

Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

June 2000

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

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LOUISE BOURGEOIS

TATE MODERN: COLLECTION 2000

King & I

- Christopher Renshaw's revival opens at the Palladium

Club QBH

- Melbourne gets a new nightclub

Work of Art

- The launch of Tate Modern

Image is Everything

- Steps and Don Williams

Notre Dame de Paris

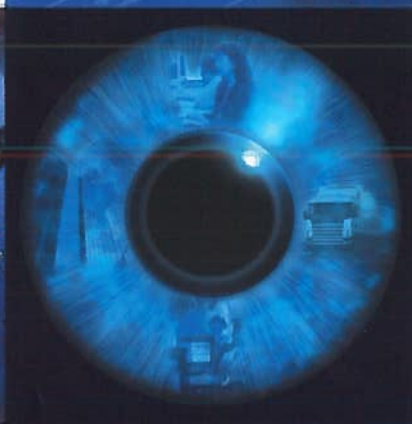
- A controversial new play opens at the Dominion

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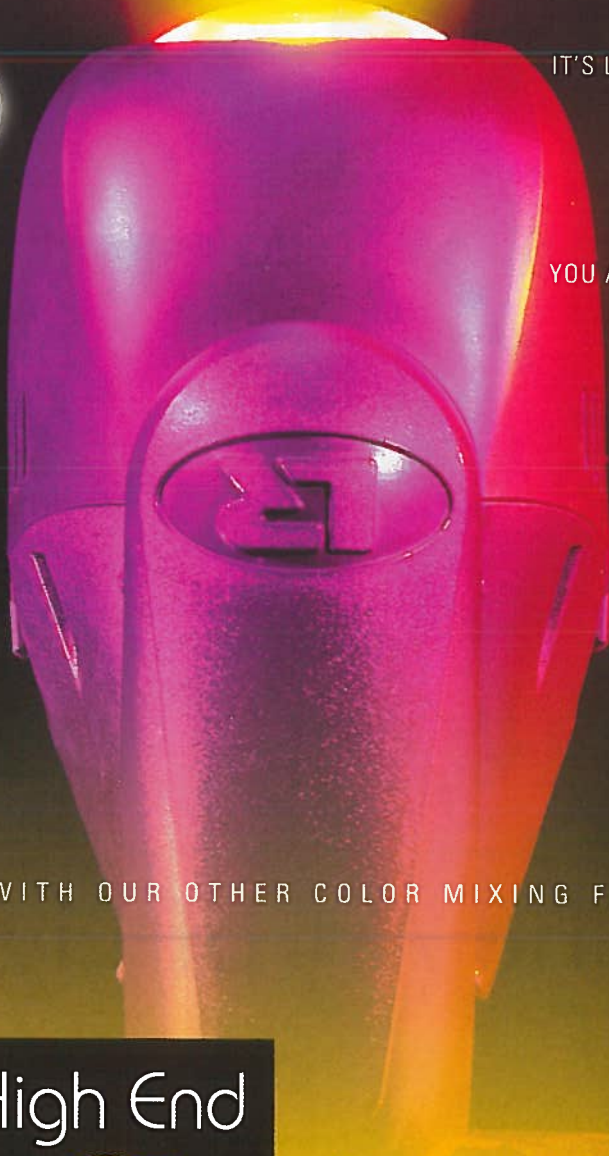
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Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

June 2000 Volume 15, Issue 6

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Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

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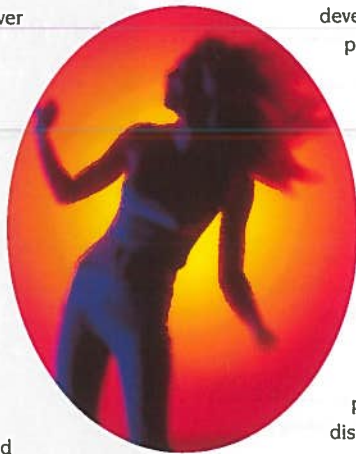


PLASA 2000 Marks Start of Entertainment Technology Year

The PLASA Show, the world's largest entertainment and leisure technology event, is set to launch the industry year with a spectacular display of light, sound and special effects at London's largest exhibition venue.

With over 400 exhibitors and over 14,000 visitors expected, the PLASA Show - now in its 23rd year - will run from 10-13 September at Earls Court - and will feature manufacturers, suppliers and distributors of professional lighting, sound and AV equipment for the performing arts, night venues and theme bars, concerts and touring, the DJ market, architectural installation, corporate presentations, amusements and attractions, recording studios, cruise liners, TV and film, educational and religious establishments.

The PLASA Show is a showcase for the entertainment technology industry where exhibitors launch the latest products and technological developments to the world, and this year will see the introduction of many brand new features.



Extended opening hours: visitors will have an extra three hours at the event with the Show opening from 10am - 6pm on Sunday 10, Monday 11, Tuesday 12 September and at 10am - 5pm on Wednesday 13 September.

Technology Gallery: visitors will be able to see the latest new products and developments in this dedicated product launch area and then catch up with the PLASA Awards on Wednesday 13 September at 9.30am.

Masterclass Programme: one of the PLASA Show 2000's key areas for development is the amusements and attractions market and the Tile Zone seminar will offer specifiers in this area a platform for up-to-the-minute discussion, debate and advice.

DJ Competition: the DJ Competition (on Sunday 10 September), sponsored by DJ Magazine and Gemini Sound Products, will search for the hottest and newest DJ talent in the country, while the DJ Lounge will feature the latest products, technology and services.

For more information, visit the PLASA website at www.plasa.org or call Carol Talbot at the PLASA Show Office, tel: 020 7370 8215.

Luminar Acquires Northern Leisure

After many months of merger talks, the Boards of Luminar and Northern Leisure have made a recommended offer of one new Luminar share for every four Northern Leisure shares.

The acquisition will create a company worth nearly £585 million and make Luminar the leading operator in the theme bar, restaurant and club markets, with 237 venues serving around 600,000 customers each week.

Luminar is the owner of the world-famous Camden Palace and London Hippodrome nightclubs, as well as the Chicago Rock Cafe, Rhythm Room, Liquid and Jumpin' Jaks brands. Five Northern Leisure executive directors will be appointed to the Luminar Board.

The announcement comes at a time when the face of the leisure market is changing dramatically. Northern bought Rank's nightclub division last year, Luminar bought a stack of clubs from Allied Leisure and First Leisure went through a management buy-out.

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Show-Control by Artistic Licence

Purchase online: ArtisticLicence.com

Artistic Licence is pleased to announce the launch of Show-Control - a miniature 60 channel DMX512 controller.

Overview:

Show-Control is a compact DMX512 controller. Operating on either battery or mains power, Show-Control is perfect for trade exhibitions and museum exhibits.

Show-Control can be programmed using keypad and LCD display, by snapshotting received DMX512 or with our offline PC software Show-Edit.

Show-Control can drive a total of 60 DMX512 channels. All fades operate as LTP which makes control of moving lamps simplicity itself.

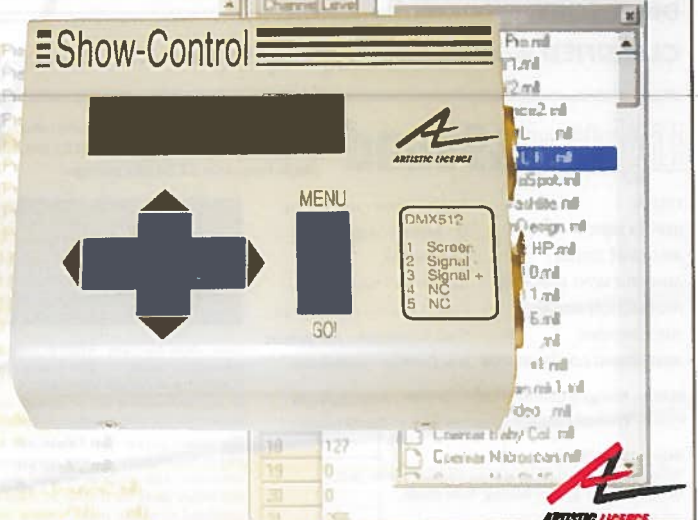
Show-Control is powered by an internal rechargeable battery, with a normal life of 25 hours and uses a high brightness backlit LCD screen.

Show-Control Features:

- ← 60 channel DMX512 output
- ← 250 level memories
- ← 40 sequences
- ← 4000 sequence steps
- ← Programmable step or fade times
- ← Latest takes precedence operation
- ← Snapshot DMX512 from console
- ← Alphanumeric channel names
- ← External, programmable go trigger
- ← DMX512 triggered playback
- ← Rechargeable battery or mains

Show-Edit Features:

- ← Fader based visual interface
- ← Hard disc storage of shows
- ← Edit memories live on stage
- ← Moving lamp library
- ← Lamp personality editor
- ← Edit all memories, sequences and times



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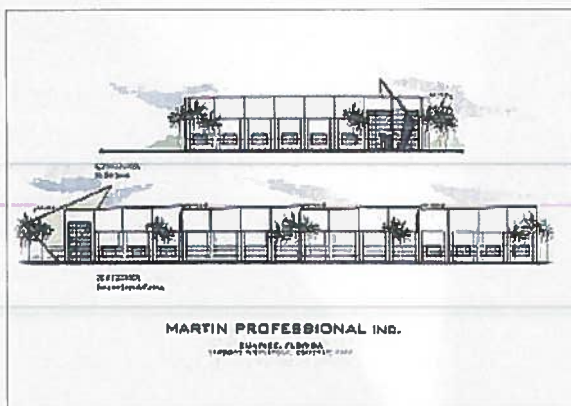


Changes at Martin Pro

Martin Professional A/S has acquired the remaining 49% of shares in Martin Professional Italy making the Italian company fully owned by Martin Professional A/S.

Managing director Mario Radice is leaving the company and will be replaced by Pio Nahum who will also continue in his role as Group sales and marketing director. Martin Professional Italy was formed in 1997 and in this short period of time has established itself in the Italian market.

Meanwhile, Martin's Florida-based US subsidiary, Martin Professional Inc, has announced plans to move into a new facility early in the year 2001. The new office will be built in the Sawgrass International Corporate Park in Sunrise, Florida, just a short drive from the existing building. It will give Martin US



personnel twice as much working space with a 3,106sq.m warehouse, 200sq.m showroom and nearly 900sq.m of office space and other facilities. Completion date for the new building is expected to be just after the start of the New Year.

PRG Restructures Two Divisions

Production Resource Group has restructured combining the PRG Lighting Group and Audio Group into a single operating unit, the Lighting/Audio Group.

The two divisions will continue to be branded separately in their individual markets, but will be managed by a single group of senior PRG management. Some of the key elements of the new organisational structure include the appointment of Don Knezovic as the chief operating officer of the Lighting/Audio Group, whilst Steve Terry becomes President of Lighting Systems. Nick Jackson continues as president of Light and Sound Design (LSD) with Jeff Senkovich promoted to the new position of vice-president of Lighting/Audio. Don Stern, chairman of the Lighting/Audio Group, is assuming responsibility for Production Arts rental sales and operations.

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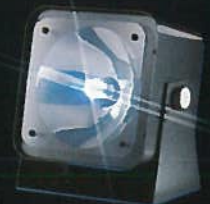
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Canford Announce Manufacture of EMO Range

Canford has announced that it has taken on the rights to the design and manufacture of the EMO range.

All products involved in the deal will appear in the Canford catalogue - The Source - and the company has added that all distributorship and dealership agreements will be maintained. EMO has built up countless devotees to its range of studio and performance products. Chas Kennedy, Canford's Group



Production manager John Driver with account manager Mike Reay

manufacturing director explained the move: "We have been distributors of EMO product for many years and know the range well. It is manufactured to the same high standards as our own and will be complementary to our own products."

Canford has imposed a tight deadline to enter full production of the range. Mike Reay formerly sales and marketing manager at EMO, has already joined Canford as an account manager and in addition to other responsibilities will continue to look after EMO sales. Canford is keen to stress that there are no plans to change the branding of EMO products.

BAV Equipment Stolen

Booth Audio Visual are offering a substantial reward for equipment that was stolen from the company in early May.

A Mr F Belhadj, who gave a false address in Worthing, hired a range of equipment, including JBL speakers (serial no: 18017), a Crest amplifier (serial no: CA12 9404392), Citronic mixer (serial no: A611B903A0288), Yamaha multi-effects unit (serial no: 65238), two MAD Madscans (serial nos: 27006, 27006B) and a Le Maitre GI50 smoke machine (serial no: 0563). The list also included a Shure radio mic system, Numark twin CD player, Opti White Lighting strobe and an Apollo Equinox lighting effect.

The equipment has never been returned and BAV believe that Belhadj is now in Tunisia, though the equipment may still be in the Sussex area. If you have been offered any of this equipment or can help, please contact Brighton Police Station on 0845 6070999 - quote crime reference no: C1/8661/00 or John Boath at BAV on 01273 600678.

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

"Although this was unquestionably the start of Pollak's career in rock and roll, he didn't follow the conventional route of his many contemporaries. Having got his toe inside the door, instead of tving his flag to the mast of one of the big lighting service companies, he took a more solitary route."

Steve Moles interviews lighting designer Jon Pollak

Cyrano wins it by a nose...

The Cyrano produces 50% more light than other followspots from Robert Juliat.

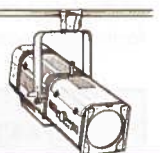
Designed to combine high power with ease of use, Cyrano is designed as an operators followspot. Offering precision control of the fade through a rotary 'throttle' style handle mounted close to the colour changer and variable soft glass diffuser.

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2000 Tony Awards

It was third time lucky for lighting designer **Natasha Katz** at this year's Tony Awards, presented on June 4th at New York's Radio City Music Hall. Nominated twice before, for *Beauty and the Beast* and *Twelfth Night*, Katz this year took the trophy for her stunning work on Disney's *Aida*, beating **Peter Kaczorowski** for his lighting for *Kiss Me Kate* and the familiar team of **Jules Fisher** and **Peggy Eisenhauer**, nominated once for *The Wild Party* and again for *Marie Christine*.

Aida was also triumphant for British designer **Bob Crowley**, who won the Best Set Design category having missed out on the same award last year despite being nominated twice! This year he beat **Thomas Lynch** (*The Music Man*), **Robin Wagner** (*Kiss Me Kate*) and **Tony Walton** (*Uncle Vanya*). Crowley received a second nomination this year as well, as Best Costume Designer for the same show, but lost out in this category to **Martin Pakledinaz** for his work on the popular *Kiss Me Kate*, which also won the Best revival of a Musical award ahead of *The Music Man*, *Tango Argentina* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Disney's show fared less well in other categories, winning just Best Original Score for **Elton John** and **Tim Rice** and the Best Leading Actress in a Musical award for **Heather Headley** and not even being nominated in the Best Musical or Best Director categories. Following the precedent established in 1999, when the ballet *Swan Lake* caused controversy by winning the best choreographer and best director of a musical categories for its creator **Matthew Bourne**, *Contact*, another musical-without-words, won many of the top awards, including Best Musical and Best Choreographer for its creator **Susan Stroman**.

British nominees did well at the Tonys once again, with transfers from London winning Best Revival of a Play (*The Real Thing*, ahead of *Moon for the Misbegotten*, *The Price* and *Amadeus*, another London transfer) and Best Play (*Copenhagen*, ahead of *Dirty Blonde*, *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* and *True West*). *The Real Thing*'s British leads, **Stephen Dillane** and **Jennifer Ehle**, picked up the Best Actor and Best Actress in a Play Awards, Ehle beating her mother, actress **Rosemary Harris**, who was nominated in the same category for her performance in *Waiting in the Wings*.

The person enjoying perhaps the most successful evening was director **Michael Blakemore**, who collected the Best Direction of a Musical Tony (for *Kiss Me Kate*, ahead of **Lynne Taylor Corbett** for *Swing!* and the twice-nominated **Susan Stroman** for *The Music Man* and *Contact*), then had to return to the stage just a few moments later to collect the Best Direction of a Play Tony, for *Copenhagen*, ahead of **James Lapine** (*Dirty Blonde*), **David Leveaux** (*The Real Thing*) and **Matthew Warchus** (*True West*).

John Jeffcoat Dies

L&SI has learnt that **John Jeffcoat** died of a heart attack on Sunday June 4th.

Jeffcoat was one of the industry's more colourful characters and had a long and varied career in it. In the mid seventies he was a founding partner of Meteor Illusion with **Tony Gottelier**. He then left the company in the early eighties to set up another distribution company - *Son et Lumiere* - before joining *Optikinetics* in the mid eighties as director of export sales. He stayed with the



company five years before moving out of the industry to run his own hotel business. He later returned to the industry working first with the *Multiform Technology Group* and then subsequently setting up his own company - *Yes* - which distributed tiny smoke machines. **Neil Rice** of *Optikinetics* summed up the comments of many: "He was literally a larger than life character and will be sadly missed by all who remember him."

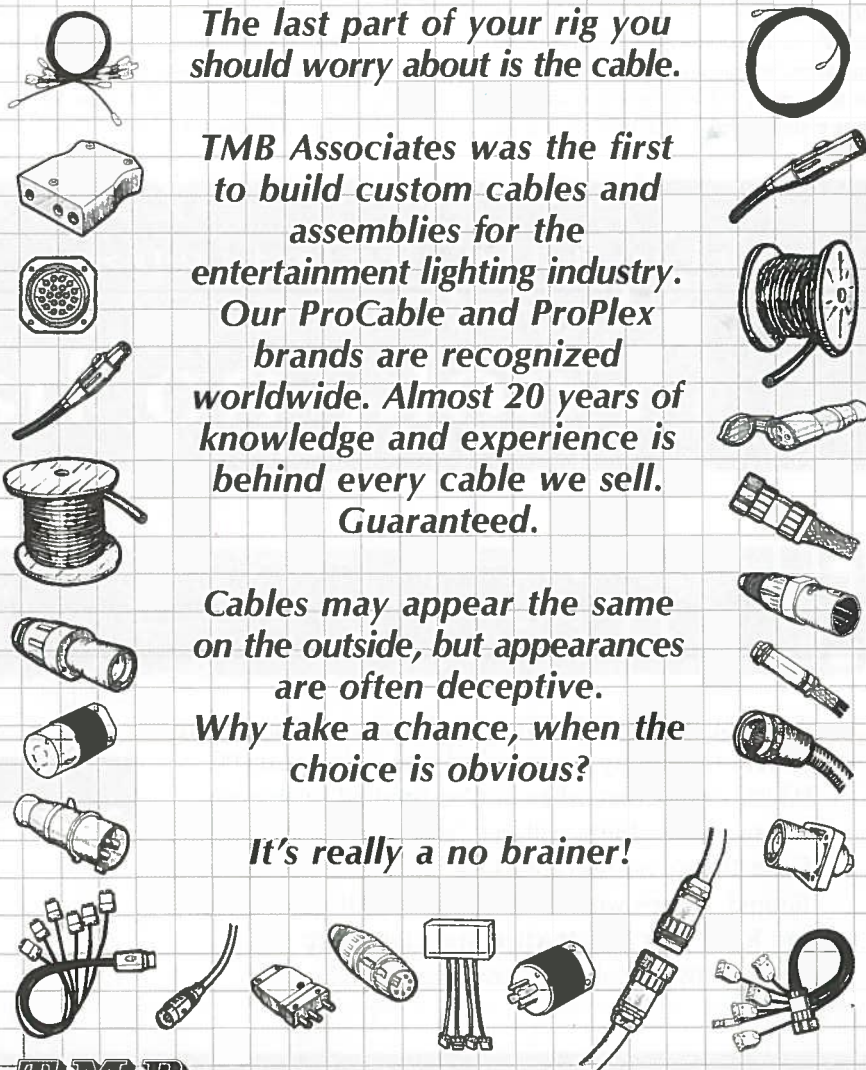
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Jonny Ringo's, Ultimate Leisure's newest venue in Newcastle, opened with a bang recently, thanks to Total Audio Solutions and Sound & Vision Network.

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The venue combines a two-storey café/bar/restaurant with Internet and satellite TV technology to provide a flexible environment for eating, dining and catching up with world events.

TAS was asked to provide a zoned sound reinforcement system to complement the video and computer system being

installed by Tyneside's Sound & Vision Network. The system, based around Sony's SRP-S900 full-range loudspeakers, SRP-B1000P subs and SRP-P26 power amps, is controlled by the new SRP-F300 Digital Audio Processor. This is used to provide multiple audio zones, crossover functions, delay, EQ and limiting to keep the entire system worry-free for the busy bar staff.

£22million for UK Film Industry

A package of film production initiatives backed by a total fund of £22 million has been launched by the Film Council, the new strategic organisation set up by the Government to create a coherent structure for the UK film industry and to develop film culture in the UK.

This programme of activities marks a radical reorganisation of the use of public money for film. By the end of the year the Film Council will also be delivering separate and detailed policy proposals to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, geared to creating real structural change to benefit the British film industry.

The package includes a Film Development Fund of £5 million a year to support the development of a stream of high quality, innovative and commercially attractive screenplays; a Premiere Production Fund of £10 million a year for the production of popular mainstream films; a New

Cinema Fund of £5 million a year to back radical and experimental film-makers, especially new talent, and to explore new electronic production technologies.

In addition 20% of the budget of each fund will be earmarked for European co-production. This will deliver a minimum of £4.2 million a year towards the Film Council's strategy of expanding business in Europe.

This programme of activities marks a radical reorganisation of the use of public money for film.

The package also includes the expansion of the British Film Office in Los Angeles to attract inward investment in the form of US films to be made in the UK. The LA office will also become a base for promoting UK film exports and co-ordinating US based training initiatives. In addition, the annual grant for the BFI has been set at £16 million to achieve the Film Council's objectives for film culture and education. The Council is also increasing the British Film Commission's budget to just over £1 million a year to ensure that Britain's world-class production infrastructure sees continued growth in overseas production spend in the UK.

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AC Lighting Completes RAH Refit

London's Royal Albert Hall is undergoing its first comprehensive building development since it opened in 1871.

Scheduled to complete in 2003, the £66.3m programme originally began in 1995 and AC Lighting's Special Projects division, led by Adam Beaumont, has completed the upgrade of part of the lighting cabling and control system.



The RAH's Scott Nielson and Mark Jones, with AC Lighting's Adam Beaumont

The RAH's deputy technical show manager, Mark Jones, designed and specified the system, whilst Scott Nielson worked with the AC team on the project. AC has upgraded the circle rail

with new power and control wiring for the FOH circuits. All trunking panels were replaced with customised 2m sections, each containing 12 16A sockets for six dimming channels, along with two independent power circuits for moving lights and scrollers. 12 DMX connectors, covering two DMX 512 universes, were also installed. On stage, AC installed three six-way stage boxes and DMX outlets.

Batmink Expands

Batmink Ltd, distributor for a wide range of product lines including those from American DJ, Genius, Lite Puter and MBN, has purchased further offices and warehouse facilities covering some 1500sq.m.

MD David Churches told L&SI: "In line with our continual expansion, the new premises will allow a greater stockholding, especially on our sole imported lines." To coincide with the move to new premises, Batmink will be holding a massive auction of sound and lighting equipment on Sunday July 16th. For further details and an auction catalogue call +44 01458 833186.

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

"So we didn't get far towards answering the original question: what do critics think about the new technologies onstage and do they need a new form of response to them? You'll have had a few answers from me over the years."

Ian Herbert - Asleep - page 68

CJ Spencer Rebrands

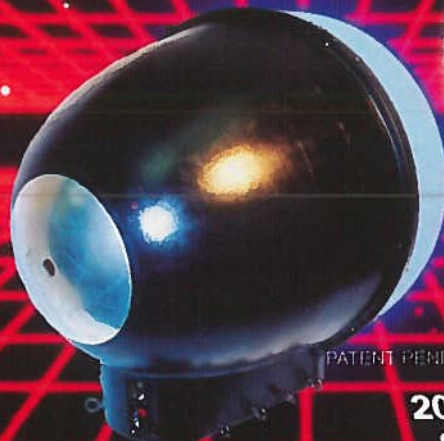
Show production company CJ Spencer Associates has rebranded, and is now trading under the name 'Hotcakes UK Ltd'. The decision to rebrand coincides with the company's plans for expansion covering personnel, office space and substantial IT development at its headquarters in Skipton. Hotcakes, whose current clients include Marks & Spencer, Cosmopolitan Show, BBC Good Home Show and Prima, will be promoted as a 'brand experience consultancy'. You read the term here first.

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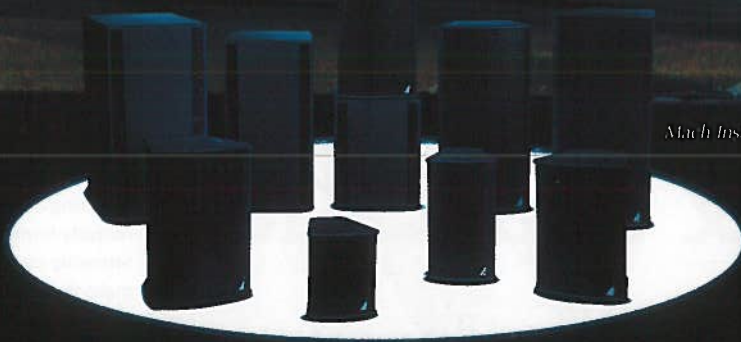
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ESP in Profile

For a company that started in a spare bedroom in the late eighties, the modern face of ESP is a far cry from its early beginnings.

The now established and highly successful event services and production company (hence the name) has an impressive list of clients and an even longer list of successful projects behind it. It's a success story that has been built on years of hard graft. Having cut his teeth as a freelancer on various projects, including, notably, a 10-year spell as a production manager for Holiday on Ice, David Stressing founded ESP in 1988, ostensibly to create a service company that the industry could turn to no matter what it needed.

Six months later he was joined by Ann Brodhurst, the two having worked together on the Holiday on Ice productions. They set about establishing the ESP name. Pivotal to the company's growth in those early years was the winning of a contract to supply projection screens to over 500 Vauxhall showrooms in the UK. All available finance was channelled into the purchase of welding equipment and the two set about manufacturing and installing all the screens themselves. [Today, ESP is working with Vauxhall on the roll-out of a new concept based on a traditional black box system to create a motor show-style look].

The Vauxhall contract freed up money for reinvestment, and ESP started to build up its range of equipment. One year in, it took on the UK distribution of the French-manufactured RVE dimming and control range at a time when the brand was virtually unheard of in the UK. The following year, it reached an agreement with Mobil-Tech for the distribution of its range of trussing, towers and stands. Still in relative infancy, the company was now working on an increasing number of projects, including one at the Home Office for the Lord Mayor's banquet, and its client list was expanding with companies



Above, David Stressing and Ann Brodhurst. Inset, David and Peter Stressing with the latest delivery of Mobil-Tech trussing

such as Guinness, NatWest, SmithKline Beecham filling out the ranks.

The projects were varied, the experience was valuable and the income allowed them to invest further in both people and kit. When the Vauxhall contract came to an end in late 92, Stressing approached the Holiday On Ice management and first tendered for, and then won, a contract to be a full service supplier for the production; the company did the lot - lights, sound, sets, AV - often touring five shows at a time around the world. It's a contract the company still has and whilst the Holiday on Ice production now tours no more than three shows at any one time (with inventories of 320 moving heads not unusual), it remains a huge project for the company.

Throughout the nineties, ESP found themselves working on a diverse range of events, including concert tours, exhibitions, product launches, conferences, theatre productions, even rubbing shoulders with royalty on occasions. On several of these projects, ESP had collaborated with audio company CSL and so successful had these alliances been that in 1998 the two decided to merge, at the same time relocating to new 10,000sq.ft premises. CSL's Simon Allison, Chris Griffiths and John Dixon joined the ESP team.

The company was now in a strong position to offer a full turnkey solution to clients and spent a not insignificant amount on new equipment. On the sound side for instance, the company pulled in a large amount of PA kit, the heart of which is a 25kW EV touring rig and over 40kW of JBL components. These are complemented by Midas and Allen & Heath desks, with

Klark Teknik processing and EV, Crest and RAM Audio amps. ESP is now the official distributor for the Spanish-manufactured range of RAM Audio amplification. To complement this, the company also has an in-house sound

production studio with Steinberg Wavelab editing software.

The company's lighting inventory is equally comprehensive; from pinspots to 8-Lites, it has an enormous range - from the standard through to highly specialised, more esoteric kit. And you can count ETC, Strong, Martin Professional, Clay Paky, High End, Pani, Optikinetics, Compulite and RVE in the frame. ESP also has an impressive stock of laser equipment ranging from the smaller 1W system through to a 50W Nd:Yag laser. The stock items also cover every type of rigging, trussing, staging system, curtaining, backdrop and tracking possible, not to mention a range of waterscreens. The company also carries a large stock of special effects, snow machines (a range which they build themselves) and well basically, whatever you want - even if it's portable ice floors.

The above is the backbone of a growing organisation. Today, ESP has a team of nine full-time people based at its headquarters in Letchworth, where it also has an extensive warehouse facility and departments for set building, design, equipment demonstration, sound editing, servicing and project management.

The latest part of the ESP story concerns perhaps one of its most significant steps to date. David Stressing and Herve Liegeois, MD of Mobil-Tech, recently formed Mobil-Tech UK with Peter Stressing at the helm - the intention being to make the range more readily available in the UK at a more competitive price. Mobil-Tech has recently developed a new range of trussing, manufactured from aluminium, rather than steel, which, with its obvious cost and weight implications, has already created a noticeable upturn in sales.

What next? Well Stressing and Brodhurst admit they have a busy summer planned and part of their future plans include building the product portfolio ever wider - which can only mean one thing - new premises.

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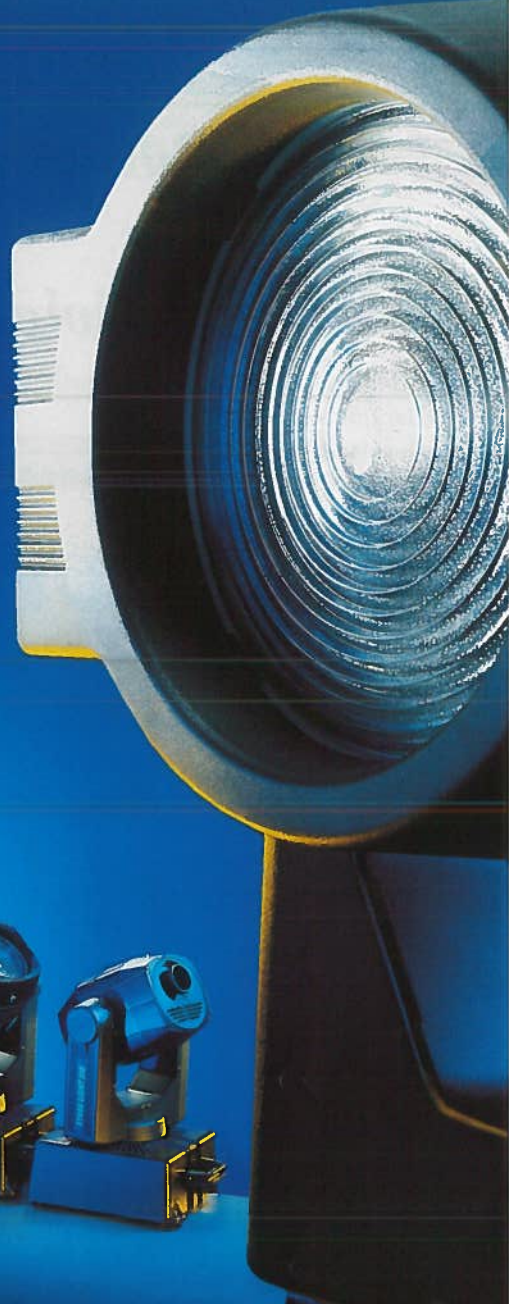
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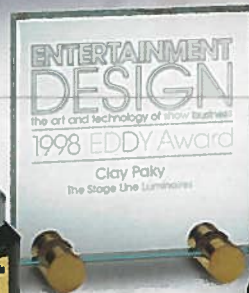


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PROFESSIONAL SHOW LIGHTING



New Ultra Violet Effect

UV Light Technology's UV400 ultra violet special effects floodlight received its official launch recently.

Prototypes of the UV400, developed by UV in co-operation with Temple Decor, were put through their paces at Glastonbury last year and on-location findings were later translated to further refinements of the effect.

The floodlight features a 400W lamp, uniform UVA distribution and a 90 degree beam angle.

The company behind the product - UV Light Technology - is relatively new to the market, although MD Paul Jackson has over 15 years' experience in ultra violet technology. To complement the floodlight, UV also offers a backdrop design and painting service, including 3D and dual image options.

UV Light Technology (UK) +44 121 454 6053



Tim Carroll of Temple Decor with UV's Paul Jackson shaking on Temple's £15,000 order for 20 UV400 floodlights.

AV Industry Census

The UK's first ever broadcast media industry census took place recently.

Backed by major employers, trades unions and the government, Britain's first broadcasting Census is the culmination of a major consultation exercise by the cross-industry group examining future training needs in the media industries. The initiative is part of a programme of work developed by the Audio-Visual Industries Training Group and is chaired by Roger Laughton. The industry has long been hindered by the lack of accurate available information and the Census should provide reliable estimates of how many people work in the industry, and a picture of what they do and who they are.

www.skillset.org

Mounsor Loses Case Against PSL

Presentation Services Ltd (PSL) has successfully defended a claim brought against it by former employee, Chris Mounsor, who recently left the company to establish Nocturne Europe. Mounsor had been employed as PSL's manager of concert touring, UK and Europe, from July 1996 until November 1999 and following his departure, alleged breach of contract and unfair dismissal. These were denied at an Employment Tribunal hearing in North London where PSL successfully maintained that Mounsor had resigned.

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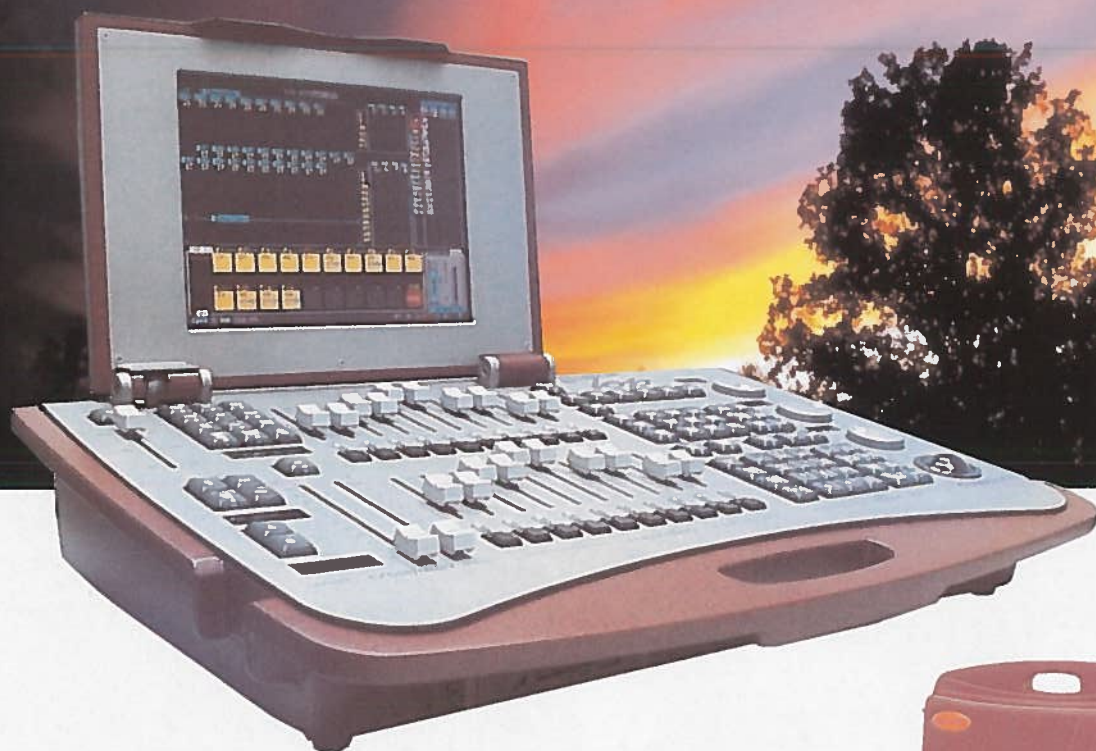


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People News

Mike Lowe, managing director of ETC Europe, has announced strategic changes in the management team.

After nearly three years of commuting between his home in Copenhagen and ETC's European headquarters in North Acton, **Tim Stockholm** is returning to live permanently in Denmark. He will assume the role

of manager, Northern Region, with responsibility for Belgium, Germany, Austria and Slovenia, while **Fulvio Cotogni** continues as manager, Southern Region, covering South Africa and Middle East.

Erik Larsen, previously sales manager for Northern Europe, takes on the newly-created role of product manager for ETC Europe, and finally **Peter Ed** now assumes responsibility for marketing as marketing director, ETC Europe.

Andrew Bruce, who started the Autograph Group of companies from a stable in Camden 27 years ago, has announced his decision to step aside as managing director and take on the role of chairman. He will now take a back-seat role in the day-to-day running of the company, allowing him to focus on his career as a sound designer. **Terry Jardine** will take his place as managing director of the Group. Jardine joined Autograph 11 years ago and became a director in 1998. Working alongside him is **Duncan Bell**, who has been appointed Group financial director. Bell has worked in numerous technical areas of the company over the past 15 years before becoming involved in the commercial side of the business.

Lee Frankcom has joined the Coe-Tech sales team. Frankcom, one of the rock and roll industry's most colourful characters,

originally launched his lighting career at the immortal Rainbow Theatre in Finsbury Park. Since then he's made his way through a plethora of top lighting rental and production companies before becoming concert touring guru at Vari-Lite

Europe/VLPS.

Tim Adams has taken on the role of editor of Miller Freeman's Installation Europe publication following Mike Lethby's departure at the end of April. Adams, who for the past few years has been working alongside Jerry Gilbert at JGP public relations, took up his new position at the end of May.

Des Fallon has joined the rapidly-expanding team at Nocturne Europe as sales manager, where he will be working alongside former colleagues Chris Mounsor, Lee Spencer and Richard Burford. Fallon has worked for the last six years supplying video systems to the music industry, working with artists such as Blur, Pulp and Robbie Williams.

PSL has appointed **Mick Ryder** to the company's Concert Touring Division, which is currently co-ordinating a number of high profile tours throughout the UK, Europe and the US. Ryder arrives at the company following four years as event director for Fulham-based Cube TV, prior to which he was a freelance production manager.

Since doubling its workshop facilities, Total Fabrications Ltd (TFL) has seen a major increase in the demand for its specialist



Erik Larsen



Peter Ed



Terry Jardine (left) and Duncan Bell

continued on next page

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News Round-Up



People News . . .

manufacturing services. In order to meet that demand, the company has recently recruited **Neill Darracott** to its ranks. Since graduating from Southampton University in 1988, Darracott has spread his work experience between mainstream industrial engineering, and developmental work for the entertainment industry.

Strengthening the team at the Sound Dept is **Andy Simmons**, who has recently been appointed sales director. Best known for his management of the Crest Audio



Andy Simmons

UK operation before taking it to the Sound Dept two years ago, Simmons has recently finished a stint working with XTA Electronics as international sales and marketing manager.

John Eeles has joined Chameleon Audio in a market development role to promote sales of the full Chameleon product line-up, especially the new D777 pro audio amplifier. Eeles started in the music business as a pro musician, later moving into sound production.

Marketing and sales consultant **Nick Dimes** has joined forces with journalist **Sue Sillitoe** to launch Dimes & Sillitoe Ltd, a communications management



Nick Dimes and Sue Sillitoe

company. It has already attracted a number of key clients including Fleetwood Mobiles.

Mackie Designs has promoted **Jay Schlabs** to the position of national sales manager for all Mackie product lines, including Mackie, Mackie Digital Systems and Mackie Industrial Contractor Products. Schlabs joined Mackie in 1994 as a technical sales trainer and in 1996 was promoted to Western regional sales manager.

Following the departure of **Ian Woodall** to launch his own

multimedia installation venture, **Steve 'Bunty' King** will take on the role of sales manager at LMC's London branch. He brings with him over 20 years' experience in the professional audio industry, including touring FOH and monitor engineering, and technical sales.

Chris West has joined Avolites as training manager.

West, who has just completed a BA Honours degree in Theatre Studies (Stage Management option) at the Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, will be co-ordinating all training schedules as well as overseeing the demo room.

Tony Beresford has left Stageline UK to take up a position with a marketing and advertising company in its shows and exhibitions department as a project manager. **Jon Slater** of Pit Stop Barriers will take over Beresford's role.

Mojo Barriers has a new guy on the payroll in the shape of 24-year-old **Kevin Thorborn** who is now responsible for promotions and sales development. He

comes from a background in construction and is passionate about the presentation industry.

Neil Mooring, one

of the directors of John Hornby Skewes, died suddenly at his home on Sunday 30th April at the age of 48. He was educated at Leeds Grammar School and joined John Hornby Skewes in 1970 at the age of 19. He worked in the sales office and was promoted to sales office manager before accepting a position as an area sales manager. He was promoted to purchasing manager in 1979 and joined the company Board of Directors. For many years he served on the Statistics Committee of the MIA.

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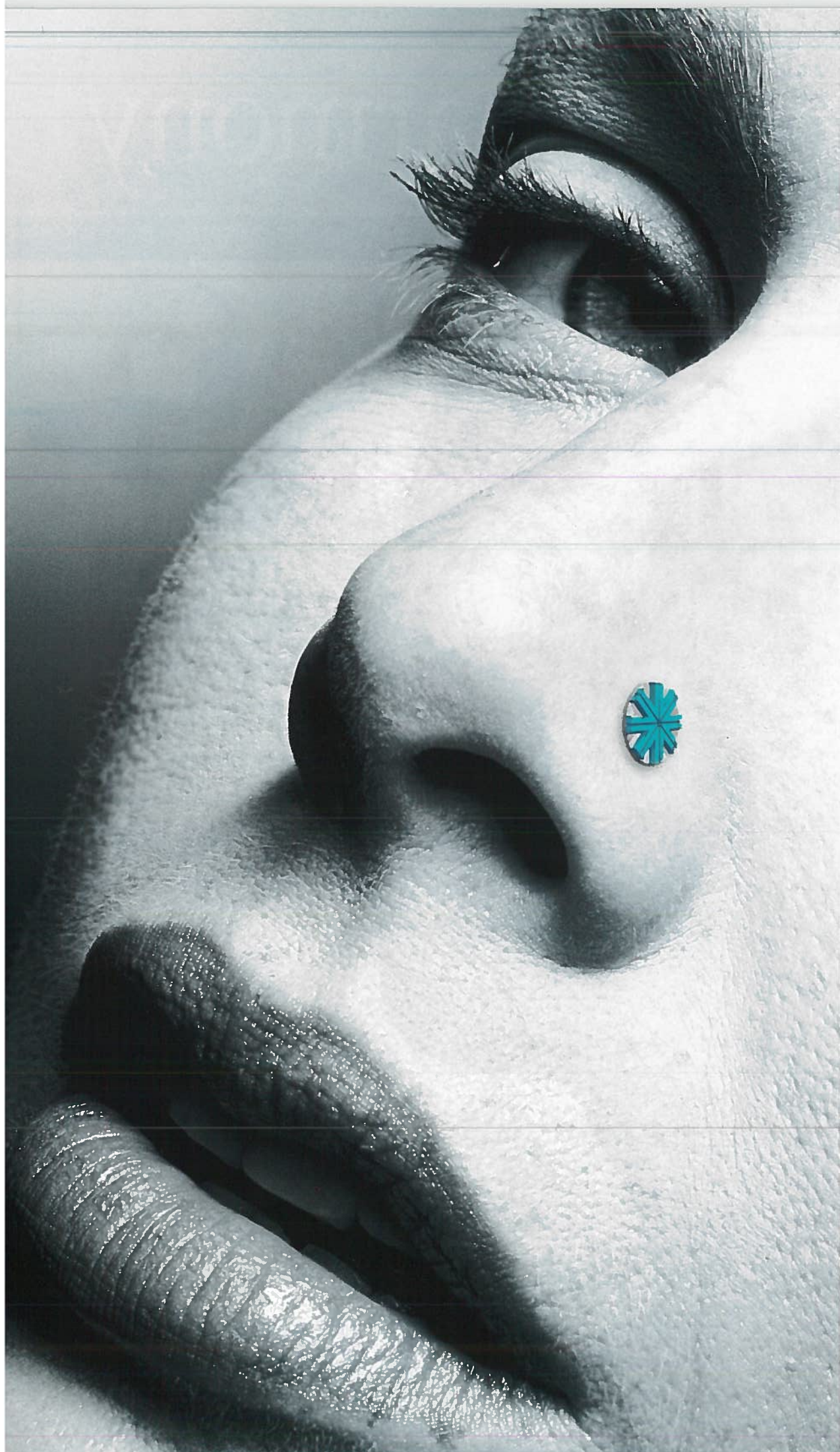
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Vertigo Rigging's Winning Formula

Vertigo Rigging was called in to rig three cars to set the scene for a recent Formula One gala dinner at the Dorchester Hotel in London.

The event celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Formula One World Drivers Championship. The idea was to create a roller coaster effect with the vehicles at varying angles. With rigging time very tight, Vertigo used as much stock equipment as possible. The framework was made from Vertigo's stock of truss, with the addition of some specially-made header plates to create the pitch of the cars, which were then lifted



onto Vertigo's adjustable car cradle, placed in position and anchored to the truss.

The operation was overseen by Vertigo's Tim Roberts. The three cars were a red 1950s Maserati Formula One car (worth over £1m) from the private collection of Pink Floyd's Nick Mason, last year's World Championship McLaren, driven to victory by Mika Hakkinen, and a new Jaguar

XKR production model, auctioned during the dinner for upwards of £75,000. The event organiser was Fisher Productions and the display designer was Terry Brown.

LSC Introduces iPRO

Australian-based LSC Lighting Systems has released the iPRO dimmer which follows in the footsteps of the ePAK, ePRO, and e24 dimmers all of which have been successfully launched in the last few months.



The iPRO features 12 amps per channel, 100% duty cycle rated operation, hard-firing of the dimmer channel and temperature dependent fan speed. With the same core structure as the ePRO, it incorporates a unique mounting system which allows the iPRO to be bolted to a solid wall, a 19" rack frame or in view of its sloped bottom end, to rest on flat surfaces. Utilising the same user interface as other LSC dimmers, the iPRO dimmer provides quick set up of the DMX512 address, individual drive control over any channel, scene storage and a choice of a six fade curves per dimmer channel.

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FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

"However, this is a populist show, its intended viewer 'the general public' - that's a reality the Americans have accepted and understood for years. The nay-sayers in the Broadsheets can stick their heads up their fundamentals all they like, this show looks destined to run and run."

Steve Moles reviews the King & I - starting on page 53

AND THEN SOME..

Here are just three products from the effects company - an established manufacturer with a reputation for excellence in design and innovation, reliability, engineering and build quality.

THE CIRRUS LOWSMOKE

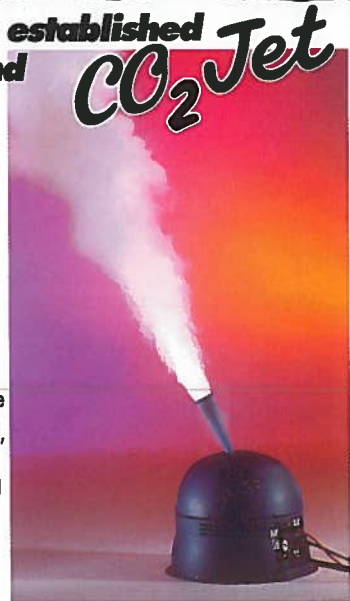
- Unique method of generating lowsmoke effect
- Uses easily obtainable CO₂ (bar gas) cylinders
- Very cold - therefore stays very low
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- Very economical to use
- Many more features too numerous to list!

THE CUMULUS DRY ICE MACHINE

- One piece moulded shell - no more leaks
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- Unique lid locking mechanism
- Ducting Adaptor facility
- 5-position basket mechanism
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THE CO₂JET

- Projects white jets of CO₂ up to 7 metres high
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rosco Designers on Colour



 Totalisant 60 années de métier à eux deux, Christian Brean et Jacques Rouveyrollis, ces deux grands complices, ont bourlingué a travers le monde pour apporter leur touché de la lumière à la Française. Ils ont ainsi éclairé des Opéras, des Ballets, des scènes de Music Hall, des Evénements, du


Sport-Spectacle, des pièces de Théâtre. Le monde de la Télévision comme celui de la Vidéo ne leur sont pas étrangers non plus. Au-delà des grandes productions pour lesquelles ils sont si souvent appelés, ils aiment apporter leur expérience à des spectacles peut être moins prestigieux mais tout aussi intéressants.



 Gianni Mantovanini nato a Milano, dal 1963 al "Teatro alla Scala". Nel 1975 firmo per la prima volta le luci di uno spettacolo messo in scena nella allora "Piccola Scala", dove dal '75 all'80 ho svolto il ruolo di Lighting Designer. Nel 1981 passo a collaborare alle produzioni del "Teatro

alla Scala", affiancando il lighting designer e mio maestro Vanio Vanni, assumendone il ruolo nel 1991.



 Max Keller hat sich in Deutschland stark für den Beruf des Lichtgestalters eingesetzt. Mit seiner Bildersprache, die sich vor allem in einer Kombination

von Lichtquellen mit unterschiedlichen Farbtemperaturen vermittelt, prägt er die Aussagekraft des dramaturgischen Lichts. Er entwickelte seine Lichtgestaltungen für das Schauspiel an den Münchner Kammerspielen, aber auch für Opern an anderen Bühnen, vor allem in Europa. Als Autor des einzigen deutschsprachigen Fachbuches über Lichtgestaltung im Theater trug er viel dafür bei, dass die Arbeit mit Licht stärker als künstlerisches Gestaltungsmittel akzeptiert wurde.



Hans-Åke Sjöquist has worked as a lighting designer in his native Sweden for almost 30 years.

From 1978-79 he studied in the USA at the Yale University School of Drama. He worked at the Royal Opera House in



Stockholm for six years as Resident Lighting Designer from 1980 to 1986, lighting over 20 major productions during this period.

For the past 13 years he has run his own lighting consultant company, Candela Design Limited, designing numerous drama, musical and opera productions in Scandinavia and throughout Europe. Mr Sjöquist also designs architectural lighting for indoor and outdoor environments and has just lit two major permanent exhibitions at "The Museum of Natural History" in Stockholm, introducing the largest fibre optics installations ever made in Scandinavia.

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Widely regarded as the dean of lighting designers for both the West End and Broadway, Richard Pilbrow also heads Theatre Projects Consultants. His second book "Stage Lighting Design - The Art, The Craft, The Life" was named LDI Product of the Year. "When I began lighting only about fifty shades of Cinemoid were available. I often used them two and three to a frame seeking new possibilities. Then I discovered Rosco and first brought this wonderful range to Britain. Now the possibilities are almost limitless. Colour brings life, texture and vibrancy to the stage. I love it."



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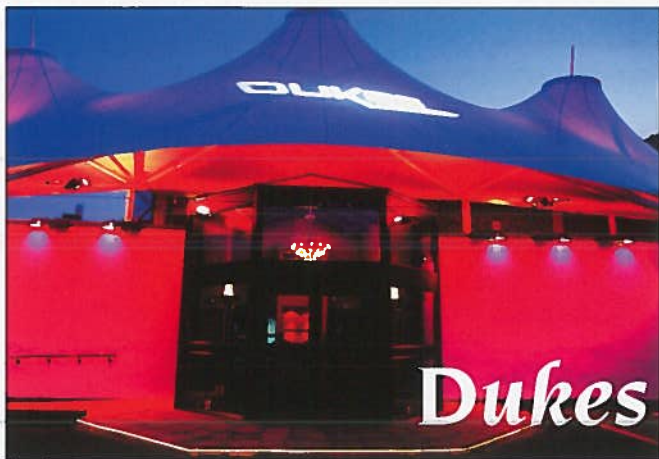
A new programme of masterclasses, seminars and training sessions have been introduced to give you an even broader insight into the industry.

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Duke's nightclub in Chelmsford has been relaunched with a new look and a new name. The club, now rechristened Duke's Genesis, is owned by Essex Entertainments who also own the successful TOTS in Southend.

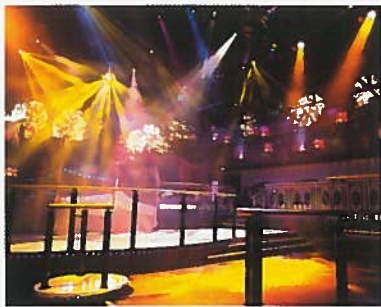
Interior designer Ashley Rowland has redesigned the mainstream venue, losing the massive kitchen and relocating administrative facilities to increase the capacity from 1200 to 1600. On the technical front, Rowland and technical co-ordinator Chris Adams, worked with Lightfactor Sales and The Music Company for the lighting and audio specs respectively. The entrance structure is a tensile concept supplied by Aura, comprising white fabric cones over a steel framework. This is lit with two High End Studio Spot 575s in Ecodome housings, complete with custom Duke's gobos.

Once inside, clients' senses are assaulted by myriad features and effects, pivotal to which is the mesh cladding, projecting from main wall surfaces. The chill-out area features water sculptures by 'Waterworld', enhanced with 17 MAD fixtures - a mixture of MAD Opticolours and 211s. Lightfactor supplied 15 Studio Spot 250s with wide angle lenses for the peripheral mesh lighting, while 60 Suono 2040 profiles spots, from Italian manufacturer LDR, are used for further projections, with 34 LDR Coro

300W floodlights also scattered around the room, joined by five High End AF 1000 Dataflash strobes. For the dancefloor, Lightfactor supplied eight Studio Spot 250s, 12 Technobeams and another eight AF1000s plus Penn ladder-beam trussing. Duke's existing ShowCad system was re-utilised: it is now possible for this to be triggered by a custom video control system designed and installed by Kaleidivision. The

Kaleidivision controller operates all video sources throughout the club, and Kaleidivision also produced special footage and general video graphics and sequences which are played throughout the night. Dotted behind the mesh are over 60 Sanyo 28" and 25" monitors supplied, as with all video display and projection equipment, by The Music Company.

Rigged around the ceiling for front projecting onto the mesh are 10 Sanyo PLCSU07 700 ANSI Lumen projectors, and beaming onto a 16ft screen behind the DJ platform is a Sanyo PLCXF10B (3000 ANSI Lumens). The video projection and graphics system also doubles as an in-house promotions and advertising platform for the club. The Music Co also installed the new sound system - a combination of their own Axhead speakers for the dancefloor, and various Bose units for peripheral areas. Amplifiers are MC2 and control is all digital, via an XTA PD224 and a Peavey Media Matrix X-Frame, which between them handle all of the signal processing.



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101 Dalmatians

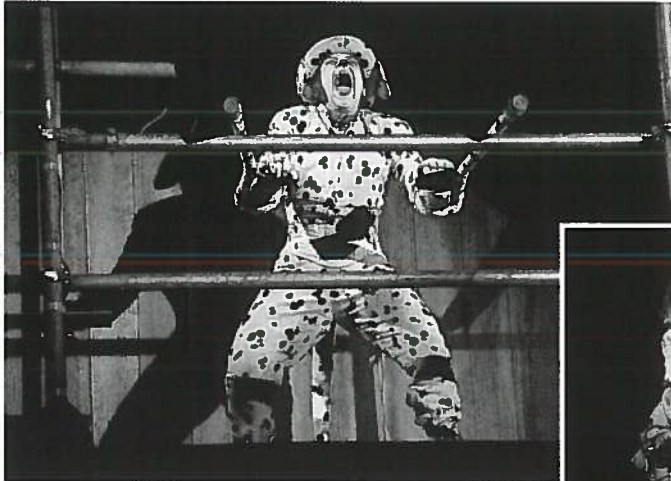
Director Debbie Isitt's new multi-media stage production of 101 Dalmatians elicited controversy when it premiered at The Belgrade Theatre in Coventry.

Isitt's hard-hitting work is designed to be adult in nature, employing dark metaphors and a provocative human story running beneath the fluffy animal one. She combined 2D video moving image with 3D stage action to present this unique version of the Dodie Smith classic.

Isitt's company Snarling Beasts was formed 15 years ago, during which time she's toured, written, directed and performed theatre worldwide and more latterly, made films. It's always been her intention to make a piece of film theatre and when the opportunity for this production arose, she thought the 101 story ideal for this style of presentation.

The pace of production was hectic with the film evolving first, preceded by two weeks in the theatre to develop characters and special effects. Three of the five-week rehearsal period was then occupied with making the movie, shot in monochrome on digital video at a variety of locations including Woodchester Mansions in

Gloucestershire (Hell Hall), a spooky half-built, grandiose Victorian pile. The puppies were played by 100 local (to Coventry) schoolchildren with an average age of eight whilst the camera work was



handled by Gary Tanner, who also lit the film. On-stage the split was about 50/50 between the two mediums.

It was a highly interactive show, with film footage from Hell Hall operating on CCTV-style monitors on and under the stage at certain points, with live actors passing in and out of it. At times the video and live action meshed so effectively the audience found what was real and what was pre-recorded indistinguishable. The set was designed by Richard Campbell Johnson and

featured stark, imposing, industrial-style scaffolding bridges and abseiling platforms. Sound was designed by the Belgrade's head of sound Steve Wilson. He had a Shure radio mic on each of the 10 live cast and ran the show via a Soundcraft Series 5. For pre-recorded playback they used three Tascam MD801 mini-discs running into a Yamaha 03D console, which memorised EQ and levels. It was then routed out through the house auditorium PA of Martin W2s and W3 speakers. An Emu keyboard sampler was used to produce various effects with others coming from the movie track. In the scenes where film images and music were sync'ed, the music was recorded onto the film and then edited.



The video projector was a new Proxima Pro AV 9310 with the main video source beamed onto a nine metre wide screen. Lighting designer Bernie Howe, also a member of staff at the Belgrade Theatre, assumed the dual role of chief LX for the production. A major consideration for him was lighting with video running onstage, and the general tone is moody and sinister.

He used an assortment of conventionals from the large house rig plus their three Martin PAL moving lights, CCT scrollers and the Compulite Ovation console. The biggest lighting challenge was a delicate balance of trying to retain the cinematic feel onstage whilst enhancing the seamless crossovers between video and live action.

photos: Ian Tilton/Belgrade Theatre



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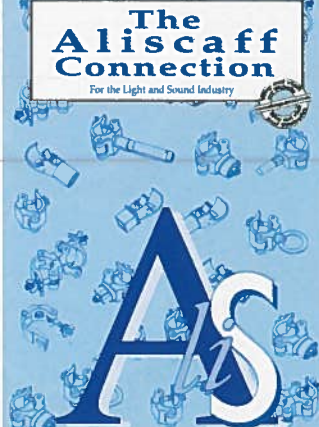


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Theatrical London

If you're planning to visit the PLASA Show in London, then consider extending your trip and register for Theatrical London. This tour presents delegates with a unique opportunity to meet with the technical teams who work behind the scenes on some of the most critically acclaimed productions and events in London.

The Dome at Greenwich - the centrepiece of the UK's millennium celebrations - will form a key part of the tour. Here delegates will have a chance to tour the various zones and reach their own conclusions about one of the most talked about attractions in the UK. They will also have an opportunity to talk with members of the design and technical teams, and in particular Simon Brophy, head of lighting for the NMEC.



Delegates will also see two of the latest productions to open in the West End - Disney's

highly acclaimed adaptation of *The Lion King* and Cameron Mackintosh's *The Witches of Eastwick*. Since its launch on Broadway, Disney's *Lion King* has become one of the most successful stage shows of all time. Director/designer Julie Taymor has translated Disney's original animated feature into a spectacular stage musical, brought to life by a cast of over 40. The Broadway production picked up 25 major awards, with every member of the creative team winning Tonys.

The Witches of Eastwick is running at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The play, based on the novel by John Updike and the Warner Bros film starring Jack Nicholson, is directed by Eric Schaeffer with sound design by Andrew Bruce, lighting design by Howard Harrison and set design by Bob Crowley. Following both performances, delegates will go backstage to meet with members of the creative team.



Complementing these, are visits to some of London's best known theatres. Technical consultant Mark White and members of the ROH technical crew will guide delegates on a tour of the House - one of Europe's most technologically advanced 'state-of-the-art' theatres. Participants will also have the opportunity to tour both Sadlers Wells, renowned for both classical and contemporary dance performances, and The Royal Court, a leading force in world theatre dedicated to new work, both the subject of recent extensive refurbishment programmes.

The backstage tours for Lion King and Witches of Eastwick are being sponsored by Autograph Sound.

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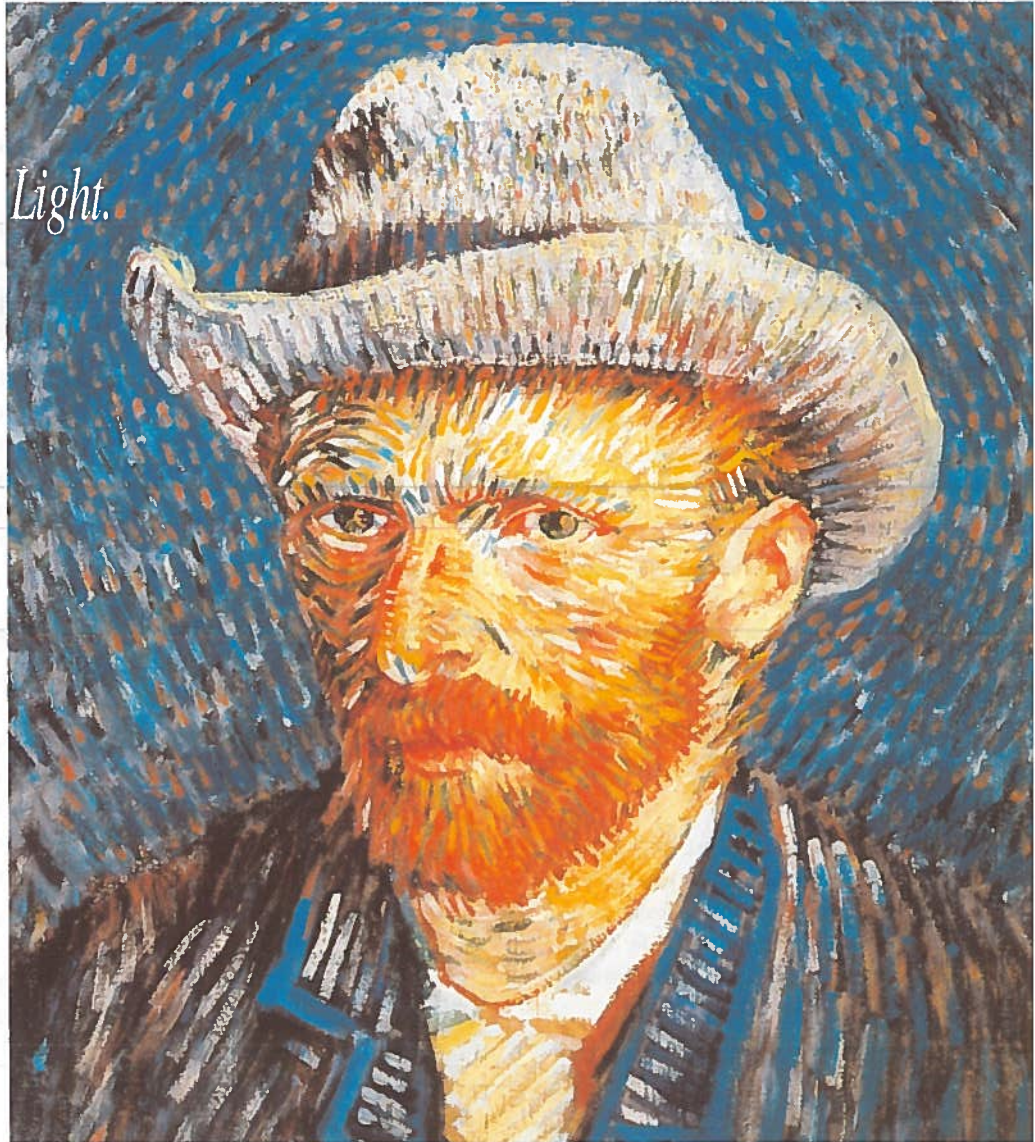
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Member Categories

PLASA has recently reviewed its membership categories and introduced a range of new ones which will enable both individuals and organisations to become members and benefit from a selected range of services.

There are now three new membership bands that come under the generic category of associate membership. Businesses that operate on the periphery of the industry or supply services to it can now join, as well as universities, colleges and charities. Individuals and consultants can also now join PLASA.

FULL MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership is open to ALL EUROPEAN UNION companies making a full time living out of the entertainment technology industry. Companies must have been trading for at least two years and need to provide two references from current Full members.

Cost of annual membership : £380

INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

International Membership has the same criteria as Full for those companies based OUTSIDE the EUROPEAN UNION. Unlike Full members however, International members do not have voting rights.

Cost of annual membership : £380

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

Corporate Membership is for businesses WITHIN the EUROPEAN UNION that belong to a group of businesses where another member of the group is already a Full member.

Cost of annual membership : £125

INTERNATIONAL CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

International Corporate Membership is for businesses OUTSIDE the EUROPEAN UNION but that otherwise meet the criteria for corporate membership.

Cost of annual membership : £125

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Associate Membership is for businesses or individuals operating only partially within the industry or supplying support services to the industry.

Cost of annual membership:

- a) *Businesses* : £345
- b) *Universities, colleges & charities etc* : £100
- c) *Individuals, consultants* : £50

Call Jan Shepherd at the PLASA Office for further information on becoming a PLASA Member

TELEPHONE: +44 1323 410335

Code of BUSINESS Ethics

The Association is currently reviewing a Code of Ethics prepared by former committee member, Matthew Tonks, which outlines the way in which a Code of Business Ethics and an Appeals Procedure might be implemented.

It is a move the Association has been wishing to make for some time and will give PLASA more direct powers to act in the interests of all the members by dealing with companies who fail to meet certain standards. The Code outlines a number of procedures it will follow in the event of members breaching the terms of the Constitution, which could include a fine or either suspension or termination of the company's membership.

The draft Code was mailed to all PLASA members in late May allowing time for comments before the AGM which takes place on Thursday June 15th. Full report on the AGM next issue.

Human Resources FREE ADVICE

It is well documented that SMEs (small to medium-sized enterprises) are increasingly overwhelmed by the amount of legislation relating to employment of staff.

In response to membership feedback in this area, PLASA will soon be launching a new service offering free advice and information on human resources issues. An expert in the field will be available to help with a wide range of enquiries including disciplinary and grievance procedures, employment contracts, recruitment, absence control and redundancy. Members can use the telephone, fax or e-mail for this service according to preference.

Consultancy in relation to specific projects or training will also be made available to the membership at preferential rates.

NEW
SERVICE

Language Line

Last month in L&SI a new service for PLASA members, Language Line, was announced. Language Line has, however, changed its name for business customers and is now known as Comunicado. All other aspects of the service will remain the same.

PLASA

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E-mail: norah@plasa.org

www.plasa.org

New MEMBERS

The following companies have recently joined PLASA.

Impact Audio Visual designs and installs audio visual systems and related equipment. The company is part of the Lanyfax group, a pan-European AV company.

Stonewood Electronics Ltd designs, develops and manufactures pro audio, DSP, lighting control and wireless communications equipment.

L-Acoustics of France is a manufacturer of speakers and amplifiers.

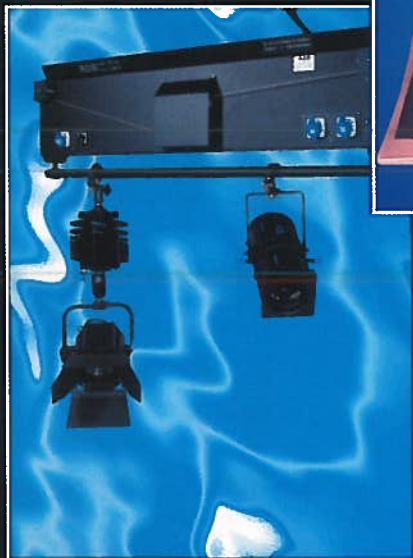
Yamaha-Kemble is a wholesaler of professional audio equipment.

Coef of Italy has converted from International membership to Full membership.

Our apologies to Acre Jean who we mistakenly listed as Acre Lighting last month - the company offers a range of theatrical drapes and backdrops, and not lighting as we inferred.

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WWG to Liquefy Waters Tour

When Roger Waters starts the second leg of his 'In the Flesh' US tour at the Ice Palace in Tampa, Florida, he will be backed by some sizzling liquid light effects courtesy of WWG's Peter Wynne Willson (right).



For Wynne Willson, whose relationship with Waters goes back to the early days of Pink Floyd, this production closes a generational circle between the 250W QI projected effects of the Floyd shows of the sixties, with the 6kW HMI TeleProjector, from French company Chameleon, that will be used for effects projection on this millennium year tour. "The big benefit of the TeleProjector," according to Wynne Willson, "is that it can be pivoted through 90°, even during a show, to enable special effects to be employed in the other orientation. However, the brightness and power we can deliver today with this equipment, is like making a comparison with reading by candlelight in the Dark Ages!"

For 'In the Flesh' part two, Wynne Willson has created what he describes as a 'Fried Slide' system with small bubbles, immiscible liquids and saturated colours so that coloured liquids will 'boil' across a giant screen behind Waters during his performance.

To ensure some consistency of appearance, as far as it is possible with such an organic effect, WWG has provided a semi-automated system to enable a competent operator to manage the delivery of the images at

showtime. Wynne Willson has attended production rehearsals at Calverston Naval Base in New York to train and encourage the lighting crew in the unusual aspects of liquid light technology. The tour will climax with a two-night concert at Madison Square Garden in mid July. The lighting designer for the tour is Simon Sidi and set design is provided by Jonathan Park.

We will be profiling Peter Wynne Willson in the next issue.

Bogus Letters

It appears a new batch of fraudulent letters are doing the rounds. We've highlighted this issue in the past and once again advise companies to be aware of approaches made to them by individuals claiming to be looking for a partner for a joint investment proposal.

The latest letter to have arrived on the desk of a PLASA Member is from a Mr David Songo from Sierra Leone who has supposedly been left a major stake in a diamond company, worth \$27.5 million dollars. Forced by the political unrest in the country to smuggle the money overseas, Songo is looking to transfer the money into a UK account for onward investment.

The letter asks that the recipient set up a nominated account for which they will receive 30% of the total amount. The theme of the letters are almost always the same and are usually littered with the death of family members, political unrest and huge amounts of money.

Anyone who receives such a proposal should contact the DTI on +44 0207 215 5000.



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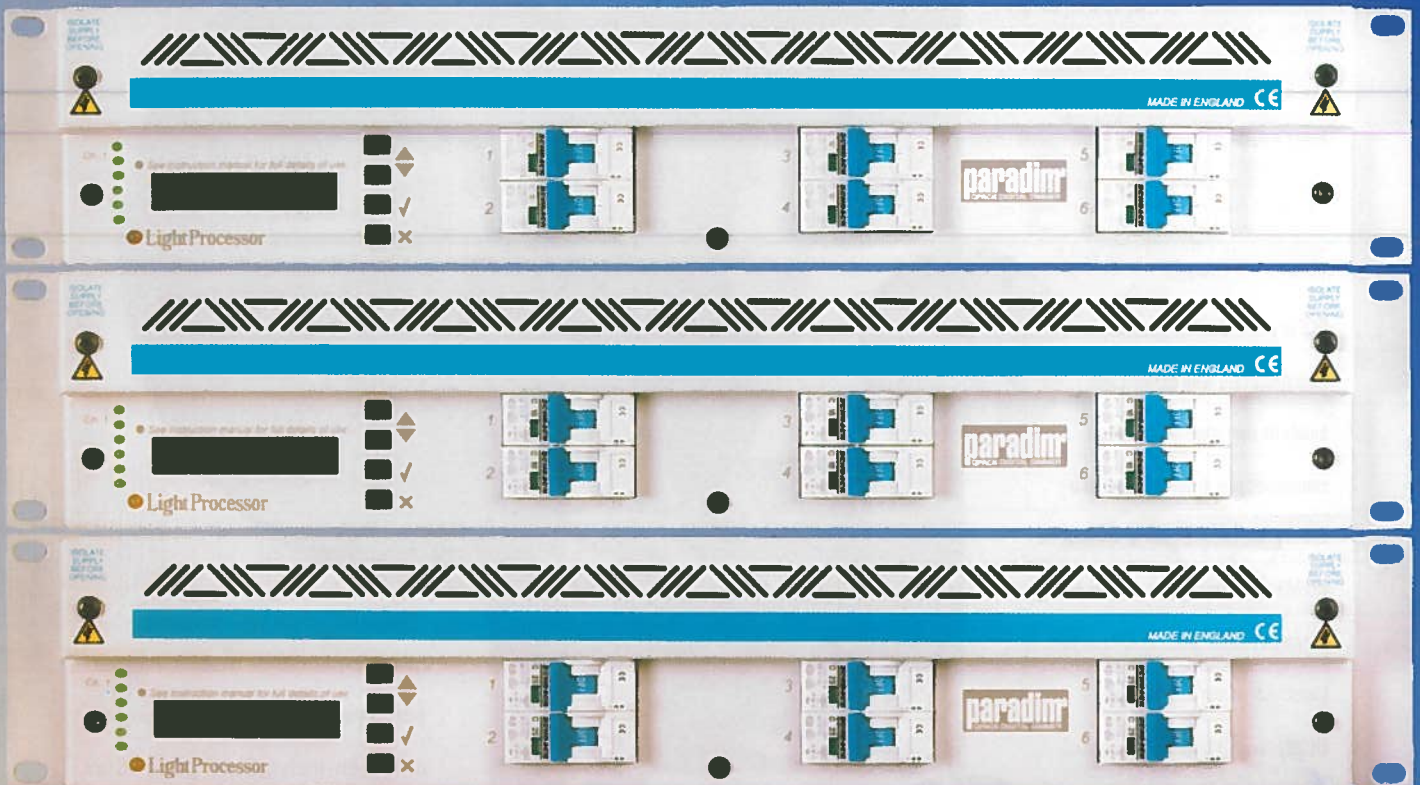
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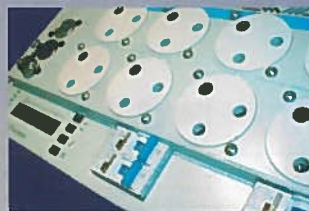
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Scouting For Theatre Expertise

Our picture, taken at the recent USITT conference in Denver, Colorado, shows members of a committee involved with rewriting the requirements for the Theatre Merit Badge for the Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

Sharp-eyed readers may recognise Jack Schmidt of Strong seated at the rear left of the picture. Schmidt told L&S: "Though there was a very minor rewrite last year, the requirements were last re-written in 1968, and the Theatre has changed a tiny bit since then."

The meeting at USITT also discussed the BSA 2001 National Jamboree: these events are held every four years at Fort A.P. Hill, near Fredricksburg, Virginia, south of Washington DC. Schmidt explained: "Some of us on that committee will be on the amphitheatre lighting staff for the Jamboree. The equipment for the shows, will be state-of-the-art equipment hired from regular suppliers. It is a major production."



Other members of the group pictured include Bill Myers (production manager, California State University, Fullerton), Darrell Winn (production manager, University of California, Davis), Bill Hektner (San Diego State University) and Tim Hansen (Oasis Stage Werks, Salt Lake City, Utah).

L&S will be following up the BSA 2001 National jamboree in a future issue.

Web Five

Take time out to check these sites

5

1. This site is for online slackers who surf the net when they're supposed to be working (you know who you are!). Download fake typing and phone sounds.

161.58.30.205/index.shtml

2. Online auction sites are the dish of the day and alongside the routine, this one offers some pretty strange items money can't usually buy.

www.firedup.com

3. Sweet toothers can order cakes online and have them delivered direct to the door.

www.thin-end.co.uk

4. This site has gained a cult following in the US with its hundreds of little known uses for well known products. For instance, tennis balls can prevent snoring and lemon juice can stop dogs barking!

www.wackyses.com

5. Insomniazine is a useful London listings site that details all the events in the capital, not to mention a celebrity spotting section.

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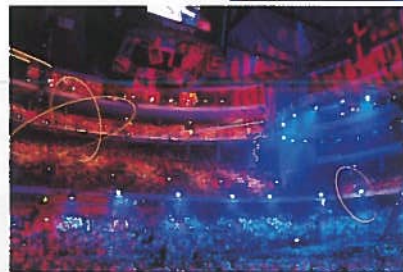
- Eurovision 2000

The Eurovision Song Contest has become a major television production with the very highest levels of production. This year's contest, staged at the 12,000-capacity Globe Arena in Stockholm in May, was screened to an estimated audience of over 100 million people in 34 countries worldwide, and featured 24 artists singing live over a four-hour broadcast - a mammoth undertaking for the production crew.

Broadcasters SVT (Sveriges Television) gave lighting supplier Spectra AB responsibility for pulling together the massive lighting spec for what was to be the largest intelligent light show ever produced in Sweden. Spectra also provided the 26-strong crew and production manager Ola Melzig, who worked alongside SVT's lighting designer Kristofer Röhr. The lighting grid featured a combination of luminaires from Vari-Lite and Martin Professional with a Virtuoso desk at the helm.

The Virtuoso, programmed and operated by Fredrik Jönsson of SVT controlled 25 VL7 zooming spot luminaires, as well as 63 Mac 500s, 63 Mac 600s and eight PAL 1200s which made up the majority of the stage lighting. There were also two Wholehog II consoles in action, each with extension wings. The first controlled the 100 Mac 600s which were built into the set (operated by Emma Landare), while the second looked after 17 Mac 250+ on the LED screens each side of stage, 24 Studio Due City Colors and 22 PAL 1200s over the audience and catwalk, as well as 30 2kW ADB profiles (13°- 36°) and over 100 James Thomas Par 64s. As well as the two Hogs, there was an additional Jands Echelon controller for 50 1kW Selecon fresnels and 40 James Thomas Par 64s (the second Hog and Echelon were operated by Palle Palm'er).

In all, over 300 automated Martin Professional luminaires were used, including more than 200 Martin moving heads, supplied by Martin distributor, Oscar Lighting. Two



large screens - a 44sq.m LED Panasonic, showing live footage from Swedish broadcaster SVT's camera team, and a 19sq.m Sony CRT JumboTron which showed the show's 'Lips' logo in the national flag colours of the act on stage - were supplied by Sweden's Massteknik. The company was also asked to help implement one of the most creative aspects of the show's production.

Over the past six months the company has purchased 115 modules (36sq.m) of the Pixelite PXT-1004 high resolution indoor LED screen (which, following Pixelite's recent acquisition by Lighthouse Technologies, has now been re-titled the Lighthouse LVP 102 screen). The show's designers came up with a world-first concept for these high performance, lightweight screens: creating a stage backdrop made up of independently mobile video screens, used to

display single or combined graphics images created for each artist competing in the contest. Five self-powered, radio remote-controlled mobile dollies - each carrying a portrait-format Lighthouse 10mm pixel pitch LED video screen, provided a unique backdrop to the contest.

Also fed to the mobile screens by wireless link were the screens' individual video signals, allowing the dollies to be totally free of cabling. Finally, for the show's five-minute musical finale, all five screens moved together to form one single panoramic screen. Lighthouse Europe's Dave Gunn, who provided technical back-up and assistance to the Massteknik team during the week of rehearsals, commented: "It was another innovative way of using video screens - and as far we know they were the world's first mobile, battery-powered giant screens."

The spherical shape of the Globe Theatre, with a height to the catwalk of 36m (plus a further 50 metres beyond that) made this a particularly precarious venue to rig. Thus SVT called on the highly-qualified DM Audio, who specified an exclusively Martin Audio sound rig. Lars Wern's company not only carried out the original

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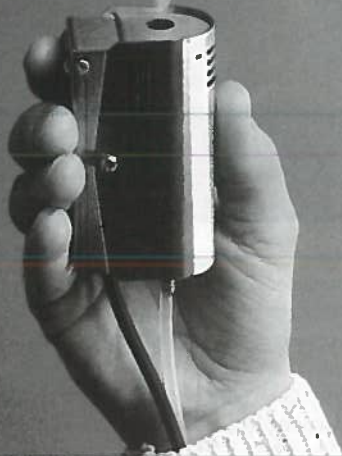
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News Round-Up



Right, the main Martin sound cluster.
Below, DM Audio's Lars Wern with fellow
FOH engineer Robert Ernlund

installation of the Globe 10 years ago, but had been on duty when Sweden last hosted the competition - at the Scandinavium Arena in Gothenburg back in 1985.

As a security precaution, all presets were backed up on two 56-channel Amek Recall consoles. Wern was joined FOH by another Gothenburg veteran, Robert Ernlund, while Mats Grahn and Leif Matsson had the challenge of delivering artist mixes through four invisible 'countersunk' Martin Audio LE700A wedges -

presenting the music in a stereo feed - and some 24 LE12J vocal monitors. Two floor-mounted W8C side-fills and subs behind the screen completed the foldback.

The rig was based around two main clusters, consisting of Wavefront W8C, W8CT and W8CM enclosures - flown on each side of the stage, with floor-mounted WSX sub woofers. To compensate for the trim height, DM Audio flew additional downfill W8Cs above the view of the camera, and added a row of tiny WT15 audience front-fill speakers.

They also favoured a W8C delay system to cover the back of the arena, despite knowing that the Martin Audio W8CT and CM long throw cabinets were quite capable of going all the way. With the extraordinary height of the venue, DM Audio thus managed to achieve almost 90 degrees of vertical coverage, adding a further W8C cluster each side to infill in the highest seating areas.

The backing music was fed frame-synch'd from the OB trucks via four-channel DigiBeat (from



SVT) and picked up at the FOH desk. "The new Rupert Neve RN inputs are the best we can get for a job like this," explains Wern. "The

automation has helped us keep track of a show which has 24 different artists." Robert Ernlund also seemed totally relaxed with the virtual dynamics. "We don't have the scene changes as we would in theatre, but we are storing each country's settings so we can get access to the virtual dynamics. The artists have effects and click tracks, but we had a CD to listen to on a compilation from

SVT ahead, so we could get the delays and effects set."

Effects were controlled via MIDI from the Recall desk. A mix of QSC amplifiers - EX 4000, MX 3000, PowerLight 4.0, PowerLight 1.8 and the new PowerLight 3.8x - powered the main clusters and Martin wedge monitor speakers. Control-wise, Grahn and Matsson alternated on a pair of 56-channel Soundcraft FIVE Monitor consoles - which could be configured as 56-channel or 52 mono/4 stereo, with 16 stereo busses.

As you may know, Denmark won the contest - which means that next year the Danes have to pay for the TV spectacular, and it'll probably be lit with even more Martin Professional luminaires than before.

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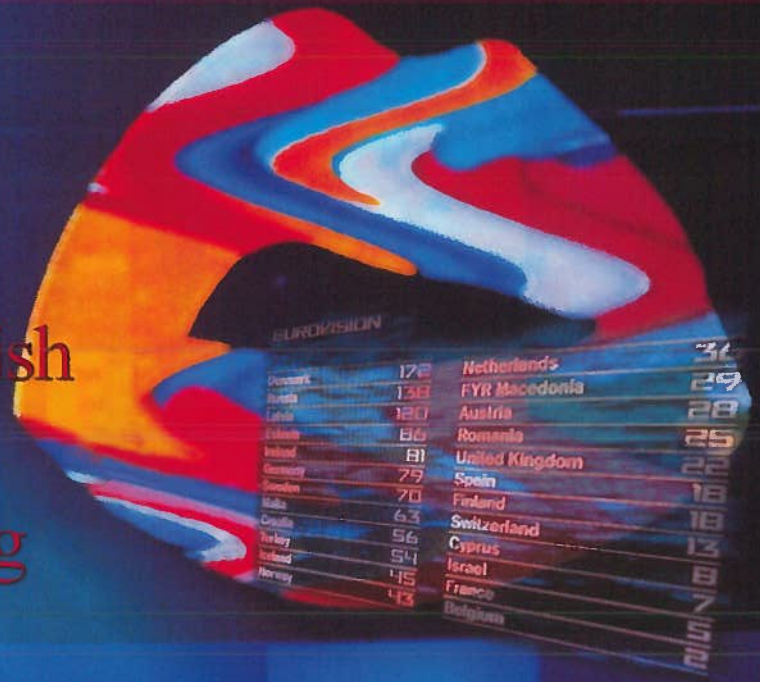
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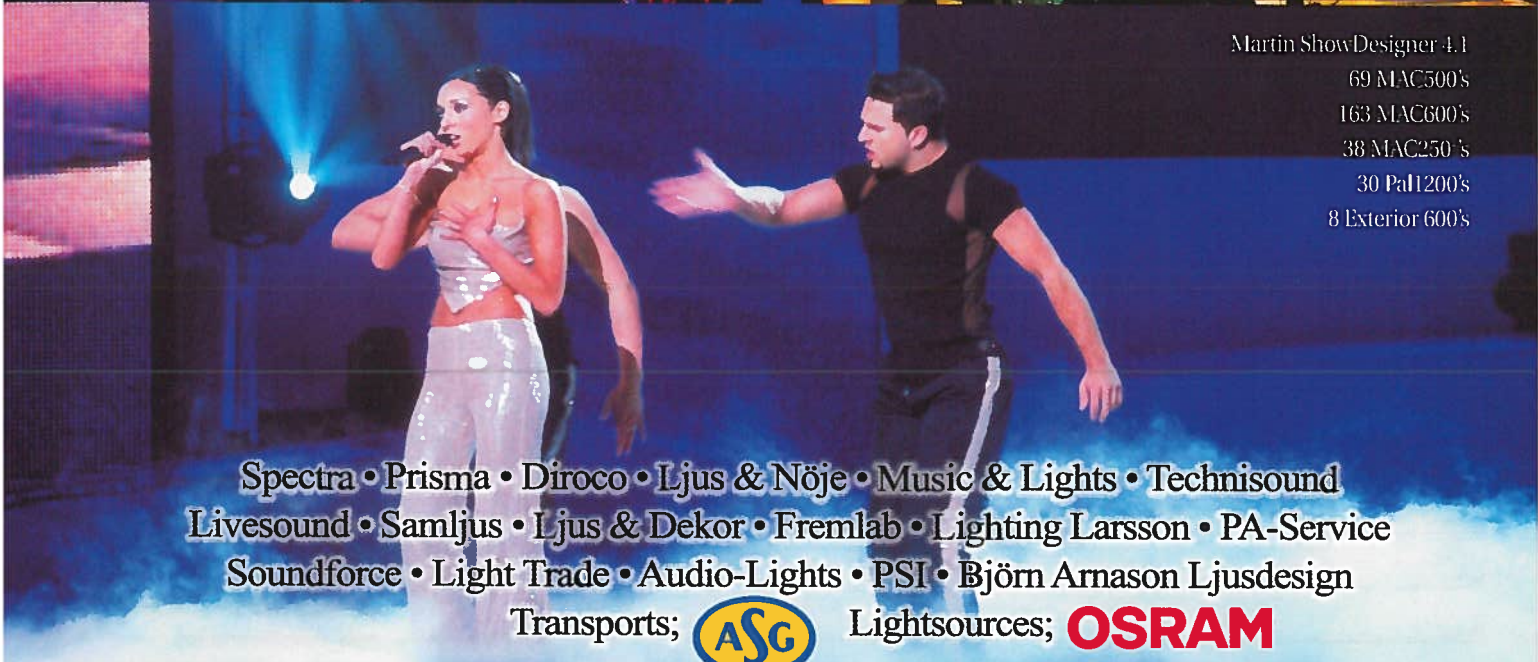
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Our Finest Hour

The RAF Museum in Hendon recently unveiled its latest attraction - a multi-media show which retells the story of the Battle of Britain. Entitled 'Our Finest Hour', the show is the biggest development the Museum has witnessed in recent years and with a six-figure price tag, the hope is that it will significantly increase visitor numbers at the venue, which currently attracts 140,000 a year.

To mark the launch, which coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the Battle of Britain, the Museum invited over a hundred VIPs and guests, including 36 Battle of Britain veterans to the official opening of the new show. The company behind the design of the show was Sarner International, who emerged with the most creative ideas when the contract was put out to tender.

Faced with two irreversible items - the size of the Hall (36 x 45m) and a number of static exhibits in place (a Spitfire and Hurricane, plus a Heinkel 111, Junkers 88, Messerschmitt 109 and 110), Sarner's storyboards envisaged a show which the audience would watch from a raised bank of seating erected to one side of the Hall. The planes would be in the lower foreground, a painted backdrop behind, and projection screens would be lowered into place on which archive footage would relate the story of the Battle of Britain.

The Sarner team, led by John Griffin, Ross Magri and Mike Bennett, worked with LD Bob Bryan and sound designer Charles Bennett on implementing



John Griffin, Ross Magri and Mike Bennett - the production team behind the RAF's new visitor attraction



their ideas. First, Sarner had to find a way to carry out the work without damaging the aircraft, and in particular the installation of the show infrastructure - overhead lighting bars and cabling. Using cherry pickers to avoid damaging the aircraft, Sarner then attached a range of Pars and ETC Source Fours to the bars. The Hall had originally been lit with Mercury lighting, which Sarner requested that this be changed to tungsten lighting, which they then interfaced to, adding dimmer circuits so they could control light levels. Since the planes were to be an integral part of the show, Sarner lit each cockpit by installing a mix of lamps.

With no budget available for acoustic treatment of the space, to give them the levels of intelligibility required, Sarner spec'd a pair of Tannoy 115s and a pair of 112s with TX2 controllers run through Crest and C Audio amplification. For the projection elements, two screens were rigged above the planes - the main scenically painted gauze screen (15m by 4.5m) and a mock barrage balloon (10m by 5m). The stills and footage for

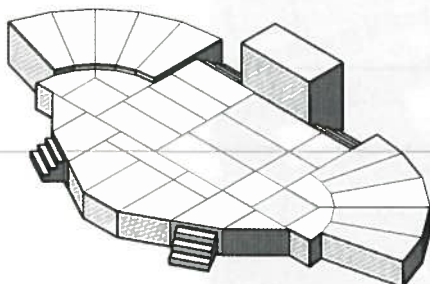
these are fed from NEC and Kodak projectors. To the rear of the planes stands a large dramatically painted backdrop (25m wide by 5m high). Commissioned from scenic artist John Campbell, it shows a war-torn London skyline which is cleverly brought to life by the use of dimmable fluorescents and Coda floods. Adding the haze effect is a Jem ZR20 smoke machine, whilst motorised lights mimic WWII searchlights.

Both the footage and audio clips for the main presentation were obtained from a number of sources and recorded and tracklaid in Sarner's own studio using Pro

Tools 4 and a JL Cooper CS10 control station. They were then layed back and MPEG2 encoded from Sony BVW 75 Betacam SP machines. The video segments were edited using a Windows NT I000 Avid Suite followed by a digi beta online edit. An Alcorn McBride V4+ show controller is used to trigger all the effects and to maintain video and audio synchronisation. Next to it, an Alcorn McBride DMX machine controls both the theatrical and exhibition lighting, with an Alcorn McBride DVM-2 handling playback of MPEG-2 video. A Fostex DI08 - an eight-track hard disk based digital playback machine - manages the surround and spot effects.

The official opening was conducted by the Secretary of State for Defence, Geoffrey Hoon MP and when the invited veterans saw the show, they were extremely moved by it, believing it to have captured the spirit of the Battle perfectly.

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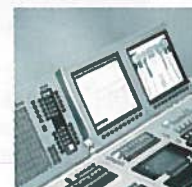
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News Round-Up



Edinburgh - The City of Opportunity

Showlight 2001, in Edinburgh, offers delegates opportunities not to be missed.

An afternoon at the Strand factory in Kirkcaldy will give visitors an inside look at one of the lighting industry's leading companies, whilst other visits range from the technical to theatre to distilleries - taking in some of the most notable landmarks in and around Edinburgh. These include Edinburgh Castle, famous for the Edinburgh Tattoo, St Andrew's Castle and Cathedral and Glenturret Distillery.

Another definite date for the diary is the Showlight Dinner, this time sponsored by Strand Lighting. Inclusive in the registration fee, this is a chance for you to wine and dine alongside some of the biggest names in the lighting industry. At the magnificent Hopetoun House, situated just 10 miles west of Edinburgh, diners will be surrounded by 18th Century furniture and paintings, including works by Canaletto and Gainsborough. Hopetoun House was built in 1699 and several features from the original interior remain, including silk wall coverings, rococo coved ceilings and the panelled main staircase.



To be held at the Edinburgh Festival Theatre, May 21-23, Showlight exists to give people time to talk and to discuss ideas with others in the lighting industry. A comfortable and international mix of manufacturers (but without the sales hype!), the importance is placed on the dialogue, rather than the equipment itself.

All scheduled visits are intended to complement this - allowing attendees the opportunity to mix with some of the top names in theatre, film, television, architectural and themed lighting design.

We are currently looking for innovative speakers to fill the last couple of available spaces. So, if you would like the opportunity to speak at Showlight 2001 - the event organised by lighting professionals for lighting professionals - or would just like further information on the colloquium and what it can offer you, please contact Ruth Rossington, Showlight 2001, 38 St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, BN21 3UT, telephone +44 (0) 1323 642 639.

Or you can visit our now up-and-running website which includes on-line registration at www.showlight.org.uk.

\$20m Las Vegas Entertainment

Millennium Multi Media.com, a new internet-oriented digital and traditional entertainment, technology and communications company, is to build the Millennium Entertainment Center, a \$20 million, 60,000 square feet, two-level dome housing a revolutionary entertainment venue.

Situated on Las Vegas' famed strip, the MEC, will accommodate 2,000 customers, and unlike other Vegas venues will have no gaming elements. The main part of the venue will be a range of conference facilities and a nightclub - the key attraction of which will be a computerised light and laser projection show featuring interior fireworks, falling snow, lightning, twisters, and a host of other computer graphic and holographic effects. World-renowned supper club impresario, Mark Fleischman, former owner of Studio 54 and creator of the well-known Tatou dinner clubs, will head the project.

BBC's Opti FutureWorld

The BBC's FutureWorld exhibition is touring nine major UK cities throughout this year.

Designed in-house by BBC Resources, it aims to promote new digital technology, at the same time as revealing the making of its recent successful 'Gormenghast' and 'Walking with Dinosaurs' programmes. The exhibition is divided into 11 zones, each defined with OPTI Trilite trussing. International exhibition contractor Networks of Sheffield are responsible for both installation and moving of the exhibition from venue to venue and are using seven 45ft trucks for this at present.

The Newcastle venue, The Lightfoot Centre, sees the first use of an auditorium built by Networks with feature work using OPTI Trilite. There are in fact two sets of exhibition material being leapfrogged around the country. The exhibition is free and details of the remaining venues and dates can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/futureworld.

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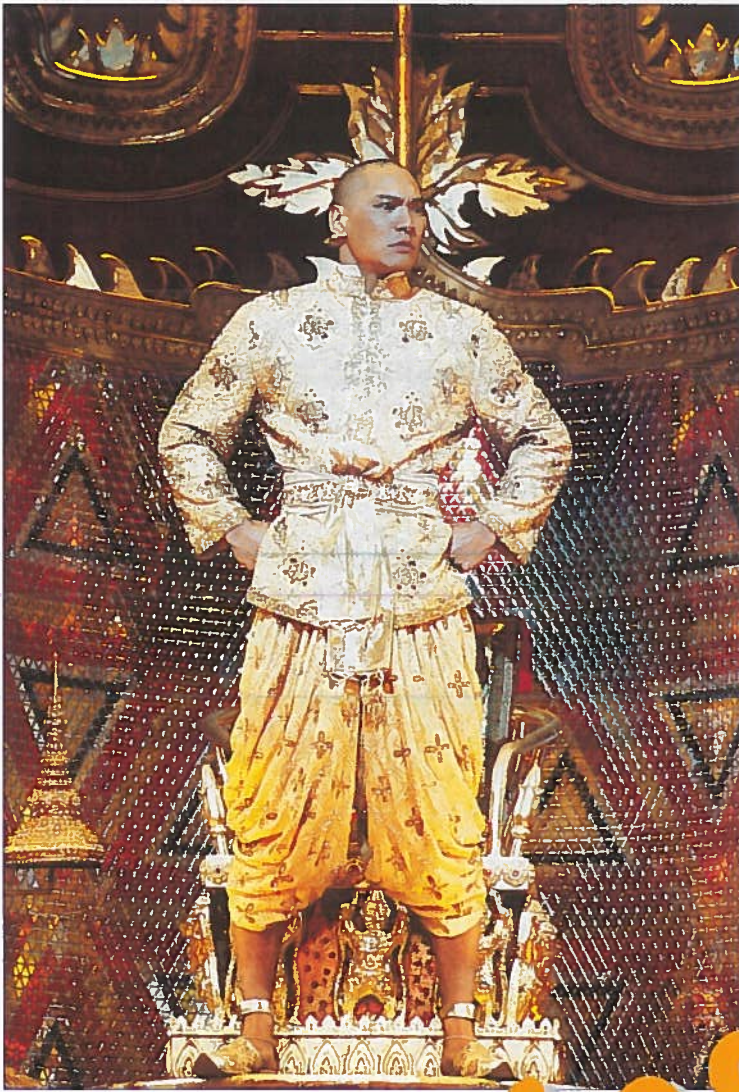
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The original production opened on Broadway on 29 March, 1951, where it proceeded to run for three years, racking up 1,246 performances. It received five Tony Awards, including Best Musical, and honours for both of its stars.

Christopher Renshaw's latest revival brings this

King & I

sumptuous

production to London's Palladium



THEATRE

I've been ravished - or so the posters promoting *The King & I* would have me believe. That statement conjures up images of Leslie Phillips and slightly improper suggestions to buxom blondes - not at all appropriate for one of Rodgers & Hammerstein's most popular musicals. But the slightly quaint language, redolent of *Morris Minors*, cravats and blazers, is actually spot on. This is a lavishly-staged production, presented in an opulent style surely not far removed from its forebear of 1957. Of course, part of that is predicated by the paternal hand of the R&H organisation, controlling casting, director and staging. Nonetheless, when the curtain opens you're quickly transported to another place, not through the use of some immense opening effect, but by the sheer luxury of the setting. It's Hollywood on the big stage and it's luscious.

There's been a lot of sniping at this show in the mainstream press, rather what we've come to expect from a production destined for success. Who cares if Elaine Page is beginning to show her years? She can sing, and acts passably better than most opera divas (whose acting inadequacies are somehow

overlooked in deference to their voices). And it's not beyond the realms of credulity to find Page attractive - a principal pivot of the plot - though in truth that attraction should be forged from the steel of her character - a trait

Page is not so adept at portraying. However, this is a populist show, its intended viewer 'the general public' - that's a reality the Americans have accepted and understood for years. The nay-sayers in the *Broadsheets* can stick their heads up their fundamentals all they like, this show looks destined to run and run.

So, nearly 50 years have passed since Yul Brynner made bald heads sexy and bushwhacked my parent's generation with his apparent ability to sing. Half a century that has seen post-war sentimental idealism replaced by a demand for more realism. Yet here is a show rooted firmly in the former, gentler idiom, that has reportedly advanced £5m in ticket sales. What are we supposed to make of that?

The sound for this presentation is designed by Paul Groothuis, designer in residence at the National Theatre for the past 14 years. Although not so well known in the West End, Groothuis does make forays outside the National from time to time: "It's good for me to get out," he explains, not unreasonably, "it stops me getting stale." A taste for variety that's surely a pre-





The Broadway production - photo: Joan Marcus

requisite for any designer keen to grow and develop fresh insights.

Groothuis is no stranger to R&H either, his Oklahoma at the National having been very well received - he's in no way a left field choice to design for this show. What he needed to bring to the Palladium was clear, in his mind at least. "I'm making it sound as lush as possible - the Palladium is quite a dry house. And I wanted to make it sound big - not loud - especially up under the overhangs of the balcony and the circle."

It's certainly the case that the two upper seating areas have their own architectural idiosyncrasies that can block sound. The void beneath the lower circle balloons up at the back, the view from the rear of the stalls being akin to looking through a letterbox. It's similar between circle and balcony above, narrow portals as it were, giving onto large airspaces, requiring plenty of speakers to ensure that the punters situated there get the coverage they deserve - and Groothuis hasn't skimped.

Richard Brooker, Groothuis's associate designer, took me around the theatre and explained the

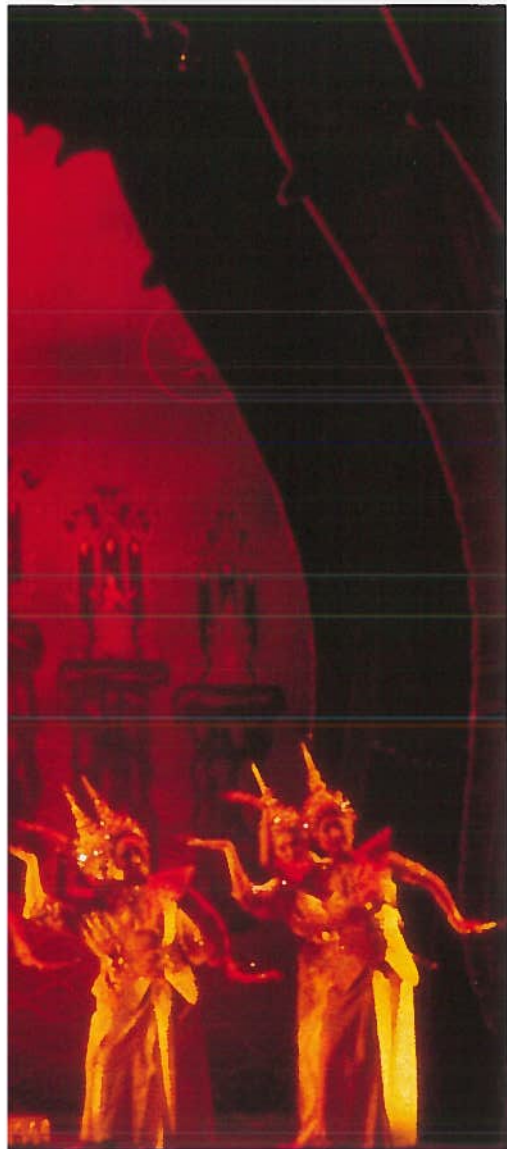
"Deans plays with this, too, throughout the show, sometimes subtly, setting up different orchestral 'shapes' for different numbers, and sometimes in a very deliberate and showy way as percussion sounds swirl up and down and - seemingly - around you, the latter most remarkable since there is no surround speaker system."

rationale behind each bit of the extensive sound system. "We've used John Owens from Aura Sound Design as our production sound engineer," he explained. "That's despite using Autograph as the equipment supplier." (Autograph still put a PSE on the show, in this instance Tony Gayle). "We do it that way because having someone in that position, independent of the supplier, is more effective," said Brooker.

Owens agreed, but added that: "Autograph had in fact been very responsive to everything

requested," not that Groothuis, Brooker or Owens appeared in any way demanding or unreasonable men. "The nice thing about working with Paul," said Owens, "is he'll talk it through with everyone. It's not quite democracy, but he does ask opinions. It's all open to discussion. He might tell me 'I want a particular speaker there', and so long as I know what it's got to do - to cover - then he'll leave it to me." Interestingly, and perhaps an indication of just how reasonable this affable Dutch designer is, Owens then pointed out: "If what I do doesn't give him what he wants, he'll still try to work with it, rather than re-wire the whole thing." Which is confirmation that Groothuis got to earn his spurs at the National doing his own fit-ups.

There are three elements to the sound system - vocal PA, orchestra and a surround-sound system, being d&b audiotechnik, Meyer and Canon respectively, with JBL and a few more exotic models dotted around as well. The main vocal system hangs on two trusses above the proscenium: balcony, circle, and stalls being covered by a mix of d&b C6s and E9s. "The front truss changed position several times before



Previews," said Brooker ruefully, lighting as ever being the culprit, "and the final position gave us a problem where combing was noticeable on half a dozen seats in the stalls." A one millisecond delay on the most central C6 solved the problem, such attention to detail being maintained by Groothuis throughout the theatre. Autograph's Tony Gayle confirmed that Groothuis spent three long nights moving around all over the seating areas setting system EQ and the delays. "That's when I step away," said a smiling Owens.

Orchestra PA is behind elaborate set pieces (abstracted elephants) which completely shroud the pros. Two Meyer MSL2s, a USW and a 650 per side make for a potent system that is gently applied - the 650 in particular only really makes its presence felt when the percussion warrants it.

The surround system, all Canon V100s, are deployed mainly up on the sidewalls of every level. "A retail environment speaker," as Brooker described it, "they have a very wide horn, making them ideal for a very low level, dispersed sound. They're delayed to the music system, have a touch of reverb, and are there just to lift the orchestra. To make it sound a bit more open." As for the rest of the delay and fill

system, comprehensive is the word: two rows under the Circle (d&b E3s and JBL Control 1s), two rows beneath the balcony (all JBL Control 1s), and a single row up on the balcony (d&b E3s) - 72 speakers in all when you add the odd fill tucked into an awkward corner. "Mainly it's to keep the energy levels up towards the rear," said Brooker, alluding once again to the big void up under the Circle, "the E3s on the balcony also help lift the low end."

One of the better-known songs 'Getting to Know You' best conveys just how natural the sound is. A light melody with powerful refrains, the song has all the spaces and dynamics to expose an unbalanced system, yet the image never strays from the stage. I do have to qualify that by saying L&SI was, as is so often the case, afforded generous seats in the stalls, just a few rows back from the stage, and certainly well outside the shadow of the Circle.

Unlike a rock show, it would be impolite to start wandering around the auditorium during the performance and check out coverage and imaging everywhere. However, Groothuis obviously spent the time setting the system (as evidenced by all on the production side) and if the sound in the open part of the Stalls was anything to go by, then I would expect it to be similarly naturalistic. The show is so good that I for one, would not be averse to visiting several times, sitting somewhere different each time. I don't believe I'd be disappointed.

Set designer Brian Thomson has presented Nigel Leving's with the most sumptuous of stages on which to marshal his lighting skills. Opulent and majestic, the predominant décor manages the skilful trick of overflowing with gold and jewels, without falling into the trap of being gaudy and vulgar. The sheer depth of the staging is breathtaking. While little of the action takes place upstage, the sense of palatial space is never wasted: we are at home with Siam's senior potentate, make no mistake. Leving's exploits this depth with gusto, the prevailing dusky blue against the blackened starcloth and faint fog, provides the backdrop to Anna's ship-borne arrival in the opening scene. It lacks nothing in conveying a

hot, humid Far Eastern harbour. The Palace, which appears in scene two, is lit in a reflection of its colours - reds and golds predominate. But it's the mise en scène I enjoyed most. A thin gauze would waft across mid-stage, lightly pleated and lifted at one corner, like a peek beneath the flap of an envelope. Alternating between strong side and soft overhead lighting, the gauze could change from translucent to a rich velvety solidity in the twinkling of a fader.

Front light is distant and dispersed, caressing the set, with most power from overhead. Often it's like watching a TV show in that there are few shadows, the softer front light smoothing them away. Then, an intimate scene twixt Anna and the King will be starkly isolated by ETC profiles tucked in under the sides of the Circle, which hit the principals at head height, adding dramatic sharp relief to the intensity of the scene. And Leving's gives himself plenty of angles to draw upon and build other contrasting dramatic looks. The complete rig is big, but then there's an awful lot of set and stage to light, over 270 of the ETC Sils, and even more of the Source 4 Pars, many fitted with Wybron scrollers, plus an Arri 4kW and a dozen High End Studio Spots.

The lighting rig, as well as being sizable, is a bit of a coup for PRG, this being their first ever West End production. Fortune ever favours the bold for PRG serviced the contract out of the soon-to-be-defunct SpotCo warehouse in Ealing, using SpotCo and LSD technicians. "The Ealing guys, and the chaps at LSD in Birmingham, did a fantastic job," said Alan Thomson of PRG.

Readers will no doubt recognise now the efficacy of PRG snapping up Thomson last year: his connections to the West End run deep, not least to King's production manager Richard Bullimore. "Of course, we did have one or two hiccups," admitted Thomson candidly, "but you do with any production." Thomson made the shrewd move of putting an experienced West End LX, Peter Lambert, on the PRG payroll for the build period and fit-up. "We told him 'come to Ealing, put your team together, and prep' the gear as you'd like to see it arrive.'" It proved a good model under the circumstances, as



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Bullimore explains: "It was obviously a learning curve for them. Certain practises they were used to were not appropriate for theatre. But on the whole it worked very well, there was nothing we couldn't resolve easily."

Many of the lanterns were shipped over by PRG from their US stocks, requiring re-wiring and CE certification, a task undertaken by AC Lighting: the remainder, plus cabling and control, came from both LSD's and SpotCo's inventories. Frazer Hall was Bullimore's on-site production LX – another useful choice as Hall knew Lambert professionally, having previously worked together on *Lion King*. Hall too found little to fault, certainly not with the kit. "It was just the small details, things like cable lengths, and staggered spiders. Their standard lengths didn't conform exactly to what I'd asked for, but they soon learnt, and built everything I needed exactly to spec'."

On the control side, Hall did encounter one quite tricky conundrum: "We were originally going to programme the moving lights on a Hog II and then download that onto the Obsession II which would run the show. The Obsession website documentation says you can download DMX into it, it even has the input port, but we discovered you can't. [ETC has now corrected that information.] Fortunately, the moving lamps are only used as refocusable (sic) instruments, nothing flash, and Andy Voller, our programmer, was easily able to just programme straight into the Obsession. It's OK, but the Obsession, being only 8-bit technology, is a touch slow for a moving light console. Luckily, the show doesn't call for any slow pans." That aside, Hall declared himself well satisfied: "On the whole it was fine."

If the reports of ticket sales are credible then success is assured. Will promoters now jump on the 'classic' bandwagon, and fill the West End with the R&H canon? Well, of course, to an extent they have always been there – *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, and many more; these shows have never really left us. But nothing has exploded onto the London stage with quite so much vigour as the *King* just has. There's a sea change going on in audience tastes, and only the canny surfers will learn to ride it.

Photos: Michael Le Poer Trench

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One thing that is certain in life, other than death and taxes, is the uncertainty of it all.

Especially, that is, if you are a lighting designer. It may be that very uncertainty that is the attraction in the first place. We all joke that nobody goes into lighting expecting to make a fortune (and with one or two notable exceptions that is still the rule) but the question that's been bothering me recently is, what happens if and when it all goes seriously pear-shaped?

WHAT HAS BROUGHT this to the fore is the moving case of Tom Donnellan whose beautiful wife, Spanish actress and theatre director Elena Armengod, has been struck down with a genetic version of Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease, a degenerative brain disorder which is rapidly incapacitating in numerous and indescribably unpleasant ways. There is no cure. If that isn't bad enough, and

what could be worse, Tom and Elena live in Spain where the support for the sick, is family, rather than state, dependent. Obviously, she needs round-the-clock care.

TOM, A PROLIFIC LIGHTING DESIGNER, has been forced to stop work in order to devote all his time and attention to nursing Elena and to looking after their two daughters who are 13 and six years old. Doctors, drugs and all medication are extremely expensive and neither of them has

any medical or life insurance. Not, I imagine an unusual situation in our profession, but in Elena's case the insurance possibilities would, presumably, have been slim if available at all.

TOM IS WELL KNOWN in our business for some pretty hairy past productions, some of which have been written up in this magazine, some even by me. In the hairy department, I am thinking specifically of his 'Field in the Sky' production on the Maas river in Rotterdam, which involved 120 metres high floating cranes and 600kW of lights, and of The Red Bull Air Show in Austria, which embraced all manner of daredevil craziness including a flown 7kW searchlight. Tom is both a friend and an associate, quite apart from being one of the 'good guys'.

HIS FRIENDS, and those who simply want to help, can send financial support by cheque or transfer to: Account no. 00214038, Royal Bank of Scotland, 9 Pall Mall, London, SW1 5LX; Sort code 16-00-83. Cheques should be made payable to Tom Donnellan. Friends who wish to express their support on a personal basis can E-mail Tom at the address given at the end of this column. He will enjoy reading your E-mails, which he described to me as his 'window on the world'. However, don't be too upset if you do not get a reply, either right away, or at all, because of the emotional pressure he is under.

THIS HORRENDOUS STORY, and who amongst us can really grasp the enormity of their situation, has made me focus on the plight of the lighting designer in Tom's position and consequently to devote the whole of this column to the subject this month. As one who has had to contend with serious illness during my career, and the consequential financial fallout, I am perhaps more aware than most how such experiences dealt at random by life's lottery, can impact on one's daily life and resources both material and mental. Like Tom, I had no health insurance that covered loss of income and, in effect, I am still

paying the price of that temporary incapacity today. Unlike Tom Donnellan, though it didn't seem like it at the time, with huge support from my wife, it turned out that we did have the capacity to survive the trauma. Others, as in Tom's case, will not be so fortunate.

WHAT HAS SHOCKED ME, is that in carrying out the research for this article, I discovered that our industry has no fund to assist with financial support in such circumstances. Lighting designers are the lifeblood of our industry, makers of lighting equipment depend on them, they are both the innovators and the customers, we should be there with a safety blanket when one of them slips in the proverbial flies. I would like to see PLASA set up a fund, in cooperation with the ALD, to support LDs when the lights go dark for them.

I KNOW THAT I HAVE THE SUPPORT of Matthew Griffiths, who himself has good reason to be sympathetic, and that of Rick Fisher, the ALD's Chairman. As Fisher says: "The founding principle of the ALD was to provide professional support for the often isolated lighting designer. It is a natural extension of this goal to be able to offer assistance to those in our business in extreme circumstances. I personally support the creation of such a fund, will actively contribute to it, and hope the industry will come on board."

IT WOULD BE A START if, at this year's PLASA Show, one of the annual charitable donations went to such a fund set up by the ALD, and Griffiths is happy to confirm that this would be entirely possible: "PLASA and its members would be very supportive of such a cause," Matthew told me. Subsequently, there could perhaps be an option on member's renewal forms to make an additional, voluntary contribution to the fund, and other events and sponsors could be canvassed to chip in. I understand that the ALD is beginning to investigate low cost insurance packages for members, the high cost of which was a point emphasised to me by Tom Donnellan, again such options could be promoted alongside membership renewals. All, and any other, ideas would be welcomed by E-mail to tony@wvg.co.uk.

THE TOURING INDUSTRY is way ahead of us lighting people, through the Production Services Association (PSA) which represents the interests of road crews, and which achieved charitable status this month. Come on PLASA and ALD members and officials, give me your support on this one. I will kick things off by contributing my (small) fee for this column to the fund.

MEANWHILE, our hearts go out to Tom and Elena and their two children as they struggle with their truly dreadful plight. His friends can contact Tom Donnellan by E-mail at the following address: tdi@render.es

"What has shocked me, is that in carrying out the research for this article, I discovered that our industry has no fund to assist with financial support in such circumstances."

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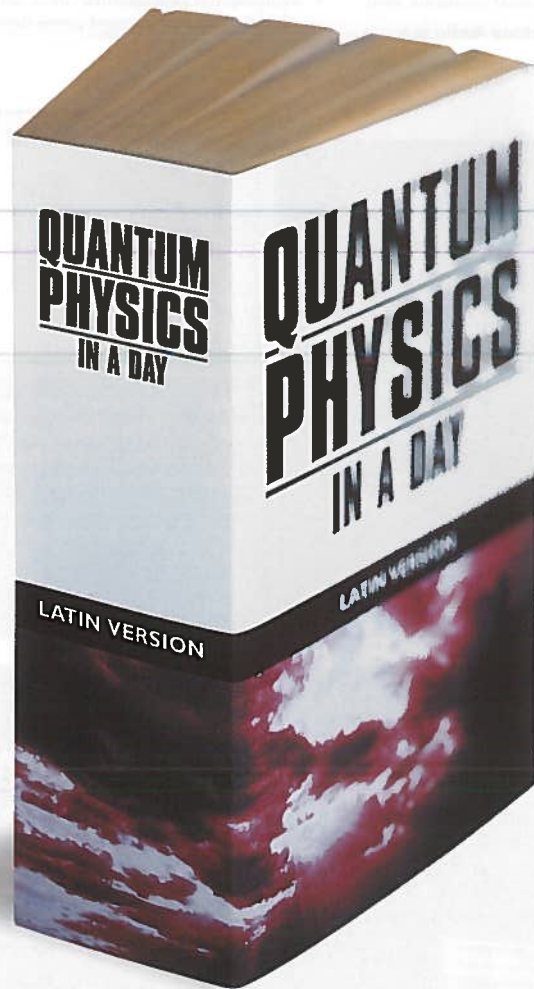
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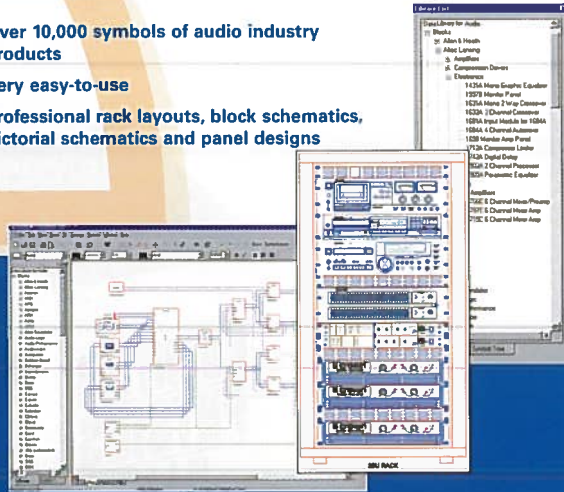
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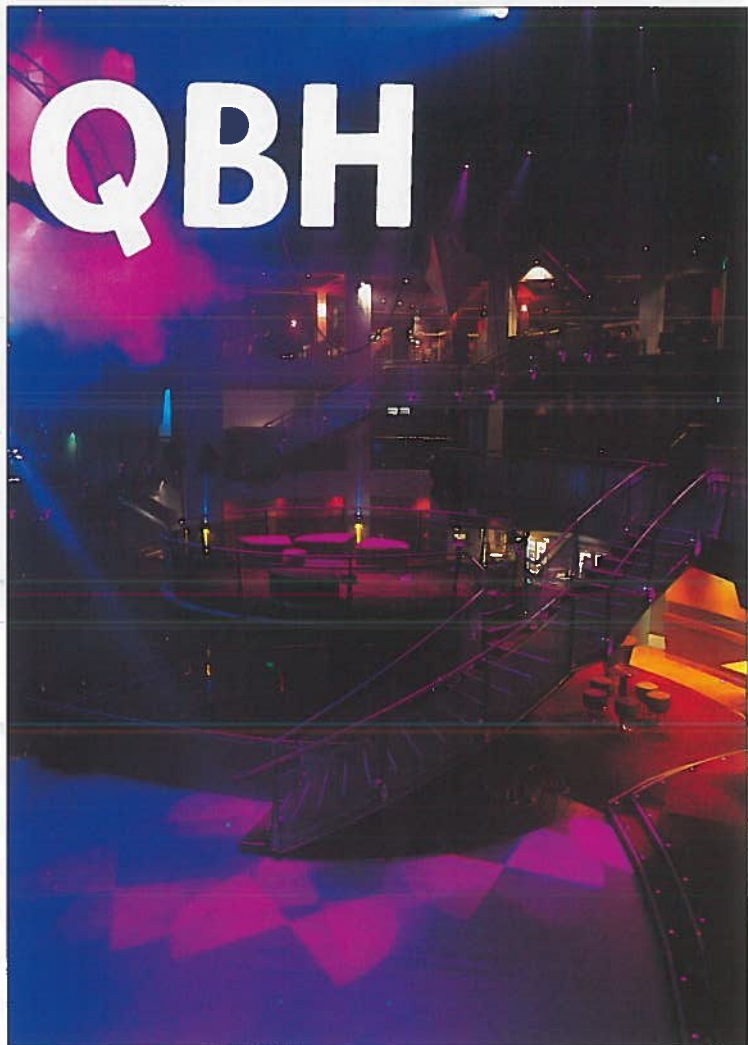
Club QBH

The Queens Bridge Hotel, locally known as the QBH, was an integral part of Melbourne's working life for over 60 years. It was one of the very few pubs granted an 'early' licence, which permitted it to open at six in the morning. Now it's more likely to be closing at that time as Andy Ciddor discovers

Purchased by Bruce Mathieson in the late 1980s, the hotel had gradually lost many of its traditional clientele as the docks area was redeveloped into the Southbank business and residential projects, and the vast Crown Casino hotel and entertainment complex. This is precisely why Mathieson had originally acquired the hotel - as a site for a club in a newly developing leisure and recreation precinct. His vision was to build Melbourne a world-class dance club and live venue for 18 to 25 year-olds, on a scale not previously seen. In the mid-nineties, Mathieson engaged architects Nick Varthalis and Lex Carter, who together with his son, Bruce Mathieson Jr, and consultants from Total Concept Projects, spent the next three years developing the concept and designs for the venture, and obtaining the requisite building permits. In 1997, last orders were taken at the Queens Bridge Hotel for the very last time.

Club QBH is built around the bones of the old hotel. Whilst it retains the pub's original façade, the club building is approximately four times the hotel's size, encompassing the entire block, including what had been the hotel car park. The form of the club is a sweeping, three-level open space with mezzanine floors. The space is further broken up by small lounge areas on intermediate levels of the curved staircases, which architect Lex Carter describes as "stairways to draw you upwards". According to Carter, the volume of the 2,500 capacity venue was deliberately fragmented. "Even if there are only a few hundred people in the club, they won't feel lost in the vastness of the space," says Carter. "The levels also allowed us to provide good sightlines to the stage for when live acts perform."

The architectural theme of the club is the sphere and its close two-dimensional relative, the circle. There is a striking 10m diameter glass dome in the ceiling some 16m above the main dance floors (Lex Carter is careful to point out that this structure is actually a segment of a sphere and not a true dome). The glass dome is outlined by a two-level circular truss system at ceiling height which provides a major rigging position for lighting. Suspended on chain motors above the dance floors are two 3m and one 5m diameter triangular-truss spheres which can be raised or lowered (within specified safety limits, of course) by the DJ. The larger, central ball, also winches open with a



pair of chain motors to become twin truss hemispheres, in the process exposing the luminaires and the cluster of six mirror balls within it.

The curved stage is only 750 to 900mm above the dance floor levels which is sufficiently elevated for live acts, but low enough to be accepted as a dance floor area in club format. This was of importance to Carter, whose philosophy is that there's nothing worse than looking at an empty stage. The lounge areas which take the place of staircase landings are also disks, trimmed with glass and stainless steel balustrades. There is also a disk-shaped platform, perched atop a column some 3.5m above the centre of the dance floor area. It has been designed for use by performers, as a DJ position, or a front-of-house mixing and control position for live shows. Presently, "the Mushroom" - as this disk is known to the club staff - is being used as a launching platform for the trapeze act which has been performing at the club for several months.

The façade of the original 1930s worker's pub is now the entrance to the club which, from the street, looks much the same as it always has. Patrons are frequently mystified at how large the building is inside - comparing it to the effect of entering Dr Who's famous vessel, the Tardis. This state of disorientation is further enhanced when patrons look down and discover that they are standing on a glass floor suspended about 100mm above a bed of white pebbles; an effect described by Carter as "like walking on water".

In keeping with Bruce Mathieson's vision of a world-class club, the décor and visual elements of the club's technology have been designed to create a strong impact. Some 4.7km of optical fibre is used to outline elements of the structure, illuminate the edges of the treads on the staircases, light up balustrades, give pin point patterns in the floor, and backlight translucent fibre-glass panels in the club's seven bars. The fibres, which were supplied and fitted by Ambience Lighting, are illuminated by 12 Digilin Arcblaze 150 HD light boxes,



NIGHTCLUB





which offer DMX512 control of colour and transition rate. Pre-programmed colour changes can be swept around the club under control from the main DJ console.

Operationally, the club has two distinct personalities. In club mode, the entire system of lasers, video projection, sound, lighting, truss winches, atmospheric effects, etc, are under the control of the DJ, who has to fit these tasks around selecting and spinning the appropriate music and keeping the audience amused. The interfaces and control systems for the DJ need to be foolproof and semi-autonomous. As a live venue, on the other hand, every device in each system must be manually adjustable and able to be played as part of the performance. There are also some serious differences in equipment requirements between a DJ playing dance music and a live band performing on a stage, especially in the areas of audio and lighting. Club QBH has been equipped to handle both sets of requirements.

The main PA system is designed around two FOH clusters placed left and right of what is the stage area for live shows. Each cluster contains eight Electro-Voice X-Array Xi-1183/64 full-range speakers and four EV X-Array Xi-2181 subwoofers, driven by EV P3000, P2000 and P1200 amplifiers from EV Merlin ISP-100 crossovers. As additional fill in club mode, the clusters are augmented under the main balcony by eight EV Deltamax speakers powered by EV P2000 and P1200 amplifiers via an EV Dx34A crossover. On the rear wall of the first floor area, fill is provided by four EV Sx300 compact speakers that are time-aligned through a Yamaha SPX990 signal processor and powered by an EV P2000 amplifier.

In club mode, the signals are sourced from the main DJ console. This consists of a Rane MP24x console, fed from three Technics SL-1200 MkII turntables, a Denon DN-2500 Dual CD player and a Vega radio mic. There is a second, similar DJ console, mounted in a custom-built roadcase that can be placed anywhere in the venue to give complete flexibility in the style of presentation available in the club. To provide sufficient stability for the two Technics turntables, David Brace of Total Concept Projects, the principal technical contractor for the QBH, came up with a 12mm marble plate under each turntable mounted on a pad of 25mm compressed rubber for damping. Brace is very pleased with the result. "It has been put on stage where the FOH PA stacks are either side of desk," he says. "The DJ has been able to play records all night at full volume without problems." There

"But perhaps the best measure of a club which is serious about staying in the marketplace and keeping up its standards, is how QBH is planning for the long term . . . a not-inconsiderable sum has been allocated for capital equipment replacement and upgrades at the end of the first year of operations."

are some cable points around the venue to link the portable console back into the main DJ desk, but TCP included a Shure radio link to the main DJ desk to enable the mobile console to be located with maximum flexibility. Monitoring for both DJ consoles is through JBL Eon self-powered speakers.

For live performances, there is a complete FOH and foldback system stored backstage in roadcases. Based around a 48-channel Midas Heritage 2000 main desk, and a 48-channel Soundcraft SM12 foldback desk, the system includes 12 EV T221M monitor wedges, an EV Mongoose drum-fill, Shure microphones, DI boxes, stands, etc.

Processing available includes Klark-Teknik DN514 Quad Gates and DN360 graphic equalisers, a Yamaha Rev-500 digital reverb and Yamaha SPX990 signal processors. This is a pretty damned serious system to have on standby, but it gives a good indication of the level of professionalism that has generally been lavished on Club QBH.

The club's laser system is a Laservision Genesis full-colour, 3.5W, water-cooled, twin-head unit, controlled by a Laservision Spectravision scanhead controller. The sequences programmed into the system by TCP during commissioning are triggered via a Laservision IP 2000 touchpad controller located at the main DJ position. The IP 2000 has a dedicated key for each of the nearly 100 sequences stored in the Spectravision controller.

Video projection at QBH is from a pair of Sony VPL-X1000 high resolution LCD projectors throwing onto 3.6m by 2.4m screens located on the rear wall of the venue, either side of the stage. Program sources available on the switch matrix in the DJ booth are DVD, VHS tape and the club's off-air reception system. A Videonics Titlemaker 2000 enables the overlaying of messages, club promotions and the like over the output of the video switcher. Whilst both projectors are normally fed the same signal, it is possible to route off-air signals directly to one projector independently of the switcher. This would allow the patrons in Aussie-Rules-Football-obsessed Melbourne to watch a game of 'footy' on one screen and video clips on the other.

A pair of continuously running Reel Fx DF50 diffusion foggers with DMX adapters are mounted under the stage, venting through the mesh stage surround to keep a permanent haze in the club. Heavier fog effects are achieved with a DMX remote-controlled Jem Twinhead Clubsmoke machine, also located under the stage.

The lighting rig consists of 12 Par 56s on a bar over the stage area, running off a single Jands GP12 12 x 2.4kW dimmer rack. This is augmented by 16 Futurelight MH 660 moving head spots and a pair of Coemar NAT 1200 MSR moving mirror spots on the lower level of the central truss ring, six Coemar NAT 1200 MSRs in the central 5m truss sphere and another in each of the 3m truss spheres. The 5m central truss sphere also has two Apollo Paradox and two Apollo Prisma effects units, two TAS 1500 Strobes, a 1.2m star-shaped mirror ball and seven smaller mirror balls ranging in size from 200mm up to 600mm. The two 3m truss spheres are each fitted with two Apollo Equinox effects, a strobe unit and a 900mm star-shaped mirror ball. Intel Controls DMX-controlled relays are fitted to the truss ring and the three truss spheres to control motors and effects devices, which do not operate directly from DMX512.

Lighting control is based around a PC running the ShowCAD show controller, which is configured to output two DMX universes. Dual rings of DMX are split through custom-built DMX splitters, and distributed to the stage, the AV equipment room, truss ring and the three truss spheres. As there is no production lighting console in the QBH, all lighting programming was undertaken by TCP commissioning staff on a Compulite Sabre console prior to the opening of the club, and transferred to the ShowCAD system via its

DMX input. A library of packaged building-block sequences was developed with the intention that these could be used regularly for 12 months before scheduled reprogramming. Facilities exist for easily incorporating an additional lighting controller for such occasions as New Year's Eve, when an Avolites Azure 2000 was brought in to run the live elements of the evening.



The dual-ring truss around the base of the glass dome has the top ring fixed in place and the lower ring suspended below it from pipe trolleys. This allows the lower ring to be rotated for access from a single point for maintenance, rather than being lowered the 30m to the floor. The truss spheres can be brought all the way down to floor level for equipment access by

switching the PLC truss controller into maintenance mode - a function not available at the DJ console.

In club mode, all QBH visual and effects systems are designed for simple operation by the DJ. The lighting system and atmospheric effects are controlled by a simple musical keyboard which produces MIDI signals to trigger the pre-programmed sequences in the ShowCAD. There is a remote panel for the chain motor controller, and the laser system is controlled through its touch-pad interface.

According to club general manager Marcus Johns, Saturday nights are so popular that during the night some 4,000 people pass through the doors of a venue which admits only 2,500 at any one time. The club also hosts live band gigs, underage sessions (no alcohol served and no-one over 18 admitted) and corporate functions. They are also exploring ways to use the venue in the earlier parts of the week. But perhaps the best measure of a club which is serious about staying in the marketplace and

keeping up its standards, is how QBH is planning for the long term. The TCP technical staff who program and maintain the equipment, are already in discussions with QBH management on how best to spend the not-inconsiderable sum which has been allocated for capital equipment replacement and upgrades at the end of the first year of operations.

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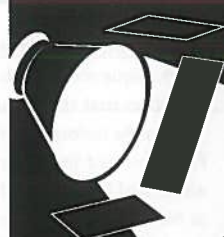
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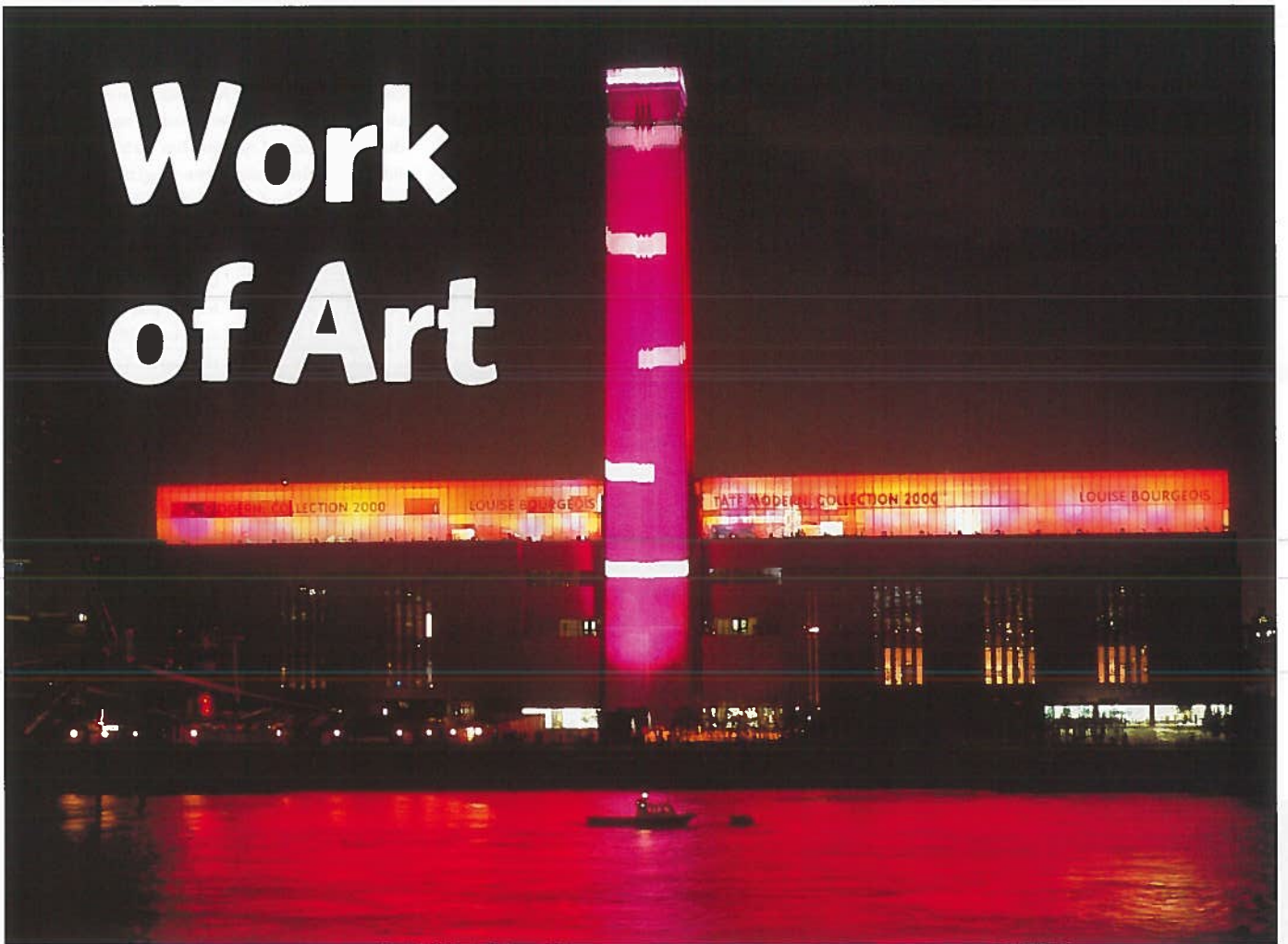


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Work of Art



The already-famous new addition to the British art scene - the Tate Modern on London's Bankside - was officially opened by The Queen on May 11th. London's glitterati (the guest list covered everyone from the Prime Minister to Mick Jagger) arrived in their thousands for the hottest date in town and the VIP invitations were reportedly changing hands for over £1,000 on the black market.

The new Tate Modern (the name reportedly at the suggestion of London cabbies) now dubbed the 'Cathedral of Cool' by the media is so far removed from its heritage that one commentator was forced to remark that it is the greatest transformation "since the Princess kissed the frog."

When Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (perhaps better known for Battersea Power Station and the famous British red telephone box) first designed Bankside in the early fifties, he can't have foreseen that within less than four decades, the turbines would grind to a halt and the Tate organisation, led by director Nicholas Serota, would claim it for its own. Their mission to house the international part of a collection that was rapidly outgrowing its Millbank home.

The task of translating this sizeable structure into a modern museum fell to Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron. Inside the gallery's lobby,



Ruth Rossington talks to the creative and technical teams behind the recent launch of Tate Modern

the 100ft-high former Turbine Hall, which runs the whole length of the vast building (500ft), now offers an imposing entrance to the gallery.

The building's landmark 325ft central chimney also remains, but is now the lynchpin for the most noticeable change to the exterior of the building - a two-storey glass structure often referred to as the 'light beam' - which runs its entire length. For the crowning touch, Herzog & de Meuron also collaborated with artist Michael Craig-Martin to create a lightweight luminous roof fabricated from translucent panels (aka the 'light box'), which illuminates the chimney's apex like a beacon.

As befits the highest-profile modern art gallery opening in Europe for many years, the Tate Modern wanted its launch to capture the front pages of the international press - and create stunning images for the BBC who were broadcasting the event live. To help them realise this ambition they called in creative experts Imagination to design and produce the opening show. Since light had been very much a feature of the renovation, it seemed only logical that the launch should take this as its theme too.

Following initial meetings between the Tate and Imagination MD Gary Withers, a team of

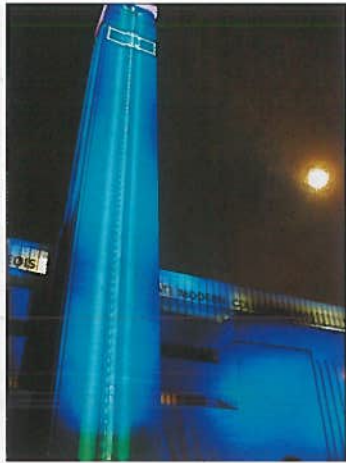
five were appointed - event producer Mike Halford, production manager Alistair Wilson, project manager Daisy Huet and the two designers - Kate Wilkins handling the lighting, John Del'Nero the sound. The Tate were insistent that they didn't want a show or 'spectacular' of any kind, rather a 'treatment' of the building and so Wilkins sketched out various options inspired by the building.

She had two principal angles of viewing to consider. There would be the invited guests on the river's south bank and there would be the TV cameras positioned across the Thames at Blackfriars. "The lighting was designed," she explains, "to concentrate on the very strong shapes and features of the building, so from across the river the 'cross' was revealed between the chimney and the 'light box', while the guests close to the building would also see two different layers of colours projected onto the chimney enhancing the brick's texture." The lighting scheme included lasers which would highlight the building's more industrial architectural features - the whole accompanied by a soundtrack of classical choral music.

The designs were quickly agreed by the Tate, so on a cold December day, the production team headed to Bankside to run a series of tests. At



over 650ft long on its northern frontage and a largely brick facade (4.2 million in fact) the former Power Station posed a fairly unique canvas. Kate Wilkins knew that the bricks would have a very low reflectance factor and be highly absorbent, so wanted to establish what colour levels were needed and which light would best provide them. Several different lights were lined up for the trials, which devolved, after some careful experimentation, down to a small palette of tools headed by 50 Vari-Lite VL5Arc wash luminaires. "We chose the VL5Arcs because in the tests it was the brightest and most controllable luminaire of its type. I wanted the light to climb the whole of the chimney in a long, smooth flow, which demanded a very powerful optical lens system to achieve it in a



clear that the use of imagery would somehow conflict with the clean lines and highly controlled look of the launch. Imagination recorded the trials using broadcast 3CCD cameras to give them an idea of how the light levels would translate to the small screen. They then presented their findings to the BBC so that they, in turn, could make preparations for the live broadcast.

Behind the scenes Imagination had to carry out an extensive risk assessment exercise - the paperwork for which ended up running to several hundred pages. One of the more curious, but entirely understandable, elements of this was to guarantee that no works of art would be damaged as a result of the lights or lasers. The solution came courtesy of the Tate's computer-operated blind system with interior blinds being dropped and raised on the night to a preset sequence.

In the days leading up to the launch, teams from Imagination, VLPS, Dobson Sound, Unusual Rigging (who handled all the rigging elements of the project, supervising the installation of lighting fixings and cabling), Scena (who dealt with the reveal elements), Showforce, Maxover Events and Showpower (who provided the 700kva of power), were on site installing the infrastructure for the event.

On the actual launch day - the event split neatly into two parts. The Queen arrived at 11am and the first of the BBC's live broadcasts kicked in to record the official opening. Sound designer John Del'Nero worked with a team from Dobson Sound, led by Tom Button, to devise the reinforcement for the official speeches. One of the challenges facing this

team was the internal acoustic of the venue. As you enter the building and descend into the main Turbine Hall, concrete surfaces either side create large levels of reverberation - to circumvent this Del'Nero had to use a distributed sound system. Ten dB E9s (five per side) were flown along the length of the Gallery and then delayed back, with dB E3s for front fill. The amplification was all dB and Dobson's David Dyer ran the feeds from a pair of AKG SE300 mics on VR92 extensions through a Yamaha PM3500 desk.

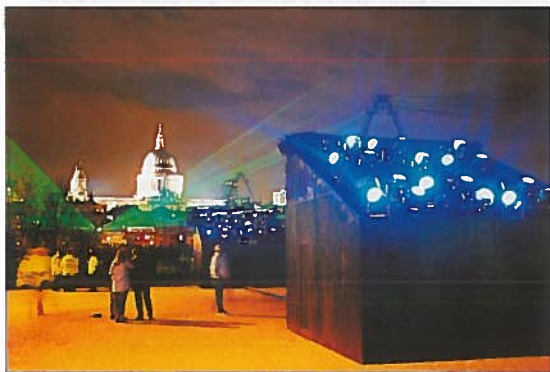
By midday, the Queen was en route to her next engagement, leaving the team a few precious hours to fine-tune for the evening's launch. This began with a VIP reception; then, at sunset, the laser introduction outlined the details of the enormous

building, including its windows and chimney. This pre-show sequence ran from sunset to 10.45pm, at which point the evening 'went live' on the BBC. At that time, the full lighting sequence was run for the first time, and as guests moved outside, the north facade became animated with waves of deep colour which gradually filled the chimney and flooded the light box.

30 of the VL5Arcs were used to light the front face of the Tate, with each lighting position at ground level fitted with two lights with overlapping beams, and each top-level position equipped with four luminaires. The effect was to provide two crossfading colours from each lighting position. The remaining VL5Arcs were then used to highlight the sides of the chimney. ETC Source Fours with gobo rotators and glass were used to simulate the movement of water, whilst Robert Juliat D'Artagnan 2.5K HMI Profiles provided the shuttered profile lines which climbed the chimney. VLPS sourced the 22 CityColors from HFM Lighting. The units were placed on the roof of the building, four metres from the glass gallery and used to wash the roof with a variety of rich colours.

The whole show was operated and programmed by Paul Cook. He and Kate Wilkins had done a large amount of pre-programming in VLPS's dedicated WYSIWYG Studio, before transferring to the site two days before the launch to continue programming and begin focusing.

To produce the laser effects, Imagination called in Laser Grafix, whose pedigree in this area has been well proven, since just about every South of the Thames major London event, has had the Grafix treatment. The company came armed with intelligence since they'd projected images onto the building on previous occasions. This time around though, their brief was to provide the lasers and programming for highlighting the architectural details, creating a smooth sequence within the lighting scheme.



precision controlled short-to-long throw effect." As a result of the tests, VLPS were drafted in to supply the lighting, which not only included Vari-Lites, but also ETC, Robert Juliat and City Color fixtures.

That freezing December day also afforded the team a chance to experiment with projection, but this was quickly jettisoned when it became

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Working from a position across the river at the City of London Boys' School (coincidentally, this same site had been used two years' earlier by the company when it handled the laser projection for the Bridge of Light - the image of the winning Millennium Bridge design) oblong and single line laser images were choreographed to play across the building's exterior. To reduce flicker problems for the television transmission, six nd:YAG lasers were used, synchronised with two controllers through SMPTE time code. The lasers varied in power from 30W - 50W, but were only set to about 12W for the show, since subtlety rather than power was the required factor.

With 4,000 guests expected and live coverage, the brief for Del'Nero and the team from Dobson Sound was that the sound system should be as discreet as possible, but come with enough punch to cover the entire South Bank area in front of the Tate. Del'Nero spec'd dB speakers and, as options were few for mounting, cut holes in the lighting towers and installed a ring of E9s in a radiating arc. A number of B2 subs were mounted beneath these. In the recently planted Silver Birches to the side of the main entrance, dB C6s were carefully hung and then delayed back to the towers. Since the event called for precision timing, the co-ordination of lights, lasers and audio was managed by timecode with the main



playback channelled through an Akai DR8. This then fed a timecode link to the lighting desk and also transmitted signals via a microwave dish across the river to the laser control desk. Dobson Sound's Paul Stannering mixed the show on a DDA interface desk and a stereo feed of the playback was fed to the BBC.

Since guests were free to wander throughout Tate Modern, there was also a need to 'dress' the inside of the building. The design for this fell to LD Hugh Vanstone, assisted by Ollie Fenwick, who used a combination of VL5 wash luminaires, VL6B spot luminaires, 2.5K HMI fresnels, Robert Juliat D'Artagnan 2.5K HMI Profiles and Source Four Profiles, all operated by Richard Knight. These lit the exhibits - including the famous giant steel spider designed by Louise Bourgeois -

Facing page, colour washes highlight the 325ft tall central chimney.

The two lighting towers stacked with equipment and, behind, the laser fired from across the river.

Left, part of the Imagination team - Mike Halford, Alistair Wilson, Kate Wilkins and Daisy Huet

the reception area and the Williams Fairley Band which played a selection of acid house anthems arranged by artist Jeremy Deller. To add atmosphere to the Turbine Hall, the Imagination team pulled off the extraordinary feat of persuading the Tate to allow them to use real candles - 500 in total. However, in order

to do so they had to fabricate a series of metal trays which had enough volume to accommodate the molten wax should every one of the 500 melt. Such were the stakes, a team of eight were drafted in to babysit the candles throughout the evening.

The night and the venue have proved a hit with the public. Immediately following the launch Tate Modern attracted 120,000 visitors in its first three days. The £135 million that it cost would seem to be money well spent and just part of a success story that saw it complete within budget on time and with little of the bad publicity which has dogged both the Dome and the Royal Opera House.

As for the art - well that's another story.



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Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

I've been away again. Nice work if you can get it, but unfortunately work did come into the equation. One of my voluntary hats for the last three years has been the presidency of the Communication Committee of the International Theatre Institute, which sounds rather grand, as does that fact that about 300 of its members, from Angola to the Ukraine, got together last week in Marseilles for the Institute's Congress.

"The quintessential actor-audience relationship is not overpowered by technology but enhanced by it, as it has been ever since some Elizabethan added a candle or two to improve the view of Twelfth Night."

THE HIGHLIGHT of my lot's week was meant to be a public round table on a subject which would have been of interest to many of you, namely how does the theatre writer and critic respond to the new technologies which are sweeping our stages today? The lead-in to the event will show you just what an ITI Congress at its best can be like.

WE ARRIVE to find that the round table is not announced in the publicly-distributed programme, just tucked away in the delegates'

programme in type so small you can easily miss it. It omits the carefully-prepared summary of what we want to discuss, and mentions only one speaker of the six we have invited, and that speaker has just discovered that he can't be there anyway. The good news is that we will have full translation and video facilities. The bad news is that our potential audience of about a hundred maximum will be accommodated in the main, 900-seater conference hall. No need for an overflow, then . . .

ON THE MORNING of the round table, two of the speakers, who agreed months ago to talk, tell me that they don't want to take part. I try desperately to get them back on board, but they are clearly unwilling, though both claim to have thoroughly researched what they want to say.

THERE IS NO SIGN OF THEM when we start, surprisingly near the advertised time. Perhaps that's what threw them? They arrive half an hour in, by which time I have rejigged the programme to do without them. We are extremely fortunate to have a serious main speaker, not a critic but Mme Béatrice Picon-Vallin, probably France's foremost authority on theatre design. She has brought along a couple of video clips to enliven her talk, of the Peter Sellars *Merchant of Venice*, which used a lot of hand-held cameras as well as big and small screens to bring a new and startling emphasis to Shakespeare's play, and of a French production which again experimented with live actors responding to their video image.

FOR ONCE, THE TECHNICAL SIDE IS IMMACULATE: well-projected videos, accurate sound-levels, house-lights in and out seamlessly. A big thank you to the house technicians of the Palais du Pharon. The translators seem well on the ball, too: nobody's staring blankly at their headphones. Béatrice does a very good job, too, explaining that the quintessential actor-audience relationship is not overpowered by technology but enhanced by it, as it has been ever since some Elizabethan added a candle or two to improve the view of Twelfth Night in Middle Temple. She cites the greats of last century, such as Meyerhold and Piscator, as people who knew how to make new technologies the servants, not the masters of their production.

A COUPLE OF CRITICS then amplify the theme, and I put in a word or two about how the likes of Katie Mitchell and Simon McBurney are following the Roberts, Wilson and Lepage, in adding exciting new technical slants, sometimes very

simple ones, to the repertory of stage communication. So far so good. Then the dinosaurs lumber out of the swamp, those typical round table contributors you get anywhere. They have obviously listened to nothing that has gone before, but are determined to make their own point. The actor is paramount, says one. The playwright comes first, says another. We don't need all this equipment to make great drama. What's the point of electricity? they mumble into their microphones one after the other. Who wants to see *Les Misérables*?

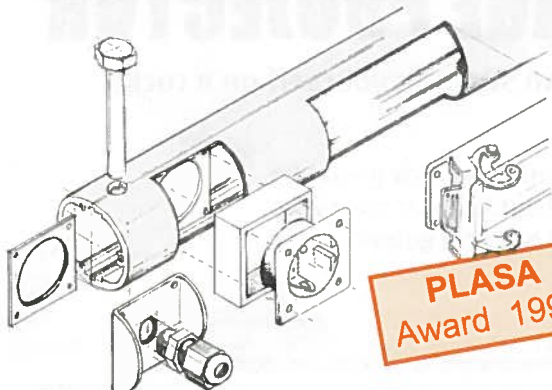
SO WE DIDN'T GET FAR towards answering the original question: what do critics think about the new technologies onstage and do they need a new form of response to them? You'll have had a few answers from me over the years in this column - I'm sorry I can't bring you any more from the collective, prehistoric wisdom of the International Theatre Institute.

IT WAS A RELIEF to get away to a real theatre that evening. Out in the run-down, racially mixed suburbs stands a beautiful, well-equipped theatre, the Toursky, which shows no sign nowadays of its origins as a cinema. It has a superb view, from its terrace, over the docks and the bay of Marseilles. Richard Martin, an engaging, grizzled old hippie director, has built it up with the alternating support and hostility of succeeding Ministries of Culture. At present, it's hostility - he gets no State grant, but money from the city and his natural enthusiasm mean that he can programme 45 productions a year from all over the world and bring enthusiastic local audiences to fill his theatre for most of them. Tonight there's a 90% house for an avant-garde dance company, who have come all the way from Melbourne to present the premiere of their latest work. To be honest, it's not a complete success, and by the end that 90% house has been whittled down considerably.

AFTER THE SHOW we go up to the terrace, where the whole staff of the theatre, it seems, join Richard and the Australians on one long table to eat, drink and reminisce. I discover that the show's techies, who have come with it from Oz, are also responsible for its original music. The mournful Steve (who's been running the lights), reveals that his entire sound-score had to be put together in three and a half days. Jolly Tasmanian Richard (sound mixer) is just happy to be along for the ride - usually he plays sax in Melbourne's clubs.

WE TALK LONG INTO THE NIGHT under a clear sky. The wine flows freely. The dancer is paramount, says one. The idea comes first, says another. We don't need all this equipment to make great shows. What's the point of electricity, we mumble into our glasses. Who wants to see *Les Misérables*?

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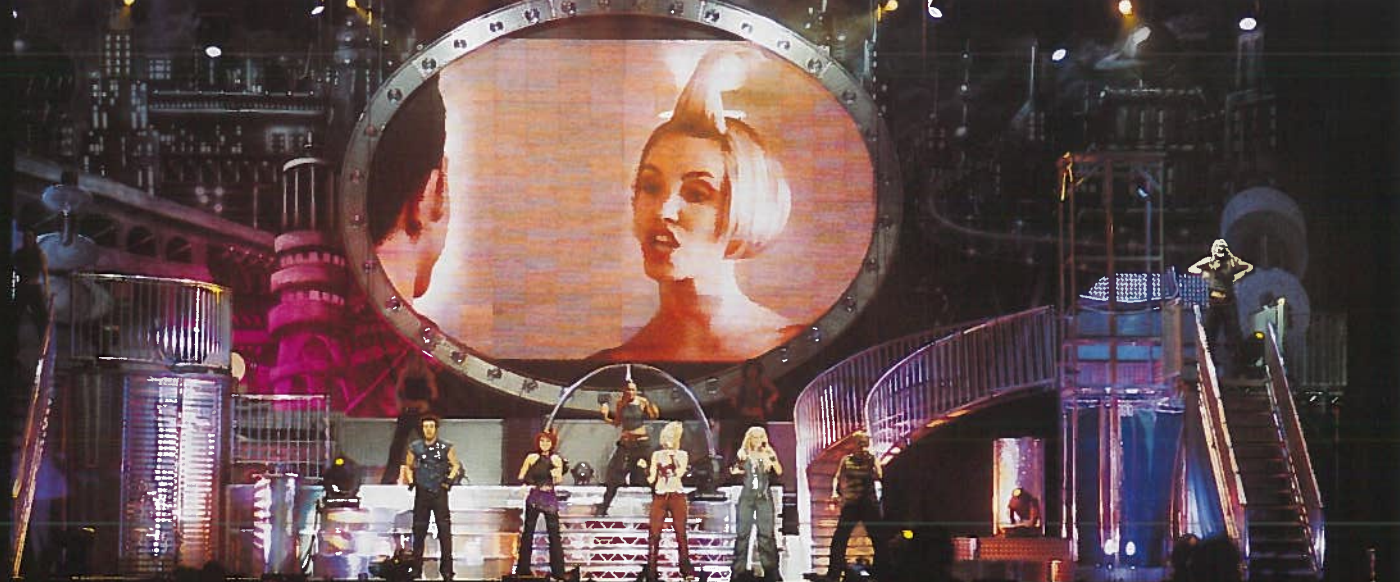
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TOURING

Image is Everything

*Steve Moles
reviews
Steps and
Don Williams*



Just Steps' third visit to Sheffield - and every other UK Arena - since November '99, and each time the multiple nights get longer. Ever ready to catch the latest wave, L&SI did arrange to visit this show last year, but fell at the hurdle of photography. Strange that a band in the first flush of success should come over all coy about being photographed live. But in the frothy world of boy/girl bands, image is everything, and Steps do possess a particularly sparkly image. Their show is a fine example of sparkle.

On this particular day, we gained admittance to the arena floor mid-afternoon, and had the rare delight of hearing three of the five Steps sound-check. It is now our solemn duty to report that the two girls present have lovely voices, great harmonies, and one of them has a real maturity in her voice that indicates regions of vocal ability as yet unexplored by their repertoire. The male voice didn't have the same sparkle; singing through a large sponge was more the mark. Revealing the owners of these voices would be churlish: the point I make is that despite the petty sniping of the media, it's not all manufactured in the studio. Whether they outlast their allotted five-year attention span is

another matter, but for the moment sit back and enjoy. Whatever you may think about Mr Waterman, his abilities in the world of classy pop are hard to fault.

Sound

Mark Ballard has operated for all Steps' shows. Courtesy of Wigwam he has now used both their main systems, V-dosc and d&b 402, the latter for this tour, and generally finds himself equally satisfied. In the pursuit of quality he has one goal: "The five voices. My main fear on the system change was getting gain on stage - what came off the back of the PA was important." Ballard found that with a standard five-wide, seven-deep arena hang there's no lobbing off the back, "just the occasional frequency that needs careful filtering, and that's dependent on the room, not the system. In Glasgow, for example, I had nothing to touch at all."

For room and system test, Ballard is using a relatively new analysis product, a Spectrafoo from MHLabs (visit www.mhllabs.com - there's much more than space here allows). "It's similar to Pro-Tools or Smaart, but being Mac-based it's much, much faster," a feature he was easily able to demonstrate. "When some frequency on stage is starting to get unstable, but hasn't quite lifted off - you just know there's something in there that's about to - a quick look at the analyser bar

graph shows it up straight away." Ballard has two XTA DP100s in parametric mode across the system for that very reason.

In the absence of a band, all music comes from two sync'd Fostex D160s (16 track hard drive machines). Ballard can concentrate on the vocals almost exclusively, but that's not always a blessing: "A prime example would be 'Lay all your Love on me' where everything, even the backing vocals, comes up on two channels - you just can't do anything with it." Not such a secure feeling when your principal vocalist comes spinning out 30ft in front of the PA on a Kirby flying wire.

Control is from a Midas Heritage 3000, with Amek 9098s on each voice, though just for compression. As was said above, Steps can sing so there's just the usual treatment here - H3000 for a bit of harmony, TC M5000 for the ever-popular 480 Concert Hall sound (what comes off the Fostex is completely dry), and that's about it. Paul 'Moose' Dee has a quietish time feeding Trantec in-ear systems, and a few Nexo Compacts and PS15s scattered about just for the dancers. Don't you love shows without a band?

Set

Production manager Ian Whitehead appeared in these columns once before as set designer, for Peter Andre (remember the five-year allotted time span. Seen





Andre recently?). "Metropolis' was all I got from the band," he says, and apparently it was all he needed. "I started with a 60ft by 40ft stage, and allowed 16ft at the front for dancing. I didn't work from a front elevation concept, I took a plan view, looked at what space I had, and built from there."

Two pre-determined items set his limits: a large oval centre screen, and an 8ft diameter globe for the group's opening descent onto stage. "Once the globe landed I had to have a 4ft riser to half-hide it - I couldn't have a ball sitting in the middle of stage all night." The view of the screen also dictated that high set pieces could only occupy the upstage wings.

Lite Structures built and supplied the set, almost all of it from rental items, including the rather lovely curving, Perspex-decked ramp stage left. Alan Chesters of Hangman painted a suitably Fritz Lang'ian backdrop, and hey presto, a happy band. As Whitehead pointed out: "When you tour this often, and you're basically seeing the same audiences time and again, you have to have a different stage set each time, so renting items like these is ideal."

Pyro is by MTFX, and there's plenty of it. Mark Wade of Over the Top supervises the rigging, except for the personnel flying, which is by Kirby Flying Ballet.

Video

Ruary MacPhie is a freelance video director who cut his musical teeth with Dick Carruthers out on the 'Stones. Coming from a conventional cameraman background ("I started with Samuelsons, went on to news, but reached a point where I wanted a change, a move to vision mixing,"), the lessons he learned with Carruthers have been applied here. "I'm using just two dolly cameras in the pit, the track extending right to the wings," the rationale being to always get front-on pictures, avoiding profiles. "Normally, pit cameras are static, and directors rely on a camera at the FOH mix position to get pictures when the artist is off to the sides. But I think that image always looks rather flat, it jars against the pictures from the closer cameras." Which does make for an exceedingly busy night for the two

camera operators, the only other feed being a minicam on stage for one particular stunt.

MacPhie has the obvious pleasure - he and his system tech' couldn't stop talking about it - of using the first all-digital PPU for this type of work in the world, courtesy of Nocturne Europe. "With the signal never having to be converted from camera until it reaches the projector, there's no degradation at all." Which does have one very slight drawback: "When you're running VT, the clarity of the process compensates for a decaying tape, a 20% loss on the tape is unnoticeable," which is great until the tape then breaks without the usual warning signs.

Nocturne also supplies the central LED screen ("the original Spice Girls one from Saco," informed Nocturne's Chris Mounsor), plus side screens with Barco Realities back-projecting. These Barcos seem pretty punchy; close up, the image is pin-sharp, with no visible pixelation, a benefit apparently derived from the all-digital processing. They're also bright, averaging two to three stops down from a very bright stage on my camera's spot meter.

Despite the 'straight out of the box' newness of the system, all the familiars are there: Grass Valley mixer, Magic DaVE, Leach matrix and Sony at the head end. The live stuff from camera is generally restricted to the side screens with the LED showing VT, but not for every song. One thing of note - this self-same screen system looked appalling on Puff Daddy, yet here it looked seamless, the former obviously suffering from the conversion of NTSC to PAL.

Lighting

Vince Foster has taken over the lighting design for the band, with Darragh McAuliffe operating for the tour, the two men having most recently collaborated on Party in the Park. Cote de Scène, based in Nice, retain the supply contract

from November, which McAuliffe informed me is, as ever, dictated by cost. "But that has an impact: each bidder spec'd different types of moving lamps. For this show, where brightness is so important, a more powerful wash-light than the Mac 600 would have been helpful. As soon as you put colour in they lose a lot of punch." Which left the eight 600s on the front truss in open white for a lot of the evening.

On the moving profile side, Foster has put both Mac 500s and VL2Cs (from VLPS France) in the rig. "For a show like this we have everything on, all the time," says McAuliffe. "The 2Cs are real workhorses, doing a lot out in the audience, and many of the more powerful stage effects." He has Griven Kolorados (1.8kW) and their smaller cousins, the 575W Kaleido top and bottom on the backdrop and tucked in around the set.

"They're similar to the City Color, with similar patchy colour matching, and they're slower," he said ominously - but hey, beats four-cell groundrows.

Foster has a couple of neat features - a 40kW Lightning Strike which receives a good hammering ("We love the Lightnings," said McAuliffe, and with good reason, they do give some dynamic to the powerful rhythms driving the show). But the chimneys are

my favourite - 3ft tall aluminium perforated tubes, part of Whitehead's set, in which Foster has fitted a Par with Chroma-Q scroller and a smoke machine. Small in terms of the overall design, they are fun, and very, very visual. These apart, this is a show of big, saturated looks: "There's no arty stuff here," confirmed McAuliffe, but they do set mood with some monochrome scenes, and the second and third songs of the set are deliberately pedestrian to quieten down an over-excited audience, and give pause for a more concerted build towards the show's climax.

For those few mums and dads whose kids haven't yet plundered the Steps Ticket investment fund, I can reveal that a pre-Christmas tour is being contemplated.

Before you let your eyes roll up into the back of your head and fall into a deep trance, how would you like an annual tour where the gear doesn't get stressed, and the crew get to gently cruise the UK for four weeks? So Don Williams is a sexagenarian, middle ranking country star. Next you'll be telling yourself that Hip Hop has musical integrity.

Lighting

Don comes on stage after his band have plugged in. Sits on a stool that looks like the driver's seat of a Mack Truck on stilts, takes a



deep breath, and then pauses. He is not a man of quick delivery. Everything is slow and deliberate, unlike his music, which is light and pleasant. Most of the night Don's five-piece band is bathed in a tight pool of colour, with just the drummer intermittently pulled out of the frame by contrasting hues.

Lighting designer Paul Gravelle gives his stage some depth and a touch of variety by the simple artifice of six VN short-nose floor Pars pointed up onto the back black. His rig is simplicity itself: new lighting company on the block, Ultimate Lights, have supplied him with 10 spanking new sections of Thomas pre-rig filled with Pars, a pair of 8-Lites, Avo 72-way dimmers, and a Celco Series II out front. The most modern pieces of kit are six Source 4 profiles, "just for pick-ups on the band, in case the house spots aren't up to much." Out of his 120 Pars in the air, 28kW is gelled in Congo: "Purple is one of Don's colours," explained Gravelle - which in realisation looks rather incongruous on a 61-year-old with a grey beard wearing a Stetson. Sometimes it's good to argue with the star.

The remainder of the rig is essentially four key colours: blue, red, amber and magenta, with just an extra 2kW of green and yellow for the kit: "It just gives me some contrast, and it can add to the depth. I'm trying to make it look more theatrical than rock and roll, more 'easy listening'. Lighting here is just a mood-setter, there's no thrash and trash." Apart, that is, from the show closer 'Louisiana', when Gravelle lets rip, as it were. But the prevailing colours do get a bit wearing; they're all deep, saturated hues, and Gravelle's focus is so tight around the band that the visual experience is all about intensity, which is at odds with the 'easy listening' style he alluded to earlier.

Sound

Rob Stokes has been with Williams for eight years, having previously trained his ears with Sound Image in San Diego working for acts like Jackson Brown, Jim Messina and John Denver before getting "tired of the West Coast." Stokes hails from Louisville, Kentucky, though now, inevitably, he's based in Nashville.

Like Gravelle, when touring the US, Stokes has little option on system ("It's PA de jour at every venue,"), but is a fan of Meyer and has specified an MSL4-based system from Canegreen for the UK tour. "Actually, I always specify Meyer on the rider, but rarely get it. All I'm after is hi-fi sound, and even coverage. I don't need level. I really like the '4 a lot, but I'll say one thing against it, it's too narrow at 40 degrees." With the 4s all flown, Stokes fills the gaps with UPAs on top of his 650 subs, and UPMs for front fill.

In the house he's using a PM4000, and with a live recording session at the Palladium on the horizon, is going to experiment using the desk mic' pre-amp to feed his D88s - budget is an important consideration on this tour - "not that this can't work well," he said.



The rack at the side of the desk is small, and contains mainly Yamaha, a Rev 5, SPX1000, two 990s, and a Roland SDE3000. Below is a bit of a surprise, half a dozen dbx 160XT compressors, and the same number of Drawmer gates. "Don's vocal and his guitar are compressed, plus Bass (DI and mic') and the other two guitars, but barely. If I can hear it I'll turn it back."

When he talks, Don has a voice like a pickled walnut, deep and dark - too much sippin' whisky ai'd say. Singing is another matter: lighter, but no less rich, he still pitches beautifully for an elderly man, even if he has lost a little power. "I'm using an Audex OM6 for his mic' - it has a wider pattern than the 5 or 7, which I need, as he does move around." Which is one of the peculiar things for a man who must have played many a shithole in his lengthy career - his mic' technique is not helpful. Usually, he's backed off five or six inches.

Most of the effects listed above are for the guitars, or Williams' voice, flattering and thickening. "I put a slight delay on the guitars. It's for the theatrics really, to make it a little more dynamic." It's a goal Stokes achieves well: the sound is very present, uncoloured, and full, a thousand miles away from where most of us hear Williams, in a hotel lift.

Tom Crandall has UPAs for monitors, a Midas XL3, a rack-full of Klark Teknik DN360 graphics, and that's it. "He likes all kick and his voice, hovering between 110 and 120db peak at his mic'. He likes it really bright and trebly - he gets his low information from the house." Crandall does put a full band mix in the background, but says, in his experience, Williams is unusually awkward. "He knows what he likes and I've had to break some preconceived notions of what monitoring is all about in order to give it to him. The frequencies he wants loud - 1.2k, 3.6 and 5 - would feed back if he got what he wanted," which presumably points to some hearing deficiencies in an elderly pair of ears. Doesn't stop him filling houses though. Money in the Bank.

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The Stables



The £4 million rebuilding of one of the UK's premier arts venues - The Stables, in Wavendon, Milton Keynes - features a cutting-edge audio design, specified by technical consultants Carr & Angier, supplied exclusively by LMC Audio Systems Ltd and installed by The Oxford Sound Company, who also won an independent contract to supply and fit the comms network.

Situated on a five-acre site, The Stables, which has played host to over 10,000 musicians from all disciplines, operates as a charitable trust - the Wavendon Allmusic Plan - with jazz legends John Dankworth and Cleo Laine as its joint presidents. It is a situation the partnership could little have anticipated when, in 1969, they opened their intimate venue - a small building with a leaking roof, situated at the end of a garden.

Thirty years later, the technical project co-ordination has been handled by resident sound engineer David Carter, working alongside Mark Hornsby from Paul Guilleron Acoustic Consultants. Though the new venue will not be completed until October, the new performance space opened for previews on April 21 to reveal sound reinforcement equipment from right across the Martin Audio product range, tuned and networked via an assortment of BSS Soundweb components.

The audio contract was worth £135,000, as Mark Bromfield, from LMC Audio Systems'

In 1969 John Dankworth and Cleo Laine could not have anticipated that their intimate venue, a small building situated at the end of the garden complete with leaking roof, would play host to an estimated 10,000 acts. But now, with its state-of-the-art technology and impressive facilities, The Stables is in a position to compete with the region's best.

L&SI reports

Birmingham office, explained: "The tender was put out to four companies by Carr & Angier. We were given the specification and asked to quote on two different loudspeaker speaker systems and Martin Audio won over - largely on the strength of Cleo's voice reproduction."



MUSIC VENUE

An additional factor was the day spent in Martin Audio's demonstration room where the system was put through its paces. Bromfield says: "It was largely the EASE plots mapped out by Peter Childs (Martin Audio's project engineer) that gave confidence to the specification, and the reassurance that it would indeed sound as had been imagined, once the building work was completed."

In the main auditorium a winched system involving six Wavefront W2s (used as downfills), are hung from W8 Compacts, which are flown on a single truss bar. The system also includes four W85 subs, mounted on the joists and firing directly downwards.

A further two Martin W8Cs will also be deployed - when required - as additional front of house speakers at balcony level, while onstage six of Martin's classic LE400s will be used for monitor mixes, with a new Blackline S18 to add sub-bass to a Martin monitor when used as a drumfill. The system is powered by QSC PLX3002, PLX2402 and PLX3402 amplification, and with no under-balcony



The main flown Martin Audio cluster (right) and inset, the BSS Soundweb rack



"There are feeds to the recording studio - allowing direct live recording - and the rehearsal room. This means that should The Stables wish to record a live performance they can simply patch the stage event through to the studio."

or difficult areas to contend with, the venue offers a good line of hearing.

Soundweb played a key role in the audio networking of the different rooms. BSS Audio's proprietary digital routing device had been earmarked for this project as far back as two years ago. But once LMC Audio Systems sensed the degree of flexibility required - with auditorium, rehearsal room, green room, studio and a fire alarm system all needing to be networked - they recommended replacement of the dedicated loudspeaker system controllers with entirely Soundweb-specific architecture. "It was the first thing we thought about," says Bromfield. Four 9088 Soundwebs - and a 9010 'Jellyfish' Remote - now form the central core of the installation.

"The sound reinforcement system is configured left, right, centre, and we knew we could delay everything through Soundweb. Even the monitor rack has a portable plug-in unit, with the EQ for the wedges also running through the 9088," says Bromfield.

The Jellyfish Remote is situated in the control room with a Cat 5 network system running round the venue. Bromfield is already looking to the future: "The next stage will be to mount the Jellyfish in an ABS box with Cat 5 running in and out, up in the control platform. We can use the Cat 5 network system to plug in up in the control area and pick it up on stage - by plugging

the Jellyfish into the stage feed we will be able to control the monitors locally.

"Since the Jellyfish also has an RS232 control port, I will remote that port out to the side of the of the box, allowing control via a laptop - enabling the engineer to completely reconfigure the system by remote control as he chooses."

Meanwhile, the four 9088s will also be linked into the fire alarm system to provide a line level feed which will duck the whole entertainment system in the event of emergency. A 32-channel Midas Heritage 1000 runs through 32 channels of XTA DS800 mic distribution from stage (LMC having supplied predominantly Shure SM58, SM98 and Beta 57A, as well as UHF radio systems fitted with SM58 capsules). There are feeds to the recording studio - allowing direct live recording - and the rehearsal room. This means that should The Stables wish to record a live performance they can simply patch the stage event through to the studio.

The stage itself is reconfigurable into any format - either with the thrust protruding or retracted. At the rear are barn doors, which open out to allow the stage to be moved outdoors for summer concerts. The auditorium is named after long-time benefactor, Jim Marshall of Marshall Amplification. With a capacity of just over 400, it retains the intimacy of the original building, the raked seating (and balconies) on three sides of the stage remains, but with improved acoustic qualities.

The next phase will be to develop on the site of the old Stables. At present a temporary screen divides the auditorium from the original building - formerly a Victorian stable-block, which was declared beyond repair in the mid-nineties. This will be demolished in due course and replaced with a new structure housing a foyer, bar, box office and cloakrooms.

Meanwhile, the new season kicks off with a vigorous programme which includes appearances by La Bottine Souriante, Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra and Paco Pena, Janis Ian, Paul Carrack, Eric Bibb and Tony Hadley.

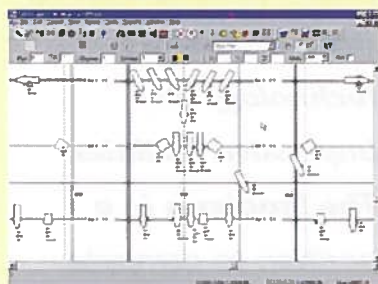
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John Watt

Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

When this column first appeared a few years ago it was accompanied by a photograph of me. The current editor, ever fearful of losing circulation decided to spare her readership this shock over their Bran Flakes, and discontinued it. Since

this element attracted more feedback than the article itself, it has now become a rare event to get a letter from you, my faithful readers.

IMAGINE, THEREFORE, my joy at receiving a letter on behalf of not one, but all the employees at ETC - after all, there must be 16 or 17 of them by now if you include Mike Lowe and the tea lady.

THEY WERE TRIGGERED OFF, I

gather, from something I wrote about Americans (some of them actually are American it appears), so they are allowed to be a bit jumpy under the Bill of Rights. I fear they assume that I follow some journalistic quest for truth and accuracy... should there be any doubt about it, I don't. My basic principle is never to let the facts get in the way of a good story. A very small picture of their esteemed president is attached to the letter (the results of which you can see in the news pages of the last issue).

A BEAU BRUMMEL-STYLE FIGURE if ever I saw one, he is sitting with one foot on the desk, largely because the desk has no gap to put his

knees in. He appears to be wearing jeans and plimsolls. I had a pair as a boy, made by Dunlop, and you were expected to wear them for PE, whatever that is. They had a more practical function because I never could stop my home-built liquid dimmers from leaking and they were proof against the 500-or-so volts that lapped around my feet during most shows, particularly after a quick raise. I suppose that's why he wears them - shows a certain lack of confidence in their earthing systems though, don't you think?

ONCE IN A WHILE, something leaps off the screen when you least expect it and knocks the stuffing out of you with its sheer audacity - a rare event that our elders and betters on the seventh floor have sought to eradicate altogether. I must tell all those Philistine accountants, all those ratings-driven programme controllers and all those stockmarket-fixed MDs, that one such event slipped through the net on May 21st on ITV. I caught the last half hour of the 'Classical Brits' from the Albert Hall and it looked just stunning. It was fronted, incidentally, by Trevor McDonald who I suppose needs the odd gig now that he hasn't got a proper job.

IF I HAD IAN HERBERT'S TALENT, maybe I could describe the look, but take my word for it, it was just stunning. The set, designed by Peter Bingeman, was a fairy-tale palace soaring skywards to the dome of the hall in beautifully-composed perspective. How can a mind think so laterally as to produce a perfect accompaniment to a show, but one which stood alone in its own right at the same time?

THE LIGHTING was by Durham Marengi who didn't miss a trick on being presented with this most versatile of canvasses. Now a single element, a fragment of the whole lit delicately with just a lamp or two, now all those 'towers' complemented with very defined shafts of pure colour from very high up, now a sculptured

element, now a textured one. What a duet between lighting and set, classic design for classical music. Durham comes from a background in theatre and industrials rather than TV, and works with Peter Bingeman a lot, and it showed. Credits include 'The Wall' in Berlin, The handover ceremony in Hong Kong (the bit that Jim Tetlow didn't do) and Andrew Lloyd Webber's 50th anniversary concert. He told me he uses a second facility provided on all moving lights, namely the off switch! Wish I had thought of that. Certainly in the part of the show I saw, the moving lights were used to great effect, but I never once saw one move. This was all of books two and three packed in to one demo - thanks Durham, your invitation to Showlight is in the post!

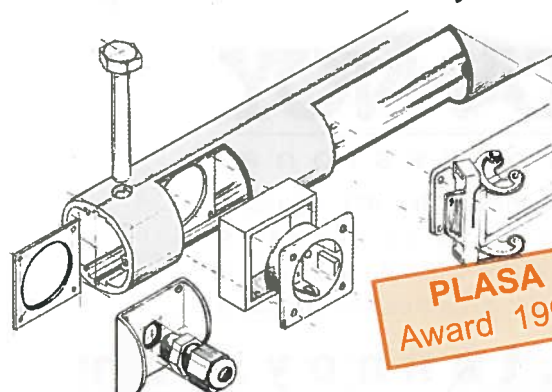
NOT QUITE SO ENTHUSIASTIC about GMTV's efforts in a capsule on the London Eye. Easier to write about it than light it, I suspect. In the interests of pure research I've tried to recreate the problem. I swiped a Pyrex mixing bowl from the kitchen and have been trying to look up at the sun through it whilst still exposing for my grubby thumb on the rim. It goes without saying that you can't expect to see anything beyond the glass. The result of this experiment is a) there's no quick fix, and b) we didn't get our usual cake this week. GMTV needn't have gone to the expense of proving it on network television. You have to get very close with a wide-angle lens to make Eamon Holmes' ears completely disappear behind his nose, but they came close in every sense.

ITN, MEANWHILE, in much simpler, controlled studio conditions, manage, on the late night bulletin, to get camera, presenter and key exactly in line, which means incidentally that the key isn't a key at all. This gives a whole new meaning to the word flat. When I was on racks, one busy man per camera, my old crew chief used to yell at me, "that's as soft as old boots Watty". I wonder what he would make of these pin sharp pictures which look as soft as old boots and turn flesh in to cardboard.

IN CASE I'm appearing a bit holier than thou about this, I'll confess to being called back to a news studio I lit recently to soften it up so they can shoot from here and here and here as well! They admitted the previously agreed positions were fine but... And we never have cracked the reflections of the autocue in the news reader's glasses (via the glass-topped desk) so you aren't alone even if you do get the doubtful privilege of a mention in this column. Maybe it's time to blow the dust of that old caption (remember them?). "We apologise for the loss of your picture. This is due to journalists entirely beyond our control." Wimbledon looms, so next time I'll see you in court.

"In the interests of pure research I've tried to recreate the problem. I swiped a Pyrex mixing bowl from the kitchen and have been trying to look up at the sun through it whilst still exposing for my grubby thumb on the rim."

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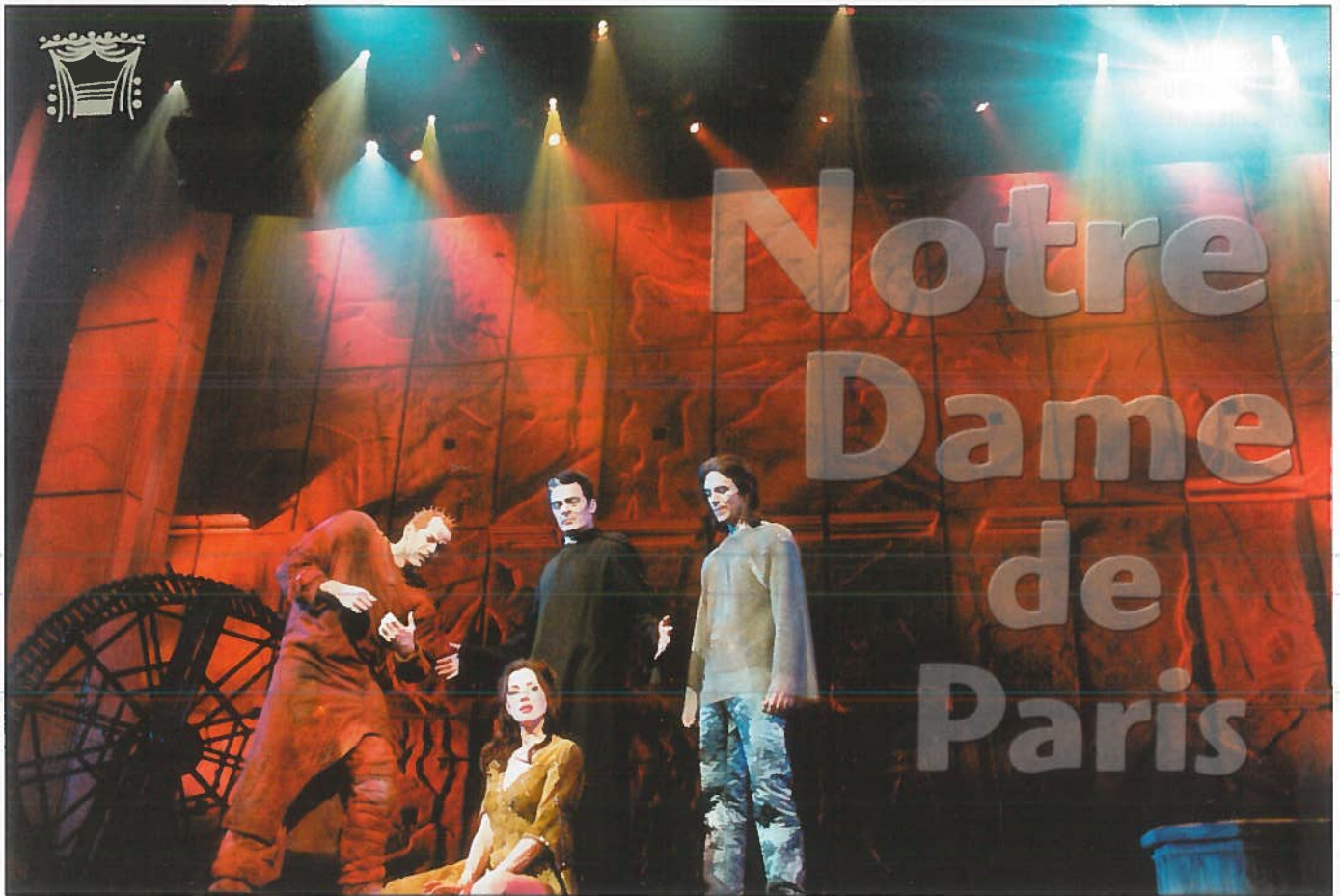
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KNOW HOW



photos: Steve Gillett

Based on the Victor Hugo novel, this latest production to open at The Dominion is already proving controversial - and it's got nothing to do with the play

Whilst the use of technology is at the heart of the debate, it shouldn't overshadow the fact that *Notre Dame* has several West End technical firsts.

The latter include a flying automation system - for both people and scenery - designed and installed by Vertigo Rigging, based on Beta winches supplied by PCM. In the audio department, it's the UK theatre debut of the French-manufactured Innovason Grand Sensory Live console, supplied by sound contractors Orbital Sound. As for lighting, the 144 moving fixtures make it the largest moving light rig for a West End installation show, supplied by The Moving Light Company.

The French/French-Canadian production, brought to the West End by Michael White, originated in Paris in September 1998, when it was first staged at the 4000-seater Palais de Congres. Clearly born to be a blockbuster, *Notre Dame de Paris* was pre-hyped by the release of the hit French language soundtrack album at Midem in Cannes in January 1998. The single, *Belle*, topped the French charts for 33 weeks and guaranteed its success onstage.

This was followed by both French and Canadian tours, and conversion into English language (by Will Jennings) for a Las Vegas production before its transfer to London's West End. If all goes well in the UK, Japan, Australia and Broadway could all be on the cards. Much emphasis is being placed on London being the flagship production.

The director is Gilles Maheu and the designer is Christian Rätz with lighting design by Alain Lortie and sound design by Manu Guiot. In London, Australian pop star Tina Arena stars as Esmerelda with Garou as Quasimodo. Production management in London is by Crosbie Marlow Associates.

Notre Dame has an energetic feel which fuses gutsy, glitzy belting pop music with highly choreographed dance, acrobatics, stage action and, of course, Gothic melodrama and pastiche. Played in a textured, white box set design that is lit beguilingly, the clean stage, high-impact props and in-the-face presentation is more usually characteristic of a rock and roll show!

The rapid scenery and prop changes and the aerial-based acrobatics called for specialist rigging. Vertigo Rigging's Tim Roberts and Ken Mehmed project-managed the automation installation. They worked in close conjunction with PCM's John Jones and Tony Dickson to devise the new winch system.

It utilises three 400kg and five 750kg Beta winches, used for eight abseil lines which fly props and scenery in addition to people. The winches, built to VBG70 standards, were chosen for their safety features which include a factor of 12:1. The eight are mounted on a side-stage pallet, encased by a metal beam framework that enables them to slide up and down the beams in onstage/offstage and



upstage/downstage axes. All winch cables are fed to a header block upstage of the palette, diverted up into the theatre's grid, and fan out across it to the relevant points. Then the various abseil lines, inertia reels and climbing accessories are attached.

A customised Beta winch control desk with a movement cueing system, which allows both individual and collective control over the winches, was designed and built by PCM. Vertigo completed various additional rigging work in the theatre for *Notre Dame*, including the installation of Orbital Sound's flown front-of-house PA stacks - one centre and two side clusters - and two FOH lighting trusses. They are also servicing and operating the show for its West End run.

Lighting designer Alain Lortie is based in Montreal and has worked with Gilles Maheu for 12 years. He started with the first *Notre Dame* in Paris and has re-lit its various incarnations. He comments that coming into the West End with its solid technical infrastructure has proved a "very different, but positive," working experience.

When he originally devised the lighting scheme, Lortie chose a large moving light rig for total flexibility. He knew time would be tight, and that the director was demanding, so it was vital that he could respond quickly during plotting and programming to Maheu's lighting needs. The French tour contained no generics at all, but in the UK the conventional count has now increased to include profiles, fresnels, floods and pars, together with Rainbow scrollers.

All lighting is supplied by The Moving Light Company, project-managed by Bryan Raven. The moving elements of the rig are based around 95 Martin MAC 600s, 20 MAC 500s, 15 PAL 1200s and 13 High End Cyberlights. The whole show is controlled from a 3072-channel Compulite Sabre 192 system and parts are triggered by a SMPTE timecode feed from the audio desk.

The rig is primarily positioned overstage using house bars, and on side stage booms, with some minimal front-of-house lighting. The three Robert Juliat Aramis front-of-house spots are an essential element of the show, which requires detailed and precise followspotting.

The London production features three new white side stage legs per side, which match in with the set. Previously they had black drape legs, so Lortie has had to adapt the show for the increased reflectivity.

Getting good smoke has been a big issue at The Dominion. The lighting and general ambience rely on a diffuse and hazy aura. The voracity of the ventilation system and the theatre's construction (for fire containment purposes) means the grid and fly area acts like a chimney. It is also affected by the external weather conditions - the windier it is outside, the quicker the onstage smoke dissipates!

Lortie casts himself modestly, as LD, very much in the role of practitioner and 'artisan' - a tool for the director and author as opposed to an artist. While he will fight the lighting corner when necessary, he is not precious about "his creation", acknowledging that there are already plenty of creative spirits in the Notre Dame melting pot!



Left, the technical team of Laurent Dumont, Chris Headlam (Orbital), Manu Guiot, Pascal Alikian (who worked with Dumont and Guiot) and Sebastian Frost (Orbital). Far left, the new Beta Winch automation system.

The decision to stage a show with a digital tape backing track instead of an orchestra has been a political hot potato in London among those concerned with 'keeping music live' debates. Still a rarity in the West End, Orbital Sound actually also did it on Boyband at The Gielgud last year - where it had the additional impetus of being faithful to the musical genre!

The sound designer is Paris-based Manu Guiot, who is also a record producer. He was heavily involved in the recordings that preceded the stage show, and the album and original show mixes were recorded simultaneously. Guiot worked with Laurent Dumont on the show's design and has worked previously with the composer, lyricist and arrangers. He admits his surprise at still doing Notre Dame three years later!

The soundtrack is intense - with nearly 50 numbers in just over two and a half hours. Guiot has the mix honed down to 20 groups on his Mac, which is re-mixed completely for each theatre - using Cubase. He finds this a far simpler solution for acoustic variations than trying to fix problems through the system. To keep sound uncomplicated and 'large', they went for a big stereo image rather than a surround system. Again flying in the face of West End convention, it's a simple left and right, rock and roll style PA - loud and clear!

It is the first time Guiot has used d&b -and he's adamant it won't be the last. The unobtrusive

boxes are configured in two elegant side clusters and one central, with d&b C7s and C4 subs. There are further B2 subs under the floor, E3 infills attached to the pit rails and E3 delays.

Orbital bought both the Innovason FOH desk, made in Brittany (from Fuzion) and the Midas Heritage 3000 monitor desk (from LMC Audio) for this production. Their own sound designers Sebastian Frost and Simon Whitehom worked closely with the French. Guiot explains that for the first Notre Dame at the Palais de Congres, they used a Saje Memory desk, an old analogue board with a digital remote which sounded "beautiful". When the show moved on, they couldn't find a similar console to tour, so cast around for a digital console that retained some basic analogue sonic characteristics.

Show playback is from three Tascam DA78 eight-track machines. A Shure IEM/radio system is used for the seven live vocal feeds from the principals - using Trantec mics.


Much of the processing happens onboard the Innovason console and Guiot specified several pieces of Avalon valve kit - which look great with their blue lights and big silver oval dials! He uses a compressor on the music, one on the master stereo output and another Avalon on the vocals. Apart from that, there's a Lexicon 580 reverb . . . and that's it. Production electrician for the show is Jim Douglas and sound operator is Rick George.

Guiot, Lortie and all the UK production companies and suppliers have enjoyed the experience of putting the show into the West End. It's been an interesting and rewarding international and cross-cultural exchange of working practices for all.

A final addition to the list of firsts should include that it's the first time we've ever heard a theatre PA run up with AC/DC - Hells Bells of course!



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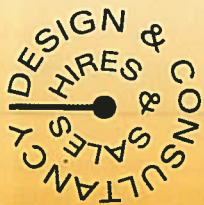
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L&SI Talks to the Industry Trend-setters

“It was funny - as it was with my own children - I was brought to my dad’s workplace when I was a young boy, and I was extremely disenchanted. I realised what the job entailed.” Jon Pollak, indicating why he didn’t follow his father into TV and movies, while paradoxically admitting that his career in lighting live entertainment is not so dissimilar.

“My dad worked for all three national broadcasters in the US, and later when he moved to Los Angeles he joined up with Saul Bass at the National Screen Service and concentrated on the movies.” Along with Bass, Pollak’s father was one

of the pioneers of modern special effects - his was no routine job on the lot.

But for Pollak junior, it was to be his mothers’ occupation that drew him, moth-like, to stage lighting. “She was an actress. Born in Iberville, Quebec, she worked on Broadway, was a member of the Theatre Guild, and

eventually joined my dad in Hollywood, working mainly in Westerns.” You can still see her today, stage name DJ Thompson, as she’s in many old reruns of Gunsmoke. “Yeah my kids still spot Grandma, and I always call her up and say, ‘hey, you’re due another \$3.95 cents in residuals.’” Pollak has the kind of irreverent humour that appeals to Anglo Saxon tastes, his conversation littered with irony.

“My mom first took me to the theatre in New York when I was 12. We saw radical stuff - Melvin van Peebles, that sort of thing. Interesting. It struck me straight off - this is amazing - I took the stage craft class at school immediately.” He

also lit the school plays, took casual work at his local theatre, and not unexpectedly went on to take a degree, starting at LA Valley College doing Technical Theatre. “They taught all that theatre history stuff that, when you’re a young man, you think is a waste of time. Fortunately, in spite of my indifference, I somehow retained most of it.”

Pollak then moved quickly onto UCLA where he took Media: “I never attended a single media class - strictly theatre,” he recalls: this was 1975 when students did as they pleased. After just one-and-a-half semesters he applied for the exchange programme and went to England. It was to be a pivotal moment.

“In the UK I interviewed a few schools and ended up choosing the Guildford School of Dance & Drama.” Although the normal procedure was for the school to interview the prospective candidate, Pollak was more directed. “Besides, they needed the money,” such is the leverage of foreign students. “And it appeared to be a good dance school,” he added pointedly.

Pollak and his fellow students spent much of the time converting the nearby St Stevens church into a theatre, wiring dimmers, building a stage, even installing a small fly bar system. “It was an odyssey for me. We did everything, and when it was finished we ran the place. Everyone got to do every job - house manager, costumes. I even lit a show once,” he added wryly. But he still found the lure of this cramped little island hard to resist. “I did like it in the UK - it was easy for me to assimilate the culture.” More importantly he met his future wife, marrying her five years later and



eventually settling in the UK. “But first I went back to UCLA, got my BA - I don’t think I’ve looked at it since - and started work.”

It was here that Pollak’s ‘cultural assimilation’ stood him in good stead. While working as a board operator he was recommended to a director to design and light a show, by an old girlfriend, a dancer who worked on both sides of the Atlantic. “That’s when I really learnt my craft: here’s the music, here’s the movement, now go ahead and emote from that.”

He was employed at the Variety Arts Theatre in LA when Ricky Lee Jones came in to rehearse for her US tour. “It was one of those lucky coincidences. I’d already jumped at the chance just to work as a stage-hand for the rehearsals. I met Marc Brickman, her LD, and we got on really well. When someone on the touring crew slipped downstairs and broke an elbow, I was invited to take his place.”

Although this was unquestionably the start of Pollak’s career in rock and roll, he didn’t follow the conventional route of his many contemporaries. Having got his toe inside the door, so to speak, instead of tying his flag to the mast of one of the big lighting service companies, he took a more solitary route. “Working directly for managers is how I did it - the pecking order was something I learned early on.” A world tour with the Tubes quickly followed, “a mélange of theatre and rock,” a mix he has striven to maintain ever since.

As for the scooter at Monza? Check out ‘Grand Prix’ 1965, effects by National Screen Service of course. ■

Lighting & Sound

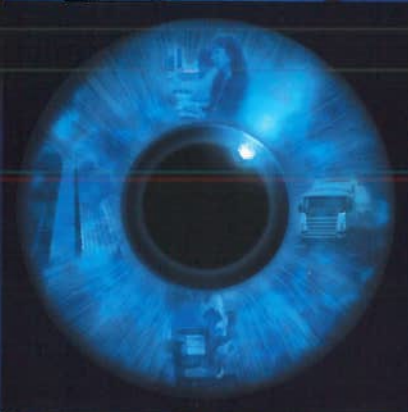
Not a man to take the conventional route, Steve Moles traces the career of LD Jon Pollak

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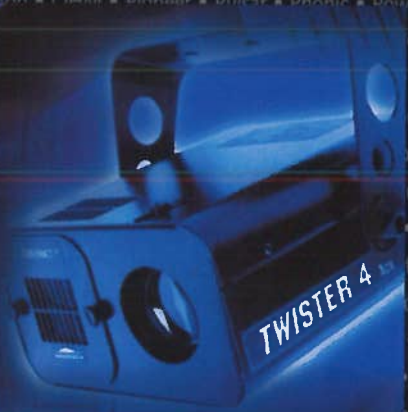
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ANYtronic • Abstract • Adastr • AKG • ASL • Audio
• DAS • Denon • Electro-Voice • EMS • EMO • Form
Leisuretec • Light Processor • Lamps • Multiform • M
Penn •
Tannoy
• Cloud
Filter •
• Orto
Sabine
• AKG
• EMS
Lamps
Ryger •
• Zero



• BSS • Carlsbro • Cloud • Citronic • Clay Paky • Crown
btronic • LEE Filter • Griven • Hardware • Inter-M • JBL
• Optikinetics • Ortofon • OHM • Pioneer • Pulsar •
• Sennheiser • Sabine • Stageline • Stanton • Stands •
• Abstract • Adastr • AKG • ASL • Audio Technica •
Denon • Electro-Voice • EMS • EMO • Formula Sound
• Light Processor • Lamps • Multiform • Mirror Balls •
• QSC • RCF • Rane • Ryger • Sony • Soundcraft • Shure •
Technics • Yamaha • Zero 88 • Ampetronic • Alesis •
• Citronic • Clay Paky • Crown • Connectors • Cables
Griven • Hardware • Inter-M • JBL • JEM • Le Maitre •
• OHM • Pioneer • Pulsar • Phonic • Powerdrive •
• Trillite •
Carlsbro
• LEE
• Optikinetics
• Sennheiser •
• Adastr
• Electro-Voice
• Processor •
• Rane •
• Yamaha
• Clay
• Fostex • Fabtronic • LEE Filter • Griven • Hardware
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Cables • DAS • Denon • Electro-Voice • EMS • EMO •
• LEE Filter • Leisuretec • Light Processor • Lamps • Multiform
• Powerdrive • Penn • QSC • RCF • Rane • Ryger • Sony •
• Trillite • Tannoy • Technics • Yamaha • Zero 88 •
• BSS • Carlsbro • Cloud • Citronic • Clay Paky • Crown
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