo, during which the building fascia was shot through with vibrant colours and enlivened with clear, bright gobo projections overlaid on top of the washes.

Highlighting Hilton

Lightfactor Sales recently illuminated the exterior of the world-famous London Hilton International Hotel in Park Lane.

The demonstration was intended to illustrate the power of various High End fixtures to light buildings

The lighting reached right up to the topmost floors of the building, revealing the hotel in a new and different perspective, illustrating how a normal, prosaic building can be transformed into an outstanding landmark with the application of colour and texturing.

ABC India

ABC '99 is the second international exhibition/trade fair of its kind for the audio/video, broadcast and film industry to be held in Southern India.

The exhibition also incorporates Musika 99 - a trade show for the music industry. The show takes place in Chennai (Madras) and will run from 30th July through to August 1st. The fair is expected to attract an international audience of production and programming professionals from film/TV studios and production houses. ABC '99 covers a range of products including recording, broadcasting, transmission equipment and kit for the audio and video industries.

The event is organised by Exhibition & Communication Enterprises (India) Ltd - Telephone +91 44 8235186.

New from Kam

Kam have released three newly specified mobile DI/small band loudspeakers. The KC12 is a 12 inch, three-way 200W full-range loudspeaker, whilst the KC15 is a 15 inch, three-way 300W full-range loudspeaker and the KC215 is a 2 x 15 inch three-way 400W loudspeaker. Lamba, who distribute the Kam range, have also recently been appointed UK distributor by Taiwanese club and stage lighting manufacturers Genl.

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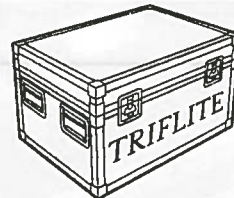
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09:00	150W	23°C	52%	1500 lux	65 dB
10:00	200W	24°C	55%	2000 lux	70 dB
11:00	250W	25°C	58%	2500 lux	75 dB
12:00	300W	26°C	60%	3000 lux	80 dB
13:00	350W	27°C	62%	3500 lux	85 dB
14:00	400W	28°C	65%	4000 lux	90 dB
15:00	450W	29°C	68%	4500 lux	95 dB
16:00	500W	30°C	70%	5000 lux	100 dB
17:00	550W	31°C	72%	5500 lux	105 dB
18:00	600W	32°C	75%	6000 lux	110 dB
19:00	650W	33°C	78%	6500 lux	115 dB
20:00	700W	34°C	80%	7000 lux	120 dB
21:00	750W	35°C	82%	7500 lux	125 dB
22:00	800W	36°C	85%	8000 lux	130 dB
23:00	850W	37°C	88%	8500 lux	135 dB
00:00	900W	38°C	90%	9000 lux	140 dB
01:00	950W	39°C	92%	9500 lux	145 dB
02:00	1000W	40°C	95%	10000 lux	150 dB

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ID	Power	Temp	Humidity	Light Level	Sound Level
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102	150W	23°C	52%	1500 lux	65 dB
103	200W	24°C	55%	2000 lux	70 dB
104	250W	25°C	58%	2500 lux	75 dB
105	300W	26°C	60%	3000 lux	80 dB
106	350W	27°C	62%	3500 lux	85 dB
107	400W	28°C	65%	4000 lux	90 dB
108	450W	29°C	68%	4500 lux	95 dB
109	500W	30°C	70%	5000 lux	100 dB
110	550W	31°C	72%	5500 lux	105 dB
111	600W	32°C	75%	6000 lux	110 dB
112	650W	33°C	78%	6500 lux	115 dB
113	700W	34°C	80%	7000 lux	120 dB
114	750W	35°C	82%	7500 lux	125 dB
115	800W	36°C	85%	8000 lux	130 dB
116	850W	37°C	88%	8500 lux	135 dB
117	900W	38°C	90%	9000 lux	140 dB
118	950W	39°C	92%	9500 lux	145 dB
119	1000W	40°C	95%	10000 lux	150 dB

Interactive Plot Data Editing



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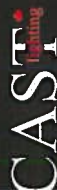
Drag And Drop Patching

Channel	Power	Temp	Humidity	Light Level	Sound Level
1	100W	22°C	50%	1000 lux	60 dB
2	150W	23°C	52%	1500 lux	65 dB
3	200W	24°C	55%	2000 lux	70 dB
4	250W	25°C	58%	2500 lux	75 dB
5	300W	26°C	60%	3000 lux	80 dB
6	350W	27°C	62%	3500 lux	85 dB
7	400W	28°C	65%	4000 lux	90 dB
8	450W	29°C	68%	4500 lux	95 dB
9	500W	30°C	70%	5000 lux	100 dB
10	550W	31°C	72%	5500 lux	105 dB
11	600W	32°C	75%	6000 lux	110 dB
12	650W	33°C	78%	6500 lux	115 dB
13	700W	34°C	80%	7000 lux	120 dB
14	750W	35°C	82%	7500 lux	125 dB
15	800W	36°C	85%	8000 lux	130 dB
16	850W	37°C	88%	8500 lux	135 dB
17	900W	38°C	90%	9000 lux	140 dB
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19	1000W	40°C	95%	10000 lux	150 dB

Drag And Drop Patching



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Plans have been announced for a spectacular lighting scheme designed by light artist Yann Kersale - which will visually enhance British Airways London Eye, the world's largest observation wheel, when it opens on London's South Bank early next year.

Designed to reflect the elements, the central theme is a massive circle of white light from within the rim, which sweeps the skyline at 135 metres. The embarkation platform, built out over the Thames, appears to 'float' on a cushion of blue light. The final element of the scheme - earth - will be depicted in a green lighting display in the trees to be planted in Jubilee Gardens close by. The Eye will be lit for the first time to see in the New Millennium.

Recording Technology 99

Recording Technology 99 is the new UK National show for recording professionals. Exhibits will be in the field of recording studios, mastering, audio post and project studios.

All the leading brands will be represented and Recording Technology 99 will be the first opportunity in the UK to see many new products announced at both AES in Munich and Pro Light & Sound in Frankfurt. The show will also feature live presentations and seminars on topics of immediate importance, including Mixing for Surround and the implications of DVD and MP3 to the recording industry. The show takes place on Friday 25th and Saturday 26th June at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London.

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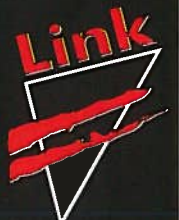
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BudWorld

The newly-opened 1000 capacity BudWorld is the first of a new series of multi-faceted themed environments joining the ever-eclectic portfolio of venues run by Kingfisher Leisure PLC.

The venue was formerly The Croydon Coliseum, and the concept of BudWorld was devised by Fred Lawrence and David Cliff from Kingfisher, with Bud branding as a central marketing buzz-feature. BudWorld needed that extra 'something' to tempt people through the doors in an area well endowed with choices for eating, drinking, dancing and entertainment. The technical budgets were reasonable but not excessive, so the creative and technical elements were relied upon heavily to give BudWorld that bit extra. A strong video presence informed and played an essential role in the overall visuality.

Lightfactor's Dick Carrier was involved in the project from the start, overseeing the technical specification and installation and designing the lighting and sound - all of which was supplied via Lightfactor Sales. The audio system was configured so a portion of the dancefloor system, together with the infill system, is used for visiting PAs and live acts who use the dancefloor. The system is zoned and can be remotely tweaked by management, allowing levels to be adjusted away from the dancefloor. The speaker and amplifier system is all Peavey, complete with a Media-Matrix 108 digital processing PC-based system from control. There is also a Soundcraft Spirit 8 into 3 mixer, and Lightfactor also supplied all the DJ equipment.

The lighting, designed by Carrier, is controlled by an Avolites Azure 2000 console. Fixtures include High End Systems Studio Spots, Technobeams and Trackspots, Pars, Futurelight colour changers and custom neon strips. Dimming is provided by LightProcessor Paradime digital dimmers, and additional effects include two Smoke Design Company hazers and a pyrotechnic system. Three custom-designed trussing systems in the roof, fabricated by LSD, are trimmed in red neon and mirror the bow tie shape of the BudWorld logo.

The video hardware and software at BudWorld consists of over 60 Hantarex monitors and three six foot motorised video screens with inputs from a Kaleidolight graphics generator, four cameras, a VHS player and cable TV. Video control is via a Crestron SmartTouch video controller, an Extron 8 x 8 switching matrix, a Kramer Black & Burst generator and a Kramer 6 x 6 video switcher. The lighting operator also mixes video live each night.



A spectre is haunting Europe ...

... the spectre of the sound reinforcement horror. It terrorises its captive audience in various manifestations: Distortion, clipping and feedback, comb filtering, uneven level distribution and the disparity between visual and acoustic image all conspire to perpetuate the exploitation of the listening classes. The man at the mixing console turns into a sorcerer's apprentice who can no longer control the signals he has summoned! Two things result from this fact: I. In solidarity with the downtrodden audiences we proclaim: Equal Sound for All! II. It is high time that the nursery tale of the spectre was openly confronted with low distortion, excellent signal to noise ratio, linear frequency response, realistic dynamics, controlled directivity, clear intelligibility and source oriented reinforcement. To this end conscientious Friends of the People have assembled in Backnang to manufacture black boxes that will bring about democracy for listeners.



Optex Win Academy Award

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recently held its Annual Academy Awards Ceremony at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel, Beverly Hills, USA, where, for the first time, a British individual, in collaboration with a British Company, received a Scientific and Engineering Award for the design and development of a softlight.



Derek Lightbody (pictured with the award) joined OpTex as a technical consultant in 1991. His previous experience as head of vision and lighting with the BBC enabled him and the OpTex design team to create Aurasoft. The light has been very successful in the film, television and photographic media and has been used on a wide range of commercials, drama series and films, including two of the nominated films at this year's awards - Elizabeth and Shakespeare in Love.

People News

Making a welcome return to the entertainment technology industry is Michael Goldberg, who has joined Triple E as sales and marketing consultant. Goldberg has been involved with the industry most of his working life, previously as national sales manager at Rosco and later managing director of M&M until 1997. As a consultant, Goldberg will be dividing his time between Triple E and several other companies within the industry.



AC Lighting Inc has appointed Christian Choi as software and programming specialist at their Agoura Hills office in California. A well-known face in the entertainment lighting industry, Choi brings with him extensive experience, having programmed many major productions.

Peter Child has joined Martin Audio in a project applications role to support the company's accelerated growth into the architectural and theatre markets. Child formerly ran the Renkus Heinz European sales office and prior to that worked at Bose.

Orbital Sound has recruited Simon Whitehorn to join their sound design department. Whitehorn, formerly a freelance theatre designer with experience in London's West End, joins the busy company to work on a variety of forthcoming plays and musicals.

Mike Stittfall, a freelance projection technician for over five years, has joined Laser Grafix to head up their successful projection department.

beyerdynamic has appointed Roger Mycock, formerly a bass player with seventies band, the Mixture, as regional sales manager covering Wales and the north of England. He will be responsible for sales of all the beyerdynamic product line, as well as distributed product lines, including XTA, ASL and Gallien-Krueger.

Steve Sinclair has joined LSD, taking on the role of general manager at the company's headquarters in Birmingham. He has a lengthy history in the lighting industry, first joining See Factor in New York back in 1979. In the intervening 20 years, he's worked on productions for many of the major lighting companies, on both sides of the Atlantic. He will be responsible for all operational aspects of LSD's work. His arrival coincides with the departure of Jo MacKay.

Grant Smith is a name that will be known to many in the rigging fraternity. His work as an outdoor roofing specialist for the last five seasons has made him a familiar face in the industry. He joins Summit Steel as equipment hire manager, and will also be the primary contact point for all Summit customers' on crewing requirements.

Peter Maddison, formerly of Adam Hall, Leamington and Le Maitre, has joined PJ Lighting as assistant manager to handle UK customer support and orders.

Tony Gottelier

No Comment...

I got quite a surprise just before Easter when I discovered, by dint of a telephone conversation attempting to schedule an appointment, that last year had 53 weeks, despite what we were all told at nursery school. At least, that is, according to the compilers of calendars (but with one notable exception none too far away as you will shortly discover).

You may wonder why I should bother to mention this when so few people in the UK use week numbers as a point of reference. Well, it's because my business has many customers in other countries who do use them and, indeed, I found

them so useful that several years ago I prevailed upon PLASA to include week numbers on their really useful Publishing wallplanners.

Most of you probably haven't even noticed them, particularly as the numbers are relegated to barely readable, light print at the bottom of each Monday's box. Which is just as well, because this year's chart is one week adrift - perhaps appropriately in this Millennium year, which we know to be three whole years awry due to a miscalculation in the Middle Ages.

While this error is unlikely to have such enduring implications, I

know how ubiquitous the wallplanner is in the industry and I wouldn't want anyone to turn up for an appointment in Timbuktu one week too early. Just think of the hotel expenses! The point is that our diarist, who shall remain nameless for fear of retribution, has labelled the week ending January 3rd 1999, Week 1, whereas everyone else has counted it as Week 53 1998. Thus, the wallplanner is one week ahead throughout.

Just to confuse even further, the week containing the infamous Millennium Eve will be Week 52 this year and not Week 1, as per the chart and I don't suppose any of us can afford to get that one wrong. No, this is not an April Fool

While none of the really big fish in the nightclub sector, promised by earlier speculation at the end of last year, has come to pass, some of the minnows are apparently swimming upstream to mate and, presumably, spawn big new profits for shareholders.

The first to put up, are Allied Leisure whose offer to merge with, previously dishevelled, European Leisure was confirmed just before the Spring holiday. How things have changed since those not so far off days when the aggravated takeover of Midsummer Leisure by European led to its erstwhile chairman, Mark Ward, being banged up for fraud. In the meantime, MD Ian Rock and Chairman Victor Steel have performed such a successful makeover that European has developed from a fallen woman to an attractive and successful star performer.

Like the London buses, who are never there when you need them, then two show up at the same time, another suitor has also materialised in the shape of Waterfall Holdings. Now chaired by ex-Rank director, and on the rebound from an earlier dust-up within that Group, John Garrett, their desire to mix it seems opportunistic if not downright incestuous - European own 24 percent of Waterfall.

Nevertheless, this can do nothing but drive up the price of European Leisure's shares - the Allied combination would value the new grouping at close to £70m. European's two most famous properties are Camden Palace and the Hippodrome, with intense and newly arrived and arriviste competition in Leicester Square including Chorion's Tiger Tiger and with Ron McCullough's Big Beat coming soon, consolidation is probably sensible. Thus, there are lots of holders of what was virtually worthless European paper following the Midsummer debacle, who could shortly be realising their delayed dreams of a place in the sun.

Meanwhile, industry watchers will be keeping an eye out for confirmation of the next moves from both Northern and Luminar Leisure, around whom the hottest of unconfirmed rumours have been swirling.

And so Lionel Bart has made his final exit from the stage door and slipped away to pick a pocket or two in another place. There are many in this industry who owe a debt of gratitude to Bart who, almost single-handedly, reinvented London's musical theatre in the Sixties with shows like *Oliver!* and *Fings*. He also wrote pop songs for, among others, Tommy Steele and Cliff Richard, the most famous of which, *Living Doll*, really established the latter's career.

Arguably, his was the springboard which others such as Lloyd Webber exploited further down the line. It is poignant that he never received the financial rewards he so richly deserved, having foolishly sold his copyrights for a pittance. Nevertheless, *fings ain't wot they was*, thanks to Bart.

And a final word about the PLASA Show in September. Any PLASA exhibitors worried about the implications of P&O's decision to put the Earls Court exhibition centre and its Events associate up for sale (see page 6), need not be unduly concerned. After all, the association owns its own Show and therefore holds all the cards. With the new Docklands-based ExCel Centre presently breaking ground in the old Royal Victoria Docks, providing a new and up-to-date 90,000 square metre option for organisers from 2002, it would be a foolish, indeed, for any new proprietor to rock the boat.

Anybody who feels they could benefit from being a week ahead and would like one of the unique PLASA Publishing Wallplanners, should contact L&S immediately. Allow 53 weeks for delivery.

Anybody who thinks Mr Gottelier should have better things to do with his time than count the weeks in a year should contact him direct.

"While none of the really big fish in the nightclub sector, promised by earlier speculation at the end of last year, has come to pass, some of the minnows are apparently swimming upstream to mate and, presumably, spawn big new profits for shareholders."

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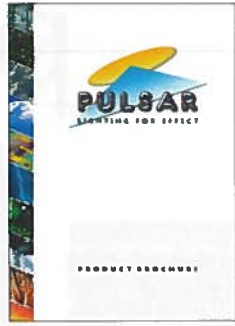
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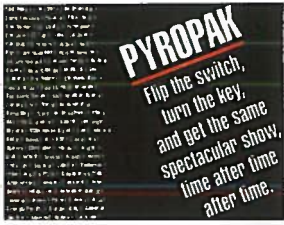


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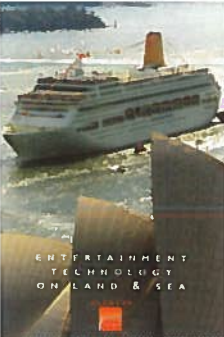
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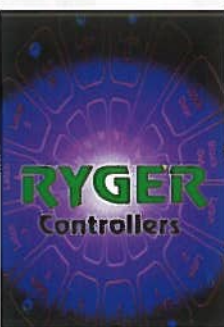
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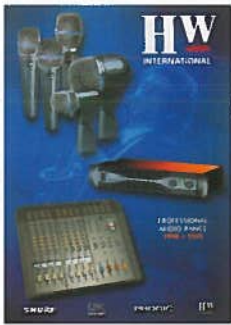
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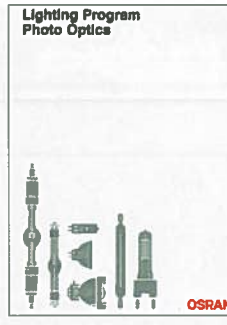
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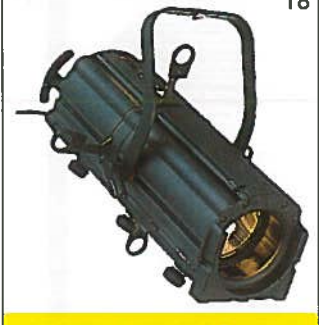
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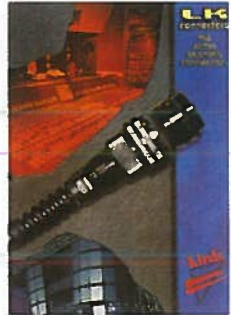
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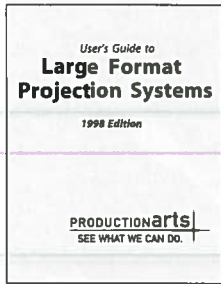
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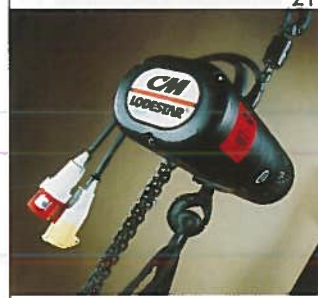
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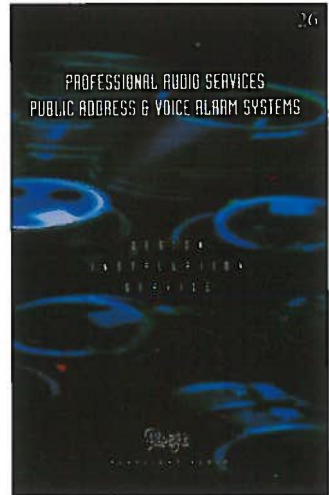
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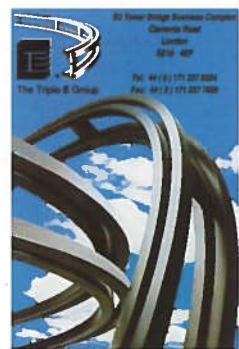
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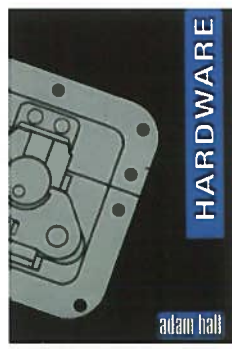
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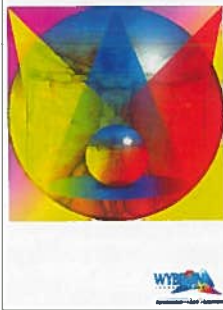
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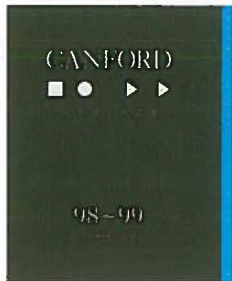
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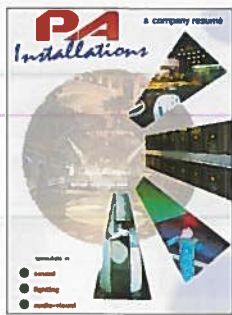
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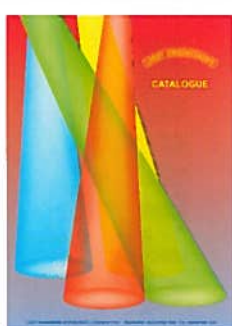
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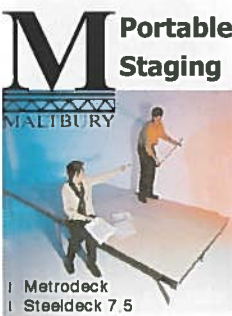
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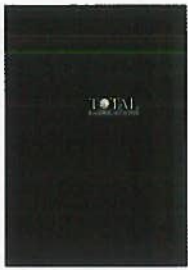
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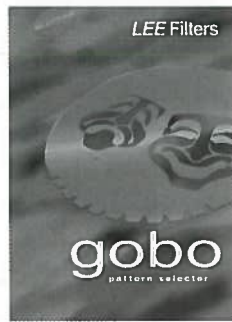
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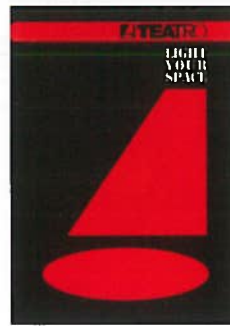
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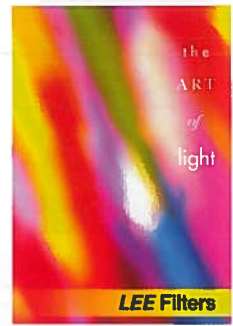


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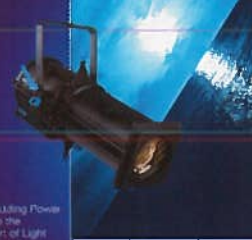
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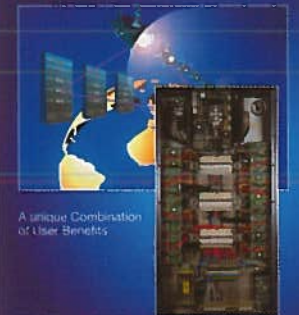
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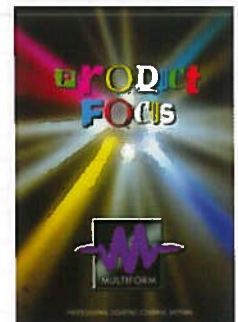


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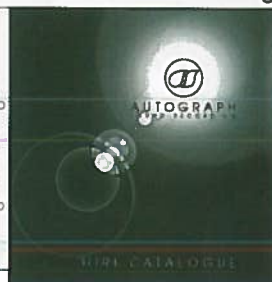
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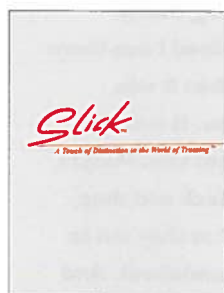


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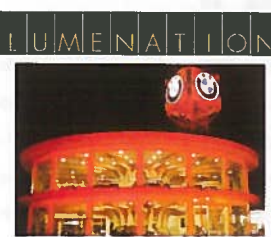


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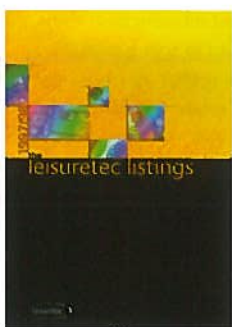
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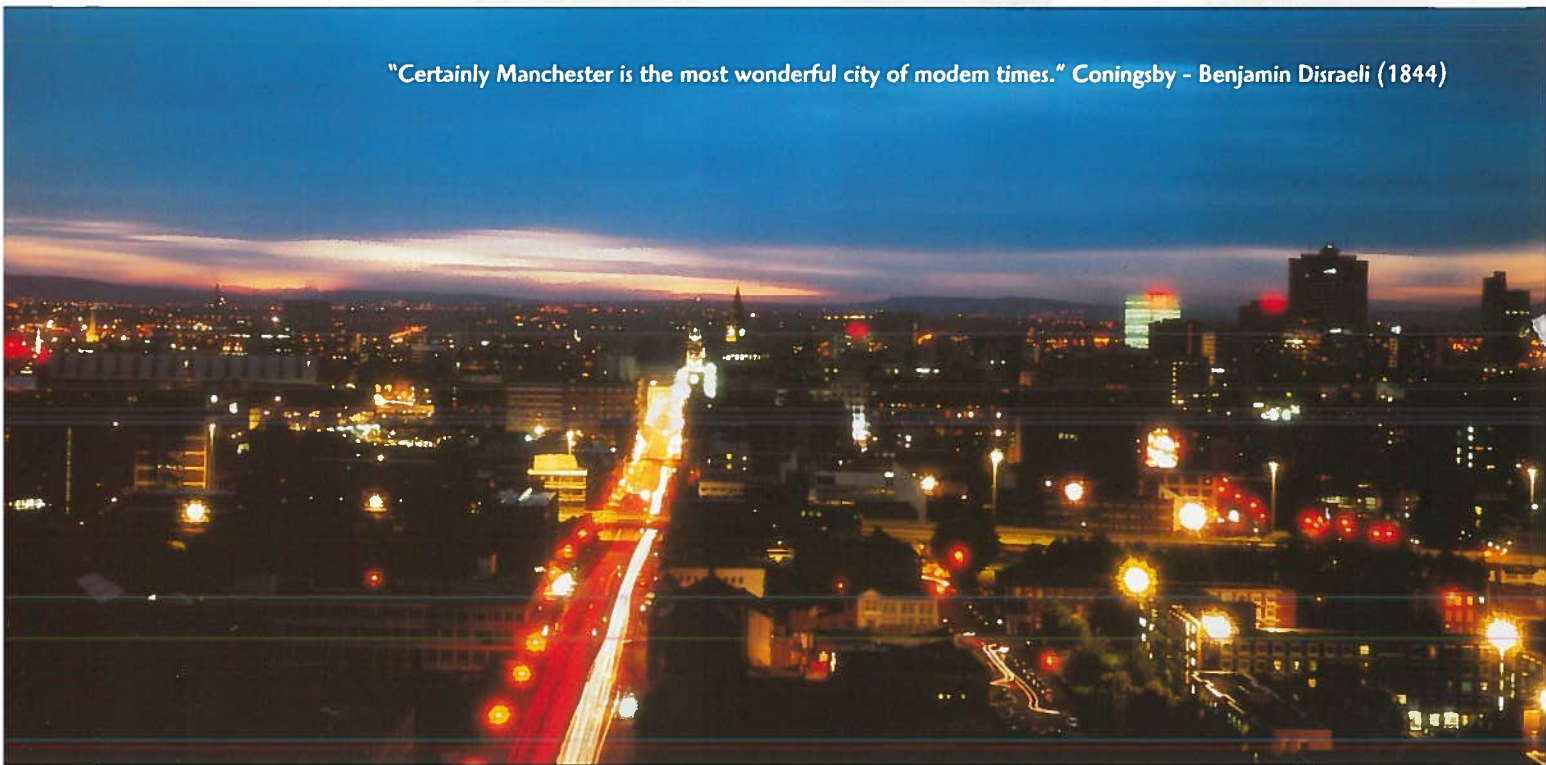


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"Certainly Manchester is the most wonderful city of modern times." Coningsby - Benjamin Disraeli (1844)



FOCUS ON . . .

Mad For It?

Now I'm not for one second saying that it always rains in Manchester. Indeed I was there once - 1987, I think it was - when it was glorious sunshine for a whole 10 minutes. It was like being stuck in the first day of the Harrods sale. People running out of every doorway, office block and shop, discarding clothes across the pavement as they ran to the middle of a large, grass-covered roundabout. And then, en masse, they all threw their arms out to their side, fell flat onto their backs and worshipped at the altar of the sun god. Some of the younger ones were even heard to proclaim that they'd only heard of such things from their grandparents and thought the "great fire in the sky" was merely a myth.

It's getting harder and harder to think of decent introductions these days, as the above might well demonstrate. But I'm trying to make a (possibly extremely important point) - something that may have got lost in translation. Manchester is not known for its sunny disposition. It rains. A lot. Now I've never been much of a psychologist - but even I can see a pattern emerging here. It rains, therefore people are unable to enjoy the great outdoors as much as folk, say, across the Pennines. *Ipsa facto*, they must find entertainment indoors, under a rain-proof roof. Seems logical to me. It might also explain the preponderance of Manchester-based bands that have dominated the music scene for the last decade or so. Think Manchester, think Oasis, the Stone Roses, Take That, James (but Bradford claims Tim Booth as its own), The Buzzcocks, Happy Mondays, A Certain Ratio, New Order/Joy Division (and their various off-shoots) and, of course, The Smiths. Donning my Freudian slip once more, a quick analysis of the output of the songs by these noble musicmasters and you quickly find two themes: despair (The Smiths and New Order/Joy Division's entire back catalogue) or "getting away from all this"/"getting

Ross Brown provides an overview of the variety of venues in Manchester - home of football and music in the North West

out of your head" (Oasis's first album, Happy Mondays, even James pseudo-Buddhist moments seem to be about changing the life you have.)

But what precisely does all this have to do with Manchester's pubs, clubs, bars and venues: it's simple really. Step One: it's chucking it down, let's get under cover. Step Two: we can either stay in and make music or find a warm, inviting hostelry and have some fun which will help us forget that it's chucking it down outside. Which, my learned friends, helps to explain why Manchester has got both a thriving music scene and countless venues to stretch hedonism to its breaking point.

Now try and get information out of all these venues about what equipment they have installed. Secretive? You don't know the half of it mate. I've never been one for false modesty, so if I'd installed a state-of-the-art sound system into one of the UK's largest cinema multiplexes, in the country's newest shopping centre - then you can be sure I'd tell anybody who'd listen. But not UCI. Oh no. Information on their Trafford Park multiplex? It's covered by the Official Secrets Act. As is any information I might like about the cornucopia of attractions at Granada's Studio Tour.

So thank God for the Manchester Evening News Arena (the Arena formerly known as Nynex - TAFKAN, to give it its full title). Selling an Arena on the back of failure may not be the best start, but Europe's largest multi-purpose indoor entertainment and sports arena is a result of Manchester's failed Olympic bid. To give you a brief PR blurb: the Arena cost £56m to build, it opened on July 15 1995 (Torvill and



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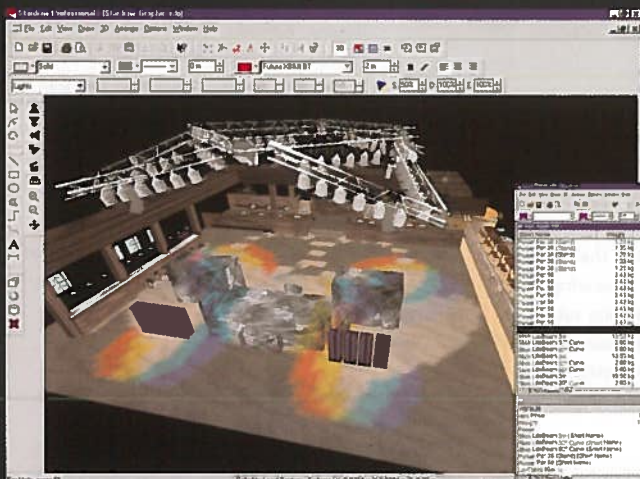
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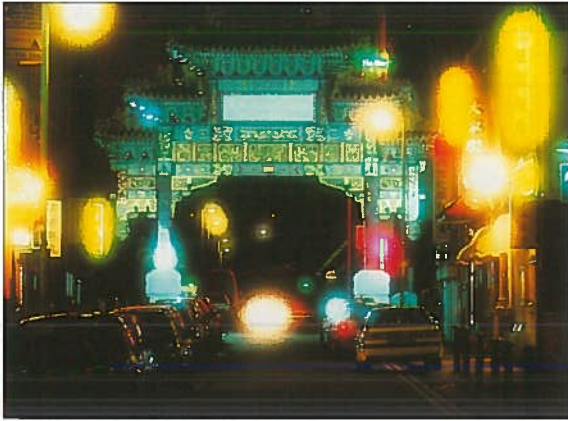
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Above, Manchester boasts a diverse cultural mix - there is large Chinatown in the city. Below right, ice hockey at the Manchester Evening News Arena - originally built as part of the city's Olympic bid.

Dean played live - new album due soon apparently) with 1.2m people visiting 143 events during that first year.

Like the majority of similar arenas, the MEN Arena has a relatively meagre in-house sound system for the simple reason that touring shows bring their own gear. However, I did say 'relatively' meagre - this is a big arena, with a lot of different areas to cover. Altogether there are 20 speaker pairs in the Arena's roof, with each pair driven by its own amp. The 40 speakers are all Community Sound, with eight RS880s, 12 RS660 and 20 RS220s. A further four full-range cabinet speakers are also provided (for general stage and sound effects use) - the actual nature of these varies, but the current example is a set of SX 200s with frequency response from 80Hz to 15kHz.

The leads that supply the noise to these babies run through a complicated series of patch leads allowing any combination to be easily identified, accessed and (if necessary) re-routed or bypassed. Following these leads back to the desk - again a variety, but usually a little number from Spirit by Soundcraft with a 24/4/2 combination - all grouped and colour-coded because of the wide variety of people that have cause to use it.

Actually creating some sound for these stack to boom across the Arena, a basic microphone set-up of three Electro-Voice EMCV 150s (cardioid dynamic), three AKG C567E (tie-clip) and two SKM 1032s (radio) are provided.

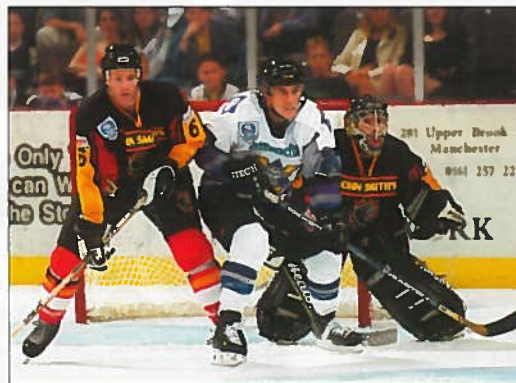
If your intimate little gathering requires background music, then that is provided by the set-up in the Arena's Audio Control Room courtesy of two Tascam CD-401 MkIIIs, a rack-mounted Tascam 122 MkII (tape deck) and a Denon TU38ORD (tuner). Also in 'sound central' is a Yamaha Q2031A graphic, a Rane PE15 parametric EQ and various reverbs and delay units.

Of course, it's the variety of bars and clubs that Manchester is probably best known for - in fact, it boasts more clubs per square mile than almost any other European city. Which is probably the reason why its inhabitants are, to quote a Mr L Gallagher of Burnage, "mad for it". One of its most famous drinking holes is the Dry Bar. Also

known as Dry 201 (the Factory Records catalogue number attributed to it - funny bloke Antony Wilson), the Dry Bar has a reputation as a place to be seen when in Manc. Its reputation may have faded slightly, as the ebb and flow of the tide of fashion dictates, but one thing hasn't changed in 10 years - its sound system!

A man who identified himself only as "Mr Caldwell", informed this reporter that the equipment in the Dry Bar was - and he admitted he

was looking over his shoulder at the mass of black boxes behind him - a combination of JBL Matrix and C-Audio amps ("The model?" "No idea, son."), JBL speakers ("ditto"), a couple of Technics (you guessed it) SL-1210s, a Foxtex mixer, a Denon tape deck and a Technics CD player. I'm taking with a pinch of salt his claim that it was, in total, a 9k system, but I have been wrong before (June 22 1982, if you're interested). No it would be easy to mock all this - but two things come to mind. For a 10-year-old system, it's both a great set-up and, more importantly, it's still working - so why bother changing? Status Quo have used the same three chords and, bar Radio One, no-one cares.



However, the penultimate year of the twentieth century (anyone who wants to argue can try), does see at least one venue embracing change and modern technology. Springing up quicker than you can say 'Beers R Us', the themed bar and all its bastard offspring are appearing in a High Street near us all at an alarming rate, as you may well have noticed. The main culprit of this homogenisation of our local hosteleries is Allied Domecq's own Firkin brand. Popping up all over the firkin place.

Down on Grosvenor Street, the Footage and Firkin, a former cinema, is currently being upgraded with some serious new toys - mainly to encourage the students from the adjacent University to stay all day (attention all pub owners: this can be achieved without fancy technical systems - simply offer cheap booze).

A four-zone system (three up and one down), using Cloud CZ zoner controls to maintain the balance, it is a wiring nightmare writ large. As a Grade 2 listed building, the contractors have had to work especially hard to ensure that the look and feel of the building has kept within the strict guidelines of listed status.

Downstairs there are a total of 10 Nexo PS10 cabs flown horizontally from the ceiling and walls, with a further five Nexo PS500 subs, all driven by five CE Crown 2000 stereo amps. Processing for this merry bunch is through a Symetrix graphic EQ. Upstairs, it's a slightly different story; each of the three areas has eight RCF Monitor 8 speakers running from a set of Amcron and Cloud amps.

Providing the source for the various areas are the trusty jukebox, two satellite decoders, a video and terrestrial TV receiver, a Pioneer CJD behind the bar and, after running through a Panasonic DCM 500 mixer, the DJ box contains a further two Pioneer CJDs and, as yet undecided, tape and record decks. Monitoring will be via either RCF or Bose 301 monitors - they're not sure yet! The lighting/visual side is fairly standard; 10 Abstract VR8 scanners, four UV strips, two strobes and the trusty Firkin gobo for the venue's entrance - oh and two 100 inch projector screens. Big. Very big. The main drive equipment and all the source hardware is located on the ground floor of the venue, with the various rack-mounted equipment located in the lower basement. The "full psycho-acoustic analysis" (not my words) has already been carried out with the sound run from heavy to excessive ("Basically everything from background to nightclub," the contractor I spoke to said).

Back to that 'more clubs per square mile statement'. I reckon it's true and you could get seriously wasted in a very short time. Most of the nearby University students can be found at 5th Avenue, The Venue, 21 Piccadilly and Jabez Clegg, whilst a more mixed audience are out legging their way round Bookbinders, Discotheque Royale, Kaleida, Boardwalk, New Continental Club, Richfields, Saturdays, South, The Attic, The Ritz and the Sankey Soap.

Manchester is also the gay capital of the north and has a string of gay clubs - Follies, Napoleons, Chains, Paradise Factory and Cruz 101. The latter, on Princess Street, is one of the city's most popular clubs and its own particular equipment run-down throws up a couple of surprises.

A dozen Ohm BR12s and eight Ohm BR2as I can cope with. I don't even have a problem with a combination of Rane and Cloud CXM graphical EQs. In fact, I'll be honest with you, Technics 1210s, Pioneer CJ10s and Beyer radio mics hold little concern for me either. It's when we get to the lighting that I get twitchy.

22 Martin Roboscan 802s, fine. The good ole Par 66s (16) and Pin spots (64), also hold little concern. Chuck in four strobes, some rotating pin spots and a La Novalight Galaxy and I'm still smiling. It's when I'm told there are 'neon triangles' and mirror balls. Not one: mirror balls you notice. Cue the cold sweats.

When I think 'neon triangles' and mirror balls (emphasis on the plural) I also picture white



The G-Mex (left) home to numerous exhibitions and concerts. Inset, Apollo Leisure's Palace Theatre - the Grand Old Lady of Oxford Street

stiletto, handbag circling on the dancefloor and requests for 'Blastaways' across the bar (a potent mixture of Castaway and Diamond White if you were brought up on a better side of the tracks than I). And, to be honest, I'm equal parts impressed and despairing that a club as popular as Cruz 101 still has them.

Of course, Manchester isn't only known as a 'dancing' City - some would argue that Leeds has now stolen that crown - but also as an excellent city for live music; a crown I don't believe any other northern city can take away from it.

One of the 'classic' venues that has created this reputation is undoubtedly The Roadhouse, now undergoing something of a renaissance since a management buyout from founder John Macbeath last November. A regular venue on the old 'college' circuit - which seemed to have Carter USM on tour 365 days a year when I was at college - The Roadhouse plays host to, for want of a better term, 'NME' bands: those that are not quite household names but your average music fan usually knows the name. These days, that means bands such as Add N to (X) and Ketamine, appear alongside theme nights celebrating genres such as soul, drum 'n' bass and ska. Add to this the popularity of the venue for pre-tour production and rehearsal/recording sessions, and you've got one popular and well-stocked venue.

Taking centre-stage, metaphorically speaking, on the audio side is an Allen & Heath GL3000 32/8, with 60mm faders and no EQ, with monitoring courtesy of two Ohm BR 15MS passive wedges.

The mix from the A&H desk runs into a total of six amps; one each of Bell's 9028 and Amcron's MA2400 and VZ5000 models for the front-of-house, and another two MA2400s and a Hill DX3000 drum fill amp for the monitors. The FOH speakers themselves are two Ohm BR30s and four Court bass bins.

Because of the variety of uses The Roadhouse undergoes, the venue has a wide variety of microphones: one

each of Beyer's 380 and 201s, one each of EVs 757, MC150 and PL80 models - with two 257s - an AKG 202, seven Shure SM58s, Audio-Technica Pro37 (two) and 862 (1) models and two Peavey PIs.

The processing effects for this cornucopia are equally impressive: two BSS FDS 340 3/4 way crossovers, an Alesis 30-band stereo graphic EQ, a Behringer protector 8-way limiter, four Alesis 30-band monitor graphic EQs, a Roland SDE 3000 delay, a Behringer Quad gate with filters and three Behringer Composer compressors. The actual 'noise-making' equipment is relatively standard compared to this little lot - but nonetheless excellent: a Teac twin cassette deck, a Sony MiniDisc recorder/player, two Denon CD players, one Sherwood CD player, a Kam mixer and some record decks produced by some Japanese company. Need I bother saying which?

It's difficult to isolate a certain number of venues to be illustrative of the sheer variety available in Manchester, but there is one that simply has to be included. This has got little to do with its heritage, though as a former railway station, it's story is definitely worthy of mention. It has little to do with star attractions - though it has hosted gigs by the famous and infamous, as well as a vast variety of exhibitions, it doesn't even have anything to do with equipment (they wouldn't tell me). The G-Mex (Greater Manchester Exhibition Centre, to give it its Sunday name) is where I saw my first concert; A Certain Ration, The Happy Mondays and New Order on the same bill - 16 and in heaven I was. That's all.

For more, shall we say, cultural pursuits, Manchester isn't exactly short on theatres

either. Second only to London's West End, Manchester's theatres put on hundreds of productions a year. The Grand Old Lady of Oxford Street, as the Palace Theatre is occasionally known, first opened in 1889 but unsurprisingly, a few things have changed since then. All the classics have played at this throw-back to concert hall - Jack Warner, Joe Loss, Jimmy James, Danny Kaye, Laurel & Hardy, Tommy Trinder and, my personal favourite, Arthur Askey. Ivor Novello shows premiered at the Palace and, up to the present, the Theatre has been one of the premier provincial theatres for touring West End Shows. Lighting control comes

courtesy of a Strand Galaxy 3, operating a selection of Cadenzas (10), Cantatas (18), Irises (4) and three profile spots (one each rated at 2kW and 1kW).

The revitalised Royal Exchange was covered extensively in the January issue of L&SI, but it's worth repeating that this is proving to be a very exciting set of spaces, both public and theatrical, which (along with some equally exciting programming for the next 12 months) puts Manchester back into serious contention with Leeds for the title 'National Theatre of the North'.

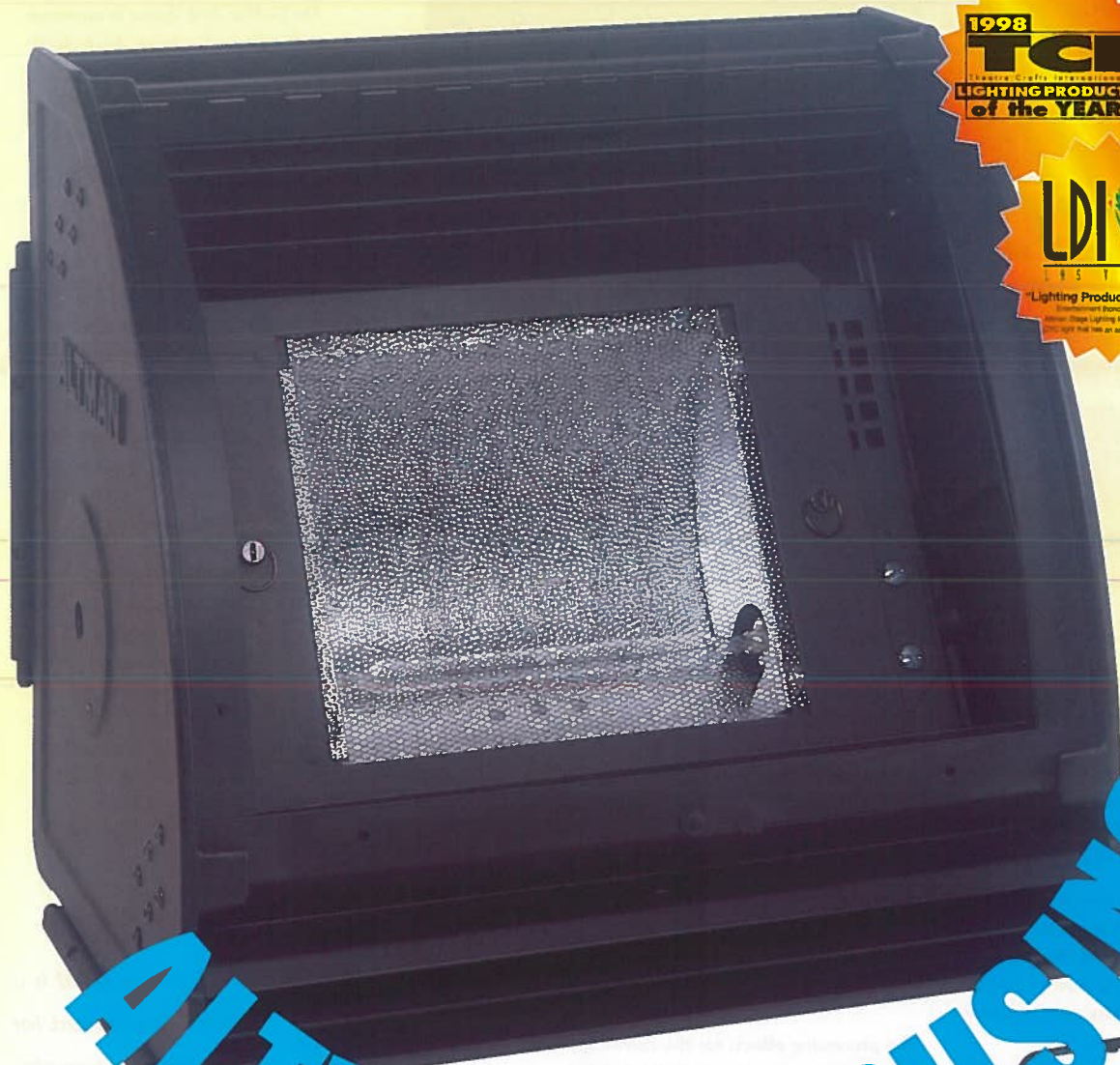
If this were not enough, there's the Opera House in Quay Street and the Opera Theatre at the Royal Northern College of Music, and there's a further 25 theatres in the Greater Manchester area alone.

The refurbishment of the Royal Exchange aside, possibly the most

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Manchester's Bridgewater Hall

prestigious new venue to be opened in Manchester in recent years is the Bridgewater Hall, home of a wide variety of mainly classical concerts. Costing a staggering £42m, the Bridgewater Hall is the home of the Hallé Orchestra, as well as the main performance base for the BBC Philharmonic and Manchester Camerata.

Driving past the Hall, it's impossible not to notice this musical citadel, dominating the Manchester skyline and certainly eclipsing the nearby G-Mex. Obviously, working to the same guidelines as UCI and Granada, information on the actual installation at Bridgewater is guarded by Lord Lucan, but you can find out most of what you need to know by reading the October 96 issue of L&SI.

However, in a venue of this nature there's one piece of equipment that is more important than all the others combined. The organ. It took a staggering 10 months for a team of craftsmen at Marcussen in Denmark to build this beast. Shipped to Manchester in November 1995, it took four months to reassemble, hardly surprising considering that the largest pipe weighs over 300 pounds! But that was just the start of the process . . . Once complete, Marcussen's experts began the lengthy and delicate process of balancing the wind pressures and voicing each rank of pipes. With 5,500 pipes ranging in size from two inches to 32 feet in length, with a frequency range of 35-17,000 Hz, it's hardly a surprise the organ took 18 weeks to voice.

My final example of the versatility of those cunning Mancs is a venue that also doubles up as a forum for training in sound manipulation and performance, has its own record label and a fully-fledged recording studio: the semi-legendary Band on the Wall (not to be mistaken with one of Mr McCartney's finest post-Beatles moments). The recording studio - named Twin Peaks - is a lesson in how to put a simple studio together. The core is a 32-channel Soundcraft DC2000, with three Tascam DA88s and a Tascam DA 30, JBL and PMC monitors and effects units from the nice people at Outboard, Behringer, Yamaha and Digitech.

Because the studio is so close to the venue's stage, and through a permanent tie-line system, it's possible to record a live performance direct to 24-track digital (the DA88) or 2-track digital (direct to DAT) - without interference from the front-of-house mix. So, the Band on the Wall manages to combine the two great Mancunian pastimes: going out and drinking, and producing some of the most introverted, paranoid, deeply touching music of the last decade or more. Alcohol and music: is there really anything else? 

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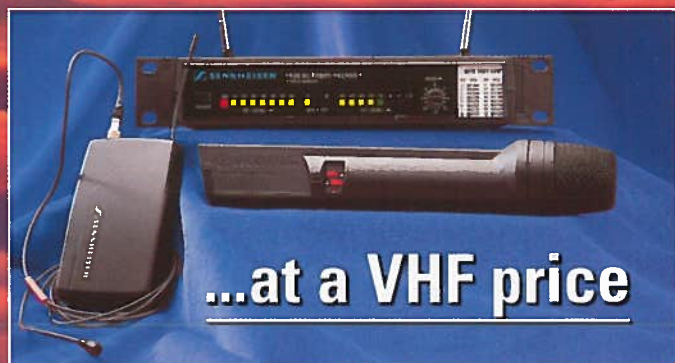
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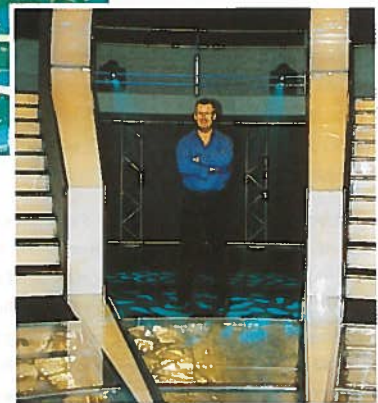
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hit the West End this summer. Moving into television design three years ago, Walmsley has made a similar impact, having designed for countless game shows and specials, including two Royal Variety Performances, and *Ice Warriors*, the most expensive set ever constructed for British television (see *L&SI*, September 1997).

The set for *Millionaire* has a slick, futuristic feel which sets it apart visually from other game shows. The arching scenic elements which radiate out from the central hub and then curve back to the middle, appearing to grip and hold the overhead circular truss like mechanical talons, are straight out of science fiction.



The unusual, but extremely effective, in-the-round set, designed by Andy Walmsley. Inset, lighting director Brian Pearce

Midas Touch

After many years as just a famous song and a daft question, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* is now also a phenomenally successful British television quiz show, which attracted enormous television audiences during its third series, screened in March. Lee Baldock goes backstage...

The undeniable attraction of the show stems from a number of elements: firstly of course, there's the money: *Millionaire* offers the largest cash prize of any game show anywhere in the world, and there is something compulsive about watching people win (and lose) life-altering amounts of cash. Secondly, less blatant than the highlighted strings of zeros, is the steadily increasing tension as the game progresses and the stakes get higher. The combination of the changing lighting states, the heart-monitor soundtrack and the often merciless provocation of poker-faced presenter Chris Tarrant, all adds up to an edge-of-the-seat experience for the television viewer.

Just about everything relating to this hugely successful show is very cleverly done, starting with the fact that contestants have to telephone their applications. This they do in their hundreds of thousands during each series, more than covering the cost of the prize money. And when the next series begins, they

need to telephone again. Why has nobody won the million yet? Mainly because it's far more difficult - in every sense - than it seems.

Even if you, the really brainy one who rattles off the answers without breaking a sweat, were lucky enough to get selected from among the hundreds of thousands of applicants, and were then lucky enough to reach the head-to-head with Tarrant, you'd still need to be made of steel to make it through all 15 questions. It's a far more nerve-racking experience than most would imagine - evidenced by the frequent and very apparent collapses of confidence of the 'I know this one, but I don't trust myself' type. That tension is what makes the show the success it is: it's not just about dishing out money, it's a crucial battle of wits and wills on a very cleverly-constructed, very intimate stage.



TV/FILM

SET

The set, which has now taken up permanent residence at Elstree Film Studios following its initial existence at Fountain Television's Wembley studios, accentuates this intimacy, its circular format emphasising the lonely, isolated island of tension at its centre. The design is by Andy Walmsley, a prolific production designer who created the set for the hit musical *Buddy* (at the age of 21!), *Blood Brothers* and more recently *Happy Days* (with Henry Winkler), and *Great Balls of Fire*, both of which musicals

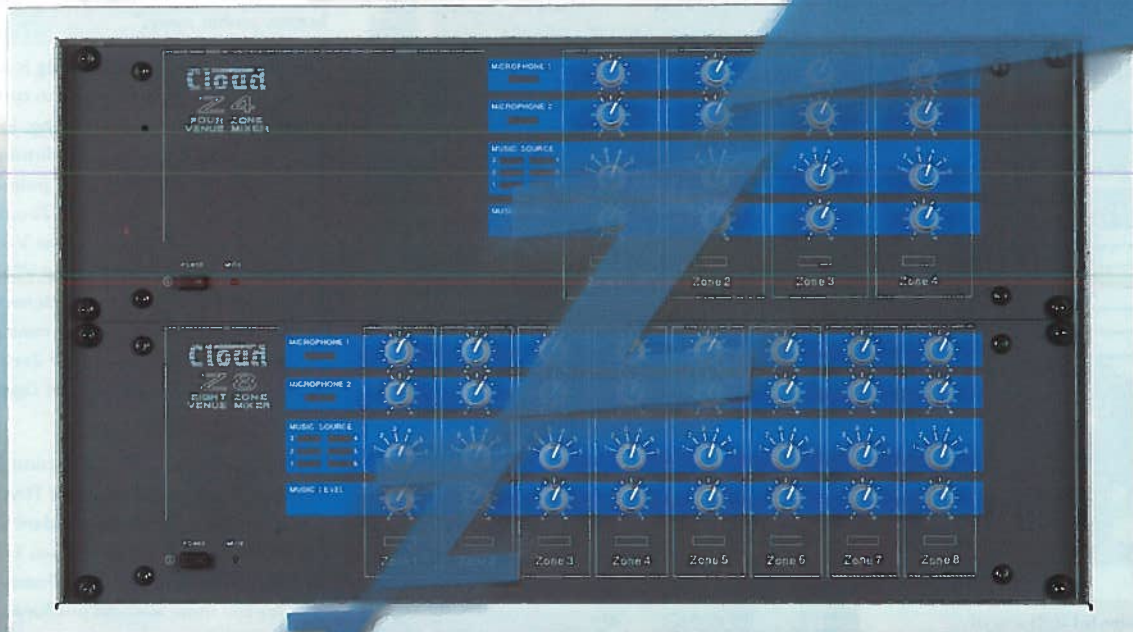
Andy Walmsley was first approached with a loose brief by producer Paul Smith, who wanted an intense, high-pressure environment for the show.

The contestants would be nervous anyway, being on television; they were playing for big money, which would make it even worse, and Smith wanted a set that would make it more nerve-racking still. Walmsley's first instinct was that it should be in-the-round, which happily mirrored Smith's thoughts. Walmsley recalls: "It's a brave move for a TV show to use an in-the-round format, because it makes it hard to hide all the technical paraphernalia. Most producers would have bottled it at that point."

But it's not a format without precedents, such as Granada's *Connections* game show of some years back, and Walmsley began the process of creating that high-pressure environment. Going back to the above description of the set, it would be more accurate to use the term 'science fictions', since Walmsley drew upon ideas from movies such as *Judge Dredd* (the courtroom scene might ring some bells), *Batman Forever* (look for the Riddler's lair), *Jurassic Park* (remember the dinosaur egg incubation units?) and *Mars Attacks*.



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Darker, darker and darker still: the changing lighting states as the game progresses through its three stages towards the magical £1,000,000. Note the increasingly darker blues from the VL6s positioned around the perimeter of the set at floor and balcony level.



A key feature of the set is its use of concentric circles, which reinforce that pressure and lend themselves perfectly to the changing lighting states. Everything is focusing attention onto the central zone, where the very nervous contestants must keep their composure in surroundings cleverly calculated to make them lose it.

Curiously, Walmsley finds the success of *Millionaire* both rewarding and frustrating in equal measure. Rewarding, because it has brought offers of work flooding in, and frustrating, because he has had by far the most attention for what he believes is one of his least special pieces of work. But for someone with a CV like Walmsley's - and there is no-one with a CV like Walmsley's - it's hardly surprising to find that he is a complete perfectionist. "Ice Warriors was a wonderful set," he recalls, "but no-one ever mentions it, because the show was a flop."

The other frustrating factor for Walmsley about being involved with such a phenomenally successful television production is, quite appropriately for this show, money. Walmsley explains: "In television, unlike theatre, you get nothing in the way of royalties. Actors and performers do, but not the designers and technical crew." It is consequently galling to see his work, and the success it has contributed to, copied the world over. But then I'm sure his success in designing for television will bring him rewards via many and varied routes.

LIGHTING

The lighting director is none other than Brian Pearce, who we last came across at the Eurovision Song Contest (see *L&S* June 1998). For this, the third series, all the lighting is controlled by Vari-Lite op Mark Ninnim from an Artisan (123 channels in all), which has successfully taken over conventional control duties from the previously-used Strand Galaxy desk. Ninnim has taken over the role from the original operator, Liz Berry, whom regular readers may remember has now taken up lighting design duties with Robbie Williams (see *L&S* March 1999). Techs are Ian Reith, an experienced operator in his own right, standing in for a spell on this show, and Daf Cook, both of whom, like Ninnim, have worked with Pearce on previous occasions.

Inside the lighting control room there are eight colour preview monitors (an unprecedented luxury, according to Pearce, and thanks to the Creative Technology OB unit, for which Pearce is full of praise) plus TX monitor, as well as the all-important computer monitor. This latter shows

the questions, answer options and prize money, as viewed by the television audience, along with status information as viewed by Tarrant on set, which includes colour-coded information on current prize, prize to be won if correct, the amount the prize will drop if they get it wrong, etc, all of which information helps Ninnim with the job of lining up the next cue. "If the show runs right through and a contestant gets every question right, the cues are in the desk in sequence, but obviously there are several things that could and do happen," says Ninnim. "What we tend to do is have the normal running show on the first playback, and on the second playback we take an educated guess. Sometimes you can get caught out - but the right cue is only three button pushes away."

The show's conventional lighting is supplied by Concert Lights (UK) Ltd, who in turn purchased much of the rig from AC Lighting, including the CEE Norm UK custom power distribution unit. The rig consists of DeSisti 5kW pole-operated fresnels, CCT 2.5kW Turbo Sil Zoom Profiles and CCT 2kW Starlette Fresnels. The Vari-Lite rig, meanwhile, consists of VL5s and VL6s direct from VLPS London, and is the only element of the set-up to de-rig between series. Dimming is from Avolites, along with three 5kW Zero 88 ID625 packs (also supplied to Concert Lights UK by AC) for the DeSisti 5ks.

The lighting itself has evolved considerably between the first pilot last year (there were two) and series three. It became evident very quickly after the first pilot that there was far more room for visual development. Brian Pearce recalls: "The idea for the show was first put forward two years ago, but the then programme controller didn't find it suitable for his particular programming. It wasn't until there was a change of programme controller, with David Liddiment, that it was given the go-ahead. On the first pilot we had this wonderful set from Andy Walmsley. We knew it was going to be intimate - the sort of *Mastermind* look, but no-one really had a visual idea of how that should be put across. By the time we came to the first pilot and hung the lamps, we began to realise there was a lot more to be got out of it. The dramatic emphasis particularly, it became obvious, could be honed in conjunction with the music and the lighting."

Incidentally, Pearce's comparison with *Mastermind* is apt: with viewing figures reaching 18.8 million during series three, *Millionaire* is expected to outstrip the previous quiz show record of 19.1 million (a 1977 edition of *Mastermind*) once video recordings are taken into consideration . . .

Producer Paul Smith, who has worked with Pearce many times in the past, knew they were both on the same track in terms of what could be achieved, and was willing to leave the next step to him: "He [Paul Smith] said, 'think about it for the next pilot - do whatever you want with it,'" Pearce recalls, "an open invitation, which was wonderful. There are very few producers who would actually give you that carte blanche."

At that early stage of the process, it was Liz Berry who worked with Pearce to develop the visual look through the first series. Since then, Pearce

and Ninnim have continued with the evolution of the lighting - a progression of subtle tweaks and additions - to the extent that there is a marked visual difference between the looks of the first and the third series. "The comments that come back from all the foreign television companies who have bought the concept are firstly that Andy Walmsley's set is brilliant - and secondly they're not touching the lighting and they're not touching the music - it's all so together."

A key feature is the sweeping blue beams from the VL6s around the upper perimeter of the set at balcony level, and out of shot at floor level, that close in on the podium, focusing attention in preparation for each question. Tightly barn-doored CCT profiles pick out the faces of Tarrant and contestant, catching every facial expression at the tensest of moments (Pearce is always keen to pay attention to correct facial lighting, rather than sacrifice it for the sake of flashy effects, and the sense of this is nowhere better apparent than here). The 10 contestants, seated five per side toward the rear of the set, are keyed with the individual CCT 2.5kW Turbo Sil Zoom Profiles. The 11 VL5s on the circular overhead truss are used as downlights on the central podium during the action and move to the audience during lights up. Pearce finds the Vari*Lites to be an extremely useful tool: "In the old days of light entertainment, you had to spend endless time focusing each week, just so that the Brian Rogers' Dancers could twirl under the downlight! Now Vari*Lites have come along and made that operation so much easier."

The level of smoke is also crucial to the mood. Of the more nail-biting moments of the head-to-head, Pearce says: "The tightly-doored CCT profile lamps add to that atmosphere. Sometimes when we get very lucky with the smoke in some of the wide shots, it looks wonderful - like 'we have ways of making you talk!'"

For the first five questions, which take the contestants relatively painlessly up to a guaranteed £1,000, the set is quite well-lit, with the audience still visible, the set elements internally lit, and light blue beams from the VL6s around the perimeter. The next five questions, where the majority of challenges come to an untimely end, take the contestant up to a guaranteed £32,000, but not without a certain degree of pain. In this section, the set lighting has dimmed, the VL6s emit a darker, more threatening blue, and Tarrant helps them along with comments like "Are you sure it's not B?".

For the final five questions, which could take the contestants to the giddy heights of £1,000,000 (nobody has ever correctly answered the third of these), the set is down to black, with the menacing music (written by Keith and Michael Strachan) more to the fore with its spooky chorals, the blues at their darkest yet, the pauses longer, the sound effects more urgent, and Tarrant in full poker-faced wind-up mode. This suspenseful drama is what Smith and Pearce knew was achievable after the first pilot show, and what now works so well.

Right: sound supervisor Chris Thorpe pays close attention during rehearsals.

Below, left-to-right: Daf Cook, Ian Reith and Mark Ninnim pictured in 'dimmer city'.

SOUND

Sound for Millionaire is provided by BBC Resources. Coming in as sound supervisor for this series is Chris Thorpe, who has managed to fit the role in with working on another game show, *If I Ruled The World*, for Hat Trick Productions. He is situated in the confines of the BBC Resources mobile behind Stage 9 at Elstree, next to Creative Technology's outside broadcast unit, where sound and vision is laid down for editing the next day, ready for transmission the following evening. Behind him sits grams operator Barry Mizen, who is responsible for providing the sound stings which run throughout the programme.

Here is another subtlety which is only subconsciously registered by the viewer: there are a total of 89 different sound effects, played throughout the stages of the show, which vary depending on whether a question is answered rightly or wrongly, how much is at stake, or whether the contestant takes the money, phones a friend, asks the audience, etc - as with the lighting, raising the tension as the stages progress. Mizen has to pay close attention to the course of the game to manually play back the correct effect and maintain the momentum. The stings are stored on three Akai DD1000s, called up and played back manually via two Preco Shortcut units, and mixed via a 12-channel Sony mixer.

Feeds from 17 Sennheiser RF systems come into the Calrec console where Thorpe keeps control. These are Sennheiser SK50 UHF systems, with a mixture of Sennheiser MKE2 and Sony ECM77 clip-on mics, the former for the seated



contestants and the latter for Tarrant and the lucky few who make it as far as the head-to-head. The MKE2s are used for the contestants when they are seated, in case they speak to Tarrant when they win the 'Fastest Finger First' round. However, before a contestant takes the hot seat, there is a cut during which the central podium is wheeled on to the stage, and the contestant's MKE2 is replaced with an ECM77. Thorpe explains: "The MKE2 is a softer-sounding



mic, while the ECMs give a harder sound, which is important during the head-to-head round."

Audience drop mics are a mixture of C460s from AKG and Quads, hung at intervals around the surprisingly small audience. "We're used to sets looking bigger on camera," says Thorpe, "but this one really does look very much bigger." Other equipment Thorpe has at his disposal includes four DPR402 compressor/limiters from BSS Audio and a unit which he is using for the first time and is particularly impressed with, a Focusrite Green 4 compressor/limiter.

Spare a thought for the crew: talking to Thorpe during rehearsals for the hour-long final programme of the series, his attention is constantly switching between me, the monitor, the autocue and the Calrec. The rehearsals give each of the 10 contestants a chance to sit in the hot seat, facing Tarrant, answering a few questions, and, to prepare them as thoroughly as possible, the lighting, music, sound effects and game plan are kept rigidly correct. Consequently, Thorpe, Mizen, Ninnim and the rest of the crew all suffer the curse of actually having to pay attention during rehearsals. "Usually you can relax a bit," says Thorpe, smiling, "but not on this show!"

One thing that comes across quite strongly from all involved is that this is a very happy production. Praise for the amenity of production company Celador was universal, and the crew as a whole seems a well-satisfied and relaxed team, which, when you consider the show's viewing figures, income and awards, isn't all that surprising.

Among those who have metaphorically sat up and taken note of the success of this team is none other than the BBC itself, which has commissioned Celador, Pearce, Walmsley and co to come up with the goods for the new-look National Lottery show, due to hit our screens in June of this year. While they won't be able to bring the same intense atmosphere to a set of coloured balls producing anonymous, unpressured millionaires, they will probably come up with something quite special.

"Among those who have metaphorically sat up and taken note of the success of this team, is none other than the BBC itself, which has commissioned Celador, Pearce, Walmsley and co to come up with the goods for the new-look National Lottery show"



John Watt

Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

Well I suppose it will have to be me who leaps to the defence of that ever-shrinking band of lighting directors still working for the BBC in London, who, like royalty, can't really defend themselves against unfair criticism. In a Guardian article, dated March 15th,

Barbara Windsor refers to the 'appalling lighting' on Eastenders. In my humble opinion it's far from that. There was a time a few years back when a new producer seemed to be influencing the pictures to the extent that your knowledge of the plot was based almost entirely on circumstantial evidence. Some theory along the lines of - in real life the room is lit by daylight from the window so to make it look real you must do the same.

ACTUALLY YOU DO that at your peril, but you

all know that. But now it looks pretty good I think, in spite of the near impossible schedules all soaps suffer. In fact, there are times when a patch of sunlight on the wall of one of those mean little houses is the most cheerful thing you will see in the whole episode. So come off it Ms Windsor, unless you want to add 'Carry on Moaning' to your credit list, you can be pretty damn sure there's a lighting man who spends

every waking hour trying to make you look the part and help the performance for which you will receive the bouquets. If the problem is those lines on the face then I'm reminded of my favourite bit of wisdom from the late Freddie Young. He had been requested to shoot a film with an actress a bit past her prime; when they viewed the rushes after a few days she remarked to Freddie that he hadn't made as good a job of the close ups as he had when they last worked together a few years back. Yes, sorry about that, said Freddie, but I have a problem, I'm three years older than when I last lit you!

I'VE JUST BEEN through one of those 'today's the day they find me out' jobs. I know this is a concept beyond the imaginings of Messrs Pearce, Gain, Sooty, Treays, etc, but in my case it's normal. One of my big failings is that I like to plan ahead and I can't believe, in spite of many examples to the contrary, that this is fundamentally flawed as a theory. But fail it does when the production team haven't the foggiest idea what they're going to do till they hit the studio and so find it, not surprisingly, difficult to describe to you. In this case the team were more used to working on film and appeared to assume that the entire stock of Lee Lighting was parked outside so they could dream up any situation and then retire while I tried to light it. Therein lies the bonus of course; being film-oriented, they expect the lighting to take a while, unlike current TV methods which are more of the Janet Street Porter school of lighting: just press the **** switch by the **** door!

ANYWAY, the only thing I knew ahead of time was that the entire piece was to be presented against a white 'bleach out'. Done that. It used to be very much in vogue and, in fact, Elstree and later Nottingham, were very geared up for producing that seamless look between floor and cyc. But even with the famous trenches for the

groundrow and special floor blenders (Hudspeth, Rooky inventions I suppose) and wall to wall dimmers it was, and is, never easy. Even with at least a 20ft no-man's-land into which Wayne Sleep ventured on pain of Jon Scoffield's tongue, the last five percent of burn out was down to racks and a bit of judicious over exposure. All I have to do is reproduce this effect in Capital's Studio B, one of my favourite venues, but a bit tight for this game. The dominoes are necessarily too close - no cove to hide the join - and if the presenter was 20ft from the cyc he would be in the car park. I suppose the bonus is that having surrounded the action with what is effectively a giant reflector, everything within it is illuminated and some additional back light and key will fool the uninitiated into thinking it's lit.

AS USUAL my life, if not reputation, was saved by the aforementioned 'bit' of over exposure administered by Fred and Steve who have seen it all before. I emerged almost unscathed from the demands of a small very wide prime lens (was it really 130 degrees?), with no remote iris of course, so no surreptitious tweaking as the shot develops. Then, just as the A1 beckoned, out jumped a promo. All we had to do was produce a reflection of the Channel Five logo on a black crash helmet. Think about it; the helmet is more or less a sphere and to get a reasonably undistorted reflection, the object to be reflected needs to be on the same light path as the camera! Suffice to say, we settled for a somewhat distorted image to one side, having crabbed this way and that in the forlorn hope that the laws of physics would change and get Watty out of a hole. Needless to say, near perfect reflections of nearly everything else in the studio were effortlessly achieved and many yards of 'black tat' were employed in a vain attempt to hide people and gear. One can only be thankful that all women between 20 and 40 now dress entirely in black. Like the Euphonium, it's an ill wind that nobody blows good!

LIKE MOST OF the rest of the populace, I watched 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' this time round, and again felt that Brian Pearce's lighting was the best use of moving lights I've ever seen (see feature this issue). More spectacular productions there have been, but as a compliment to the action, this is going to take some beating. It struck me that this 'phone a friend device' the show has invented could be usefully stolen by lighting designers. Picture the scene. You are lighting a show and the director asks you to produce a reflection of a Channel Five Logo in a crash helmet. You have 30 seconds and can ring a friend for the answer to the four choices! Who would you choose and why? Answers on a postcard . . .

"Picture the scene. You are lighting a show and the director asks you to produce a reflection of a Channel Five Logo in a crash helmet. You have 30 seconds and can ring a friend for the answer to the four choices! Who would you choose and why?"

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A Cut Above?

Steve Moles finds little has changed for Neil Diamond with his return to Wembley



CONCERT/
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Six sell-out shows at Wembley Arena, more than Robbie Williams a few weeks earlier, plus multiple sell-outs at most other arenas in the UK, and yet I worry about the Neil Diamond show. It is faultless, a perfect rendition of much of this man's output over the years: lighting sensitively realised; audio pitched to perfection; a band who've honed their skills to Gillette sharpness.

Diamond is without question a consummate professional: he holds around him a production team most of whom have accompanied him on his successful journey for a minimum of 15 years, one or two for twice that. He works daily at his craft when on tour, sound checking each afternoon. It's evident he loves to sing and loves to entertain 'his people'. I offer this as a simple example of his commitment. He comes on stage shortly after 8.00pm and doesn't leave again for at least two hours, usually longer. There are probably less than a handful of World-class performers who would so willingly subject themselves to such a lengthy ordeal without an intermission.

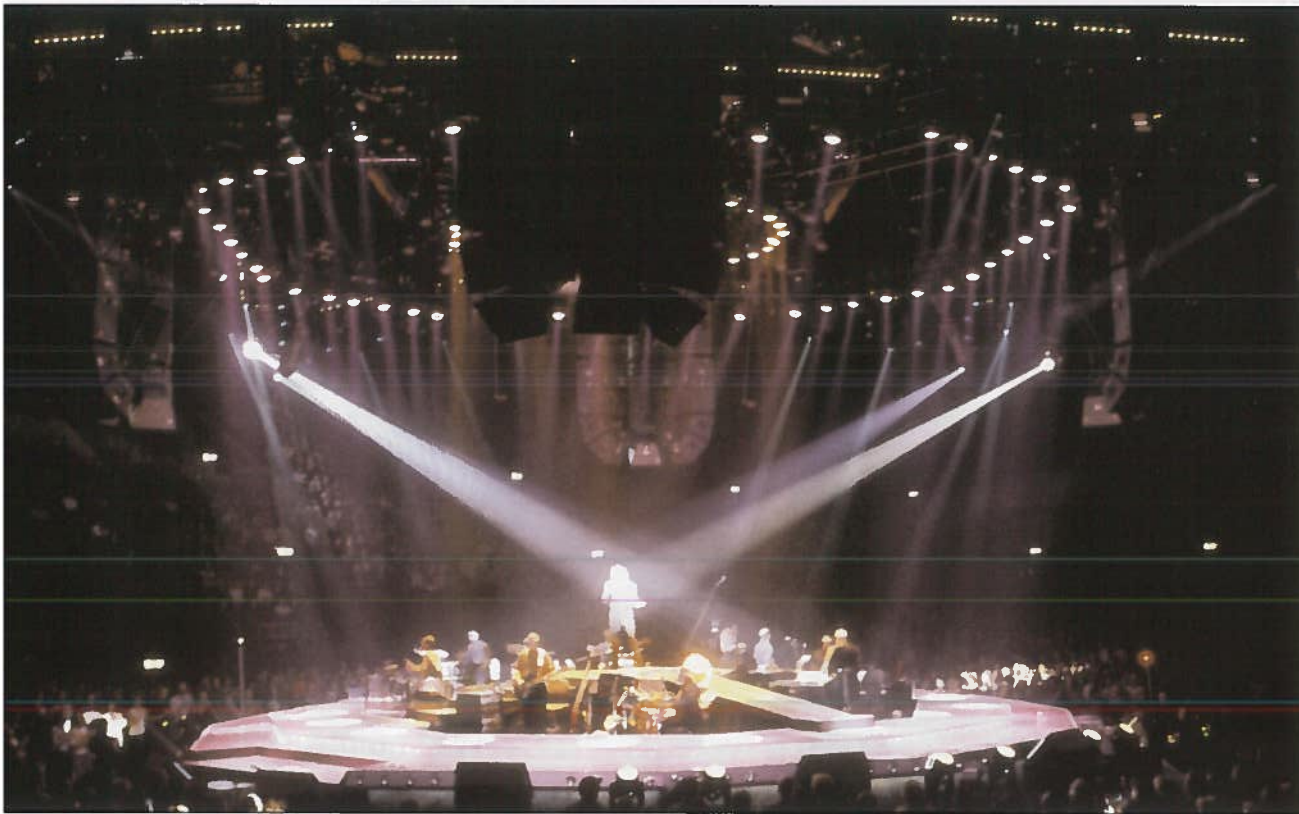
When I visited Wembley in early March I spent many contented hours in the company of Stanley Miller, Diamond's front-of-house sound engineer and sound designer. Miller is a man who exemplifies

the Diamond ethos; he is by the approbation of his peers, recognised as one of the pioneers of modern live music audio. He's not only been instrumental in defining the rule book of live mixing, he's also designed and built sound reinforcement systems that have indelibly marked the path of audio progression. He has worked for Diamond throughout his career, joining him when Diamond first cut his teeth on the US circuit, and has remained with him ever since.

Forewarned that this will happen, when Diamond arrives for sound-check at around 5.00pm, I'm gently ushered out of sight and earshot to catering. "We give Neil a CD of each night's show," explained Miller. "It's a straight feed taken from the stage. All 56 tracks are split three ways at the stage - one to me, one to Bernie [Becker, on monitors] and the third to a set of Sony PCM800s (Tascam D88s) for recording, which in turn goes to CD. He always listens to the show." ➤

Above, the view from the sound desk; inset, the man himself





"Even a classic movie like Casablanca only bears watching a few times, that's why Bogart made more, and different, movies. How often can Diamond serve the same meal for dinner, even if it is Chateau Briand?"

This is not an exercise in 'police the sound engineer'. "No, he's listening to the music. Thinking maybe about the arrangement. Perhaps he'll want to try a different song at a certain point in the set the next day when he comes in." The changes are made in isolation, none but the privileged are permitted to attend while Diamond hones his craft. But, in truth, these are tinkering. Essentially, this was the same show I reviewed for this magazine almost two years ago. Some of the songs he performs might not have been sung last time, but both Miller and Marilyn Lowey (his lighting designer, not quite due her Stanley Miller long-service medal yet) have over 50 songs programmed into their respective boards. So in the course of a tour like this, four weeks across the UK, if you attended every show there's a chance you'd hear them all.

Miller's systems man John Drane has the JBL Concert Series PA (Miller's own, with slight component modifications) arrayed in four clusters around the stage, each with a side fill speaker tucked in behind, pointing down on stage for monitors. Neat and tidy, Drane is able to ameliorate the worst of Wembley's foibles using the Crown IQ system, most particularly turning off the long throw parts of the system aimed right at the flat back wall of the arena. One of the nicer touches of the PA set-up is that the four clusters are always identical, even if that involves hanging cabinets that are quite obviously unnecessary: "It looks better," explained Drane, "and quite frankly it's easier to hang if it's all the same."

Front-of-house, things have changed radically since my last visit, particularly size and content. Where before, Miller had a bank of 16 Yamaha Pro Mixers (11 active, five spares) tucked away in a custom-built filing cabinet, and all MIDI'd up to a Yamaha PM3500, now he has just a pair of 02Rs. Well that's not entirely true, if you want to be picky there's also an 03D to handle all the intro and 'walk-out' music sources, but that's a luxury - he does have enough channels spare on the 02Rs. But you can't gainsay the logic behind separating this function, and at the cost of the board, why not? There are no off-board effects; look down into the racks and all you see is UPS's for everything, the computer

for the IQ, a digital time clock, and a bank of XTA 226s for cross-overs. "From the moment the signal arrives at the desk until it leaves the crossovers, it's all in the digital domain," explained Miller. "Although there might be tools out there, better gates say, or some fancy tube compressor, every time you take the signal out of the desk to a device, you're adding to the chain of connections. Doing it this way, the Yamahas give me everything I need, and by keeping the signal internal, we lower the noise floor significantly." And noiseless is the word, a critical factor when you consider the relative age of the system.

Lowey's lighting also appears, on superficial examination, to be little changed. But the truth is that when lighting an in-the-round performance, there are limits to what you can do with grid shape. It's what's on it that counts, and here she's made some changes. Obies are the contractor, and like last time there's still a strong presence of Coemar NAT 1200s and five NAT 2.5kW's which fulfil the important role they had last tour back in April '97. All linked to an Autopilot system, the five 2.5kW's, positioned strategically at the four points of the star-shaped grid, and one stage centre, track Diamond inexorably around the stage.

The significant change is the appearance of VL7s. For a hard-edge automated instrument on the last tour, Lowey selected NATs and a few Clay Paky HPEs. She said at the time: "I need colour crossfade - this show demands that sensitivity." Well now she has it. "We have all waited a long time for a crossfading colour fixture from Vari-Lite." But Lowey is otherwise well pleased. Like others she endured some changes, "... as any new fixture will experience." But finds ultimately the VL7 "has proved road-worthy. As we know, the fixture goes through green at some point while you are fading from one colour to another, but if you have a clever enough programmer you can worm your way around that." That programmer is Arnold Serame; naturally with all things Diamond, he's been with Lowey a long time.

Grid-shape aside, Lowey finds in-the-round challenging rather than limiting. "I feel there are tons of possibilities for a designer when you have a flat bare stage in-the-round. Firstly, your lighting becomes scenery. The beams, patterns

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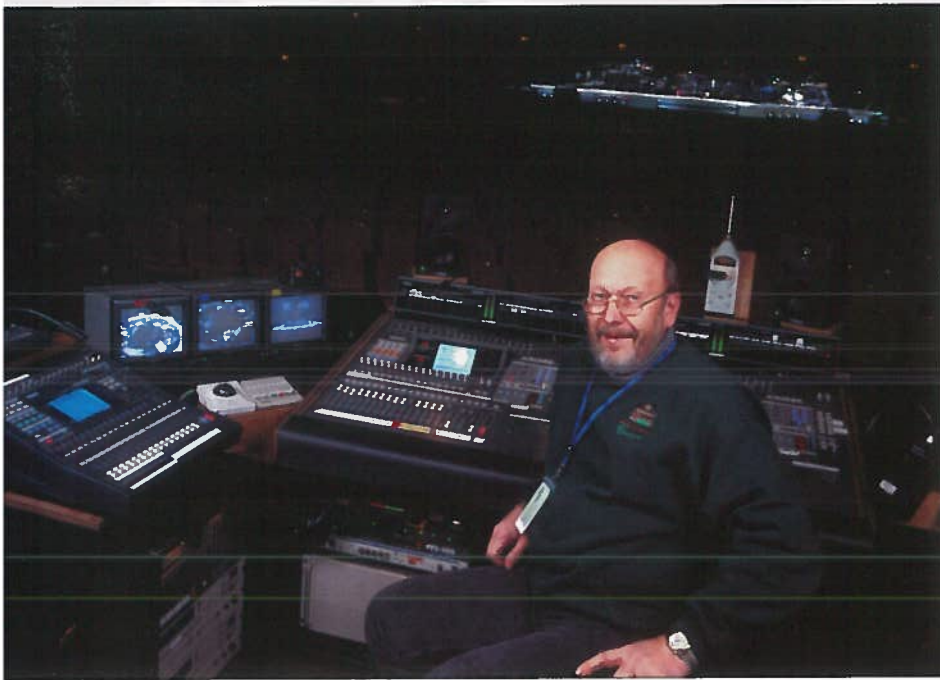
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Long-time FOH sound engineer and sound designer Stanley Miller with his Yamaha O2Rs and O3D

criticism of the lighting, more of the artist and how he chooses to present himself. I asked Lowey why, for example, they didn't bring in video screens like so many other arena acts. "We did once use screens for a Summer Shed tour of the US. Then when we re-designed the show in-the-round, the feeling was that many more people could have visual access to Neil so screens were not necessary. In addition there's the philosophical question. 'If we are going to a live show why is it necessary to cross the line by introducing another form of media into the mix?'. I feel that if the live show is large enough, and the artist is a real showman and has the ability to hold his audience's attention, there is no need for screens." And added, "this is my humble opinion, ultimately it's Neil's decision." A sound and well-reasoned argument, and you can't fault Lowey's delivery of a polished show.

However, for all the improvements to the Diamond show, I still experience nagging doubts. Lighting and sound-wise Miller and Lowey go to great lengths to introduce new technology that enhances their client while at the same time drawing on their talents in their respective fields. Yet essentially he, Diamond, is doing nothing new.

Cliff Richard by comparison, an artist held in similar esteem by his UK fans, has done three radically different tour presentations in the past three years. Even a classic movie like Casablanca only bears watching a few times, that's why Bogart made more, and different, movies. How often can Diamond serve the same meal for dinner, even if it is Chateau Briand?

and colours in the air are all one level of the visual impact and tell part of the visual story. Then you have the patterns on the stage. The choice of patterns which we know creates texture, creates moods."

The battery of VL5s (160 of them) are her most potent weapon, on what is a relatively small rotating stage. These provide the kind of muscular wash she needs for impact and indeed provide some charming animation to proceedings with rippling waves of colour change and motion cues that are just a delight to behold. "The pattern of the lights as they move becomes another element," continued Lowey, "Neil's music to me is always moving - slowly, subtly or rhythmically." To aid in creating the aspired-to textured patterns on the stage using the both hard- and soft-edge lamps, Lowey employs the simple device of a

camera, mounted directly above stage centre. "It gives a wide angle view that shows us the entire stage. This allows us to focus precisely in patterns: inner rings, outer rings, flare outs, centre riser fly outs. It gets very complex." And now warming to her theme, Lowey gives insight to the underlying ethos of the Lowey/Diamond approach to shows. "Then the audience becomes part of your scenery. You extend off the stage and break that wall between the artist and audience. Neil's relationship with them has always been critical. We have been using audience lights for 15 years. And then she adds the cautionary coda. "The designer must know when to stop that, and how much they can get away with, but it's part of being a good designer."

What surprised me most about the presentation was how similar it was to last time. That's not a

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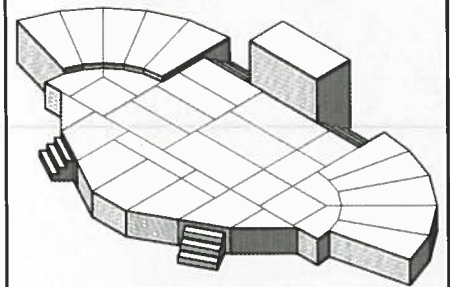
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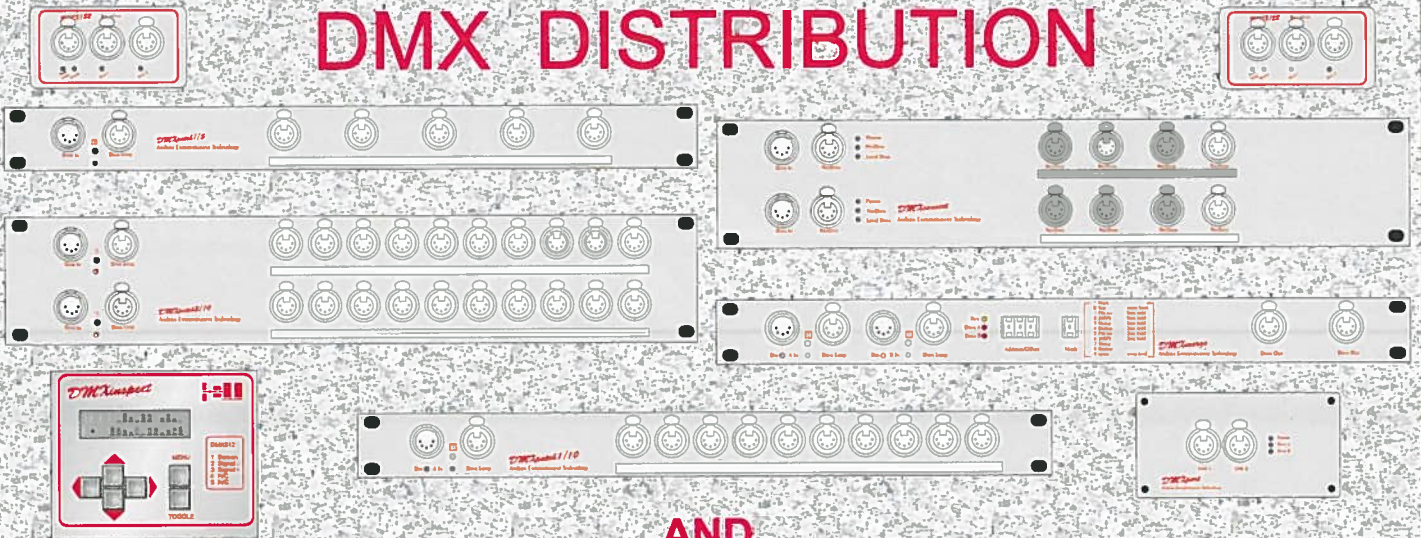
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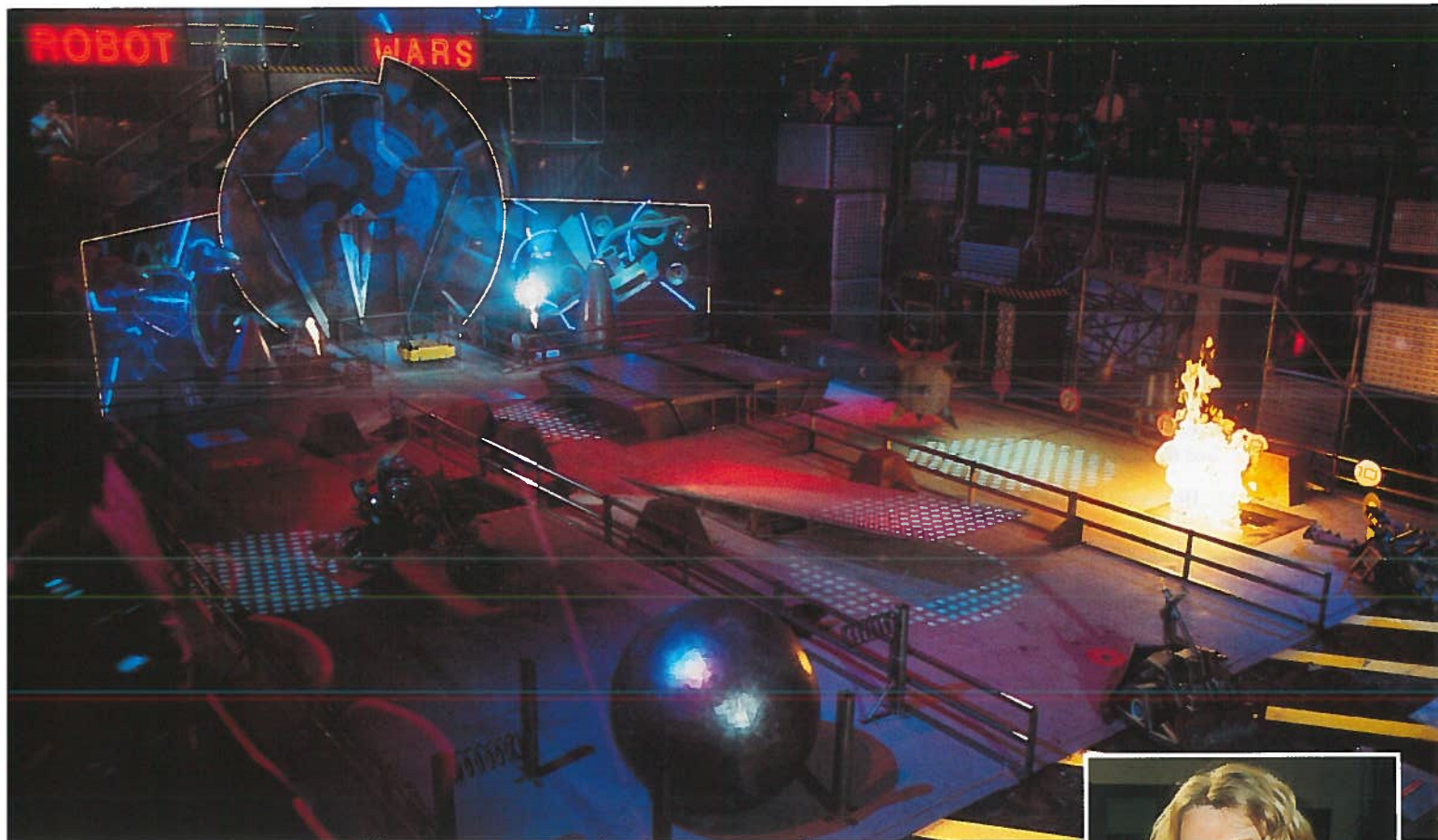
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Trading Places

Louise Stickland meets with Ronan Willson, founder of Elstree Light & Power and Millennium Studios



COMPANY PROFILE



Top, the set for Robot Wars, and inset, Ronan Willson

A thread of post-modern irony runs through the name 'Millennium Studios', with its pillared classical logo, located in Elstree, at the aorta of what was once dubbed 'British Hollywood'.

Something uniquely atmospheric about Elstree's creative past is attributable to its present state and its tough determination to preserve that pioneering spirit. Memories from the home of some great moments in British cinematic - and later televisual - history are streaked along the walls, corners and corridors of Millennium Studios. Outside in the real world, those nostalgic moments are hustling for identity, almost swallowed by all the trappings of latter day suburbia. Once the hub of a thriving British cinema industry, Elstree boasted six studios in its heyday. The first one was Neptune Studios, founded by Percy Nash and John East in 1914. Now there are just three - very scaled down, but signs of regeneration are doubtless there. Elstree Studios has recently re-opened, a shadow of its former self perhaps, but busily engaged in producing television shows.

Across the road, BBC Elstree is proactively producing top-rating dramas such as *Holby City*

and *Eastenders*, together with hardy perennials like *Top Of The Pops* and *Grange Hill*. Several major features have also been made in the South Hertfordshire area, including the late Stanley Kubrick's anticipatedly controversial aesthetic legacy, *Eyes Wide Shut*, the latest *Star Wars* prequel and Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*.

Ronan Willson founded Millennium Studios, together with its sister company Elstree Light and Power (ELP) in 1993. He has a great affinity to the area, speaking with fondness and affection for its chequered contributions to the great motion picture archive. He is particularly keen on the highly styled epoch of sixties and seventies television action series' - *The Avengers*, *The Persuaders*, *The Saint*, et al, which are currently enjoying cult status! Celluloid enthusiast Willson is keen to preserve as much of the creative past as he can in his own backyard.

The ELP/Millennium site covers two acres, containing two large warehouse buildings side-by-side, easy off road access and substantial yard, loading/unloading space. We start off sitting in the *Rocket & Roll 'em Bar and Grill*, the social hub of the Millennium Studios and ELP

complex. The *Rocket* has its own anarchic themeing, decked out with relics from the world of film and television. A fifties pastiche space rocket hangs from the ceiling. Bar stools are reconstituted from the remains of junked cameras left to rot in the old BBC Theatre before it morphed into the *Shepherds Bush Empire*. These were acquired when *Meteorlites* were called in to undertake a rock and roll lighting installation after the curtain fell on the last *Wogan Show*!

At the beginning of the nineties, Willson saw the writing on the wall for concert lighting of the type that had fuelled the growth and expansion of his company, *Meteorlites Productions*, since its inception in 1978. It didn't take a great deal of working out to see that the days of a medium-sized company surviving on touring work alone were numbered.

Throughout the eighties, *Meteorlites* rode high, enmeshed with the heavy metal/hard rock dinosaurs of the day, when a lighting rig of less than 1000 Par cans, several kilometres of trussing and serious attitude was for wimpy electro poppers and arty farties! Willson was LD

for AC/DC, and the company also handled metal monsters such as Iron Maiden, Saxon and Judas Priest when at their height. Meteorlites' other big acts of the day included Frankie Goes To Hollywood and, towards the end of the eighties, Paul Simon and Phil Collins.

Boom turned to bust and both The Gulf War and the advent of affordable, reliable and powerful moving mirror lights for purchase effectively ended the golden days of the rock and roll mega Par can rigs. Willson, astute to the impending changes in the market, closed Meteorlites' US operation in 1992 and with the capital generated, started the long re-equipping process leading to their successful transition into television and film lighting.

He is modest about his achievements with ELP and Millennium Studios. (He suspended trading 'Meteorlites' 18 months ago). The success has clearly grown out of foresight, plus the vision and desire to develop a synergy between several different, but related, companies operating in the same area of business. In addition to his own two companies, other spaces in the Millennium complex are rented out to Sapex Scripts, Oculus Ltd (post-production), Nicolaou solicitors who specialise in entertainment and media law and True North, concert and tour management services.

"We're definitely not the biggest television and film lighting company on the block, but I do believe that we are one of the most diverse," states Willson. That dynamic has in part come from their rock and roll heritage. The often irreverent and gung-ho attitudes of rock and

Meteorlites had initially embraced television work in the late eighties, just as the heavy metal boom that amplified their exponential growth earlier in the decade started to wane. "At that point, no-one took us very seriously," says Willson. "We were just a rock and roll lighting company dabbling in a bit of TV."

All that has changed. The ELP client list includes high profile series and events from the whole spectrum of television covering drama, light entertainment and sporting events. Examples include Silent Witness, Robot Wars, Pump It Up, Songs of Praise, Mastermind, Grange Hill, The Proms, the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales and Euro 96. They frequently work in Westminster Abbey and will be lighting and powering the interior of the church for Prince Edward's wedding this summer.

Willson, down to earth as ever, admits that the level of reinvestment has been scary at times. ELP has invested heavily in ARRI equipment, now stocking a full range of HMI and MSR light sources of every conceivable power option. Other stocks include battery lights, fluorescents, a plethora of traditional tungsten sources including the popular Optex Aurasoft and an impressive array of subtractive materials and lighting aids, including gauzes, scrims, reflectors, masks and textiles.

They have devised their own 'Black Rack' transport systems for the kit, evolved from the 'Meat Rack' concept and fully configurable to accommodate any types of lantern, stand or combination of gear. These are designed to be wheeled into a truck and parked, leaving a middle walkway for a walk-in stores scenario.

ELP's fleet of generator trucks are all silent enough to enable shooting within a few feet of them. They are built by Smiths of Great Bentley and have the capacity to carry lighting and cable, as well as the power, in a complete self-contained unit. There are currently six generator trucks, four others and a tractor trailer unit that's utilised for the Formula 1 studio among other events. Construction work currently in progress means one building will soon be dedicated entirely to lighting hire,

while the other will be offices and Millennium Studios-related companies and services.

Lighting stock also includes a substantial supply of dimmers and power distribution - all suitable for outdoor or indoor use and complying to the increasingly stringent rules and regulations. ELP have recently supplied some enormous dimming jobs, one of which was as a sub-contract to Lee

Lighting for the feature film *Sleepy Hollow*, being shot at nearby Leavesden. The first part of the project was shot at Shepperton and involved 14 Avolites dimming systems running just under three megawatts of 'space' lighting!

Rigging is another department that has recently undergone radical re-equipping. Shiny new steels and spansets adorn the highly organised pegs and a fully flightcased fleet of new Lodestar motors is available.

A newly completed mezzanine has increased the square footage in the ELP building by 6,000 to make a total of 24,000. Up there resides the only real evidence that this was once a thriving rock and roll company -

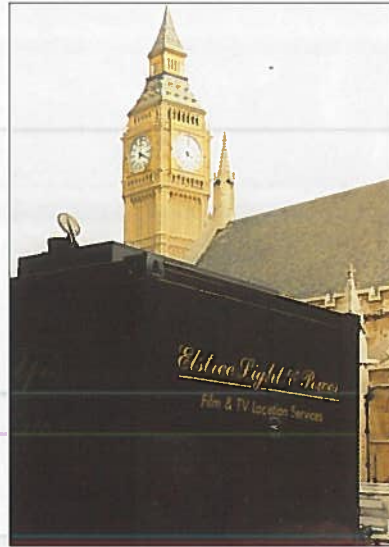
racks of Pars cans and trussing. ELP have stripped back their Par stocks to approximately 1,500 lanterns, many of which are still in pre-rigged trussing. They also have a comprehensive range of trussing including Telestage, Thomas A-Type and folding, and a selection of theatre lanterns including the latest ETC Source Fours.

Another differentiating aspect of ELP is the extensive stock of automated lights, which currently stands at over 100 High End Studio Color and Studio Spot luminaires. Back in the late eighties, Meteorlites were one of the first touring companies to invest in the new generation of professional moving mirror lights as they emerged from the clubs and into the professional market. Control-wise, they have been very loyal to WholeHog consoles, although a selection of other desks is always available for conventional lights.

A recent high-profile auction disposed of most of the antiques from the previous era including six-year-old Cyberlights that had given exceptionally good service. What's left will inevitably find its way into a dusty corner of The Rocket to gather gossip and anecdotes from the opening years of the twenty first century!

ELP aren't the only lighting company in this field, but they are the one that has made the transition most successfully and completely. Willson firmly believes that their flexibility, adaptability and relative compactness (25 full time staff) is a definite bonus. "The size of the company enables us to offer clients, production companies, designers, LDs, DPs or whoever, a very personal service, maximum attention to detail and above all an immediate response." They can pick up the phone and get through to who they need to without having to peel through a deluge of middle-management.

In 1997 ELP were approached by MACH1, the company responsible for ITV's broadcasting of the Grand Prix series. They needed a fully self-



roll, coupled with the determination and resourcefulness of the individuals involved brought a completely different set of production values to the entertainment business. It was a 'can-do' mentality which initially shook the more sedate, staid and hierarchical world of film and television. Then they began to sit up and realise that the ELPs of this world meant business.

contained, weather and noise-proofed mobile presentation studio from which commentary, pictures and sound could be mixed and beamed across the world. The studio had to occupy an absolute minimum of space . . . So the only way was up!

Willson conceived and designed a de-mountable studio cabin

that sits on top of a four leg self-climbing ground supported structure. He worked together with his colleagues David Wilson (cabin and interiors), Tim Williamson (CAD, 3D visualisation and design solutions) and design engineers Pete D'Lemos and Dirk Somer, and they produced and fabricated the studio under intense time-pressures. "It was a complete ball-breaker," comments Willson . . . but they did it!

The studio takes approximately 12 hours to construct including connecting up all necessary internal lighting and power, and the scanner van is then driven underneath, hooked in to the studio and takes feeds from the host country's cameras. The specification includes triple-glazed glass, angled windows to reduce glare, full air conditioning, carpeting, furnishings and a television lighting rig. It all packs into a 45 feet trailer, and is transported, complete with its own crane, to all European venues on the F1 circuit.

As well as off-beat engineering projects like the F1 Studio, ELP recently proved that they retain their ability and feel for challenging, large scale rock and roll-style events when they won the contract to light the 1999 Brit Awards. The Brits has been lit by rock and roll companies for the last few years, but a change in the production team triggered a decision to choose a company who could approach the show lighting from a distinctly televisual angle - and still build it in a rock and roll manner and timescale!

Lighting designer/director Mark Kenyon was instrumental in getting ELP the contract. This involved supplying 420 active moving light heads, miles of trussing and numerous trucks. Three separate lighting consoles and operators used 13 DMX lines to control lighting in different areas of the Docklands Arena. It was a huge success.

Millennium Studios running alongside ELP heightens the diversity and emphasises the additional facility over and above what could be offered from a straight lighting company. Willson points out that enquiries for studio and office space often end up as major lighting contracts.

The fully sound-proofed X Stage is 80ft x 44ft x 24ft high and includes a full scaffolding grid, optional U-shape cyc and adjacent workshop space. Other available facilities include additional warehouse space, drive-in loading doors and bays, production offices kitted out to clients' spec with telephone and computer systems, three AC edit suites, also equipped as required, a fully functional laundry and, of course, the catering.



Above, the recent Brit Awards (photo: Mike Lethby) where the lighting was handled by ELP. Across, the company's trucks outside Westminster Abbey for the televised funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, and The Formula 1 mobile studio designed and built by ELP

Last year, the production unit for the TV series Bugs took over the X Stage for six months. They used it as a unit base and to shoot all scenes from the central office set that ran throughout the series. It also gets booked for band rehearsals, production rehearsals and pop promos. Recent visitors include East 17, Radiohead, Iron Maiden and Jimmy Nail.

Both Millennium and ELP are very much Willson's companies. He sees his own forte as a technical designer and works closely with Tony Slee (with whom he has worked for 15 years) and John Singer on the hire desk. The production management of the various jobs is balanced between the three of them.

Tim Williamson looks after automated lighting, CAD design and technical planning and there are four further departments each taking care of rigging, theatre lanterns, film and television heads and power distribution including generators, transformers, etc. As much of the work is of short duration, providing the information is concise and accurate at the outset, pulling equipment is organised in a methodical, departmental way with the crew coming in on the load-out days to ensure all is as they wish. ELP also retain six full-time crew who work in the warehouse when they are not out on projects.

Willson preserves a very hands-on approach to his operation. He feels it is a mixed blessing: "It's what I've always done and it's the only way I know how to work," he says, also emphasising that this means there's only one way of doing things - his! His involvement allows him to be very conscious of keeping abreast of the minefield of ever-changing health and safety requirements and to ensure that the equipment is maintained to the highest standards.

The converse of this is that he feels it limits the scale of the company as a result. Not that he has a problem with that. He doesn't want to become encumbered with a monolithic management structure or to build a massive PLC. "It's a small, accessible team and we work hard," he comments. Against an industry backdrop that is again undergoing a cycle of corporate acquisition, Willson states: "We are one of the last small independents . . . And I'm very happy about that."

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Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

So, as I said to Kevin Spacey at the Oliviers, ain't theatre marvellous? No, honestly, there he was in a corner looking rather lost, presumably because everyone else there thought he was too grand to talk to, and he was absolutely charming, a real theatre person who modestly agreed with my rather cheeky suggestion that his best actor award should be shared with the rest of the *Iceman* cast.

agree that Paule Constable must have come very close to an Olivier for her *Amadeus* lighting, and as I leave another critic is bearing down: 'I just wanted to say how awful I thought your Forest sets were.' Someone's due for an Olivier round the kisser and by sheer good luck it isn't me.

Not that Hugh Vanstone's lighting Olivier, for his very precise work on *Blue Room* and *Unexpected Man*, wasn't thoroughly well deserved. He could equally have claimed his reward for his work of a very different scale on *Dr Dolittle*. The new post-Olivier year has already seen lots more good work in set and lighting design, not all from the usual suspects. Hartley TA Kemp has done his excellent, unobtrusive stuff at the Almeida before, but I've never been so aware of his special quality as in the last 20 minutes of Peter Gill's *Certain Young Men*. A very modest rig, with emphasis on low-lit sides, produced an amazing emotional intensity for the closing moments of a play which started bright and superficial and dug ever deeper into the relationships it so perfectly describes. Every cue counted as the focus of the lighting intensified, until you were left with the principals isolated in what was almost a band of pure light. Terrific, TA. (Incidentally, why TA? Is he in the voluntary army? Is there a Hartley TB Kemp who also lights? I stopped calling myself Ian MA Herbert when I realised, rather late in life, how easily that became I'm a Herbert.)

There's been some particularly interesting work at Hampstead and the Donmar, where short new writing seasons have prompted both theatres to go for an economy-seeking, off-white permanent set. The three variations on Tom Piper's Donmar set for *American Imports*, lit by the promising David Plater, were not as great as those for Julian McGowan's more versatile work at Hampstead, where the theatre was reconfigured to give an arc of seating round a corner stage. Jenny Kagan's lighting was more interesting than the action in the first two plays of a season which only really got going with Simon Block's *No Exp. Req'd*.

I wonder whether we're going to see a permanent set to match the permanent company Trevor Nunn and John Caird have assembled in the Olivier? What Rob Howell has put together for the opening show, *Troilus and Cressida*, is stunning: a red gravel orchestra with a walkway round it, backed by a set of doors opening on to a low cyclorama. The positioning of the doors is all the change of scenery necessary, because the celebrated Nunn choreography of crowds comes into its own to decorate the stage with whirling bodies, fighting or dancing; but the cyc is used to brilliant effect by Paul Pyant's bravura lighting plot. Gary Yershon's Hollywood music, blaring out over the PA, is slightly over the top, but it emphasises the epic nature of what Nunn is trying to achieve in this production - and achieve it he does.

A sadder story last week on the Lyttelton stage next door, where the Abbey made a brief visit with Conall Morrison's production of an old Irish favourite, *The Colleen Bawn*. Morrison did so well with last year's visiting *Tarry Flynn* that Cameron Mackintosh asked him and his choreographer, Dermot Bolger, to take on the latest revamp of *Martin Guerre*. Perhaps it's a good thing Mr Mackintosh didn't see the new production, or Messrs Morrison and Bolger might have missed out on a lucrative job. *The Colleen Bawn*, which can be moving for all its melodrama, is played - heavily overplayed, indeed - entirely for laughs, with an on-stage band providing near continuous accompaniment for what is obviously intended to be a parody of silent movies. It doesn't stop there - it does stop, however, pretty regularly for interpolated ensemble dancing of the worst mock-Oirish kind. The band and some of the singing actors were unpleasantly miked - surely a Lyttelton first - and the whole thing seemed like a dodgy regional try-out for a new *Riverdance*. Ugh. I won't point the finger at Ben Ormerod's lighting, which did its required job perfectly well, or at Francis O'Connor's sets, ditto. Well, I will, ever so slightly - why did Francis go for a packing-case surrounding frame and pop-up cottages out of the Conor McPherson school of Paddy drama, missing the chance for big realist sets? Revolving realism worked a treat for Dudley in the Olivier *Shaughraun*, after all.

Finally, a word of warm praise for Judith Greenwood's marvellously controlled plot for Declan Donnellan's latest, the cool but shattering rendering of *Le Cid* seen in Avignon last year and putting in a brief appearance at Riverside in February. Nick Ormerod's simple, dark hangings didn't make it easy, but she shone lanterns through them to great effect, and marked out acting areas that gave great clarity to a production which delighted in overlapping scenes. If this start is anything to go by, we're in for a year of fascinating lighting design.

'Elex had been putting a new gel into the moon to make it fresh for the occasion, and they forgot to untie the box in which it travels. I was up in the lighting box having kittens, trying to get them to cheat it back as invisibly as possible.'

It must have been the free champagne making me dangerously un-shy: next thing I find myself with Bill Dudley, who's clutching his best costumes award for *Amadeus*, and I'm being very rude about his sets for *The Forest*. With their Red Indian false pros they look, I tell him boldly, like something out of *Rose Marie*. Mr D defends his work stoutly - the house is modelled on Turgenev's dacha, apparently, and the pros designs come from contemporary Russian children's books. He also gives me the low-down on the awkward moment on the National Theatre first night when the show's shimmering moonlit lake was invaded by a big square shadow. 'Only on press night,' he sighed. 'Elex had been putting a

new gel into the moon to make it fresh for the occasion, and they forgot to untie the box in which it travels. I was up in the lighting box having kittens, trying to get them to cheat it back as invisibly as possible.' We

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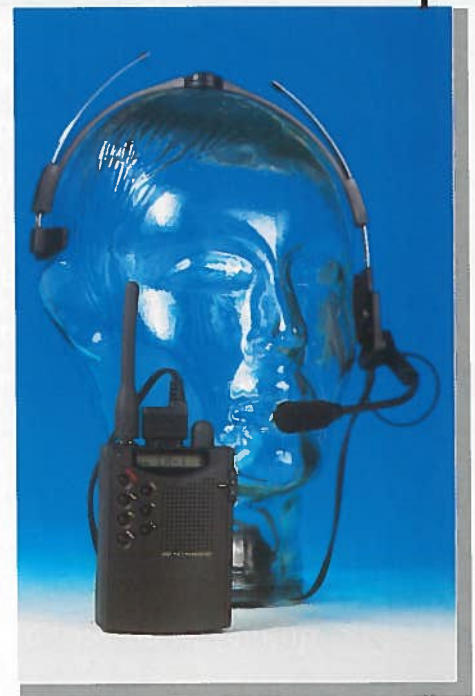
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Left, a 6 x 6 videowall dominates the party room, whilst from the ceiling hangs a one metre sphere of video screens. Inset, Tussaud's Phil Pike (left) with Jools Holland

"True to Pike's idea, everywhere you go is a fair facsimile of the real thing, and true to form the flippin' pop stars never seem to want to talk to you. I loved it."

modern music," said Pike. "He has that credibility. I asked him who he'd have as his ideal guests on Later, any star, dead or alive." So it is that we're entertained by, among others, Elvis, Dylan and Springsteen. These three are all animatronic figures, Springsteen built by Advanced Animatronics (AA) in Vermont, the other two by Tussaud's own facility in Acton. "I'd seen AA at an IAAPA show some years ago," said Pike. "They developed this Forced Feedback system for motion - it takes all the wobble out of the figures. The movements are much more natural." This was a test project Pike admitted, but obviously well satisfied he went on to inform me that plans are already well in train for opening a similar animated show in Las Vegas in late June this year.

The theatre seating is mounted on a revolve segmented into thirds. As such we're taken on through two other performance-style cameos beyond Later; the stage at Wembley Stadium with none other than Status Quo in action and a well-made trip through the history of pop music portrayed visually using five LCD projectors, while listening to Don MacLean's magnum opus American Pie. This latter was particularly well assembled in terms of content choice. Eight and a half minutes to cover 50 years of pop is no easy task - unfortunately some people were rather too busy checking that their mobile phones were working properly to notice. Then we dismount and walk through variously (in no particular order), a recording studio, a video shoot, then past the Beatles. "We have a long historical tie with the Beatles," Pike said, reminding us that it is Tussaud's figures that take centre stage on the Sgt Pepper's album sleeve. Thence down through the Magical Mystery tour bus, past a composite London street scene - Ronnie Scotts, Tin Pan Alley, Twiggy by her Mini, and much, much more, until eventually we come to the backstage party room.

Pike used a number of scenic contractors, principally MDM and Scott Fleary Schofield, for most of what's described above with Brilliant Stages enlisted for the final party room. Lighting saw Pike engage three designers, Paul Kell for the revolving theatre, David Hurst for the London streets, and Mike Odam for the party. There are more MR16s here than Wildebeest on the Serengeti, plus, where appropriate, Mad scans, Par 64s, lasers, and, for a touch of sixties psychedelia, Optikinetics oil wheel projectors. Video projection and audio is by Video Power and Aquarium Studios, and there were clearly Martin and RCF speakers dotted about, but most were well hidden. There was even a pair of CBA 54s (dummies of course) stacked behind a Tin Pan Alley store. I wonder if Roy Clair realises just how famous he is?

Perhaps the sexiest part of the trip is Fisher's design for the party room. Here the walls are clad in curved panels of polycarbonate, "We had our friends at Talbot Design make those for us," explained Kail. And several vertical pillars throughout the room have a Barley Twist cladding in the same material. All are opalescent and Odam has back-lit them in a variety of colours with the Twists lit from within using some very effective neon. A 6 x 6 videowall dominates the room, and from the ceiling hangs a one metre sphere of video screens. Mounted to a tracking device custom developed by Brilliant, the sphere moves from its hiding place above a stainless steel palm tree with articulated fronds, and out above the dance floor. The room itself is peopled by wax pop stars; as you groove to the music you can share a drink with Cher, or have a J with Jay Kay. True to Pike's idea, everywhere you go is a fair facsimile of the real thing, and true to form the flippin' pop stars never seem to want to talk to you. I loved it.



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applications, and the Eon1500, which brings the features of the Eon series to musicians and DJs who prefer external amps or powered mixers.

C Audio introduced the Pulse series of cool, lightweight amplifiers available in 4 x 300, 2 x 650 and 2 x 1100 models. Chevin Research have added the M Series of amplifiers, which so far includes the M600 Studio Standard (300Wpc into 4ohms) and the M2K (1000Wpc into 2ohms). More 'M' models are in the pipeline. Three new Interface Boxes are now available for the Spirit Digital 328 mixing console: an AES/EBU, an analogue and a mic/line interface, allowing additional inputs and/or outputs to be connected to the console via the TDF ports.



On the Court Acoustics stand was a new portable MI system, the Stagemaster 500, which has been designed by Stephen Court as a separate project to the Court Acoustics range, and which is consequently marketed under the AiR (Audio Industries Research) banner. The Stagemaster 500 uses separate dedicated bass bin and high bin, rather than a full-range enclosure, and claims an extended frequency response (35Hz - 18kHz) and studio quality sound reproduction. From the Court Acoustics product range, John Langley reports that the first Ramjet system has been sold to the company's Irish distributor SKS, based in Dublin.

Top to bottom, Allen & Heath's managing director Glenn Rogers with the WZ20S

Bill Webb of Martin Audio with the new Wavefront Theatre series

The AiR (Audio Industries Research) Stagemaster 500 on the Court Acoustics stand

The Mackie SRM450 reference monitor enclosure

Inset, Apogee's president Ken DeLoria (right) with the newly-appointed president of Apogee GmbH, Erwin Stange

TDController for use with all current Nexo loudspeakers. The NX241 features full 24-bit In and Out, and its generic nature eases the mixing and matching of different full-range and sub-bass Nexo cabs. Nexo also introduced the PS8 loudspeaker series, which scales down the concept behind the successful PS15 and PS10. A key feature is the install-friendly lightweight neodymium 12", 8" and HF drivers, which reduce magnetic leakage to levels compatible with close proximity to magnetic field-sensitive TV and video equipment - an advantage readily demonstrated on stand.

Logic System Pro Audio showed several new products, including the CM12, a compact full-range, passive, monitor-style enclosure loaded with a 12" cone transducer the low/mids and a coaxially-mounted 1" exit compression driver for the highs. The CM12 can be paired with the new LS115, a 600W 1 x 15" bass enclosure. Also new from Logic, the modular CS1000 concert series, which offers a full-range cabinet with a range of sub-bass options, each of which share a common shell for added flexibility.

California-based Apogee Sound are currently enjoying enormous success with their comprehensive range of sound reinforcement products, which can be found in no end of

A number of new products were on show from Stage Accompany: the ES40 is the latest addition to the Efficiency Series of power amps; the new XL-Bin is a bass cabinet loaded with two of SA's 15", boasting a power handling of 2000W whilst the N11 is the latest addition to the Newton system. Loudspeaker technology of a different kind was also on display - the SA8535 Ribbon Compact Driver. This is a mid-high frequency transducer which takes the compression driver back to the drawing board, screws it up and throws it away. The Ribbon design combines the voice coil and diaphragm elements of traditional driver design, into a lightweight, 'ribbon' driver, which according to SA easily out-performs all other mid/high driver designs by a country mile.

Martin Audio previewed the new Wavefront Theatre range of dedicated high-specification theatre enclosures. There are three models in the series - the WT3 is a switchable (bi/tri-amped) three-way system; the WT2 is a stand-alone, switchable active/passive two-way cabinet, and the WT15 is a full-range, vertical or horizontal orientation fill enclosure measuring just 28cm (11") in height. The creation of the WT Series is something of a natural progression for Wavefront: Autograph's Bobby Aitken has been using Wavefront systems for the touring productions of Grease, and has now specified them for Return to the Forbidden Planet.

Martin Professional's Mach brand had their new Installation Series of loudspeakers aimed at contractors dealing with short to mid-throw installations. The range includes three nearfield top boxes, four medium throw top boxes, three bandpass subwoofers, four in-fill speakers, and includes switchable crossovers between passive and active, and integrated flying accessories.

JBL showed the new SR-X series (which replaces the SR series) for use in portable live sound

Audient is a relatively new manufacturer, founded by the two 'D's of DDA, David Dearden and Gareth Davies. Receiving its worldwide launch at Frankfurt was their impressive ASP8024 High Resolution Analogue Recording Console - a full-feature in-line design with 80 inputs and full 24-bus routing. The control surface is designed to be intuitive and familiar, with back-lit system displays and custom-designed buttons.

Shure gave a demonstration of their PSM700 in-ear monitoring system with the help of Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson, he of the flute, mad rolling eyes and one-legged stance. The audience at Frankfurt's Sudbahnhof were all equipped with the wireless packs to listen to the demonstration on in-ears, and try out the flexibility of the MixMode feature which, via a potentiometer on the belt-pack unit, provides a high degree of user control over the personal mix. Anderson is a long-term proponent of in-ear monitoring, having used a home-made (and by his own admission, not very good) version as early as the mid-1980s.

Mackie's V2.0 software for the Digital 8-Bus (D8B) console made its European debut. This makes 'a massive upgrade' to the existing system and is available free to users. Mackie also announced a new partnership with George Massenburg of Massenburg Designworks, the inventor of the parametric EQ, for the development of new equalisation software for the D8B. The GML 2x2 high-resolution parametric EQ is a double sample rate software plug-in which will run on the new Universal Effects card for the D8B. Following their acquisition of RCF last year, Mackie have announced the launch of a new, highly-specified range of reference monitor enclosures. Top of the range is the SRM450, a two-way, bi-amped monitor, housing built-in FR series 300W and 150W amplifiers.

EAW's CEO Ken Berger made the announcement that Eastern Acoustic Works had acquired SIA Software Company Inc, the makers of Smart Pro software, version 3.0 of which was announced at the show. Berger said that the purchase was based solely upon a shared vision of future product development and evolution between the two companies. Version 3.0 will be the first release of the software not to be solely licensed to JBL, and a number of professional audio companies will support the system, which will continue to be marketed under the SIA name. Among them are Rane, BSS, Ashley, Level Control Systems (LCS), t.c. electronic and Klark Teknik.

New products on show from EAW included the KF700 Series three-way arrayable modules for touring and fixed installations, which include EAW's Acoustic Singularity and VA4 Technology. Also new, the KF400a, a three-way powered loudspeaker system.

Sennheiser had their EK 3053-U in-ear monitoring receiver at the show. Switchable between 16 UHF frequencies, the system offers the 'HiDyn stage' noise reduction system, as well as volume and focus mix functions for fast, intuitive control of the monitoring sound.

Among the new products shown by **AKG** was the C 4000 B recording microphone, billed as the only dual large-diaphragm transducer in the world. The design allows for three different selectable polar patterns, while the pricing of the mic makes it available for smaller studio applications.

Beyerdynamic, celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, introduced the M90, a large-diaphragm dynamic microphone utilising neodymium magnetic material and Mylar diaphragms, and designed specifically for high-SPL applications. Also new from beyerdynamic were four new microphones aimed at the growing project studio market. The MCE-90 series uses electret-condensers to emulate the the quality of condenser microphones at a lower price point. On the in-ear monitoring front, beyerdynamic introduced the SMS 600 UHF system, which includes a choice of pre-programmed dynamics to suit the user.

Audio Technica introduced the new UHF-7000 Series of microphones aimed at live performance, houses of worship, public address and aerobic instruction applications. The 7000 systems offer 700MHz operating frequency band and a choice of multi- PLL-synthesised channels. Body pack and hand-held

options are available. AT also introduced the FreeWay Series, a complete UHF wireless microphone system comprising lavalier, guitar, conventional hand-held and headworn mics, and the UHF-1900 Series, offering a choice of 13 frequencies, all of which operate simultaneously.

Following quickly on from the success of the Series FIVE console, **Soundcraft** unveiled the Series FOUR FOH console at Frankfurt. The fully-modular, VCA-



Top, EAW's Ken Berger announces the acquisition of SIA Software

Left, David Dearden and Gareth Davies of Audient with the ASP8024 analogue recording console

Below left, David Cooper of Midas with the new Heritage 3000 front-of-house/monitor mixing console



equipped console brings the stamp of the FIVE, but with a smaller footprint. Available in 24-, 32-, 40- and 48-channel frame sizes, with each size having an additional complement of four stereo inputs. The Series FOUR is ideal for theatre applications, as it allows the option of adding Showtime automation, with snapshot control of many functions, as well as Visual FX (which allows integrated snapshot storage of outboard FX settings) and Virtual Dynamics (providing a choice of compressors, gates, expanders and autopanners).

Midas were showing the new Heritage Series of mixers - the 1000, 2000 and 3000 models. The flagship

Heritage 3000 is a 30 bus console with an additional 27 x 8 output matrix. Other features include 10 automute sub-groups and 10 VCA sub-groups which include VCA sub-group muting. The 2000 is a 30-bus console with an additional 15 x 8 output matrix.

The familiar face of Nick McGeachin, ex of Numark, re-surfaced at Frankfurt with an exciting new product range under the **Electrix** banner. The effects displayed on a packed stand were the Filter Factory, an analogue filter offering tap-tempo, distortion and selectable waveforms; the Warp Factory, a fully-featured vocoder aimed at DJs, re-mixers, musicians, producers and engineers, and offering a flexible range of sounds, with features including Formant Freeze, which lets the user freeze and manipulate any particular sound; and the Mo-FX unit, which contains four effects modules.

Finally, **Production Services** showed a number of new loudspeaker cabinets including the LS2WGS subwoofer, developed in conjunction with Dutch distributor WG Theatertechnik. Forget all the technical guff - Production Services tell us: "This design actually made Wim of WG vomit when being tested." Could this be a whole new way of rating systems, e.g. this system induces slight discomfort, nausea, vomiting, internal bleeding, brain death, and so on?

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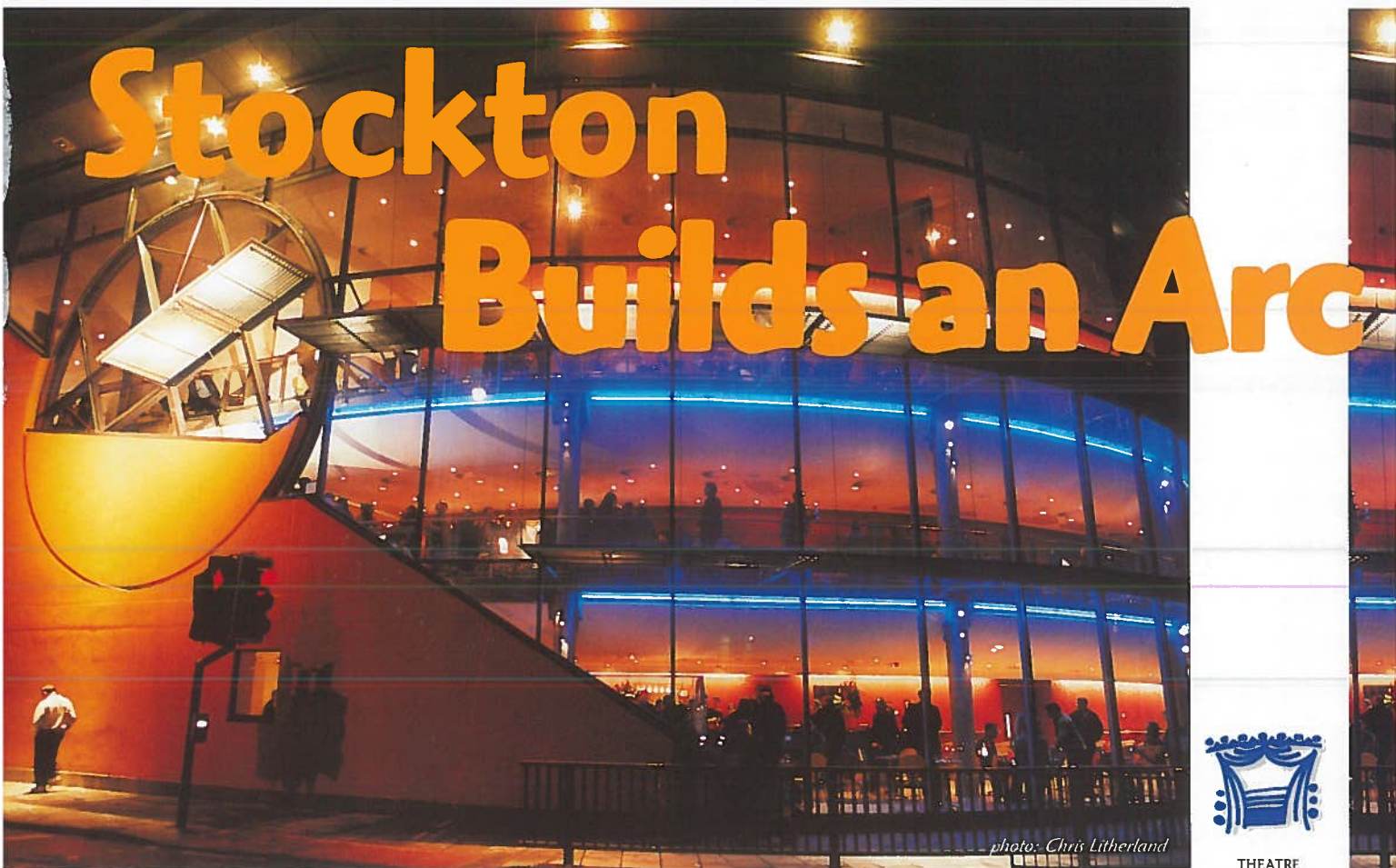


photo: Chris Litherland



THEATRE

It's quite something to approach Stockton over the North York Moors just after a blizzard. The evergreens carry white blazes of snow where the storm winds have driven it hard against their sides, and look more like a Chekhovian birch forest. After this, arriving in the town itself on a wet Friday afternoon can hardly escape being a disappointment. A few lost souls huddle in the modern Castlegate shopping centre, by the market place, but the only real sign of life is in the Garrick - not the Northern branch of the London club, but a lively pub which is already extracting pint-sized chunks from the local workers' pay packets at 5pm.

Just off the main market square, bright neon strips beckon you down a side street to a building whose curved façade is made up of huge sheets of glass, with a cut-out section of it performing lazy semicircles in the air. This is Arc, Teesside's new arts centre, a North-East flagship built with not far from £10million of Lottery money with some help from English partnerships and city challenge funds. Until now, Stockton has made its artistic mark in the wider world with the annual Riverside International Festival of street theatre, run from the Dovecot Arts Centre, which over more than 20 years has played host to some of the most interesting experimental groups in the world. When Stockton council knocked down the Cannon cinema next door to facilitate a road-widening scheme, they gave the remaining land to the Dovecot as their contribution in kind to the Lottery bid. This January, a few months later than intended, but in relatively quick time, the Dovecot's successor opened with a flourish, welcoming the Danish group Hotel Pro Forma to put on a stunning light show on the new building's eminently lightable exterior.

The plans of Arc show how cleverly architect Barry Pritchard, of Renton Howard Wood Levin's Arts Team, working to meet the needs of artistic director Frank Wilson, has squeezed several quarts of entertainment space into a pint pot of land. Arc is indeed a theatrical Tardis, containing (in an area which might otherwise house a medium-sized pub) a 275-seater courtyard theatre, a 100-seat studio theatre, a cabaret-cum-dancing space which will hold 300 sitting or 600 pogo-ing customers, and a 125-seater cinema. That's accommodation for nearly 1,000 paying punters, delivered at around £7,000 a seat. And it's not all - wait till you look round. To

make life easy for Arc's management, I have arrived in the middle of the busiest night of their year to date, demanding a royal tour. Unfazed, they comply. The theatre tonight is housing Gidon Kremer for a celebrity recital of Astor Piazzolla, quite a coup, while the top-floor studio has a visiting group, Newcastle's Fourth Wave, with a new play by Peter Mortimer. In the cabaret space, the Point, later in the evening, Marque Gilmour will be presenting two hours of drum'n'bass. I never did find out what film was showing in the cinema.

The Arc's inherited Dovecot audience is a young one and they have their marketing sights firmly set on the 18-35 age group. There's quite a student body around, with no local cinema nearer than the multiplex a few miles out and other entertainment restricted to a couple of nightclubs - the leader, Visage, on the market place, is the sharp edge of their competition, and the busiest time for Arc is from Thursday to Saturday, when the Point is in operation with various themed club nights.

My partner and I have decided to split up our evening's entertainment in order to check out two of Arc's spaces, she to Kremer and I to Fourth Wave, but first we crash the VIP do in the upstairs bar to talk to Frank Wilson. He's pleased as punch with his new baby - he's also keenly playing the client's favourite post-handover game, snagging. The major snag so far is a leakage of sound between the theatre and the Point. I'd have thought this was hardly surprising, given the level of sound that a club night is likely to generate, but apparently the channel between the spaces should be leakproof. (Subsequently it turned out that some of the services had bridged the acoustic separation joint between the halls, so that should be solved by now.)

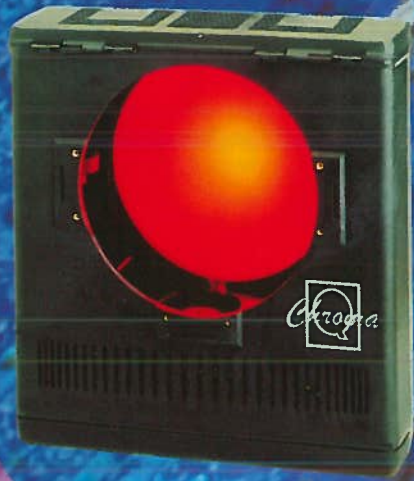
I've arranged to meet Saul Hopwood, Arc's technical director, after the show. Going back downstairs to start in the basement I'm struck by the similarities between Arc and Sadler's Wells,

Ian Herbert visits the new Arc in Stockton that is pitching for more than just a theatre audience



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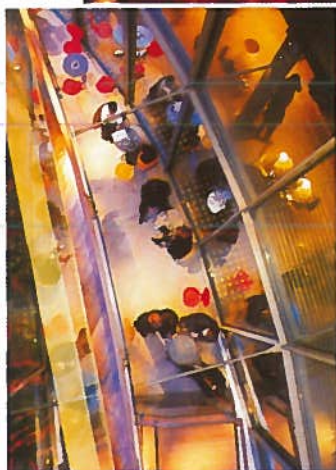
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another RHWL job, but with a rather different budget. The idea behind Arc's public spaces is similar to that of Sadler's Wells: lots of glass, strong emphasis on the staircase and so on. But Barry Pritchard has had more luck in Stockton than Nick Thompson and Ian Albery had in Islington - luck and the aid of construction contractors Laing Northern, who worked with RHWL on the Bridgewater Concert Hall in Manchester. Personally, I think the glasshouse public areas may present a subtle social problem for a centre that wants to attract the young. Whereas the blind frontage of Visage gives the outside world no idea of what debauchery may be going on inside, you can see Arc's customers very clearly in its foyers, drinking, snogging and engaging in standard youthful pursuits which they may not wish to be seen pursuing. 'Saw your Darren up Arc Friday night - bit young for Bacardi Breezers, isn't he? And what was he doing with that Sharon? It didn't look like homework.'



You're not observed in the basement, where I leave my coat. Macs and minks may belong to any of the users of Arc, perhaps to the members of the Health Club which I find in full swing down here. That will test the air-conditioning. What a brilliant idea! Get usage for your building all day, sell healthy stuff to your fitness freaks, and maybe get them interested in staying on for a show.

The other end of a corridor contains the dance studio, currently in use as the men's section of the health club, as well as (rather unnervingly) two glass-doored saunas - not, fortunately, in use. On the next floor, the first, is the theatre circle entrance and the Point's main access. On the floor above is access to the theatre gallery and the Point's circle. The Point looks very steep, but on club nights the circle is hardly used anyway, unless it's for what shouldn't be seen in the glass-walled bars.

On the top floor is the theatre studio, where Fourth Wave are setting up. Best not disturb. Presumably the cast are using the other room on the floor, the rehearsal room, as their dressing room, since the official dressing rooms, available for performers in all the spaces, are in the basement. Or maybe they come up in the ample goods lift.

Slightly muffled announcements begin for the two shows, which start at the same time. I grab my studio ticket from the Box Office, which like box offices all over the world doesn't seem to know who I am, and take the public lift up to the studio. The bleachers are comfortable, quite steep, almost reaching the ceiling at the back where the SM has set up her boards, with the



theatre's GSX handling the lighting. I'm joined by a couple of dozen theatre-goers - as far as I can tell, no one from the Kremer audience has got in by accident. *The Nightwatchman* is a wild and wacky play - imagine

Tom Stoppard writing a couple of episodes of *The Goon Show*. I'm a little surprised that the grid, festooned with lanterns (Strand Quartets) and covering most of the studio ceiling, is hardly used. The studio has 24 patchable circuits, but Fourth Wave's LD, uncredited in the programme, has chosen half a dozen floods near the back of the hall as the medium of expression.

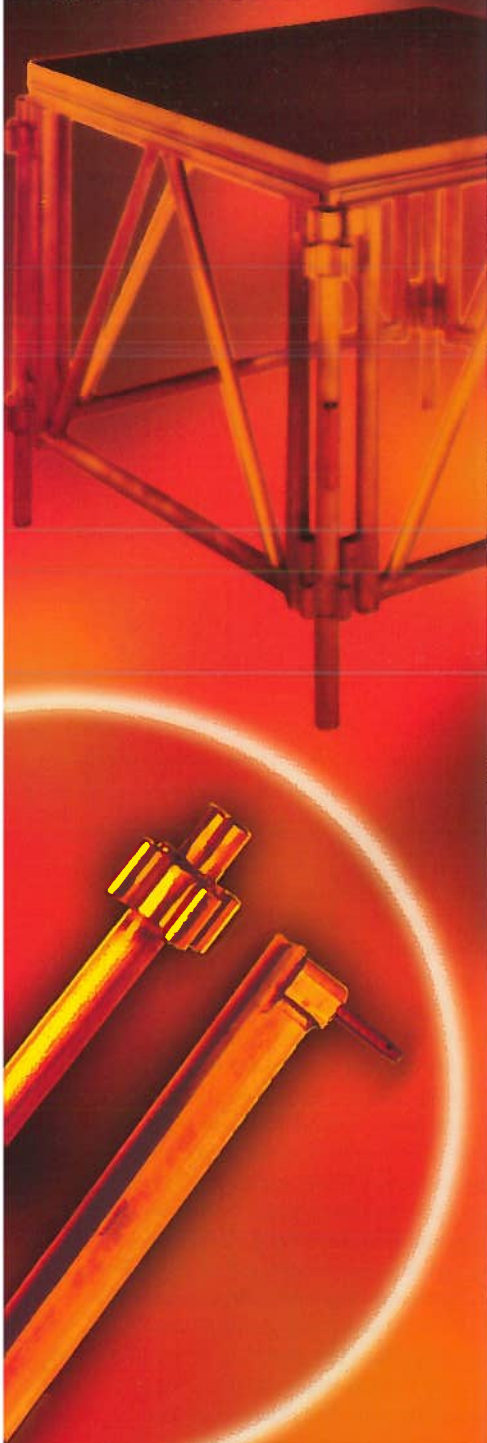
The interval fortunately coincides with Kremer's and I check out the theatre set-up with my partner. It's not just a recital, it turns out: a dancer appears and makes good use of the flat, sprung stage. One odd feature - there are no drapes, and the main feature of the spare setting is the full-height loading door centre-stage. The theatre has something of the look of the Cottesloe, but without the possibility of all-round balconies; the two upper levels have U-shaped seating arrangements, single rows along the walls ending at the front of the stage area. Tonight, the steep bleachers are fully in place for the normal end-stage setting.

After the show (two hours is a shade long for an extended episode of *The Goons*, but we have all had fun, especially when allowed to blow bubbles at the cast) there's time for a chat with Fourth Wave's, Lesley Hann and Sue Reid, who have brought their show on a North-East tour with much the same budget as a London Fringe show, i.e. less than nothing. Despite this, they have a clever touring set (built of cartridge cases - £1.50 each) and a cast of eight. Sue explains that the reduced rate lighting is restricted to what will work in Bishop Auckland, where they enjoyed a full house a couple of nights earlier.

Above, the main auditorium; inset, the Arc's public spaces - similar to that of Sadler's Wells - with lots of glass, strong emphasis on the staircase and so on. Overleaf, the rig for the opening show in *The Point*

Saul Hopwood has now finished a busy evening and has time to give me the techie tour. We start at the basement again. Saul's recently joined Arc from Pitlochry, so didn't have a hand in the choice of the kit. This was put in by Northern Light, with Jon Linstrum acting as consultant. Of course, there are things he would do differently, but all in all, the set-up is fine for what is basically a receiving house for small tours and groups. In common with most halls on the circuit, the theatre has no real flying space, and in spite of original plans for multi-purpose configuration it's firmly geared towards end-stage shows. Yes, the bleachers will retract, but the main lighting bars work best for the stage area, which has all the extra battens above it that you might expect. Cost-cutting means that there is only one bridge for hanging and focusing in the theatre, where tallscopes still rule. Saul explains that the absence of drapes for Kremer was at the request of the acousticians, whose prescription for good concert sound is a bare stage. In time, no doubt, they'll risk some drapes and see what happens.

There are bridges in the Point at least, one with a Juliat followspot on it. There's also a battery of Par 64s with Chroma-Q colour scrollers, together with 10 CCT Freedom Profiles. It's a versatile space that has potential for more than mere club nights. In fact, the first stage show in Arc was mounted on the Point's corner stage - no wing space, but a good acting area. The theatre's bigger Strand 520 board, used for that show, has never quite made it back to the theatre, and it runs the fairly rugged set of Par cans and scrollers that enliven Point club nights. The din in the Point is incredible, even at the beginning of the drum'n'bass DJ's set. The good old sixties patterns on the dance floor are actually coming through a projector, having been produced in Arc's Mac-rich



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digital studio. (Arc has great digital ambitions: anyone who wants can come in to the studio and try their hand at sound sampling or image-making).

Over to the theatre's gallery for a look at the control room, set conventionally at its rear and reinforcing the idea that the space will not stray often from end-stage format. In fact, you can

only see the official stage area from there and would have to move the board for a full-floor staging. There is a lightbar just in front of the control room which you can almost reach from the gallery seating, but Saul reckons it's a mite dangerous to try and tends to make more use of the more easily accessible bar on the front of the circle. The other board, an LBX, is here for the moment, but since the theatre has 184 circuits and the Point 88, it won't be long before they're swapped back. The lanterns here, a mixture of 68 575W lanterns, principally from the CCT Freedom range.

The theatre has a Soundcraft Spirit Live 4 16/4/2 desk, feeding Tannoy i12 full range speakers, while the more powerful 5K Point rig uses a 32/4/2 desk and a 24/8 monitor, feeding Logic Systems speakers. Outboard equipment in the theatre embraces Sony, Tascam, Denon, Yamaha and Behringer kit, with a posse of Shure, AKG, Audio Technica and Sennheiser mics available. In the Point, it's a similar story with Soundcraft Spirit FOH and Monitor desks feeding 10 Logic Systems speakers powered by Yamaha amplification. Outboard kit is again provided by Denon, Behringer and Alesis, with EMO mic splitters and AKG, Shure, Beyer and Audio Technica mics are available.

In the Studio, a Yamaha MX200 12/4 mixer feeds a pair of Yamaha YS315E loudspeakers suspended

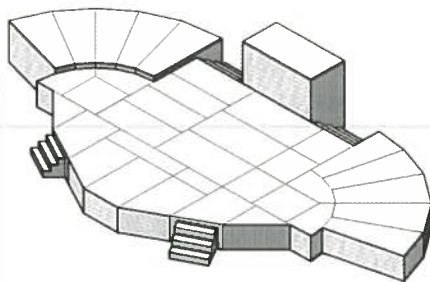


from the grid, whilst a Denon CD player and Sennheiser dual channel audio transmission system complete the line-up. Saul, too, was still busy snagging - a vivid demonstration that all was not completely finished came in one of the corridors, where a good stream of the ever-present Stockton rain was coming through the suspended ceiling.

But he was also enjoying the multi-function demands of Arc after the season-based repertory of Pitlochry. In the two months since the building opened, he has trained a back-up team of local technicians virtually from scratch. Arc techies have to be able to turn their hand to any task from board operation to get-in, although of course there are specialist skills - Saul's training is lighting-based, while his assistant is a sound man. The touring nature of Arc's business is emphasised by the fact no workshops or storage facility could be crammed into its small footprint.

It was nearly midnight when we left and as we headed off into the wet night, we saw many young Stocktonians fighting to get in to Visage down the road, and at some unearthly hour of the night we heard even more of them fighting to get out, or maybe just fighting. All very good-natured pre-mating rituals, I'm sure, but an indication that Arc won't have it all its own way in winning the town's entertainment market.

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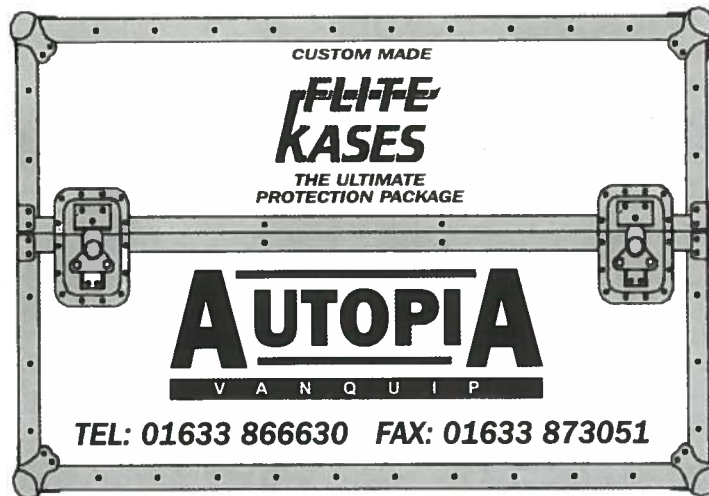
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In Profile...

L&S Talks to the Industry Trend-setters

Told in his early teens that he would never make it in the theatre, David Tinson now runs the sound department at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Strangely, it was the advent of the cassette recorder that proved the first step in Tinson's realisation that he wanted to be involved in the sound industry. "I used to record sounds on the tape recorder - heartbeats, flushing toilets, anything. It seemed such fun."

Born in Sheffield in 1962, Tinson spent his school years signing up for everything with a technical and theatrical leaning. By the time he got to his A-levels, he was assisting in productions at the Derby Playhouse. "So much was happening in the Midlands. I'd already learnt a little about electronics and when I met Chris

Parry, the chief electrician at the Playhouse, that was it!"

Rock gigs were next on the agenda. And with the new Derby Assembly Rooms opening in 1979, Tinson got to work on

the sound rigging for a number of rock bands and worked for everyone from AC/DC to Genesis. "It was great because I got to know a huge variety of equipment, how to plug it up, run cables and in so doing became very familiar with a wide range of kit." But working with famous names was not enough to keep Tinson in Derby. In 1980 he turned towards London and enrolled on one of the few recognised courses around at the time - the City & Guilds sound course in Paddington Green. Whilst on the course he was introduced to Theatre Projects and began working in its sound hire department. "I was involved with the company in its early days and we had great fun. We even supplied equipment for the Pink Floyd video *The Wall*."

Before making the move North to Birmingham, Tinson did an 18-month teaching stint at Burton Technical College in Staffordshire. "I still had the time to do freelance jobs, which is the beauty of teaching." Today, he manages to teach in his



spare time at Eton's school theatre which is a replica of Birmingham Rep, but on a smaller scale.

With almost 20 years' experience in the business, Tinson has spent the past 11 of these at Birmingham Rep. "I worked for five years under the artistic director John

Adams and for the past six I've been working with ex-RSC director, Bill Alexander. When I came to Birmingham I was employed as a sound assistant; today, although the theatre has evolved considerably, I still design, engineer and operate the sound for most of the productions." Asked to pinpoint any highlights of those early years, Tinson immediately recalls the production *The Woman in Black*. "We put on the only repertory production prior to its move to London. What made it unique at the time was the number of sound effects used. Those were the days when all sound was recorded and played back on tape. It was pre-digital so the whole show ran on a quadraphonic sound track with hundreds of spot tape effects."

Adams was to prove a major influence in Tinson's career. "He was very aware of the contribution that music and sound play in theatre. We had two large equipment buying sessions to build up the credibility of the theatre's sound system."

In 1993 Bill Alexander became the Rep's new artistic director. "Bill's shows are great because he reveres the use of music and sound. Under him I have been fortunate enough to work side by side with some superb composers. *The Snowman* was particularly memorable.

"Working with Howard Blake could have been extremely difficult and although the score was classical, I compensated for the fact that it was a big theatre and treated it as if it was a rock and roll band. It was a loud, bright and powerful

sound, which was a great success. I have worked on three productions of *The Snowman* since.

"Bill always has a vision of what should be done with sound and his scheme has finally come to fruition because the Rep is hoping to receive capital development funding of £7 million." This means that they can now replenish and renew the equipment. With a £500,000 budget, Tinson is working with Theatre Projects Consultancy to plan the theatre's sound refurbishment. "This means a total change in what we do. There will be a complete refit including a new mixing desk, which is motorised with on-board software and digital event management.

"The concept of sound has been essential to a number of directors with whom I have worked. In the production of *The Alchemist*, which went to the Royal National Theatre, we had to recreate the sound exactly as it had been in the Rep." Tinson also produced the sound for Terry Hands' celebrated production of *The Importance of Being Ernest*. As with so many of his designs, Terry Hands wanted a faithful reproduction of the original sound, not only in Canada, but also at the Old Vic.

So why, given the reputation Tinson has built over the past 20 years, has he remained so loyal to the Rep? "The thing that I've learnt about theatre and live event sound is that when you're young you work in one theatre for a year and then you move on to another. But the truth is that whether theatres are large or small, touring or permanent, the problems are largely the same. I've made a conscious decision to stay here and see my plans for the theatre come to fruition." Of course, amidst Tinson's frantic schedule he neglects to mention that he also finds the time to design sound for the Redgraves' Moving Theatre Company. And what of the future? "I plan to stay here until my seven-year-old daughter Emma is older and hope, in the future, to put my years of experience into consultancy." ■

Lighting & Sound INTERVIEW

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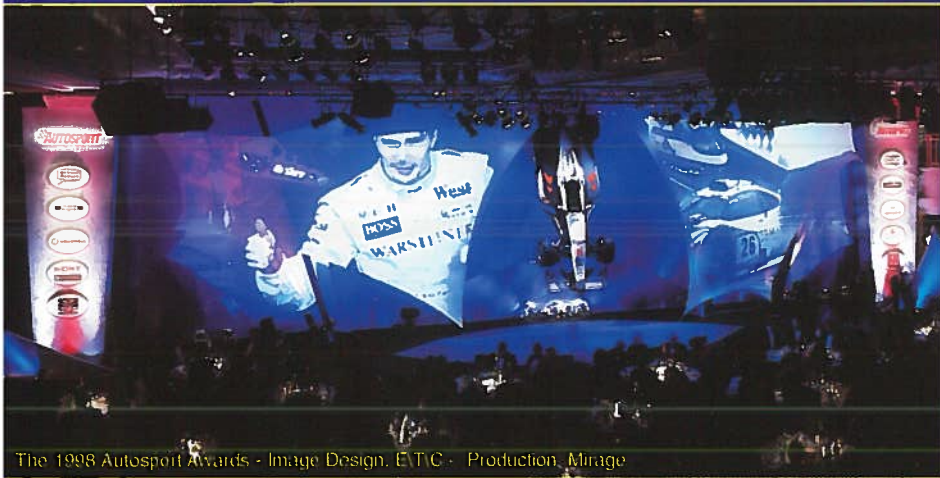
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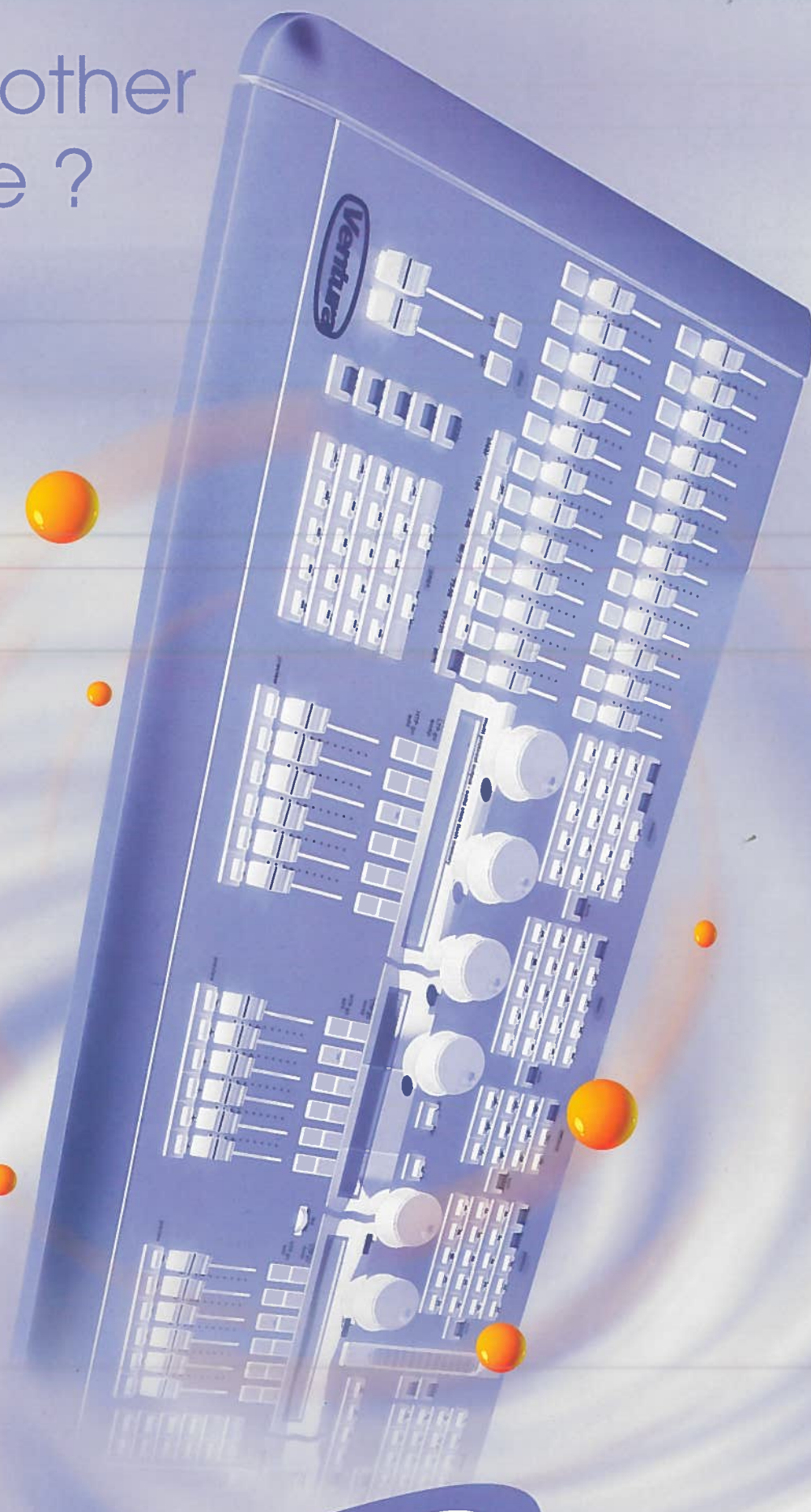
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