

Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

May 2001

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

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TMF Awards

- International Music Awards at the Ahoy

Saints Above

- Latter Day Saints: Worship on a Grand Scale

Liquid Refreshment

- Luminar rolls out its flagship brand

Toploader

- The Eastbourne lads live at York Barbican



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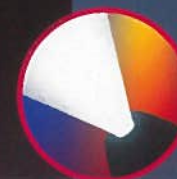
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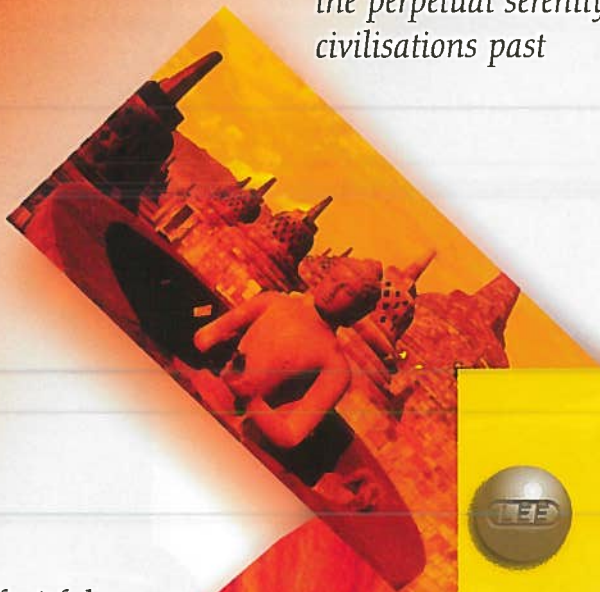


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The Art of Light



Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

May 2001 Volume 16, Issue 5

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Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

The magazine is available on annual subscription: UK £50.00 (UK Student Rates £25) Europe and rest of world £65.00 (US\$104.00) Airmail £90.00 (US\$143.00). Single copy price £3.50 plus postage.

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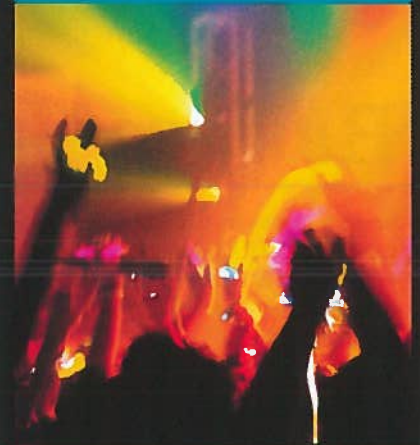
Lighting & Sound International is published monthly for \$104.00 per year by The Professional Lighting and Sound Association, 38 St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3UT. Periodicals class postage paid at Rahway, N.J. Postmaster: Send USA address correction to Lighting & Sound International,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

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International News Round-Up

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Beware the Con Artists

Here's a cautionary tale for readers. News has reached us of an Australian-based contractor who appears to be defrauding companies out of security deposits by inventing fictional contracts.

Since the ruse is fairly sophisticated and adopts an approach employed by perfectly genuine companies in the marketplace, it doesn't immediately signal alarm bells. Essentially, it goes as follows: the contractor e-mails companies, claiming to have been appointed project manager for a major cruise contract. The e-mail dangles a few details about the likely size of the contract and then invites companies to respond if they're interested in bidding for any part of the audio or lighting specification. Once they've indicated an interest, the contractor then offers to forward the bid package for evaluation, in return for a small, refundable security deposit. What happens next is all too obvious - the money is sent, and the contractor disappears. And because the amount is nominal, most companies don't pursue it, preferring to write it off to experience.

Fortunately, in this most recent instance, the PLASA Member grapevine kicked in, and the e-mails were circulated to others within the cruise sector, each company adding another piece to the complex jigsaw. The final picture that emerged made it clear to all that no further time should be wasted pursuing the alleged contract. That sequence of correspondence then landed on our desks and working with our Australia-based writer, Andy Ciddor, we carried out further checks. All the telephone numbers (except the fax line) are mobile

phones. There are no telephone directory listings for the contractor in either the White (standard directory) or Yellow (business directory) pages. Most unusual for *any* business. There is no Australian Business Number (ABN) or Australian Company Number (ACN) given in the e-mail, although it is Australian company law that any "offer of trade" is required to be accompanied by such a number. There is no registered business in any state of Australia with the name that we saw on the e-mail. Similarly, the bank account details for the transfer do not contain the account name - also highly unusual.

When we carried out a web search for the contractor, we couldn't find a single entry for it on any of the main search engines, and when market databases were checked, no record could be found of any cruise ship of the size detailed, being commissioned. Not surprisingly, when one of the companies contacted the contractor raising some of these matters, not another word was heard.

Regrettably, this is not the first time this particular con trick has been tried: four years ago a company lost a £1,500 security deposit in an almost identical scam. For anybody out there currently considering parting with money in return for bid documents, we recommend that you check the contractor out thoroughly - they won't mind if they're genuine. Not only should you ask for their business/company number, but you should also ask for a registered office address. If you arrange a meeting, make sure it takes place at their offices - don't let them suggest an alternative.

Wear Departs Celestion



Richard Wear, formerly director and general manager of Celestion International Ltd, has announced his departure from the company, to pursue other professional and personal interests.

At the company headquarters in Ipswich, Frank DiGirolamo, takes over executive responsibility for the Professional Systems Division. He is currently Deputy CEO of KH Industries (UK) Ltd, and has extensive experience of both the consumer and professional audio business, as a senior executive at Harman International, and also chief operating officer of Intellisys Inc in the USA.

DiGirolamo first became involved with Celestion as managing director of its sister company KEF, in the early nineties. His return to the UK just over two years ago signalled a massive change in the success of both the KEF and Celestion consumer brands. Speaking on behalf of Celestion, DiGirolamo said: "The company would like to thank Richard for his valuable service in driving Celestion forward to become a force to be reckoned with in the pro audio sector, and we wish him every success in his future endeavours." L&SI understands that marketing communications manager Sonia Calver has also left the company.



Artistic Licence - Lighting a fire under Ethernet Technology

Art-Net is the only public domain, royalty free, Ethernet protocol available for the Entertainment Technology Industry. Multi-Vendor support already exists. Artistic Licence will be shipping OEM modules by May 2001. Register now for a data sheet or brochure.

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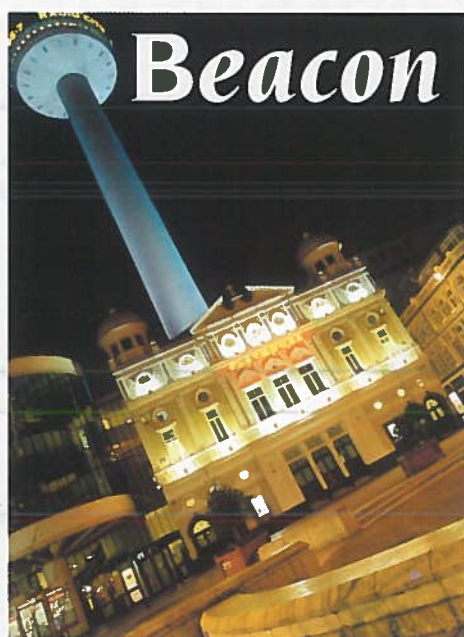
When the switch was flicked on the impressive 400ft high St John's Beacon tower in Liverpool, it was a bold, dramatic statement to mark the first phase of an ambitious City of Light project being undertaken by the Liverpool Vision organisation.

City of Light is a long-term plan to architecturally light several important landmarks in Liverpool, and is scheduled to unfold over the next five to seven years. St John's Beacon lies at the heart of Liverpool: its elegant form is one of the most distinctive shapes on the skyline.

Lee Forde, the lighting designer for the project, chose IO Studio Due City Beam luminaires - supplied to Slough-based StageteC by Studio Due's UK distributor Coe-tech. StageteC also designed and installed the lights and a custom-designed interactive control system, based on radio DMX links and operation via a telephone handset, for the St John's Beacon illuminations.

The City Beam fixtures themselves are surrounded by vandal-proof cages and situated discreetly on various buildings around the foot of the tower, including St John's Market and G. H. Lee's store, the latter being custom-coloured to match the building. Forde chose MSD I200W light sources for the fixtures - one of three bulb options. The City Beam's focus facilities also came in handy, with six fixtures shooting up from the base area of the tower and a smaller circle of four located further up. The latter had a tighter focus, dovetailing into the tower as it narrows before reaching its summit.

Since data cabling was totally impractical, StageteC supplied an Interactive Technologies radio DMX system to link the fixtures, with power sourced locally and fed to each individual unit. The programmed lighting up time (8pm to



of Light

Replay unit - effectively the electronic section of the full Spark 4D console - packaged as a 19" rack-mounting unit. This is connected to CompuCall, a new product developed by Compulite's Dutch distributor Beo, which converts telephone DTMF tones into DMX - also contained neatly in a 1U rack-mounting box.

For programming - undertaken by Forde and Matt Miles, StageteC's project manager for the job - StageteC also supplied Liverpool Vision with a Compulite SparkTOP console. The system combines all the functions of the well-established Spark 4D console into a laptop-style case with integral LCD TFT colour screen. This proved a challenging aspect of the project as the fixture's colour-changing programmes are run off macros, activated by button pushes on the phone handset. For obvious reasons, it was essential that no matter what sequence the buttons were pressed in, the macros had to always work! Compulite has used this opportunity to build a new 'Scheduler' feature into their consoles, enabling the 'scheduling' of 'events' at any time. This, together with the standard architectural software already available, makes the desks pretty flexible

The opening night launch party featured a spectacular laser show. This shot beams around and projected graphics onto the Beacon via a DPSS YAG laser supplied by Laser Studio, programmed and operated by Steve Wright. The Beacon's switch-on went without a hitch, performed by Councillor Mike Storey, leader of Liverpool City Council.

The £85,000 lighting scheme for the Beacon, the first interactive feature of its kind in the world, is funded under the Single Regeneration Budget Round 6 with additional funding from Radio City and Land Securities, owners of the Beacon.

midnight during the week, with a 2am extension at the weekends), begins with a slow cross-fading effect, incorporating 15 different colours. However, StageteC's control system also offers heaps of additional versatility. It's been designed to work via a security-code-protected telephone handset, so DJs playing out at Radio City can change colours for special occasions. It's also intended to use the Beacon lighting for running promotions and charity events where the public and local businesses can call in and sponsor colour changes, etc.

In time, the controller will also be accessible from outside the building via web-enabled mobiles, as well as linked to other feature lighting projects happening around the City, allowing them all to work interactively together if desired. StageteC worked closely with Lee Forde to produce the very precise control requirements. The controller itself is located in the Radio City offices and is a Compulite SP-4D

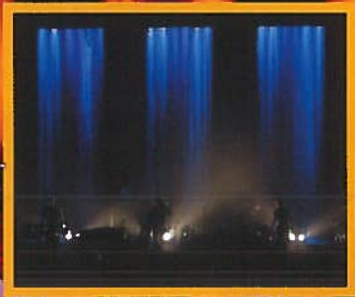
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light to accentuate effects



A Pale Yellow Green filter used here for dramatic backlight effect in combination with cold brittle Alice Blue (e-colour+ #197).

vocal lights



A touch of Deep Salmon (e-colour+ #5042) par side and toplight, white dramatic effect beams (lightsource masked) lighting up the shiny translucent doubled laser scrim, with pars in a heavy Deep Orange (e-colour+ #158).

rosco
colour



colour to dramatise

A strong Rose Purple sidelight (supergel #48) mixed with white pars isolate the stage from the romantic Deep Orange (e-colour+ #158).



Pictures of the a-ha "minor earth major" tour courtesy of a-ha

exploding lights

celebrating moving images



Jojo Tillmann is a new international lighting designer. His recent credits as lighting and stage designer include a-ha's world tour as well as tours with Vonda Shepard and Chris Rea.

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People

Antony Bridges is leaving The Service Company to begin a new career with the BBC; he will be replaced by another familiar industry figure, **Roger Hennigan**. Hennigan will be known to many from his days at M&M Lighting. More recently, he ran HTS Lighting, providing electrical and support services to the theatre industry and acting as the UK agent for The Smoke Factory and Look Solutions. These product lines will now be distributed and supported by White Light.

Sennheiser UK has restructured its management team with the newly-created roles of director of engineering, finance, marketing, operations and sales. **Dave Hawker** is appointed director of engineering and **Lesley Alaway** becomes director of finance, whilst **Phil Massey** is made director of operations. The greatest changes are to the previously integrated sales and marketing functions: **John Steven** joins Sennheiser from the KGa PR agency, to become marketing director, whilst the appointment of a new director of sales, following **Rob Piddington's** departure to Autograph Sales, is yet to be made.

A number of management changes have taken place at the Avesco group following the creation of its Audio Visual Services Division, headed up by **Graham Andrews**. Andrews now hands over the day-to-day running of CT to **Mark Elliott** and assumes the role of chief executive to oversee the development of the company. Elliott has worked with the company for the last nine years, latterly as operations director. Meanwhile, **Jon Hodgson** becomes director of project management and **Guy Mapley** is appointed director of sales.

Rosco has appointed **Adam Smith** as sales manager for the UK and Scandinavia. Smith has 25 years' experience in technical theatre and his sales experience, coupled with his in-depth knowledge of production, lighting design and the theatre industry, will add considerably to the Rosco sales force.



Zero 88 Lighting has appointed **Chris Clayton** as R&D manager. Formerly with Penny & Giles, where he designed and managed projects in aerospace and industrial applications, Clayton is a Chartered Engineer and a member of the Institute of Engineering Designers. He will be working on new fast-track developments for the iLight Group.

Stuart Cunningham has joined the Tannoy sales team to provide support for external sales engineers and customers, both overseas and in the UK. He recently graduated from Strathclyde University with a degree in Marketing and Psychology and will be based in the Tannoy Pro sales office in Coatbridge.

Bob Dean has joined LGH Rigging Services as commercial manager. He returns to the LGH Group having held the post of branch manager of the Slough Lifting Gear Hire location for three years. He has worked as a project manager in Malaysia and as a contracts manager, working on such key contracts as Canary Wharf D55.

David Kirk, former PR manager at Allen & Heath, has recently returned to take up a new role as new media manager. Kirk left the



From left to right, a wistful-looking David Kirk (bless!), Scott Callis and Mark Elliot

company in February 2000 to pursue interests in the internet and electronic communication. He subsequently worked as content manager for LeisureHub.com, a business-to-business exchange for the leisure industry.

Unitek Displays has recently made a number of key appointments: first comes **Russell Hartwell** (sales manager) who has 10 years' experience in the LED display and customer information display market, followed by **Terence Ulysses** (field service supervisor) who has been working in the maintenance and support of electronic information display systems for the last 15 years. The company has also recruited **Ken Browne** (sales executive), most recently with Gearhouse, and prior to that, with Pioneer UK.

Lightfactor's sales team continues to expand with the addition of **Scott Callis**, who joins as product manager for the Italian-made SGM range of lighting equipment. Callis will initially be undertaking an intensive 14-week UK promotional tour for Lightfactor, demonstrating the complete range of SGM products. Callis was one of the founders of MAD Lighting.

The team at Northern Light has been strengthened with several new appointments. **Craig Shaw** joins the Special Projects department as sales engineer, and will develop the company's sound reinforcement products business. Formerly with EFX Audio, more recently he has been a freelance sound system design and installation consultant. The company's sales team has been swelled by the addition of **Gerry Corcoran**. Based in Glasgow, he'll be concentrating on expanding and supporting the company's customer base in the West of Scotland. At Northern Light's Glasgow hire department, **Nicola Garman** is moving on after four years as manager, and **Scott Bland** will be taking over the reins. **Carol Whittaker** - formerly of O-Light - and **Jim McGowan** have also recently joined the hire department.

Stanton Magnetics has announced the death of its founder, **Walter Stanton**. A pioneer in the audio field, Stanton was responsible for many of the early patents in phono cartridge and styli design and electrostatic speakers, as well as other electromechanical items. He was one of the early leaders in the audio industry and served as president of both the Institute of Hi Fidelity and the AES.

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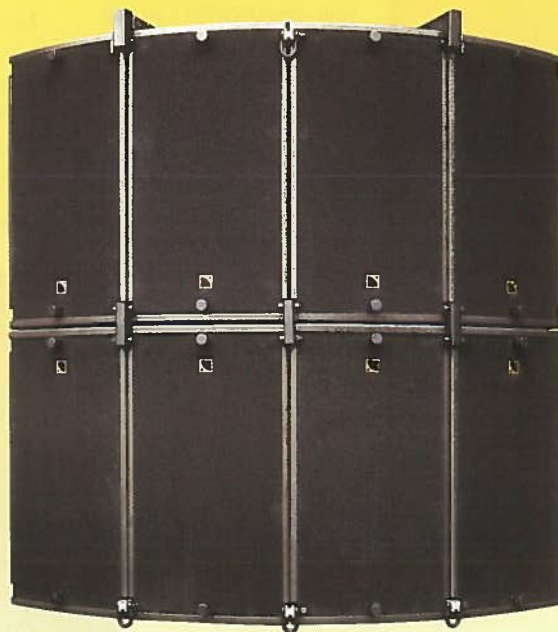
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PLASA AGM: Influence the Future

Association NEWS

PLASA 2001 AGM & Dinner • Thursday 14th June, 2001 • Coombe Abbey, Coventry.

The PLASA AGM is one of the key events of our year - it's a chance for us to review what's gone and plan for what will be a very different future. The most effective way we can do that is by involving as many Members as possible so we've strived to create an event that we feel is worth attending. Your role is very important so please don't file your ideas, comments or complaints away for another time, take this opportunity to influence the way PLASA is heading by joining us for the 2001 AGM.

Even if you've got nothing to say (unlikely we think), it's an ideal opportunity for some relaxed networking in beautiful surroundings. As a backdrop to this year's event, we have chosen the historic setting of Coombe Abbey, near Coventry. Set in 500 acres of parkland and dating back to 1150, this former Cistercian Abbey is an ideal place to meet up with familiar and new industry faces alike.

The day will start with lunch and registration at 12.45, followed by the



AGM itself at 2.00pm. After the AGM, members will have the opportunity to meet with members of the PLASA team and its various representatives in a number of informal hour-long 'break-out sessions'. We have highlighted three key areas:

Membership Services: Do you get the most out of your membership? Can you name six services you benefit from? If not, and you'd like to know more, let us show you where you could gain a business advantage.

PLASA Show: If you have a view on the PLASA Show, this is your chance to discuss it face to face with members of the Clarion Events show management team and representatives of the PLASA Exhibitor Forum.

PLASA Standards: The Standards Office is one of the most vital services provided by PLASA, and-if-you're a manufacturer, your R&D department should be fully aware of all of the latest legislation. If you don't understand why we place such emphasis on this, let Technical Standards Officer Tim Cox and a

number of technical consultants explain the reasons.

The AGM Dinner will complete the day's activities. We've arranged for two highly respected after-dinner speakers to entertain members. The first is John Cugley, a lawyer, musician and solo oarsman, whose record-breaking rowing feats for charity are legendary. He will be followed by comedian and magician Paul Zenon, a familiar face both on television and on the Comedy Club circuit.

Because we feel this will be a great Industry Event, we're offering a free Dinner ticket to the first person from each company to reply. If you plan to stay overnight, we've also laid on a range of accommodation options - available both at Coombe Abbey itself and a number of nearby hotels and guest houses. A free shuttlebus service will be provided.

Invites have now been mailed to every PLASA Member. Please look out for them - we hope you can join us for this important event. This is your chance to play a part in the future of the Association.

Mick Hannaford - PLASA Chairman



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Advanced Audio Training

London-based Orbital Sound combined forces with the Royal National Theatre's sound department to stage the first of an annual advanced training programme for students wishing to pursue a career in theatre sound.

Initiated jointly by Orbital's Simon Whitehorn and the National's head of sound Rob Barnard, the creative and conceptual elements of the course were staged at the National, whilst in-depth technical sessions took place at Orbital's headquarters.

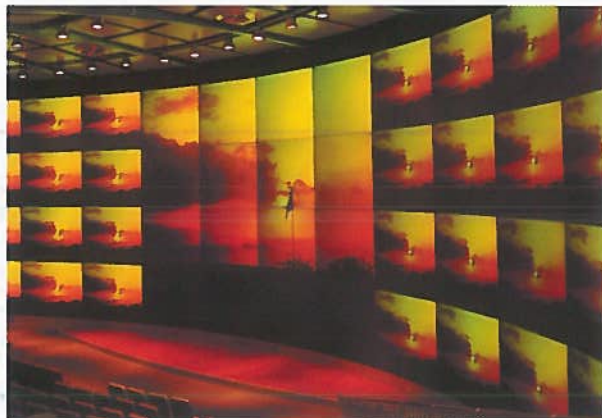
The course was designed as a 'top up' for final year Stage Management and Technical Theatre students. Nine candidates were nominated by London drama schools to participate in the ten carefully structured classes. Rob Barnard told L&S: "Our aim is to help provide these more advanced skills, as

a 'top-up' to the good basic training given by drama schools."

The four day programme, which was free to all participants, covered a wide range of subjects. Particular emphasis was placed on production engineering skills, specialist programming using Akai samplers, ProTools editing, and the programming of automated mixing consoles.

Many other subjects were covered including basic acoustics and sound reinforcement for musicals, with John Taylor, from d&b audiotechnik, leading several of the course's work groups. Following the success of the course, both Orbital and the National are planning to expand it next year, making it available through drama schools nationwide.

For further information on future courses contact Simon Whitehorn at Orbital Sound on +44 020 7501 6868 or E-mail: simon@orbitalsound.co.uk



Great Wall of China

As you can see from our stunning picture, Electrosonic's tradition of creating giant high-resolution electronic images continues with the completion of a 180sq.m display in Beijing, China. The China Millennium Monument is China's memorial building to the Year 2000. It is a grand structure, occupying a total floor space of about 30,000sq.m. Its Century Wide-Screen Projection Hall houses an impressive 56-screen (30m x 6m) projection videowall. Measure Scientific of Beijing was responsible for the design and integration of the system which uses Sanyo projectors and locally-manufactured screens controlled by an Electrosonic Vector image system.

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PROFESSIONAL SHOW LIGHTING



Envo-Tech Opens London Showroom

Sound contractor Envo-Tech, well known for its safety and security systems integration, recently unveiled an impressive new showroom at its HQ in Central London.

The showroom is designed to reflect the two sides of Envo-Tech's business, and to demonstrate the increasing synergy between the various areas. One end of the room showcases Envo-Tech's advanced alarm, PA, CCTV and access control systems, which the company provides for clients such as The Royal Mail, Crown Properties and The National Maritime Museum. The other end displays the comprehensive loudspeaker and signal processing solutions available for the entertainment markets, encompassing all of the brands now under the Mackie umbrella - Mackie, Mackie Industrial, Mackie-RCF and EAW.

Founder and managing director of Envo-Tech Brian Puckey told L&S: "The two ends of the



The Envo-Tech team of Ewan Fleet, Dave Powell, Lee Hancock, Ian Thomson, Paul Trask and Stuart Fenwick

market, and the showroom, are coming together. The layout demonstrates the compatibility of all our systems, be they for security or entertainment. Buildings today need both industrial and pro audio elements, and thanks to the digital technology now available, we are in the perfect position to offer simultaneous expertise in both."

Outback Acquires Slick Systems

Slick Systems, manufacturer of a range of rigging hardware, has been acquired by one of its biggest customers, Outback Holdings.

In a move that will see Outback acquire the building, assets and worldwide manufacturing rights, the company will be relaunched as Slick (UK) Ltd, whilst continuing to operate from the Leek plant. "We've two main objectives with this deal," explained Outback's managing director Mark Surtees. "We want to ensure the continued supply of Slick to its loyal customer base, but our ultimate goal is to build the credibility of the system within the industry and to make Slick (UK) a more competitive company."

No redundancies will result from the deal, although the shareholders and directors of Slick Systems will not be part of the new venture. "This is a significant move for Outback. As one of Slick's biggest customers we understand the potential for the system. We intend to invest in its future," commented Surtees. Outback Holdings is the holding company for Outback Rigging, Outback Services, Trapeze Rigging and Mushroom Lighting.

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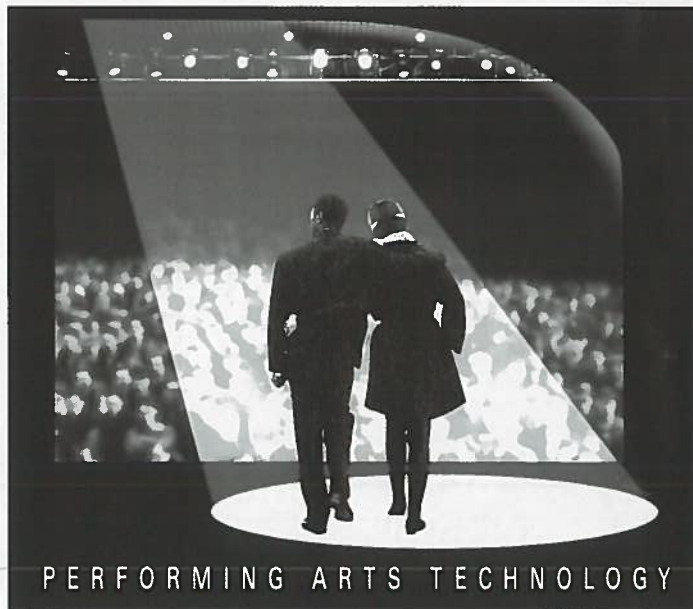
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Supersonic Class

The established relationship with British Airways, enjoyed by both the TOA Corporation and Unitek Displays, reached a pinnacle last month when the new Concorde Lounge opened at Heathrow's Terminal 4.

Designed by Sir Terence Conran, in preparation for a resumption of supersonic services later this spring, the airline's ambition is clear to see. In addition to employing top designers - including FutureBrand for the simultaneous development of their new First Class Lounge - they also invited spa specialists Molton Brown to create a shower room, steam room and massage area.

In the Molton Brown spa, a discrete TOA PC-5WL speaker can be found in each shower cubicle as well as the massage room, with local volume control independent of the overall level setting. The area is also serviced by a single TOA HB1 sub-bass unit.

However, the scheme in the new Executive Lounges has not been realised without some acoustic compromises. Since the architect requirement was for a completely flat ceiling, the 25 soft-dome, process-controlled TOA PC-121Cs have been utilised without their suspended spheres, designed to allow wide-dispersion soundwaves to be distributed coherently, and panned via TOA's bespoke Sound Space Design spatializer. Although the sphere has been removed to facilitate total recess-mounting, using TOA's AC-120 to provide dedicated system control, there is little evidence of cancellation or dead spots. This circular ceiling speaker is run in combination with TOA F-101 full-range speakers, which, like the 121s, house a 4" driver.

BA have also standardised on TOA PM660D paging mics at reception - favoured in view of staff familiarity and the fact that they are extremely durable; thus through the gentle ambience, the flight announcements and paging messages ring crystal clear. Hidden away in the bunker, the 47U high isolated power racks are generously plugged with TOA VP-1240 (240W) and PI060 (2 x 450W) Professional Series power modules, although the Lounge Pavilion is a 100V line installation - as opposed to the low-impedance design featured in executive lounges elsewhere around the world.

Commissioning the public address system is the responsibility of Windsor Voice Services, who are based at Heathrow Airport and are exclusively contracted to British Airways Voice



Services. The original template was for TOA to provide a multiple CD source. However, when it became both practical and essential to move over to a hard disk replay system, the company duly sub-contracted Nottingham-based TTL Music to provide their Music Manager delivery system, with software specially modified for BA's purposes. "This allows us to multi-stream the outputs, while TTL can take care of the management," explained Windsor Voice Services' Jonathan Smith. The model is for psycho-acoustic programming - or relaxing 'soundscape' management - while the playlist has been carefully programmed and synchronised by Smith to coincide with flight departures, as this information will tell him the optimum volume profile to set.

Nothing is left to chance in the world of the executive traveller, and so the changing status of passenger flight information is now also displayed on state-of-the-art plasma screens, interspersed with new, conventional CRT monitors, provided by Unitek Displays. At the same time, Unitek managing director, Richard Nye confirmed that in replacing the original monitors, the company has also upgraded the software: "We will shortly be proceeding to the next stage, which will be to change the platform on which the system works to a Windows-based environment," he confirmed.

In the Concorde Room, three 41" 16 x 9 Hantarex SVGA plasma screens will now present the information in widescreen, complemented by eight KME 21" colour monitors (in standard 4 x 3 aspect ratio).

Unitek fulfil a wide range of briefs for BA - including the provision of interfaces to allow the airline to monitor the fire status as well as the flight information displays throughout the terminals. Breeding satisfaction among top-tariff BA passengers assumes maximum priority at Heathrow. And the sound and vision elements are essential agents in creating this sublime mix.

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Clay Paky Outlines Plans for New HQ

Italian lighting manufacturer Clay Paky has unveiled plans for a major new headquarter facility, close to its current base in Pedrengo.

The new HQ not only represents a major investment for the company (you don't want to know how many noughts were on the end of all those liras), but also a new chapter in what has been one of the major success stories of our industry. And the timing is perfectly cued, for it's 25 years since Pasquali Quadri first founded Clay Paky, in 1976.

Over the years, the company has grown to be one of the major players in the lighting market and whilst much of that is down to its roots in the club sector, recent years have seen Clay Paky diversify into the wider arenas of TV, theatre, touring and architectural lighting. Central to all this has been technical innovation - GoldenScan did much to establish the company; more recently the launch of new products like the Miniscan HPE and Stagescan in 1997, and the Stageline in 1999, have been huge catalysts for growth.



Pasquali Quadri (left) and sales director Enrico Caironi with the model of Clay Paky's new HQ

The new headquarter facility is therefore a logical step, and since no company moves to make life harder, it goes without saying that it will not only give Clay Paky significantly more space (the new building will be 8,000sq.m with the option for expansion up to 24,000sq.m) it will also deliver a wide range of advantages. The first will be one of consolidation, as the company currently operates across three sites - totalling 6,000sq.m - its main Pedrengo facility being the largest of these. All three will be sold, and all the various links in the Clay Paky chain, from R&D right through to sales

and support, will transfer to the new HQ. The new site will also feature improved customer training facilities, not to mention a meeting room that will accommodate up to 100 people. However, its showpiece has to be the impressive 7m high demonstration theatre, which will give the company increased space in which to effectively demonstrate its wide product range.

Pasquali Quadri has, understandably, been the driving force behind the new headquarters. His pride in the company's achievement is evident as he shows us the model for the new facility, carefully lifting sections out to reveal the various departments and product areas, and even more carefully replacing them, lest he should accidentally misplace a piece and the architect take the model at its word.

Work on the new HQ is just beginning and if all goes to plan, Clay Paky will have a new home this time next year.

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Harris, Grant Associates Expand

Harris, Grant Associates (HGA), long recognised as one of the leading audio consultancy practices in the world, has recently moved its UK headquarters from Pinewood Studios in Buckinghamshire to larger premises in Guildford, Surrey.

The move, which necessitated the complete refurbishment of the 18th Century headquarters, enables the company to expand in new directions as current and future projects demand. HGA now has three principals: Neil Grant (managing director), Carolyn Hayter (finance director) and Sheen Uchida (who runs the Tokyo office). In addition, the design group has expanded to include Gavin Sargent, an architect who has worked with the company for 15 years.

Since the company was established in 1984, HGA has been involved with the design of many of the world's most successful TV, film and recording studios. The company has also diversified into areas such as home



theatre/cinema projects varying enormously in size, content and complexity, as well as the superyacht industry where it continues to be responsible for a succession of state-of-the-art installations aboard new-build and refitted yachts. Current major projects on land and at sea include the acoustic and technical design of an art, music and film facility in Central London; the largest and most sophisticated video and audio post-production facilities in northern Europe for Valkieser and three superyacht acoustic and design projects. In addition, the company's recently redesigned web site is now online - www.harrisgrant.com.

Tomcat Hoist & Rigging Workshop

Following the success of previous events, Tomcat UK is hosting its fourth annual Hoist & Rigging Workshop at the end of this month.

This year's event has been extended to four days to enable extra tuition to be included, specifically in the area of fall arrest, and to allow participants to have more 'hands-on' instruction. In addition to the fall arrest tuition, led by Steve Jervis of Protecta International, Wally Blount from Columbus McKinnon will provide instruction on Lodestar hoists. Nick Brown and Pete Smith of Unusual will give their usual entertaining class on rigging practices, whilst Mike Wells of Tomcat engineers Parkhill, Smith, & Cooper Inc, will consider recommended truss usage and inspection.

- ▶ **Dates:** 30 May - 2 June
- ▶ **Venue:** Pacific Rd Theatre, Birkenhead
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PLASA Media's online daily news service (www.plasa.org/news) has gained a strong following since its launch in 1999, becoming the most accessed area of the PLASA website. During 2000, the news was read by industry professionals in over 120 countries.

The site is unique in the level of information it offers, with over 1,800 databased news items which are fully searchable and freely available to all. But the most popular aspect of the service is undoubtedly the free headline bulletin mailing, distributed via e-mail every Friday. Since the service was started in January 2000, thousands of professionals in over 80 countries worldwide have so far signed up to receive the weekly e-mails. If you would like to join them, and gain access to the fastest and most comprehensive news service in our industry, you can sign up for free today at www.plasa.org/news. You never know, you might even win a PLASA Media polo shirt. Blimey.

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New Grid at Shaftesbury Theatre

A complete new grid system has been installed at the famous Shaftesbury Theatre in the heart of London's West End.

The theatre is known for its limited off-stage storage space, a fact that hasn't deterred the most ambitious of productions from playing there, including *Tommy*, *Rent*, *Carousel* and *Napoleon*. The month-long grid refurbishment began directly after the get-out of *Napoleon*.

The new grid was designed, manufactured and installed by Vertigo and project-managed by Ken Mehmed. Vertigo stripped out all the old timbers from the Shaftesbury's drop wells and replaced them with steel box-beams, two per bay. These beams have channels on the top for up and downstage adjustment of the drop pulleys, and all connections are fitted with neoprene packers to reduce noise transfer through the walls to the adjacent building. A completely new set of sheaves and cables were fitted to bring it up to current specifications. With the new beams in place, runners can be



spread between the drop wells across the stage, and additional sheaves and diverter pulleys can be inserted to spread the load. The result is that all the weight is relieved from the theatre's timber joists and the load is applied to the main roof trusses and walls of the building. Vertigo worked on the scheme with consulting engineer Michael Jackson from MJ Consultants. As Vertigo completed sections of the grid, the theatre's contractors moved along behind them installing new timber slats, so the whole grid facility has effectively been replaced and modernised, enabling it to deal efficiently with the most demanding productions.

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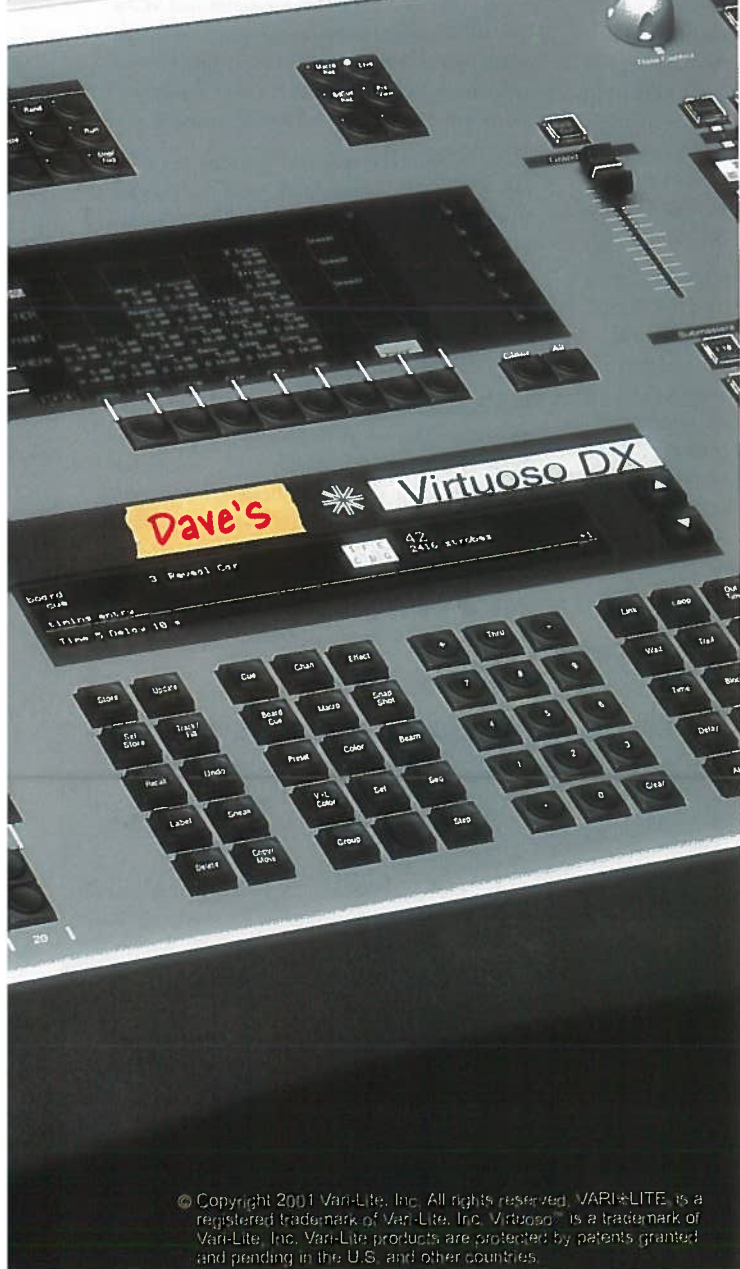
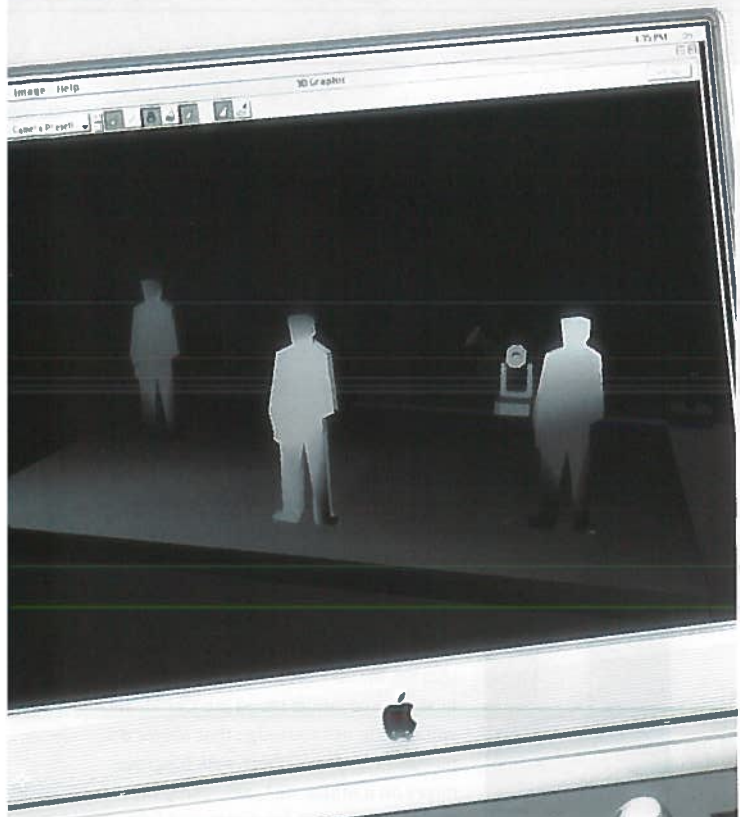
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The Corrs

There's an orange-haired clown from the USA who 30 years ago perfected a presentational strategy that's seen his products grow to become a global monster. The recipe for success is to satisfy the appetite with something that's unlikely to offend even the most delicate palette.

While the three girls and brother Jim can hardly be likened to a hamburger and fries, they do present an inoffensive brand of pop that while delightful, is unlikely to become a healthy diet if taken in excess. It was March '98 when I last saw the Corrs, in a sub-2,000-seat theatre on that occasion. Their early singles had begun what's become the band's long flirtation with the charts. Have three years been a long enough break? In short, yes. The band's live performance is much improved in that there is now an edge to them, and, dare I say it, I prefer the songs performed live to their more anodyne recordings.

LIGHTING & VIDEO

In the words of production manager Ian Caulder, "Willie Williams was brought in to liven things up." That's no reflection on Liam McCarthy, the group's original LD from the outset. He and Icon programmer Frank Shields have melded an excellent, well-punctuated light show. But it's what must lurk in William's imagination that delights and excites.

Modules of a Screenco LED screen are hung, checkerboard-fashion, behind a white scrim. All images presented upon it are abstracts, computer graphics, flames, the glittering surface of a swimming pool, etc. Why this is a stroke of genius on Williams' part is concept - the white scrim is heavily front-lit as a cyc' or with projected gobos, the video shining through as a maze of little windows. The result is enchanting: it completely denies the more conventional, jarring juxtaposition of lights and video screen, indeed at



Main picture, Andrea Corr

Left, sound engineer Max Bisgrove. Below, lighting op Liam McCarthy

times it's hard to differentiate between what is lighting on the backdrop, and what's video - one subsumes the other.

Based on all he's done before, with U2, REM and the rest, I can only imagine that he saw this potential in his mind's eye before presenting it as a concept. To be able to visualise like that is a rare skill. And it's a detailed visualisation; each module is masked by a simple frame to round off its sharp corners. So too the conventional video screens either side are framed by ovals. The fact that only the side screens carry live cuts adds to the mirage.

Craig Tinetti is video director to a happy marriage of suppliers, Screenco for the LED modules, Creative Technology the PPU, and Nocturne Europe the side screens and Barco ELMs. Tinetti keeps the live images largely free of effects, managing to keep it interesting with some tricky camera moves; he certainly knows the material. The same can be said of McCarthy and Shields; their LSD-supplied rig spends most of its time decorating the stage. The looks are both attractive and complementary, utilizing a mix of Icons and Studio Colors, while the muscle power comes from no-less than 12 followspots, which certainly keeps McCarthy on his toes, and explains Shields' presence.



AUDIO


Canegreen supply Max Bisgrove with a Meyer MSL4-based flown system, with a set of MSL6s, the complementary long-throw box, rigged above. The system is set by Chris Peters (he time aligns to the drum kit) using three BSS Soundwebs with radio remote, for 18 zones. He achieved a very nice even coverage (good job Chris!) and you have to acknowledge that Meyer do match their components well. Bisgrove mixes on a Midas XL4, only using the desk's automation for mutes and VCAs: "I run all the off-board stuff from a Mac using Digital Performer software; it helps me keep things separated, plus it's a lot easier to swap around on the Mac if they change the set."

Vocal separation is excellent, perhaps due to the new 87c capsule in the Shure radio mic system. "It's less zingy than the Beta," said Bisgrove, "and makes Andrea's voice a lot warmer." Overall, the mix is well balanced, though there is a tendency for the low low-end to swamp occasionally, and the persistent click of stick on closed Hi-Hat is irritating to say the least.

The important point is that Bisgrove uses a fair bit of compression, putting more power into those syrupy voices, something that exaggerates the harsher characteristics (though he does notch out the worst offenders). This leaves the audience with a distinct 'live' experience, which, in my opinion, is superior to those over-produced mixes on their recordings. Don't buy the album; treat yourself to the show instead.

Steve Moles

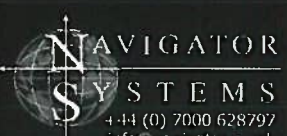
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Cereco International has launched two new websites, structured in such a way that the potential for fraud is significantly reduced.

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XL Video USA

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specialist XL Video has opening its US Office.

Based in Los Angeles, the US operation is headed by Bob Higgins and Barbara Riedling, both of whom have vast experience of the US concert touring business. It is designed to offer video equipment, crew and service for all XL clients whose tours originate from the US, European and Far Eastern operations. The first tour to be overseen by the new US office is the much-hyped U2 Elevation world tour where Barco video projection forms a major feature of the production.

New Management for PSL Lighting

Mick Scullion is to head up PSL Lighting, formerly Lighting Unlimited, as part of the re-launch of the division under the Presentation Services Group branding.

Scullion brings with him over 20 years' experience within the industry, having worked for both Concert Productions (now Vari-Lite) and the Spot Company, where he was a director for five years. Commenting on the move, he said: "The new structure will have immediate benefits for the lighting division. We are currently investing in the latest lighting equipment and along with our lighting design service, we aim to build on our already successful position within the marketplace providing our clients with service to the highest level." Barry Dennison, formerly of Gearhouse XTC, also joins Scullion, alongside current project manager Iain Grant.

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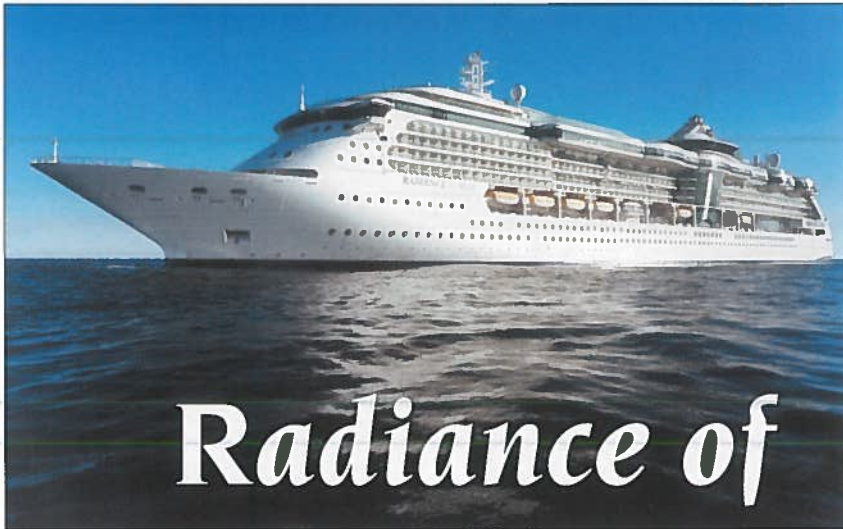
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Radiance of

the Seas

Royal Caribbean International has recently introduced the first of its Radiance class of ships - Radiance of the Seas. This stunning vessel is the largest ship ever to have been built at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Papenburg, Germany, and the first joint venture between a German shipyard and an American cruise line.

RCI has a tradition of delivering high quality onboard entertainment and Radiance is no exception. The Viking Crown is the trademark destination on-board Royal Caribbean ships, a spectacular space surrounded by a sweep of glazing, that wraps itself around the funnel at the highest point, providing panoramic views for the passengers. In the evening, the Viking Crown takes on a completely new persona and turns

into a major entertainment complex and, in the case of the Radiance of the Seas, this includes a disco, a black-box theatre and bars of various hues.

The disco is called Starquest, and Wynne Willson Gottelier (WWG) has designed a spectacular lighting, sound and video system in the area to get the holidaymakers on their toes. One of the main features is a WWG-conceived Beamlight which has been used to create a cage of 78 sequencing, vertical beams around the dance area. Other effects contained in the feature dome above the dancefloor are Martin MAC 250+s, Roboscan Pro 918s and Acrobats, Clay Paky Miniscan HPEs, Diversitronics strobes and

a bunch of neon controlled via Mode Digitrans inverters. All the automated lights listed are fitted with custom gobos. The overall lighting control is provided by a ShowCAD system linked to a Lynx button panel. Two Le Maitre STAR Hazers work in unison to create the required steamy atmosphere.

On the sound front, WWG chose the Cloud CXM/12 with the Denon 2100F double CD player, Tascam 302 double cassette deck, Yamaha MD4-S Multitrack Minidisk players and assorted microphones as inputs. Outputs are EAW JF200s, SB250s, UB 12s and UB 12-MTs, plus Altec 409s. The seven amplifiers are all by Crest, whilst processing is using Peavey MediaMatrix technology. Although only two Fujitsu 42" plasma screens are used, quite a feature is made of video, with dramatic video graphics via a Kaleidolight system.

Lower down, on Deck Four, Radiance boasts an excellent cabaret lounge, though as is usual on a ship, the ceiling is well under three metres high, which creates difficulties when incorporating entertainment technology. The Colony Club, as the lounge is named, is a flexible space allowing for full seating throughout, or the possibility of a large dancefloor when required. There is a stage large enough for a small band or group of performers, plus a control position at the opposite end of the room facing the stage. The room itself has retractable mechanical half-height shutters that allow the stage and dance floor to be closed into a small intimate space or opened to take in the entire lounge for greater participation.



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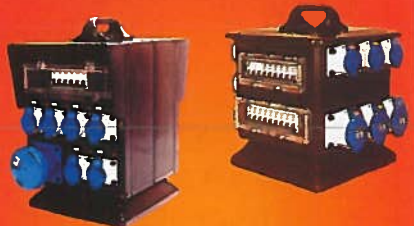
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This is a venue where sound takes the prime role over the other technologies and WWG, with their associate sound designer Richard Northwood, has not stinted on the brief for the Colony Club's performance system. At the control booth sits a Crest Century GTX mixer configured for live performance and playback. There are DBX and Lexicon signal effects units and Peavey MediaMatrix signal processing. The main speaker arrays are Clair Bros P4s, with a total of 14 Speakercraft Aim-5 ceiling speakers that allow sound focus, while four EAW UB82s cater for the dance area. Amplification is provided by Crest throughout.



The focal point of the vessel is the Centrum (left) which extends over 11 decks. In addition to the reception, the different decks accommodate two bars, the library, 12 internet stations and several small lounges. The individual decks are served by six panoramic elevators, most facing the sea. One of the most striking features of the Centrum is a nine-metre high work of art. Inset, the lighting dome above the dancefloor in the Starquest club.



Lighting is run from a Wholehog 500, using ETC dimmers to control ETC Source Fours and Source Four Pars, all fitted with Wybron scrollers. Martin Pro 918s provide the dynamic stage and dancefloor effects. There are also L&E Ministrips and Diversitronics strobes on the stage. Again Le Maitre STAR Hazers create the atmosphere on stage when necessary. An

indication of the tight space of the venue is evidenced in the fact that the single Lycian followspot is mounted on a motorised telescopic base.

The responsibility for the engineering and installation of the digital video systems onboard fell to MAVCO, who also worked closely with Funa GmbH, the main contractor for the lighting and sound systems, to provide integration for all the entertainment systems. The ship's sophisticated Broadcast Control Center also came within MAVCO's brief with Pete Canzonetta leading the team of four to

design, install and commission the centre, making Radiance of the Seas the first German-built ship to have a digital video system with high definition capabilities.

The centre features two satellite dishes for television reception and over 30 channels of onboard entertainment. A non-linear editing system enables the center to perform frame-accurate audio

and video A/B roll edits with limited effects, audio voice-over, music insertion from a CD and character generation. There are also plans in the pipeline to broadcast an onboard talk show, in addition to providing various information channels. Passengers will have access to everything from port information to weather forecasts and listings of ship activities.

The Broadcast Center is unique in that Royal Caribbean is the only cruise line that specifically employs former broadcast engineers to operate the onboard broadcast facilities.



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DJW Opens Office in Middle East

A number of successful projects and an expanding market have encouraged AV and multi media specialist, D J Willrich Ltd (DJW) to open their new office in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

Located approximately 15 miles out of Dubai, in the Sharjah Airport International Free Zone, DJW's new base will be run by Southampton couple Josh and Liz Miller. Josh, previously one of DJW's senior project managers, will now be responsible for all of the company's projects in the Middle East, whilst Liz will assist with the marketing and administration. Established in 1986, DJW grew from the AV Department of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu.

Since then, the company has grown to achieve a multi-million pound turnover and become a major force worldwide in the AV and multi media industry. DJW's ability and reputation is based on providing creative solutions that deliver the ultimate visitor experience in sound, vision, motion and interaction for museums and attractions worldwide. Recent



projects include the FA Premier League Hall of Fame, London; The Big Idea, Scotland; Bentley Pavilion, VW Autostadt, Germany; Discovery Centre, Sharjah, Shanghai Aquarium; Ballymena Ecos Centre, Ireland and X-treme World, Qatar.

Commenting on the expansion, DJW's managing director, David Willrich, told L&S: "With our associate company Mad Systems in the United States, and the opening of this new office in Sharjah, we are now able to provide three-cornered coverage of the world. This marks a significant point in DJW's growth and makes us perfectly placed to expand into India and the Far East."

Rock 'n Rolling

Those masters of rock industry logistics, EST, are once more in the thick of the action over the summer season.

Touring with a list of bands that reads like a roll-call of the top aristocracy of the rock music industry, the range of locations and number of vehicles involved is staggering. The tours are all major Arena and Stadium-scale, and are forecast to be the biggest-earning acts of the summer season. 16 of the familiar yellow and purple trucks will provide logistic support to Madonna's European tour running from the 5 June until 12 July. A further eight will provide transport for the Eagles, starting in Moscow on 29 May and finishing in Glasgow on 28 July. Another 16 will accompany Bon Jovi's European Tour which starts in Stockholm on 31 May.

As if all that wasn't enough, EST will still find time to provide transport for Jethro Tull's European Tour, plus trucking equipment to a major Conference of the World's Ophthalmologists in Istanbul for Face to Face Productions.

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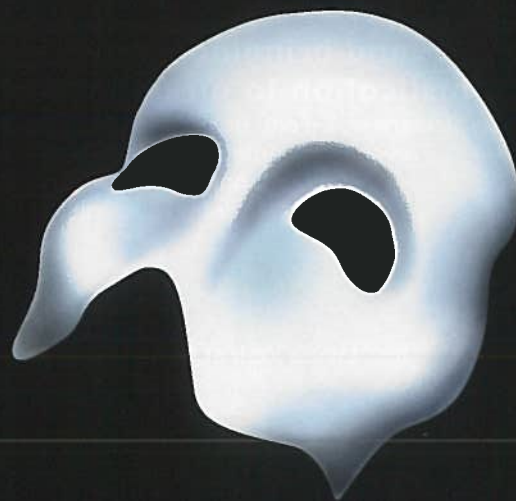
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Empowerment on Display

London-based Optimusic had an interesting demonstration of a potential application for their product at the Frankfurt ProLight & Sound exhibition in April.

Using just one of the company's OptiBeam units (see L&S January 2001), the demonstration featured a display window in a booth, in front of which a single light beam projected down onto a reflective floor-sticker. With the OptiBeam in reverse mode, anyone breaking this beam, intentionally or otherwise, triggers one of a pre-programmed sequence of cues, via MIDI.

Designed by Raymond Haeck of Optimusic's Belgian distributor



Demon, the display was a mock-up of a product showcase. The first cue activated the opaque grey LCD glass, revealing the product (a running shoe!) behind it; subsequent breaks of the beam started the product turning on a revolve, triggered a musical

soundtrack, switched on a fan to create a backdrop of fluttering tinsel tassles, then changed the lighting states, and so on, before returning the display back to its original state. This was a simple, but effective, demonstration of how just one of these interactive light units can offer members of the public the power to alter their surroundings in retail, museums, themed attractions, leisure venues, and more.

Optimusic's Mishka Klotz calls this 'empowerment' - placing the power in the hands of a usually passive audience. The levels of empowerment don't stop there: up to 32 OptiBeam units can control up to 99 pre-programmed cues each - that's a fair number of cues, just waiting to be created.

Bytecraft Invests in Caire

Bytecraft Automation has completed its investment in UK stage machinery company, Caire Ltd.

Bytecraft's John Rowland told L&S: "The acquisition of a controlling interest in Caire Ltd is the culmination of Bytecraft's five year strategy to achieve a European network of alliances and affiliates allowing us to offer stage automation and stage lighting solutions to our European customers." Bytecraft is one of the leading suppliers of stage automation control systems and has successfully completed many high profile installations worldwide.

The UK-based Caire will provide service, maintenance and customer support for existing Bytecraft installations in Europe, in addition to turnkey solutions for stage automation projects.

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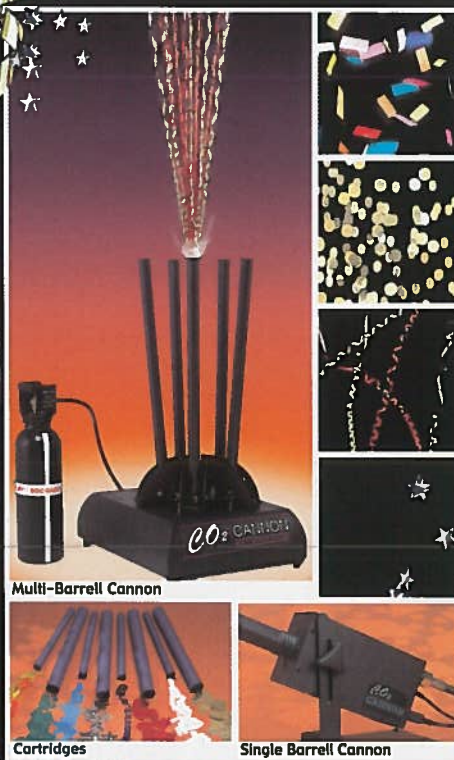
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New CT Operations

With the setting up of new Creative Technology companies in London and Birmingham NEC, the Avesco subsidiary brand is set for a substantial increase in its work portfolio.

In charge of Creative Technology London is Steve Rowan, former head of Gearhouse Multimedia. Meanwhile, the former Gearhouse NEC - based inside the Birmingham exhibition complex - has now been re-branded Creative Technology NEC, and will operate under the senior management of Chris Bramwell. This division was part of the northern group bought out of receivership, along with Gearhouse's Manchester and Scottish operations.

Although the established end of Creative Technology, based in Wandsworth, has for many years been working in the exhibition environment, CT London will be setting up a dedicated operation in which IT will form the core element of the service to exhibition organizers and direct-to-venue clients. Steve Rowan's experienced operational team, which joins him from Gearhouse Multimedia, will specialise in providing a total solutions service for exhibition clients. General manager is Jon Dasent and technical manager, Paul Holden. Creative Technology London is investing around £700,000 in PC technology and web access hardware, including thin computer terminals especially for show control rooms. A highly-experienced team and project crew of 12 PC technicians will operate the company.

Quality Award for Total Fabrications



Following an assessment by an independent body, Total Fabrications Ltd (TFL) has been awarded the ISO 9001 Certificate. This award for quality is supported by Government, and recognised worldwide.

"We've experienced an increasing demand for special project work across all our market sectors, both here and abroad," commented TFL's MD Chris Cronin. "Couple that requirement with the development of our unique safety product, the T2 trussing system, and the need for an internationally recognised standard became essential." The award recognises the company's commitment to high quality service. Readers will be interested to learn that only around 3% of UK businesses hold this certificate, thus TFL are now at the forefront of quality service and customer care. Peter Hind of TFL (pictured centre) headed up the team that prepared the company for assessment, co-opting production manager Lou McDonald and operations manager Brendan Cusack onto the team.

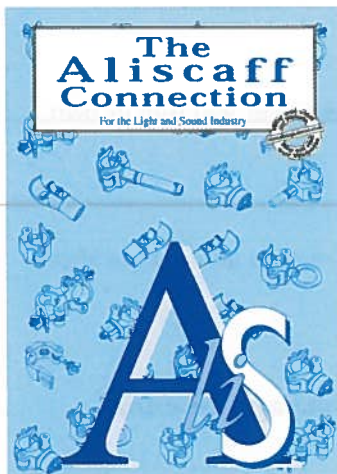
The Influence of Lighting

Late March in London saw several industry organisations come together to contribute to an evening of presentations, the theme of which was Entertainment Lighting and its Influences.

Members of the Society of Light & Lighting (SLL), the Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE) and the Association of Lighting Designers (ALD) were present to hear several speakers outline their own particular experiences.

Peter Phillipson of Future Group Lighting Design talked about the differences between the disciplines of theatre and television lighting, compared to architectural lighting. To illustrate his point, he demonstrated the differences between a number of lighting fixtures. He also went on to discuss the critical role of the lighting programmer and introduced Stuart Porter, who had worked alongside LD Andrew Bridge on the production of Aida at the Royal Albert Hall. Dave Isherwood of The Moving Light Co, followed with a demonstration of moving lights outlining the benefits they can bring to a production.

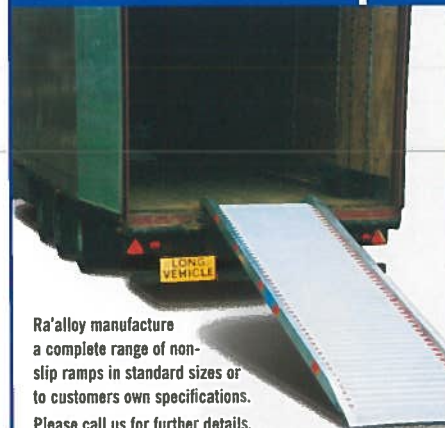
PLASA's Matthew Griffiths talked about the role of the Association and outlined a number of projects where entertainment lighting had been integrated into permanent installations, particularly benefiting educational establishments. Television lighting directors Duncan Brown and Warwick Fielding talked about the role of lighting in television, highlighting their presentations with reference to some of the many productions they have lit.



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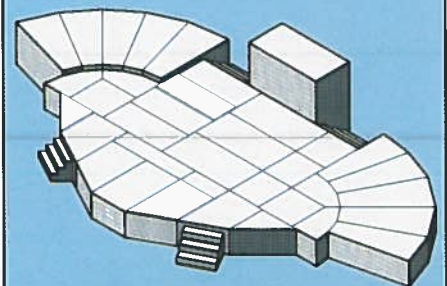
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News Round-Up

From Education to Opera



Following the successful launch of the Frog range of desks earlier this year, Zero 88 recently held a competition, the prize for which was a brand new Fat Frog lighting console.

The competition generated a great deal of interest, both online and at the various tradeshows the company participated in. The eventual winner was Dave Godin, technical manager for the Royal Opera House. In addition to his work at the ROH, Godin is heavily involved with activities in the education sector, providing training in lighting and staging. The Opera House had the opportunity to use the system in early May when a performance of *Othello* was relayed to an audience on the nearby piazza. Our photograph shows Dave Godin receiving the Fat Frog from Cheryl Ryan (Zero 88) at the recent ABTT show.

MAD Restructures

MAD, the Leicester-based effects lighting company is now trading as Mad Manufacturing Ltd.

The move follows the recent decision by MAD and Lighting Technology to bring to an end their joint partnership in MAD Lighting, a company set up by both to handle sales of MAD Manufacturing product. David Summerland continues as MD of the company, whilst David Linger takes up the role of sales director. He will also oversee the design and project management of product installations. Neil Walton becomes operations manager, and will oversee production and purchasing for MAD's busy manufacturing facility. Technical support is now the domain of Gareth Fish, whilst Roger Poyner takes up a position in export sales. Meanwhile, Sam Steed is responsible for sales in the UK, Germany and northern European regions. Finally, Paul Williams is responsible for all the company's marketing activities.

Industry Diary

Lots of events and trade shows in the coming months . . .

Showlight is imminent, taking place in Edinburgh from May 21-23. The event, aimed at lighting professionals and unique in its format, will see some leading names address an audience of up to 300 delegates, the presentations complemented by a trade show of 40 leading companies in the lighting industry and a well-planned visits and social programme.
Tel: +44 1323 418400

The 10th TILE Conference and Exhibition returns to the Business Design Centre, London, on June 12-14. The show, which addresses the leisure, theme, attractions and heritage markets, draws a strong audience for its exhibition, comprehensive conference programme and opportunities for some serious networking. For the first time ever, L&SI will be exhibiting at the event - see you there.
Tel: +44 1985 846181

PLASA's AGM takes place at Coombe Abbey, Coventry, on June 14. This is an important event for the Association, since it's the one time in the year when Members have an opportunity to come together to discuss the work of the Association and its future role in the industry.
Tel: +44 1323 410335

Following ever increasing attendances over its four year history, the dates for John Hornby Skewes' Event 2001 have been confirmed as June 17-19. A key new feature of Event 2001, which takes place at JHS's premises in Leeds, will be the provision of a dedicated pro audio demo theatre which will feature a wide range of audio products.
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We've also got PALA to look forward to this summer. Over 350 exhibitors are expected to participate in the 13th PALA which runs from 12-14 July, 2001 at the Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre. The show attracts a diverse range of exhibitors covering every area of the entertainment industry. Running alongside PALA for the first time will be Total Events Asia, a forum dedicated to event professionals.
Tel: +65 227 3294/227 0688

To make life easier for those attending any of the forthcoming industry trade shows, L&SI has put together comprehensive Fact Sheets covering the key details of all these exhibitions, including contact information, show and visitor profiles, an accommodation and travel guide, a focus on the host city and travel tips. These can be found on the PLASA website at www.plasa.org/events.

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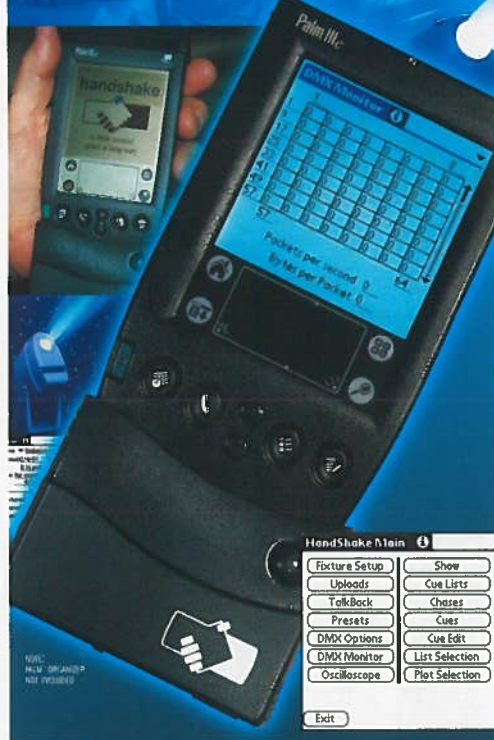
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ReStyle for Le Maitre -

Le Maitre, the name behind a respected range of pyrotechnics, smoke generators and theatre effects for the entertainment industry, has recently restructured.

The Peterborough-based company, with offices in Mitcham and both Canada and the USA, has taken steps not only to remove some previously held misconceptions, but also to exploit its growing presence in a range of new markets.

The most immediate change is the removal of the word 'fireworks' from the company name; from now on it will face the industry simply as Le Maitre Ltd. In the UK, Rick Wilson will continue as sales director, working in the company's more traditional markets, whilst director Karen Haddon will concentrate on the contracts side of the business, developing Le Maitre's presence in the touring and production markets. Display manager Richard Huffam will service clients on the contracts side, whilst Steve Ramos becomes UK sales manager and Sam Samkin will look for new clients on the events and displays side.



The changes are designed to stimulate further business for the company - a move that has already been given some impetus by the success of the Prostage II pyrotechnic system. Its launch has gained it a higher profile in the burgeoning theme park and leisure markets, particularly in growth regions such as South America and the Far East. These trends have been complemented by steady growth in other sectors.

To facilitate further expansion, the company has recently acquired the unit adjoining its

Le Maitre's Steve Ramos, Karen Haddon, Rick Wilson and Richard Huffam at the recent ABTT Show in London

head office in Peterborough - in so doing doubling its current space at the site. This is the first part of a £500,000 investment programme that will not only see new technology coming online, but new faces added to the company's R&D and technical departments. The company has also recently updated its Safety Manual (Code of Practice) and such has been its effectiveness, that the Health & Safety Executive are using Le Maitre as a template for other companies.

To coincide with the changes in the UK, the company has also been raising its profile in the US markets and has backed this up with a \$1.5million investment programme. The move to build new business on the touring side in the UK will be mirrored in the US, where Le Maitre is working to establish stronger ties with production companies.

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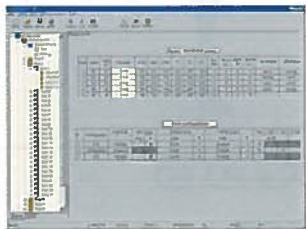
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Shanghai 2001

PLASA Presents Light & Sound Shanghai 2001, the fourth consecutive show to be held at the city's Intex Centre, took place from 4-6 April.

Several companies travelled to Shanghai as part of the Britain in China programme. Among them was **DHA Lighting**, exhibiting in conjunction with its Asian stockist Pacific Lighting (HK) and showing its latest product, the Gecko Image Projector, together with a range of other products. **Zero 88** was reinforcing its presence in the Asian market with the first Asian showing of its Frog and Fat Frog lighting consoles, whilst **Artistic Licence** was profiling its DMX512 processor chip range which it is promoting for OEM business.

Strand Lighting debuted its 520i lighting console for the Chinese market and also showed its SL spotlights, 300 Series control consoles and SLD96 dimmers. **Simplex**, meanwhile, was promoting its Ultralight staging system designed for temporary installations, whilst **Smoke Design** was demonstrating its range of silk flame machines - including Excalibur, Sabre and Medieval Torch and its Scenta Five fragrance unit. **Laser Creations International**, for its part, was at the show with details of its Laser Video Projectors and Waterscreens - both proving popular in installations across China. **MGC Lamps**, the UK distributor for replacement lamps from Philips, GE and Osram, was at the show "to scoop some business around Asia in general, and China in particular," according to director Jeff Sawyer. Hong Kong and China distributor **ACE** took its usual stand inside the main entrance. British lighting



companies on the ACE stand included **ADB/LSI** with a first-time showing in China of its Phoenix 10 desk, which allows for up to 2,048 channels and four monitors, and **Pulsar**, which was showcasing its Minipiece 54 and Masterpiece 216 DMX desks. **Clay Paky** and **Jands** products were also represented.

On the audio side, ACE featured products from **Soundcraft**, **JBL**, **Lexicon**, **BSS**, **dbx**, **Crown** and **Shure**, for which the fast-growing company has recently been appointed Chinese distributor. Together with a complete range of Shure products, ACE was also promoting the first-time availability in China of the KSM44 studio mic.

Central to the **Pacific Audio Supplies** stand was the **Bose** Panaray system, together with the **Allen & Heath** ML 5000, GL 2200, GL 3300 and ML 4000 VCA consoles and Xone range of DJ/club mixers. The company also showed a range of **Carver** amps plus a display of products from Australian manufacturer **ARX**, including the EQ-60, Barmix, 8-pre 8 mic amp, Afterburner and Sixgate units.

EVI Hong Kong was handling the Asian debut of the **Midas** Venice console aimed at small venues and corporate AV, as well as the first time showing in China of **Dynacord's** LittleMax speaker range and AM12 active monitors. The company also showed a Midas Heritage 1000, the smallest console in the range.

Chinese manufacturer **Deton** took a large space to exhibit its range of power amp, mixer and equaliser products. The company was showing its new D Series Switchmode amplifier for the first time, and also featuring the MP Series advanced mixers.

Other prominent Chinese exhibitors included **Prosperity Lamps and Components** which was launching the Cyberlight Turbo, Studio Beam and new Color Pro series from **High End**, controlled via a Wholehog II desk. Chinese sales agent **Artco** dedicated almost all its

stand to promoting UK speaker brand **Ohm**, which it is actively establishing in Hong Kong, China and Macau. The company also exhibited a range of lighting products from German manufacturer **JB Lighting**, for which it was appointed a distributor at this year's Frankfurt Musikmesse. US speaker, amp and mixer manufacturer **Biema** also had a large range of its products on display. Biema has joined forces with Hong Kong-based **Wind Force (HK) Tech Industrial Company** to introduce its products in to the Chinese market.

Sammy de Havilland, CEO of **DARE Pro-Audio** and Deco Leisure, was at the Shanghai show in his role of PLASA treasurer and executive committee member to represent the organisation and look after its exhibiting members. De Havilland presented a seminar entitled Sound Installation in Small to Medium-sized Venues - a practical approach to the design and problems. "The show was of the standard we have come to expect over the last few years, and appears to be growing in stature if not size," he comments. "It is a show held in great esteem by the visitors, as well as the exhibitors. However, as many UK and international manufacturers have established local distributors over the last few years, we now see fewer of them exhibiting in their own capacity, which should really be viewed as the show's true success from a PLASA perspective."

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God Only Knows

Audience members attending Hugh Whitmore's new play *God Only Knows* at The Vaudeville Theatre in London may not realise that they are witnessing a small revolution in theatre sound design: Aura associate Robert Tory and Aura director John Leonard have decided to make it the West-End's first 'mixing-desk free' show...

The original touring equipment list, supplied to the production by Autograph Sound, included a



Yamaha 02R digital desk, along with an Akai S6000 sampler, playing out through Richmond Sound Design's AudioBox and controlled by RSD's Showman show-control program to replay the atmospheric sound effects mix, and to 'fly' a sinister helicopter effect around the auditorium

John Leonard, Scott George and Robert Tory marvelling at how easy it is to program a show with the RSD AudioBox and the MotorMix faderpack!

for the play's denouement. Both Tory and Leonard, along with Aura's show-control expert Scott George, were keen to investigate the latest option for AudioBox users, CM Automation's MotorMix, which adds a motorised fader-pack to Richmond's audio-playback matrix. The unit facilitates hands-on programming and provides a fader mimic for the AudioBox, as well as providing full remote control for show-running. Following Aura's comprehensive use of the AudioBox and associated ABEdit software for Madame Tussaud's New York exhibition (see L&S, Dec 2000), Leonard and George were confident that the entire show could be handled just by the AudioBox and MotorMix combination and that any other front-end equipment could safely be made redundant.

Aura specified a complete double system, with a standby AudioBox tracking the main system, so that a seamless changeover could take place in the event of a failure. By removing the mixing desk and sampler from the show, Aura was able to reduce the real-estate needed for the FOH mix position drastically, and, even with the back-up system, to knock a sizeable chunk off the equipment rental costs, much to the delight of the producers. Aside from the programming computer, a CD player is the only other item in the rack, connected to two of the AudioBox's eight analogue inputs, with the AudioBox automatically switching out the CD player's signal as soon as the on-board playback system starts up.

The AudioBox's hard-disk storage system can hold up to 15 hours of stereo sound, allowing Tory and Leonard to select from a large collection of effects for playback, using the 16-track playback facility via the 16 x 16 automated matrix. "We needed to fade background sounds in and out really slowly, and to be able to move sounds around the stage and auditorium, as well as provide the spot-effects of gunfire, dogs and cars required by the script," says Leonard. "Robert handled the show while I was in New York last year, and designed mixes of Tuscan night sounds which had to creep in and out. As you can specify fade in and out times up to several hours in length using the AudioBox, this was easy to achieve, as was balancing the various other effects. The AudioBox supports eight separate cue lists, so we allocated a list to each 'family' of effects, and designated a master cue-list to control the entire show."

Sean Knowles, the show's operator, was consulted early on about whether he minded being a guinea-pig, overcoming his initial reservations once he became familiar with the fact that the MotorMix interface gave him total control over all aspects of the AudioBox.

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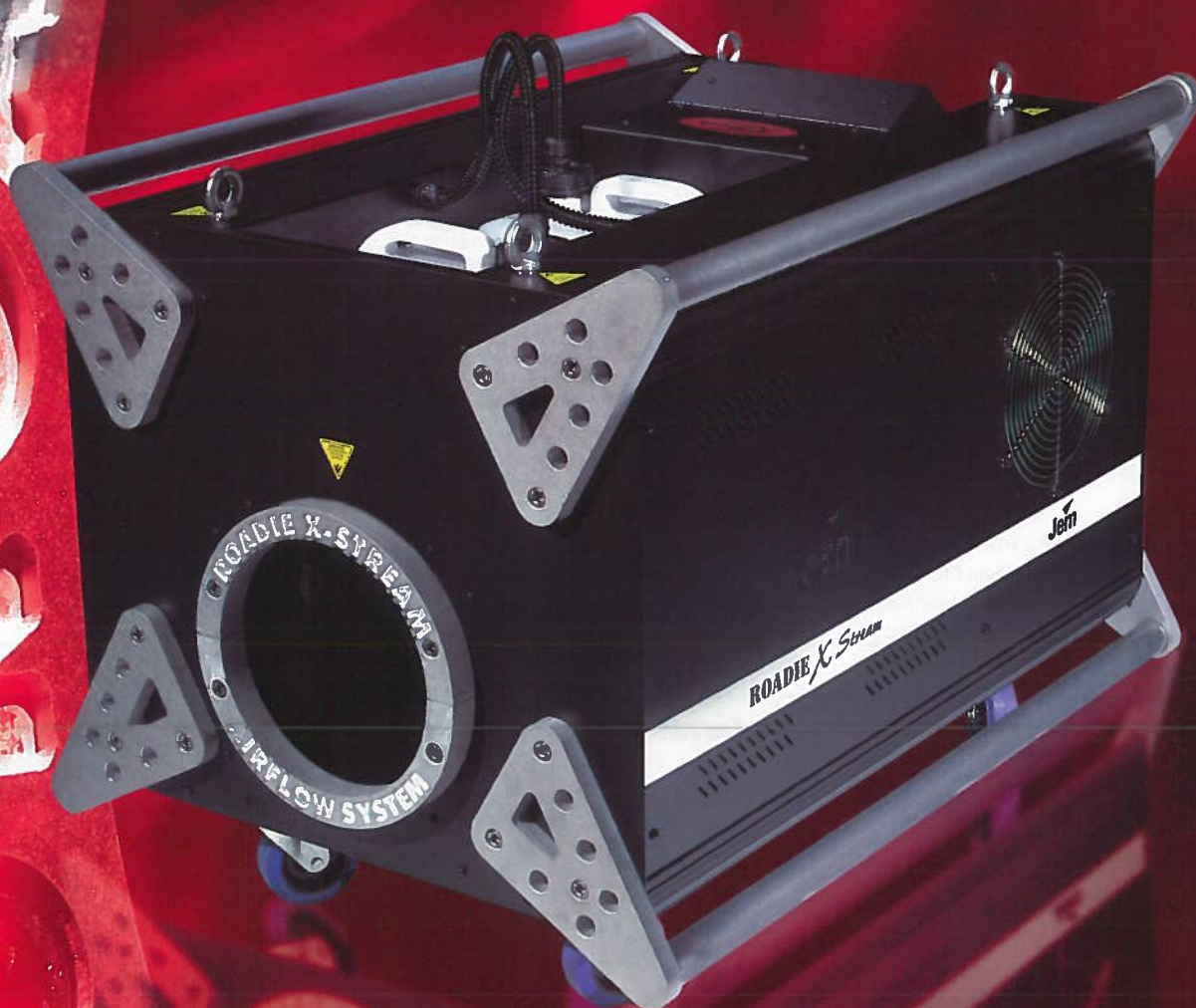
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Ninestiles School Goes State-of-the-Art

It is rare that a state-of-the-art digital lighting desk should find itself on a school's shopping list, but when Design Technology teacher, Kevin Dutton, from Ninestiles School (a leading technology college in Birmingham), attended last year's PLASA Show there was only one thing on his mind.

By the time he left Earls Court he had placed an order for a 48-channel Strand Lighting 300 Series desk through AC Lighting. With a background in theatre, Dutton has been a regular visitor to PLASA over the past five years. He operates as part of a team that includes Jo Falk and Eddie Halliday from the English faculty, that seeks to promote and educate students about lighting and sound. Ninestiles, which offers its 1400+ students a broad spectrum of GCSE, GNVQ and A Level subjects, has already earned a top accolade from Ofsted, as the school with the highest teaching standards in the country. Dutton says: "Our ambition over the next three to four years is to ensure that every student is assigned their own laptop, as we are working towards 'anytime anywhere' learning."

The school has two auditoriums - a drama studio and the school hall, the latter generally configured in the round for school productions. "In the last five years there has been a positive attitude towards developing the school's technical facilities for performing arts and drama, and this has culminated in the purchase of the 300 desk," Dutton continued.

Funding was provided by the PTA, 'Friends of Ninestiles School' and Birmingham City Council's local initiative project. "We wanted something that was both flexible and software-oriented; because



Ninestiles student Chris Walton seated at the Strand 300 Series desk

we don't have a control room we tend to wire up for a concert or production between the two performance spaces and occasionally outside in the quadrangle."

The locational mobility of the desk was eased by the fact that Ninestiles recently installed wireless technology to provide a mobile and secure wireless LAN environment, allowing teachers and students alike to turn classrooms into temporary high-tech computer suites. At the PLASA Show, Dutton reviewed a series of market-leading desks before arriving at his decision. "The bottom line was that the 300 Series allowed me to be totally flexible with the software. Also it occurred to me that if we buy scrollers, we will need extra channels - and the same goes for moving lights."

The design of Strand's 24/48 memory desk enables modules to be arranged in any order, which can be detached up to 100m apart. Interconnection between modules is via the Strand S Buss communication system over Cat 5 cable, with RJ 45 connectors for simple connectivity. Additional ShowNet and system software functionality extend the control options over the 500 Series from which it was derived,

with new effects operations, hundredth of a second fade times and a host of other features incorporated.

The Ninestiles team decided to configure the desk with 24 presets and 24 submasters. "It needed to be portable, and the fact that the 300 folds up like a laptop, and is neat, secure, well-designed and robust, has certainly justified the purchase," states Kevin. It will also enable them to update the software on a regular basis from the Internet. "We can download it onto 20 laptops or put it on the school network without having to pay a different license fee per user." Dutton adds that currently there are around 20 students logging on in a computer suite to learn how to use the software.

Following its arrival at the school, the 300 Series went straight onto a production of Macbeth, followed by a production of Grease. Out in the commercial world, the school is already working on some collaborative control technology with Light & Sound Design.

The fact that Birmingham's Hippodrome, The Rep, Old Rep and Crescent theatres have Strand boards was another major factor in the purchasing decision since local theatres are often asked to provide work experience for the students. And Dutton warned: "Some people still tend to think of schools in the traditional way - but it is not like you and I remember school. These students come out and do things that some people in the workplace cannot, or are too scared, to do." In other words, he says, they operate mostly from intuition and bypass the manual wherever possible. As a result of acquiring the 300 Series desk, the school would ideally like to add a WYSIWYG system to the educational syllabus - particularly since this term they are set to rig, programme and operate two A-level productions plus the summer concert series.



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InspHire Partnership

InspHire Ltd, specialist in hire management systems, has signed a Partnership Agreement with Microsoft Great Plains Business Solutions, which will see it offer Great Plains' Dynamics and e-Enterprise solutions as the fully integrated Back Office solution for its own SQL hire system.

With a long history of working together to deliver new business technologies, the two companies are joining forces to provide a package for small and medium companies. Andy Beal, InspHire MD told L&S: "The signing of the Agreement is the culmination of a two-year search for a suitable Back Office partner to integrate into InspHire's SQL Edition. Great Plains' purchase by Microsoft, together with the VBA tools available to us in the end, made it an easy choice. Not only will we be able to offer the same level of two-way integration with our hire system, but our customers will have the benefit of using a Microsoft branded accounts system."



Give us a Blake!

Following our coverage of Frankfurt's ProLight & Sound exhibition in the April issue, it's been pointed out to us that we omitted to show readers one of the rarer sights of the show - The Effects Co's Martin Blake. Here he is pictured on stand with his local German distributors Mona Szersieg and Reiner Seibl of IC Showtechnik, promoting The Effects Co's recently launched CO2 Cannon system, details of which you can find in our February issue.

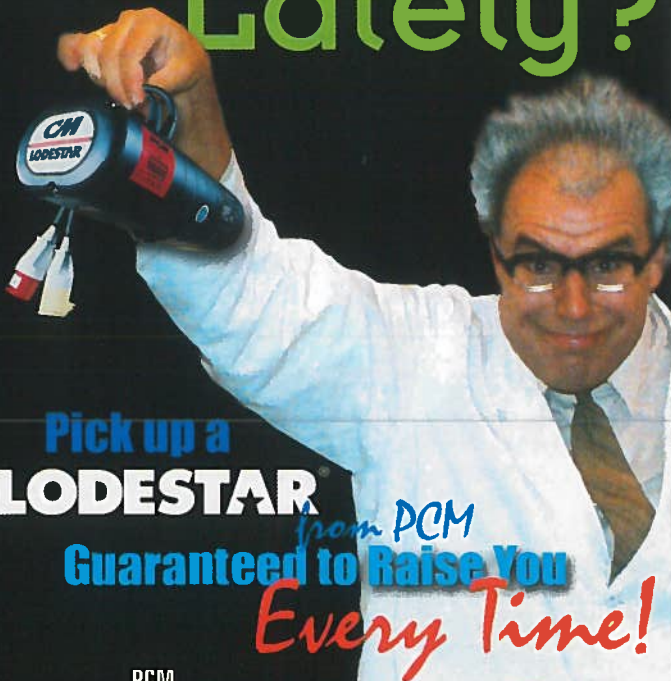
Our thanks to a Mr M Blake of Surrey for repeatedly ringing us to highlight this oversight.

Horizon Agreement

Rosco has signed an agreement with Lighting Technology which will see LT take on the sale and support of Rosco's Horizon computer software in the UK and Eire.

Lighting Technology has been an established Rosco dealer for over 10 years, distributing the full range of Rosco colour, paint, and gobos, so the distribution of Horizon (which converts a PC into a lighting control system), and its associated products is viewed as a strengthening of the relationship between the two. Lighting Technology has strong links with many working lighting designers and its LTP division works closely with designers in the architectural, retail and corporate lighting markets. Sarah Davis of Lighting Technology Projects has been appointed product manager for Horizon and is based at LT's new sales office at the Business Design Centre in Islington.

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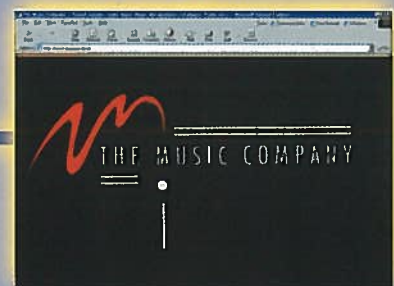
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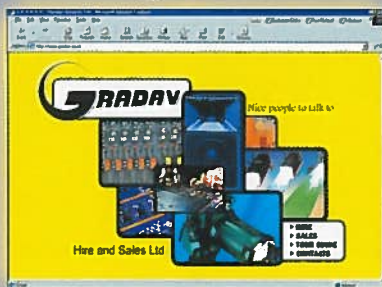
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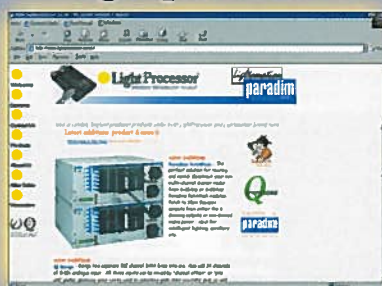
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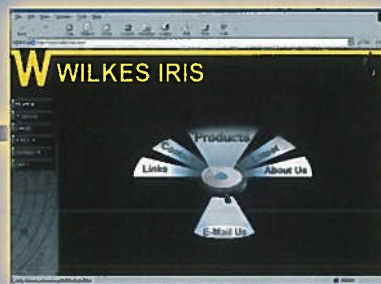
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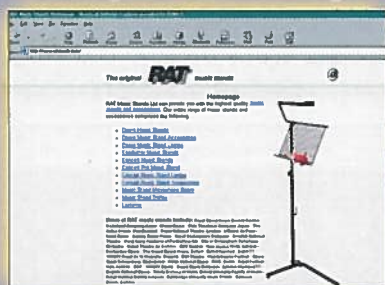
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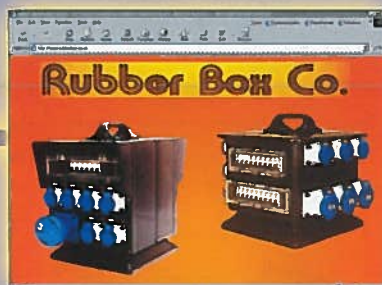
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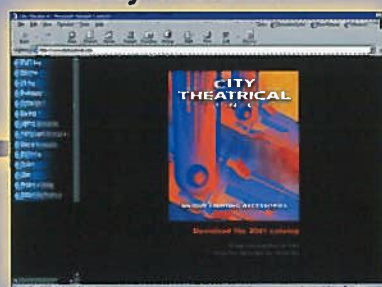
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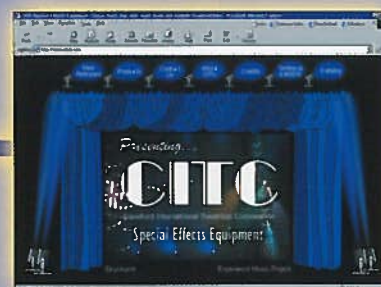
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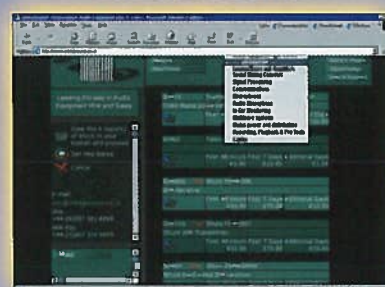
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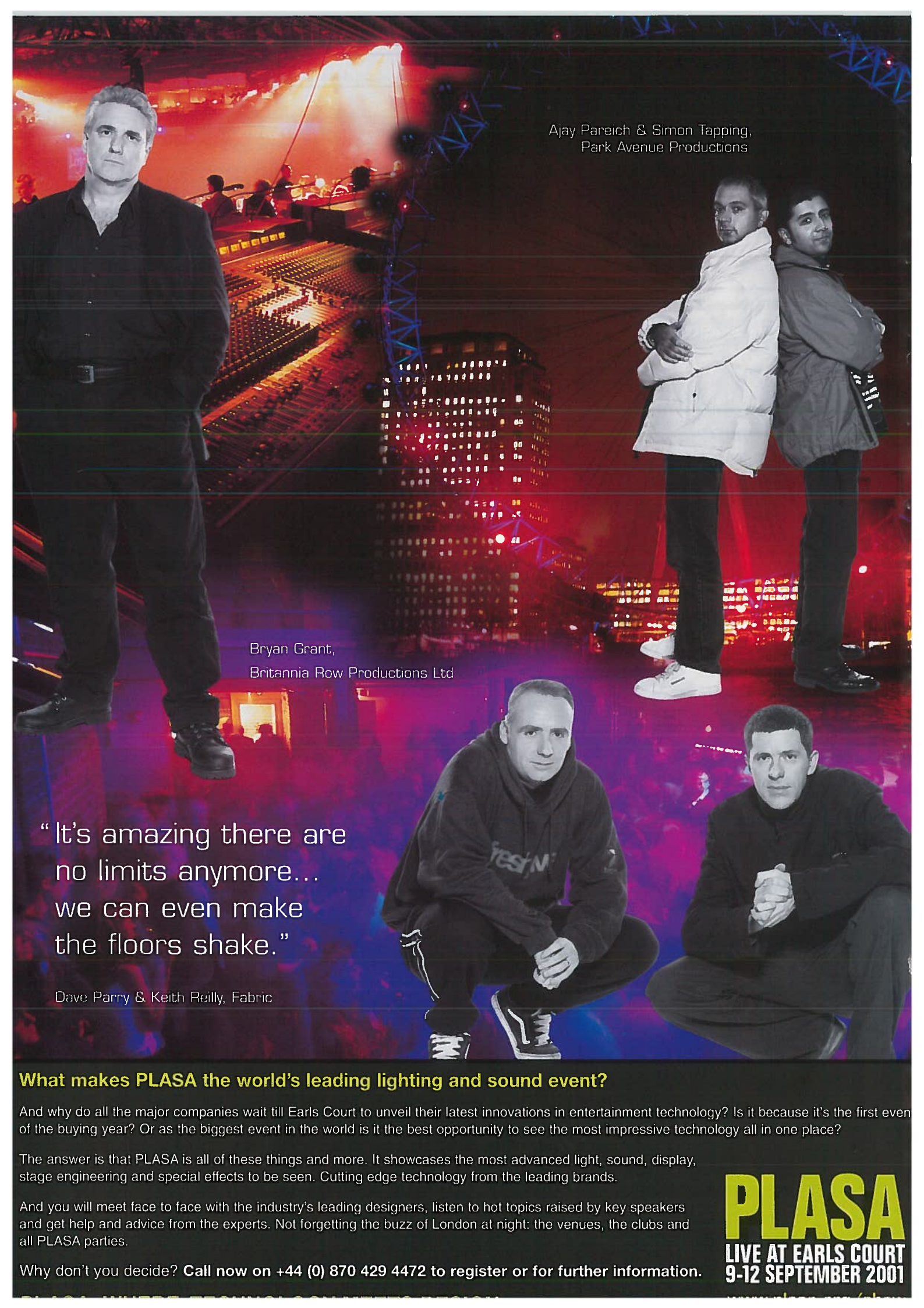


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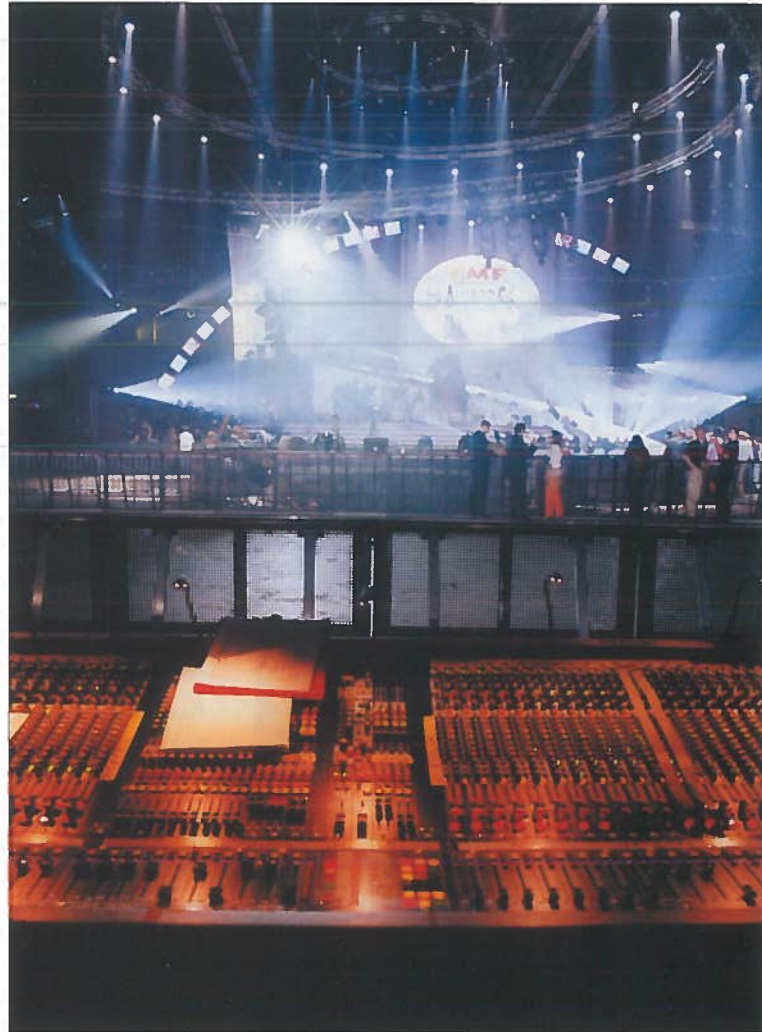
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TMF AWARDS



Staged at Holland's premiere arena venue, the Ahoy in Rotterdam, the annual TMF Awards is the country's international TV showcase for live music. L&SI was there . . .



The TMF Awards is into its fifth year as Holland's top annual music awards bash, promoted by Mojo Concerts in cooperation with Dutch music TV channel The Music Factory (TMF), and produced by Sightline with production managers Gert Jan Schreuder and Dennis van der Haagen.

The event has grown spectacularly from small beginnings to a show that last month featured 25 acts, including Manic Street Preachers, Destiny's Child and Janet Jackson, in front of an audience of 10,000 at the Ahoy Arena in Rotterdam.

Confounding the caution of almost every other top music awards event, the TMF show was broadcast live on the night. The team have, of course, heard all the tales about the early (pre-MJK) BRIT Awards, and sundry other horror stories about what can go wrong when you bring together bands, presenters and an audience in a live awards broadcast, but have elected to do it anyway for the past five years, and it hasn't backfired on them yet.

Gert-Jan Schreuder headed the technical production for Sightline Productions, and has been involved with the show every year since the second event. The key production line-up also included Ampco Pro Rent for the audio production (production manager Kees Heegstra), lighting supplier Flashlight Rentals (lighting designer Ignace d'Haese and lighting crew chief Marco de Koff), staging by Stageco, video production by Screenco Holland/JVR, rigging by Front Line Rigging, backline by Protone and artistic drapes by PNA.

Unlike the BRIT Awards, TMF's event does not include a dinner, but is staged as a live TV show, in front of a very young and animated audience, and the whole arena is lit as a big party that goes out live for five hours to around two million viewers.

Gert-Jan Schreuder, who also designed the set, explains: "This is the fifth TMF event. The first was a small affair in a TV studio, and this is the third to be held at the Ahoy. It gets bigger and more sophisticated every year. Last year we did an incredible thing with video screens; we

had 100 square metres of LED wall which moved all around the set. We now have a set that is very awards-orientated in a kind of chic, gala way. When TMF wanted a more 'gala' style approach, I started to include ramps in the drawings and the video screen configuration. Then the LD came in with his ideas for the curved and spiral trussing, so it was a combination of our concepts.

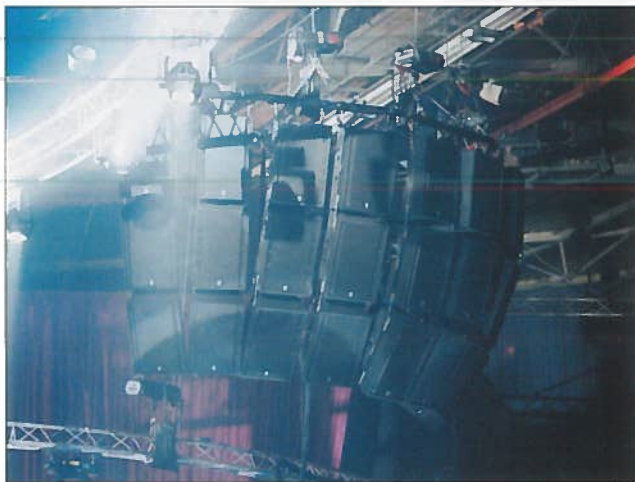
"The increased sophistication of the Awards has run in parallel with the growing popularity of the TV channel; it's certainly a big thing in Holland, but it's also very popular with the international artists. Winning one of the awards has become quite prestigious. It's always been live, even when it was at the TV studio.

"We tend to use many of the same supply companies each year. Holland is, of course, a very small country, and with a line-up that includes world stars like Janet Jackson, Destiny's Child and the Manic Street Preachers, who are used to touring with the very best service companies, it's vital that we provide technical support of equal standing. We have two days to build the set and get it ready for the transmission, which compared to other big awards shows is no time at all."

AUDIO

Ampco Pro Rent's sound production team were dealing with both live and broadcast elements. Audio production





manager Kees Heegstra says: "First, this is a television show. It's a real live show - a TV programme with a 10,000 capacity audience. We're dealing with two different recording trucks, one for all the live acts and the other for all the taped acts. We handle that with our own modified version of a BSS splitter.

"There's one Midas Heritage console out front for the 'real' acts and another for the taped acts and presentations. All bands use the same out front desk and all bands have their own monitor channels, which are left alone so that when they walk on it's exactly like it was at the soundcheck. Furthermore, at the monitor position there's a Yamaha O2R automated desk for all the tape acts - so, again, when they come on they'll have the same mixes as they had during rehearsals.

"It's quite a straightforward set-up out front. The big thing is that it's the first Ahoy show where we're using an updated version of the Renkus-Heinz Synco Touring System (RH-STS) cabinet - in terms of high end output, it sounds a lot more open." Fred Heuves, MD of Ampco, comments: "We are beta testing a revision to the long-throw RH-STS mid/high cabinet, and are evaluating the results. It's the first time we've used it in this quantity and so far we think it's superb."

Heegstra says: "We're running the FOH control system as you would in a festival situation; the live and taped acts alternate so that while a taped act is on, the engineer for the next live act can set up the 'live' console out front. In many ways it would be easier to do it with something like an Amek Recall, but if we had a fully-automated desk many of the engineers would be afraid of it, unfortunately! They still prefer to have the Midas and, sound-wise, I can understand why. There are seven completely live acts out of a total of 25. More than half the others are singing live to tape and then a few are purely playback."

Keeping it all running to time within the five-hour live broadcast was not a task for the faint-hearted. The show was not timecoded, but tightly programmed, and a very hard-working stage manager helped keep it all running on time, as did the intermissions of TV commercial breaks.

Heegstra: "Without the TV breaks you couldn't do the changeovers the way we do because there is very little backstage space; all the backline and instruments have to be carried on and miked up on the stage. The other good thing about the stage set-up is that the lectern presentation position - where they hand out the awards - is 3.5m higher than the performance stage level, so we can change over while a presentation is going on, or while an act is playing on the 'B' stage out in the audience." The main stage was 10m deep by 18m wide, while the 'B' stage was 6m in diameter in the round.

LIGHTING

Lighting designer Ignace d'Haese headed the lighting team, with Ampco's sister company Flashlight Rental of Utrecht providing the hardware and support team. D'Haese enlisted the help of Ten Feet as technical and artistic liaison with his lighting operators - his regular team.

Flashlight supplied 59 Vari® Lite VL6B luminaires, 70 High End Studio Color 575s, 24 Studio Spot 250s, 24 Martin MAC 500s, 58 1kW Par 64 spots, 28 5kW Desisti Fresnel spots, 16 4-bar Par 64 ACLs, 20 Thomas Par 36, six Thomas 8-lights and 48 High End AF1000s. The followspots were a pair of Lycian 1200W and three Strong Xenon 2kW Super Troupers.

The rig also featured three Space Flowers, four DF50 oil crackers, four High End F100 smoke machines, 355 metres of trussing, eight wind machines and 112 motors. The whole scenario was controlled by two Wholehog desks and a pair of Wholehog Subwings via a Flashlight-developed Ethernet-based control system. The Flashlight crew was completed by moving light operators Ton Swaak and Alain Korthout, spot operators Jerry Zandwijk, HJ ter Veen, Anco Stielstra, Arthur Koopmans and Michel Bisschops, and technicians Victor Andersen and Guus Hogenes.

Lighting production started building on Tuesday morning and had the job finished by 6pm the following day. Most of Wednesday was spent focusing, with Thursday and Friday set aside for programming and rehearsals.

Marco de Koff: "Most artists do have their own ideas, although it's not like a festival where they all come with their own LDs. Only the Manic Street Preachers and Janet Jackson have brought their own LD with them, although even they tend to take a back seat, since they understand the nature of the event."

"There's plenty of time to make the changes between sets this year, since everything is fully programmed and DMX-controlled. Also, we have the same team as in previous years, so everyone knows their roles and what to do, which leads to a very relaxed atmosphere."

As to how the event has changed over its five-year history, he comments: "When it started out, everything was on playback, so there was much less gear. Now there is fierce competition in Holland between the TMF awards, and their MTV equivalent. The TMFs are probably bigger than the MTV awards, but for a slightly younger crowd than the MTV audience. Compared to the early days when the biggest names were 5ive and the Back Street Boys, the event now involves more credible music and rock - like the Manics and, last year, Skunk Anansie."

This being the first year for a new LD, from a lighting perspective there have been fresh ideas - and, he says, more communication between set and lighting designers. "I think the show is less traditional than in previous years, particularly in set design and lighting design. We put a proposal forward in September, which turned out to be a little too expensive, so we scaled it down slightly, looked closely at the new set design and came up with a new lighting design involving the curved rigging and circular shapes."

"I think we have achieved the right balance between the live element and the television element. I personally come from a rock and roll background, and have a history of tailoring the shows to a TV audience, so it hasn't been that difficult to achieve. Also it has helped having a director who listens to suggestions and takes on board what we are saying to him. With so many cameras cutting in and out, communication is vital, and it has been particularly good this year."

The Ahoy Arena, he says, lends itself naturally to events like this: "It's the number one venue in Holland for this kind of thing - all the big indoor shows are staged here. Also, having worked in it for the last five years, everyone knows every nook and crannies!"

VIDEO

For Jeroen Jongenelen, sales director at Screenco Holland/JVR, this was the fourth year for JVR/Screenco's involvement with the TMF Awards. "For us it has grown from normal projection on videowalls for our first two events, to a tracking 100sq.m screen for the anniversary show, and this year to a combination of a 34sq.m (3 x 4 ratio) JumboTron JTS-17 CRT screen - masked off to appear as an oval shape - with Pioneer 40" (3 x 4 ratio) plasma screens. The masking of the JumboTron was tailor-made for this show using a canvas material cut to an oval shape and fixed to the screen modules."

The images fed to the screen were a mixture of pre-recorded material and live shots from 20 cameras, mixed via the OB truck's Grass Valley console. The plasma screens were flown in an arc either side of the JumboTron, and were programmed so that images appeared to 'walk' from left to right along an arc of 14 screens,

wait for a second as they reach the JumboTron, then continue along the final four screens on the right. "It looks like a 'hose' of imagery," comments Jongenelen. "The processing aspects are fairly standard: if you can control videowall cubes, the same principal applies to plasma screens."

The plasma screens showed logos, special effects and some live feeds, although the screens are so small in comparison to the stage set, that it's hard to pick out live feeds. They work much better with colourful, animated graphics, to the point where the audience may not realise what they are seeing - anyway, it was a fantastic and unusual effect.



Above, Fred Heuves of Ampco: the company was beta testing a revision to its long-throw RH-ST5 mid/high cabinet
Rob Kamer (left), FOH engineer with Jeroen Ebskamp, system engineer



"Front Line did an excellent job of the rigging. We work with them so often that when we give them the outline of the video system we have specified, they instinctively know what is required of them, and they are very thorough and professional."

Gert-Jan brought up the screen integration idea as the show designer. Jongenelen says: "We've never used plasma screens in conjunction with a large screen before, and I don't believe it's ever been done until now."

There was also I-Mag projection at the sides of the stage, care of Barco Reality 9200s and 3 x 4 ratio screens, and a 3 x 3 videowall set up for VIP guests in the hospitality tent.

As for the choice of CRT screens over LED, he says: "Whilst CRT screens are heavier in weight than LED systems, and require more power, the big advantage of having CRT is the pure colour rendition. By the very nature of the technologies, CRT colour is warmer and more lifelike. As long as you're happy with the weight and power issues, you will always get a more natural image with a CRT JumboTron. Theoretically, CRT screens are also friendlier to TV cameras than LED screens, because the refresh rate is identical to the PAL broadcast standard. However, I didn't really notice a problem with last year's LED system - the images looked wonderful. As we all know, LED has big advantages in terms of weight, power consumption and brightness, and I think it's inevitable that it will become the industry standard."



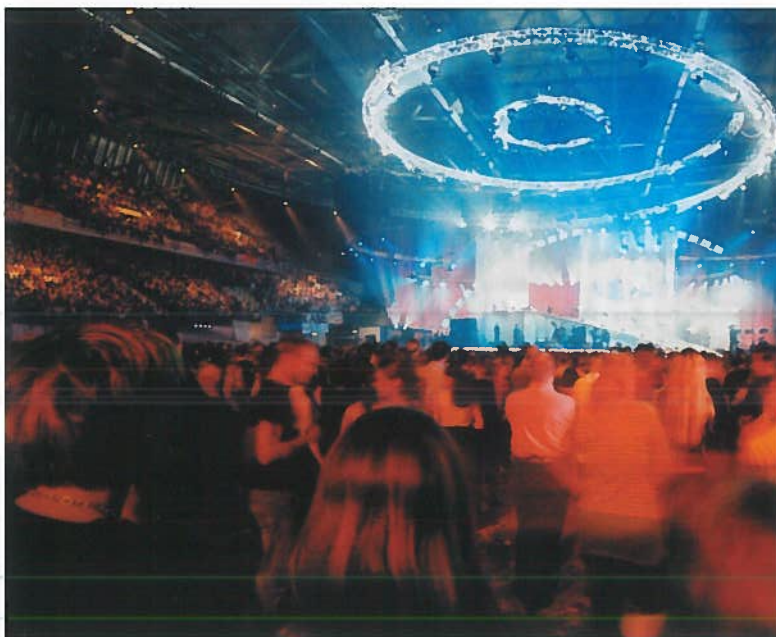
Further members of the technical crew.

Left, Gert-Jan Schreuder, production manager for Sightline;

centre, Jeroen Jongenelen of JVR;

below, Kees Heegstra, audio

production manager for Ampco



OUTSIDE BROADCAST

Understandably, there was a major outside broadcast element to the performance. United Broadcast Facilities BV provided the OB trucks, sporting its newly-acquired Unit 3 Serial Digital OB van, with 16:9 - 4:3 switchable screen ratios. It supports up to 12 Philips Cameras, and features include a Philips DD 35-4 switcher, DV Extreme 3 channel effects, up to eight Digital Betacam VTRs, Barco monitors, Axon

frame store and BTS Matrix. The audio element for this aspect is pretty comprehensive too: there is an Amek Recall console with Virtual Dynamics, two Yamaha 03D submixers, Avalon/Fostex monitoring, Tascam DAT, MD and CD recorders, TC Electronics and Lexicon effects, Drawmer and TC Electronics compressors and AKG, Shure, Sennheiser, Schoeps and B&K microphones.

All in all, a pretty impressive undertaking!

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Since Aktieselskabet Schouw made an offer for the rest of the Martin Group's shares towards the end of March, this will possibly be the last time that we will have the opportunity to review their annual performance in any detail, as I assume that their accounts will, in future, be just one slice of a much bigger pastry. So, let's take a look at Martin's year to 11th December 2000.

THE GROUP'S

TURNOVER grew by 18%, which is certainly not to be sniffed at, and gross profits on sales grew substantially from DKK 18m to DKK 57m, possibly as the result of a more rational pricing policy. But, from there on, it all went down the tubes. The cost of defending the case against Vari-Lite, including the penalty that was paid, snatched a huge DKK 64 million from the Martin purse, while some jiggery-pokery in the UK subsidiary (see L&SI, No Comment Jan 2001), put paid to a further DKK 16 million.

NEVERTHELESS, the underlying trend is very

positive and, provided there are no further heists from the current year's revenues, and control of the subsidiaries' finances is tightened, Schouw may well have made a shrewd move. Anyway, CEO Kristian Kolding still has options open to him should he need to start a squeeze. A clue to one of those options may, perhaps, be found in the Group's recent announcement of the sale of Martin Rentals to SeeLite for DKK 8m+. Without

that, normal sales for the current fiscal year are forecast at DKK 65m (GBP 5.4m or USD 7.7m).

IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, I thought it would be interesting also to look at how Martin's adversary, Vari-Lite, has fared since they made the hit on Martin. It is interesting to note that VL's policy to date has been the reverse of Martin's in that they have set out to shed all subsidiary activity, while, where possible, retaining the distribution advantages. The previous 12 months, up to and excluding the winter quarter, includes confirmation of the USD 4m gained from the Martin Group, but this was almost entirely offset by stock write-offs in Europe, and further complicated by other balance sheet transactions, so it was a little difficult to see the wood for the trees in the published accounts. Furthermore, sales of V-L's new product line, as opposed to income from rentals, can barely have started to bite by then, so it is this last reported quarter, to December 2000, that could be the first real indicator as to whether those radical changes of policy are paying off.

THE SIGNS SEEM to be broadly neutral. On lower turnover, due to the earlier disposals, operating profit was up by USD 4.8m to USD 8.2m, however USD 7.1m of that related to the sale of Showco. There were some restructuring costs also, plus some extra costs relating to the new products, and not much sign that product sales are yet impacting on profits in a positive way - that will start to show in the Spring 2001 quarter, the company say.

RUSTY BRUTSCHÉ told shareholders: "Our results compared to a year ago show the effects of the moves [disposals] in terms of decreased revenues, but they also show improved gross margins as we begin to concentrate fully on efficient distribution of our automated lighting equipment in our core markets." Somebody obviously thinks that he is getting something right, as I note that VL shares were trading at

USD 1.75 at the time of writing this piece, which is not too bad, considering.

IT'S JUST AN OBSERVATION, but isn't the disco biz getting a bad press at the moment? Not that it hasn't always been the bad boy of our industry, yet the revelation that people take drugs in nightclubs (I'm sorry, but please!), has given the press a field day.

FIRST THERE WAS THE CLOSURE of Home by the police (Ron McCulloch must be spinning in his sauna), then the pollution-police got their teeth into Ibiza and its Rave venues (more drugs), and now we have Chris George (ex-Club UK - more recreational pharmaceuticals) buying the hallowed, for hoorays at least, Chelsea K-Bar. What will it all come to?

WITH ALL THE BALLYHOO (sorry VL if the use of this word infringes your TM) about South Africa and the Aids pharmaceuticals patents, and the whole business about what should, and what should not, be patentable, the tide does seem to be turning in the right direction at last.

REGULAR READERS will be aware of the case of the notorious US patent for a toasted sandwich, well now we can go one better: an American seed merchant has been granted a patent for the Mexican yellow bean, which means that Mexican farmers cannot sell their beans in the USA without paying his company a royalty. Needless to say they are up in arms and challenging this in the Courts. I await the outcome with interest.

BY THE WAY, I also resent the fact that it is possible to obtain a trademark using everyday words which you can find in the dictionary, so that no one else can use the same word for any product remotely connected. More on this subject next month.

I RECENTLY SPENT A FEW DAYS in Prague, a beautiful City - go if you can. However, beware of the lingering Communist hangover in officialdom. A few hours in a Czech police station, following a bag snatch in a Café, was an unpleasant, not to say Kafkaesque, experience. Similarly, the bullyboy inspectors on the trams, give no quarter to foreigners when it comes to misunderstandings over roundtrip tickets, but I guess that might be the case in London also. Charm school certainly hasn't reached Prague yet, and it can be the tourists that get the brunt.

ON A LIGHTER NOTE, literally, a Czech friend told me that the floodlighting of the vast Prague Castle was given to the city by Mick Jagger - apparently he is a mate of Czech President Vaclav Havel. I wondered whether Jagger's lighting designer, Patrick Woodroffe, had anything to do with the implementation of that?

"It's just an observation, but isn't the disco biz getting a bad press at the moment? Not that it hasn't always been the bad boy of our industry, yet the revelation that people take drugs in nightclubs (I'm sorry, but please!), has given the press a field day."

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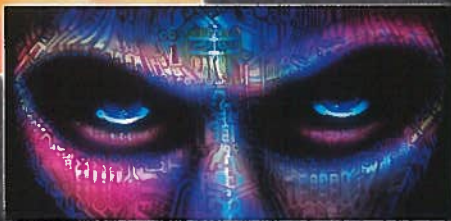
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OMEGA MAN



14' X 40'
CLUB MURAL
ON MUSLIN
NORMAL
LIGHTING



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CHICAGO TOUR



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BACKDROPS
ON LINO SCRIM
UNDER SHOW
LIGHTING



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Saints Above



Where in the world would you look to find a 21,000-seat church? Well, as is usually the case with such things, the US would be a pretty good starting point, and after considering certain geographical/denominational centres, you might be forgiven for starting your search in Salt Lake City, home of the Church of the Latter-day Saints . . .



And you'd be bang on the money, for there you'd find the 1.5 million square-foot Conference Center for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, consisting of a 21,000-seat auditorium (one of the world's largest indoor worship and conference spaces) and a 911-seat proscenium theatre . . .

The theatre consulting firm of Auerbach & Associates (A&A), with offices in San Francisco and New York, was responsible for the design and installation of this enormous facility, while its architectural lighting division, Auerbach & Glasow, provided the architectural lighting design for the conference centre. The striking aspect of the building is not only its enormous size, but also its format. It is the fan-shaped configuration of this 21,000-seat auditorium that makes it unique: while venues of this capacity are common in an arena format, nothing exists to match its front-on presentation: "We don't know of any place that is this big in this configuration," said Thomas Hanson, director, LDS Special Projects.

A&A played a major role in the design: their brief covered both the configuration of the hall, and the design of its theatrical systems, principally lighting and rigging. The company was also closely involved with the design of the seating configuration, the moveable and demountable rostrum, the remote-controlled video camera pylons and automated speaker's pulpit, the lighting for the television broadcast area and the design of the lighting control and network distribution systems, power distribution, and power requirements for the theatrical systems.

The Conference Center will be used to seat those who attend the Church's General Conferences, held twice a year in October and April. At other times of the year, it can be reconfigured to host a range of events. Although some of these in the past have been attended by as many as 50,000, the design team were determined that the space be intimate, despite the fact that the distance from the pulpit to the last row of the third tier of seats is the length of a football field! The criteria from the beginning was to allow each member of the audience a clear view of the speaker and to be able to hear the words as if the speaker was addressing him or her personally.

Since the building was designed to last for at least 150 years, it had to be capable of accommodating the latest technology throughout its

lifetime. A&A met that challenge by creating a system of data distribution, power, structural support, and an accessible service tunnel system. The company also designed a grid system over the stage to support a variety of remote-controlled rigging and hoisting elements. The tunnel system provides for future cable installation, and connects with a sub-stage mechanical pit that will be used for theatrical machinery and special effects systems during pageants.

The front of the audience area and the presentation platform is reconfigurable, allowing the tiered seating for the 352-voice Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the rostrum for the 158-member General Authorities to be removed, revealing a flat floor. The platform level and flat audience floor can be used for anything from an orchestra performance to a Church-sponsored pageant, which may feature hundreds of performers.

Key to the brief from the Church was that the space had to feel like the members were 'coming home.' Despite it being brand new and absolutely enormous, the space needed to provide a familiar and comfortable atmosphere. Although the interior space is huge, all the seats in the house offer a good line of sight to the speaker's pulpit, although large screens either side of the wide stage are still required to augment the intimacy! Three tiers of seating face the rostrum, behind which cherry-wood risers are arranged in half-circles for the world-famous Tabernacle Choir, and a new 130-rank pipe organ forms a dramatic golden backdrop.

The rostrum, which measures 150ft wide, 80ft deep and 30ft tall, is a tiered aluminium and steel structure, panelled in solid cherry-wood. It was designed to hold the choir and the General Authorities of the Church, but also to be completely de-mountable to accommodate large productions. To meet this requirement, Len Auerbach designed a unique rostrum structure which separates into 92 modules. Each module is mounted on an air-castor system which allows it to be moved into a storage area backstage. A&A also designed pivoting walls, 20ft wide by 70ft tall, which open on a single pivot point to allow the movement of the rostrum sections to the backstage storage area.

In addition to design and detailing, the Church retained Auerbach & Glasow to coordinate and administrate the bidding for, and construction of, the custom lighting fixtures. The Conference Center has one of the largest and most



sophisticated theatrical lighting control systems in the world. Based largely around ETC Unison dimming and ETC Obsession II control systems, it includes 6,000 remotely-controlled dimmers.

In addition to the main control console, the theatrical lighting can be controlled from a wireless hand-held remote, allowing a lighting technician to bring up any stage light in the building, saving huge amounts of time and energy for technicians and stagehands.



The final fixture tally included 710 ETC Source Fours and 50 City Theatrical Auto-Yokes with auto-iris. Other lighting units included 42 DeSisti 350 Leonardo 5k fresnels, 144 DeSisti Duccio and 36 DeSisti Giotto fixtures, 612 Par 64s and 48 R-40 striplights all from L&E, nine Strong Gladiator III followspots and 408 Wybron Coloram scrollers (for the Par 64s).

The Church wanted to make sure the lighting system never went off-line. In order to meet this goal, the lighting systems, both architectural and theatrical, are controlled by several control boards running on an Ethernet network, also supplied by ETC, with multiple levels of redundancy. The Ethernet system, was chosen as a data transmission system because of the scale of the installation: with some signal distribution runs as long as 2,000 feet, fibre optic cable was selected to maintain the integrity of the lighting network signal over that distance. The lighting system network is based on requirements for redundancy, with multiple backup support to avoid failure. The entire network is on an uninterrupted power supply (UPS) with generator backup.

The architectural lighting control panels are LCD touch-screens located throughout the building. The control panels are password-protected and a pre-determined level of control restricts each user's access. A tour guide, for example, may only be able to turn on the lights in the area being exhibited, but a house manager with high-level access can use the same panel to control a greater scope of the system. The LCD lighting control stations are software-configurable from a personal computer, so they are as flexible as the software that is programmed for them.

The multi-faceted function of the auditorium requires that the lighting is able to quickly respond to a variety of uses. A&A engaged Emmy Award-winning television lighting designer Bill Klages to join their team to establish the broadcast light plot, which was integrated into the overall plan. The result is a totally coordinated use of the large array of lighting positions, and each presentation

type can be served independently without disturbing the other lighting designs.

A 90ft high structural steel grating grid, about the size of half a football field, completely covers the stage area, allowing for infinite configurations of hoists and other theatrical machinery. A software-controlled rigging system flies scenery over the stage, with 40 installed motorized point hoists, expandable with an additional 30 hoists. The system is based around two Stage Technologies' Nomad stage automation controllers, along with hand-held rigging controls, point hoist control modules and hard drive storage, also from Stage Technologies.

The hoists have the capacity to lift up to 1,000- or 2,000-pound loads. Each cable pick-up point can be located on the over-stage grid by itself, or grouped together with others synchronously to lift larger loads. The software system is flexible and can be modified or reprogrammed. The point hoist system is accessible by hand-carry remotes, which stagehands use to operate the hoists. JR Clancy provided 1000lb and 2000lb point hoists, while Columbus McKinnon

supplied 20 remote-control chain hoists. To enhance visual communication, two 29ft wide by 21ft tall video screens hang on either side of the rostrum and can be quickly withdrawn into the ceiling when they are not needed. In addition to these components, A&A, working with Bill Klages, designed the grid system, circuit layout, and lighting control for an auxiliary television studio.

The 911-seat proscenium theatre is used for training, performances and Church-sponsored events. The 'small theatre' is conceived as an intimate space which is also equipped as a high-tech video and presentation venue. It is linked to every electronic system of the Conference Center, enabling direct control of the systems necessary to operate singly, or as an extension to the auditorium.

The stage is large enough for the most elaborate stage productions and is equally equipped to serve as a small worship space for overflow sessions of general conference. Tie-lines enable this space to be used as a simultaneous translation or American Sign Language presentation facility, together with any activity in the larger space.

Scenery handling is provided for this fully-rigged stage house by a 75ft high grid. There are 61 permanent counterweighted line sets, and a lighting control system with 608 dimmers, which is integrated with the building-wide Ethernet-based lighting control network. Texas Scenic provided the rigging system and hardware for the small theatre.

Lighting here is a scaled down version of the main assembly halls, again with ETC Unison dimming and Obsession II control, plus lighting fixtures from ETC (more than 300 Source Fours), DeSisti (Giotto and Duccio fixtures again), L&E (Par 64s) and Strong followspots (Super Troupers II this time), with the additional presence of 50 Strand Lighting fresnels.

While it is impossible to envisage how things will be done when the facility reaches the end of its 150-year life-expectancy, it is safe to say that the Church of the Latter-day Saints can boast one of the most impressive lighting and rigging systems in the world, and will be able to claim as much for the next few years at least.

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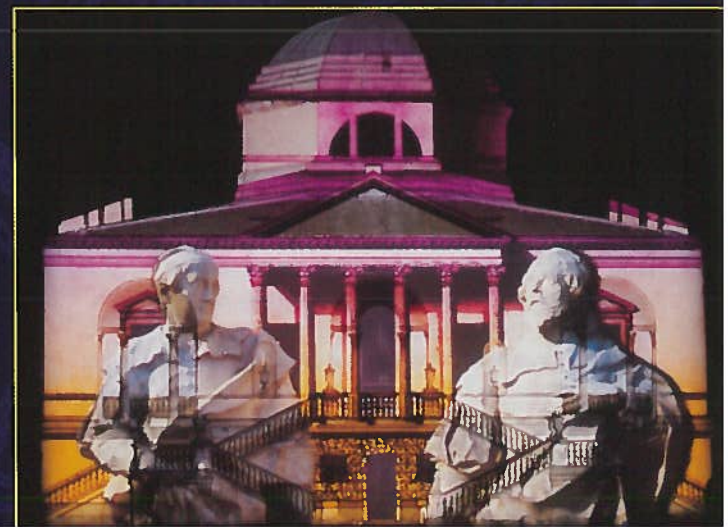
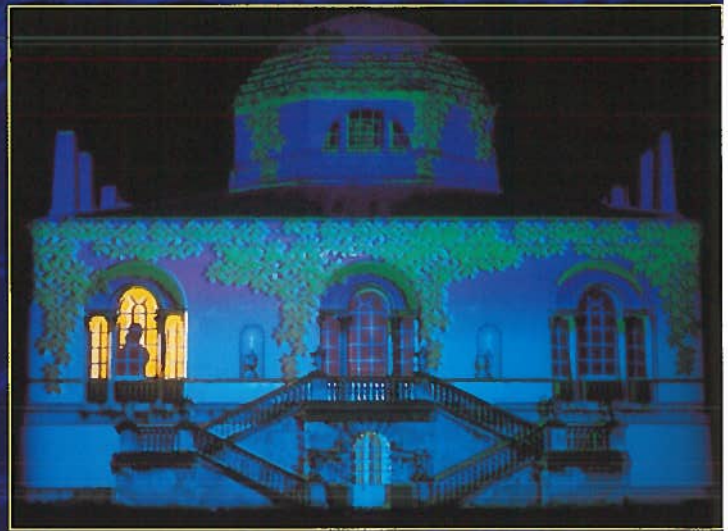
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**SEE US AT
SHOWLIGHT**

John Watt

Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

Much is made, in our business, of the art of timing. I remember Les Dawson being interviewed about the subtleties and nuances of timing: he agreed that it was indeed a complex business and that you basically tell a joke, and then wait for the laugh before telling another! I know the feeling, it can be a long wait in my case.

"Four hours to focus looked sensible - in fact with four hours I may even get time to buy the lads a coffee and doughnut, no wonder they clamour to get on my shows."

TIMING for lighting designers is similarly a bit of a black art which needs to be understood if you are to make a career in the noble art of lighting. I suspect putting the words 'career' and 'lighting design' in the same sentence is stretching credibility somewhat, but you know what I mean.

LIGHTING DESIGNERS will know that first comes the phone call, and after the stock preamble of "this is a pilot with a tight budget, but you will definitely

get the job if it goes to a series," you will be asked how long you need to rig. This is before you have the slightest notion of what the set looks like, the complexities of the show, or which studio, church hall or shed it will be mounted in. Get the answer wrong and you're done for. Best apply the tried and tested formula that works equally well when discussing a fee, estimating power requirements or buying bottles of wine - just double the number you first thought of. At the end of the day these figures will appear quite frugal and you may get the odd Brownie point for your modest approach.

HOW COME? Well, I was going to say on your average production, but on second thoughts the words 'average' and 'production' don't sit well together either, so I had better say 'on a typical production of mine'. A recent one reminded me of this timing thing, even though many of the unknowns didn't exist in this case as it was just another episode in a long-running series. Four hours to focus looked sensible - in fact with four hours I may even get time to buy the lads a coffee and doughnut, no wonder they clamour to get on my shows.

SO IT'S 8AM - well, a quarter past actually, as all London crews spend the first quarter of an hour discussing the traffic and how it was all jammed back from the Blackwall Tunnel to the Sun in the Sands roundabout and how they should have crossed the river at Dartford. This reminds a sensitive LD that they have been up and running for three stressful hours (so has he, but he gets his reward when his credit flies past at a speed which threatens Einstein's theory of relativity. Now there's a thought, like the man said, all cats look black in the dark and similarly all lighting credits look the same if they go fast enough; close brackets before you lose your drift Watty).

NOW WHERE WAS I? Oh, deciding which lamp to tweak. Light 'the money' first, then the set, so you yell out "bring in 111". Yes, radio talkback has arrived in the lighting business, but it's looked after by sound, who aren't in yet. Number 11 comes in, as Charlie has started to Hoover up the 5000 or so staples that are scattered on the carpet. These result from improved technology; a couple of dozen tacks would keep a carpet in place previously, now we have the carpet layer's equivalent of a malfunctioning Gattling gun which delivers 500 staples a minute, most fired out of the back of the device. Take a deep breath Watty, project so you can be heard at the back, "not 11, I said 111," down it comes, "stop". It doesn't, Charlie and the Hoover are establishing a comfortable lead, love 30.

IT'S 8.30AM and the thought forms that you are half an hour in and still on the first lamp with 140 to go, plus the floor stuff. Stay cool Watty, the lamp is now at the right height: "Pan it upstage a bit please." Spark turns pole and you both wait expectantly for the star's chair to come to life as it's bathed in five kilowatts of lovely white controlled light. Nothing happens, you glance back, the pole is going round for sure, the spark is looking puzzled, but the lamp remains resolutely pointed where the night crew left it. "Fink it's broke guv, do you want it changed?"

"JUST GIVE IT A YANKI" I holler, whilst kicking out the Hoover plug (a dual language version of this is available for transatlantic readers). Lamp number two goes well, although the wire bond which supports a header and has threaded itself between the lamp and the barndoors, does take a bit of sorting out as Ronnie is in the canteen. Lamp three gets us into more complex country as it has a colour on it (136 pale lavender, if you're interested). As you know, outrigger colour frames are cleverly designed to just foul the barndoors. The doors themselves revolve as if on silk runners (I wish), but to turn them depends on a level of dexterity and precision aiming with a long pole which would get a round of applause at the world snooker championships.

IT'S 9 O'CLOCK and counting, when the colour frame breaks away from the lamp and swings mockingly on its safety bond (so that's why Dave Roberts is so keen on them). This hoist is above the set, so we need some long steps and a bloke who doesn't suffer from vertigo to clamber where no man was meant to clamber, and fix it. On his approach the gel frame opens by some divine force and the aforementioned 136 (a delicate and subtle hue - whatever happened to Surprise pink?) flutters down like an autumn leaf to become lodged just out of reach behind a neon tube. We need a short pair of steps. Lamp four goes well, the pan cup is missing but I'm quite good at guessing the direction I want once hoist 104 has been brought down to my level (rather like you, dear reader). Lamp five is OK, six's lens is in three bits held together by the fish fryer (safety grid), easily fixed, now we're on a roll; lamp seven has a filament missing but sod it, the tea break is in jeopardy. It's a good job that I gave so much thought to the timing at the planning stage and asked for four hours.

IF MY TIMING is still right, you may be reading this whilst attending Showlight 2001 in Edinburgh, in which case you can complain to me in person. It promises to be quite a party with its unique mixture of all things close to the enquiring minds of lighting people, a few places remain, I hope to see you there.



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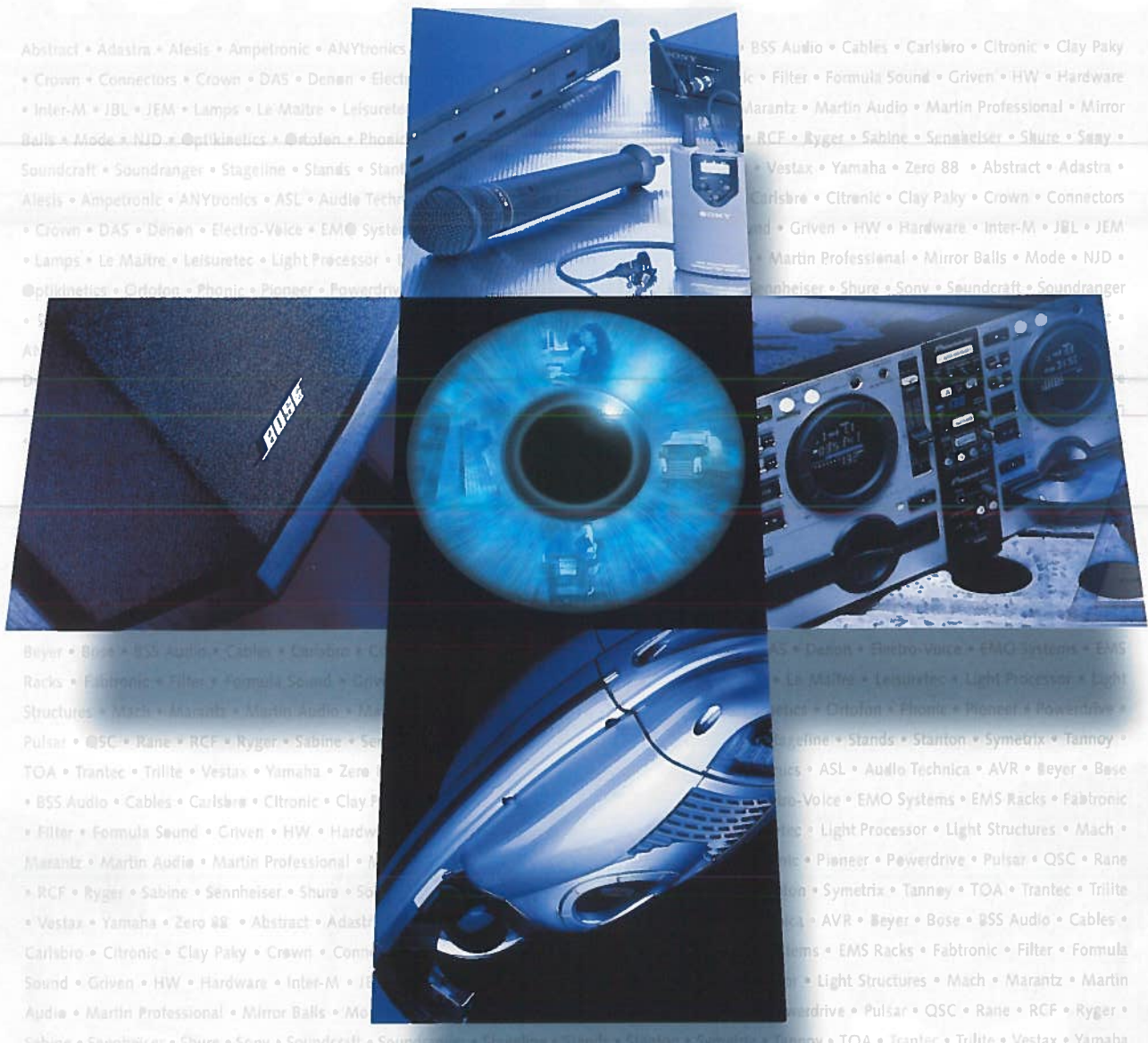
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LIQUID

Liquid in Luton is the living embodiment of a new millennium dance club, thoroughly justifying brand operators, Luminar Leisure's current share value.

Headquartered in the same town, the company now owns 240 late night leisure venues and has committed £5 million to the new complex, which also embraces Chicago Rock Café, the brand which has underpinned Luminar's success over the past decade.

As for the appropriately-named Liquid - a conversion of a former cinema into a dynamic, clinically-white 'racetrack' venue under a neon-swirl ceiling - this bears all the harmonious, integrated technological attributes (without the isolation and ostentation that you would have found from the same technologies a decade ago).

For this they must thank the key designers in this fit-out - leisure industry stalwarts to a man. Firstly there is the Neil Tibbatts' interior blueprint, then the highly-developed audio and fabrication input from the Nick Searle/John Hockey-run Lynx Lighting - who did much to pioneer early rig movement in the epoch previously referred to -

and finally DLD Lighting Designs' James Dann, who originally cut his teeth as a Tasco rock 'n' roll LD many years ago, working on shows for Elton John and Eric Clapton. So Luminar have certainly bought into experience, and unleashed pedigrees developed and honed through several style genres.

Sensing that its proximity to company HQ would make this a 'flagship' by any other name, Lynx Lighting's audio project manager, Jerrey Denning, applied his inquiring mind to solving the installer's perennial nightmare - of deadening hard reverberant surfaces in a newly-constituted interior (with the added reflection created by the all-white aesthetic curves).

As if this didn't challenge the laws of physics sufficiently, there was a further stipulation to be adhered to - namely that all loudspeaker components should be invisible. He thus pondered different audio parameters and positional options to direct the sound where he wanted - without falling victim to cancellation or noise spillage. And for his processing he chose a digital matrixing engine.

AUDIO CONTROL

Denning had been one of the first audio specialists to adopt the BSS Soundweb as soon as it was launched



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(installing it at Chicago Rock Café in Windsor). He quickly became something of an expert, but even by his standards, the requirements in Luton threatened to stretch the capacity of his long-favoured digital building block to the outer limits. At Liquid, it is hitched to a bespoke Lynx Lighting 'traffic light', bolted to the Cloud modular mixer in the DJ console, which activates the sound duckers where necessary.

It was the ability of the Cloud CXM8 modular mixer to 'treat' the mic output and music programme separately that won it the vote position in the command centre. In isolating the outputs, Jerey Denning has loaded each onto two Soundweb devices - with the EQ processing handled independently - and combined them on a mixer block in the digital engine. With one processor handling the left hand mix and one the right - each networked across to the opposite mix - in the event of one processor failing, the signal will automatically revert to the opposite mix and deliver a mono output.

His ingenious 'ducking' protocol on the processing blocks is achieved by latching the red, amber and green LED thresholds of the 'traffic lights' onto the control end of each processor, using the LED open gates to grade the different levels of threshold. He explains: "When the green LEDs are lit, the system operates as normal - but when, for example, the system reads amber, the DJ will know that a small amount of low ratio compression will apply - and when it reaches red he has between two and five seconds before the ducker comes into effect, and reduces the system by 20dB until the LED is brought back to amber or green by the DJ reducing the music level. We are trying to get away from the music being continually squashed."

Lynx Lighting's bespoke programme, whereby the gates operate without being attached to any output, and automatically reduce the level of the system using a music source, is a methodology the company has used successfully in the last 15 installations it has carried out in Chicago Rock Café, where sound thresholds are critical and the ducking device has been a precondition of the licence; but this is the first time they have put it into operation in a Liquid.

Sending and receiving eight digital signals to and from each Soundweb on the network,



there is certainly a lot of traffic going on. For the club is divided into three zones (DJ console, Reception Bar and VIP Bar) and the music is fed from Denon multiplay CDs to the Reception or VIP areas. Each has an independent level control set via locally-based Soundweb 9012 'Shrimp' wall panels, but the authorised user can source select from a total of five different sources (including 'off') and each source can be received in any zone. Denning has also installed an RS-232 socket in each zone so that whatever functions he is carrying out locally on Soundweb he can merely connect the Serial cable straight to the system.

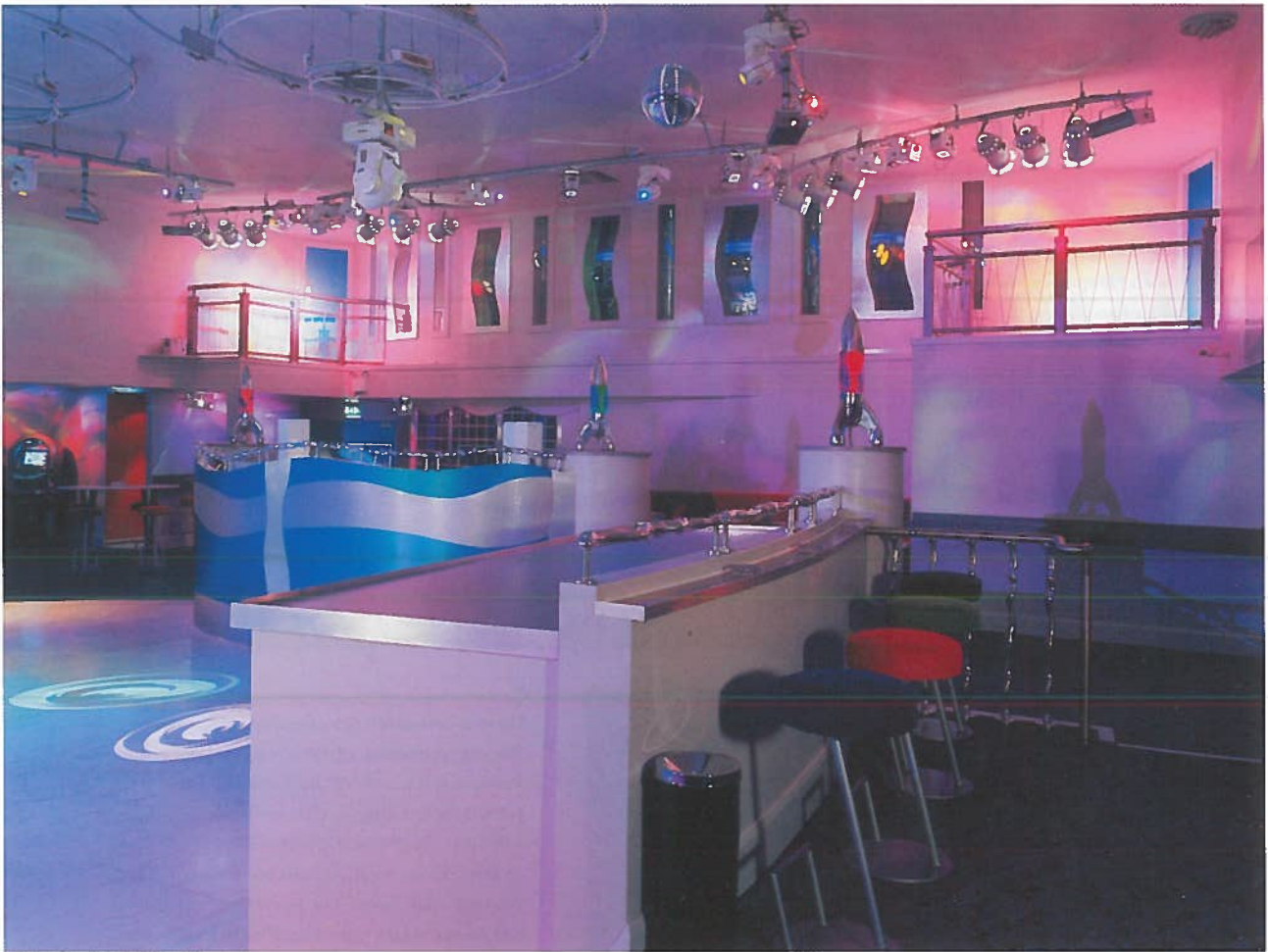
SOUND SOURCE AND REINFORCEMENT

With a greater concentration on House and Garage music, the overall level of atmosphere had to conform to a different specification than previous Liquid venues Lynx had worked on. But because of the sound restrictions, and the fact that the perimeter dancefloor wall butts up to both bars, the output had to be concentrated locally from a series of full-range speakers.

Jerey Denning admits to being surprised when he first applied his spectrum analyser to the room. "All the projection surfaces are on a curve so there is a focal point where the sound hits it and returns to the floor." The unwanted frequencies on the music programme between 5kHz and 8kHz were filtered out using the parametric EQ on Soundweb to get a level response. A dedicated eight-way parametric filter was also set up with the DJ mic (in the same audio region) to de-ess and de-T the enunciated speech, using boosting frequencies to achieve absolute speech clarity.

He explains that below 500Hz the sound remains largely omni-directional, but a larger number of full-range enclosures than previously envisaged was required to drop the level down

"Liquid's designers have shown they can achieve more bang for the buck, as effects that were once cost-prohibitive for use in multiples now come well within the realms of possibility."



and 'localise' it to the individual speakers - which are focused in towards the dancefloor for a collective level of 108dB on the floor and 92dB at the bar.

To accomplish this Lynx have deployed their own tri-amped 1510T boxes, housing a Precision Devices PD1550, a Beyma custom 10" neodymium and front non-horn loaded driver. Five of these are positioned along either side of the dancefloor, while at each end two RCF ART 500s are run passively.

"One speaker slightly out of position on that wall would create a shadow, because it's a projection wall," warns Denning.

Five metres down onto the dancefloor are two recessed clusters of four JBL VS125HS subs (2x15"), in a linear arrangement, which has been tuned using the CLIO PC-based software system, run in conjunction with Soundweb. A gap of 150mm behind the chassis has been filled with high-density sand to absorb the LF and provide a -10dB drop-off, while the justification for double 15"s was to compensate for the high reverberance. NXT flat panels are also used on the underside of the projection area to provide peripheral infill and alcove sound.

Driving this impressive sound rig - as well as the NXT flat panels in the VIP Bar and Reception Bar - are a combination of Matrix Class H STR2400, STR2000, STR1500, STR1200 and UKP500 amplifiers, favoured by Lynx because of their sonic qualities and cool running. Finally, Lynx LX81A 8" full-range boxes and LXS12 subs can be found in the VIP Bar, where a small Ecler HAK Pro3 provides the local mix, and the sound can be piped down to the Reception Bar, where there is also a further LXS12 sub.



BSS Audio's Dave McKinney (left) with Lynx Lighting's Jerrey Denning in the Liquid control box

DESIGN, LIGHTING & PROJECTION

A number of Liquids down the line, James Dann is now familiar with the white surfaces (designed by Tibbatts) that epitomise the club's interior style. Here they are offset by the blue/green neon 'Aqua' effect on the ceiling, a Corian dancefloor and Lava lamp decorative

effects - creating an environment that is female-friendly.

While the maturing of the DVD format has revolutionised video's clarity, the 11 Sanyo SU20 LCD video projectors (five down each side of the dancefloor and one over the bar) are focused to create a multiple bow-tie effect of distorted images around the walls.

Although a cluster of five, white powder-coated Martin MiniMACs form a centrepiece of moving yokes under the corkscrew swirl of the neon sculpture, linked to Mode Digitran neon transformers, all eyes are really on the perimeter wall. Here, liquids from a battery of OPTI Solar 250 projectors and gobo-changing patterns from the GoBoPro projectors, fitted with panoramic rotators, and Sanyo-projected images from Millennium Video Graphics (MVG) provide the real dynamic highlight (at one point the whole venue catches fire as the white pelmet becomes a racetrack engulfed in flames). Finally, there is a 'roaming' Panasonic 360° pan and tilt low light camera on a pole which will pick up action on the dancefloor, and at the DJ's behest, throw it onto one of the projection surfaces.

At the entrance, two Martin Pro Imagescans project the 'Liquid' logo, while further projections (via OPTI GoBoPros and Solar 250s) lead



the Liquid faithful up the stairway towards the club, and AVR colour-changing downlights illuminate the walls on the staircase. A water-wall links to the reception area where yet more OPT1 projectors are to be found: James Dann has used nearly 50 in total to light the alcoves and peripheral bar walls, alternatively with drifting oil wheel and panoramic rotation patterns, to create a calming, undulating effect which is again cross-focused.

The neon sculpture over the floor consists of four 'corkscrew' pods interlinked to a fifth swirl of concentric circles, bearing the MiniMAC profile cluster, while from the other four a MAC 250 moving yoke is suspended. Curved, painted aluminium light bars around the periphery throw further beams. These include a pair of Martin Pro Raptors, with rotating mirrors, which offer further gobo or split beam options on the dancefloor and upstand, along with multiples of MiniMAC washlights and a pair of MAC 250s. Finally, conventional PAR 64 stage lighting illuminates the feature dance podiums, situated on either side of the VIP Bar, a level above, with four Martin MX1 scanners and six CX2 colour changers adding further mood to this environment.

CONTROL BEHIND THE CONSOLE

In what must have seemed like a throwback to the 1980s, when every lighting effect had its own dedicated controller, the DJ's domain is awash with control - a ShowCAD for the lighting, backed up on a Zero 88 Linebacker, a NuLight DMX 'Airoamer' machine that introduces different fragrances, and the Millennium Graphics launcher. There is also DVD and VHS control, as well as Pioneer's new CMX-5000 CD player, featuring the unique automix facility.

Also in evidence are the obligatory Technics SL1210s, fitted with Stanton Trackmasters and Stealth laser controller from Laser Light International, as well as the Panasonic 360° pan and tilt camera controller. RCF also have a presence in the DJ console, where a pair of trusty Monitor 8 loudspeakers allow the DJ to reference his output.

James Dann, Jerrey Denning and John Hockey are all delighted with the result, and from the original template they have succeeded in delivering a theme that is clearly in a state of pioneering evolution. Moreover, Liquid's designers have shown they can achieve more bang for the buck, as effects that were once cost-prohibitive for use in multiples now come well within the realms of possibility. And both the BSS Soundweb and Martin Pro MiniMAC washlights are typical of the products that are providing that affordable gateway into a brave new future.

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Software Upgrade for Event 408 and 416 Consoles

The release of Version 4.2 software for the Jands Event 408 and 416 lighting consoles heralds a new era for the desks designed to control both conventional and moving light fixtures.

The Event 408 and 416 are hybrid consoles featuring all the familiar characteristics of a two preset memory console, along with a set of powerful controls and options to select, manipulate and operate almost any modern lighting instrument. Version 4.2 software builds on the console's ease of use and flexibility by adding a new Effects Processor. This introduces an easy path to the sophisticated effects that are possible with today's moving lights.

The Effects Processor provides a range of basic position movements as building blocks, with a set of modifiers to adjust the relationship between fixtures and the size, speed and shape of the resulting effect. Also included is a Fan Function that can be used on its own or in combination with the Effects Processor. Fan can be applied to Position, Colour or Beam and there are options to set how the fixtures are fanned in relation to each other.

The 416 is equipped with two DMX outputs for a total of 1024 channels (512 channels on the 408) that can be easily patched to 20 automated fixtures, 80 colour scrollers and multiple dimmers or other DMX controllable devices. Both consoles are fitted as standard with a VDU output and keyboard input. As part of Version 4.2, the monitor screens have been completely updated to offer complete visual feedback and it's now possible to call up one of a number of screens which provide instant views of overall output status, palette button labels, patch information, chase details and more.

Consoles with V.4 firmware can be upgraded free of charge from the AC Lighting website at www.aclighting.co.uk

Tel (UK): +44 (0) 1494 446000

CAST WYG-it

CAST Lighting has unveiled the newest member of the WYSIWYG family - the WYG-it. Its plug-and-play USB interface enables PCs running WYSIWYG software to connect with DMX lighting consoles to cue, visualize and virtually render productions.

"We have been working in partnership with Pathway Connectivity, an industry leader in Canada, on this particular project," said Gilray Densham, president of CAST Lighting Ltd. "The WYG-it has two DMX ports in for a total of 1024 channels per unit, and includes a built-in MIDI for consoles that support AutoFocus. It is a small, portable device that keeps clutter to a minimum, because there is no external power supply required." The WYG-it concept was shown at LDI in October 2000 and was first used at this year's Juno Awards - Canada's music awards show. WYG-it will be available through ETC.

Tel (Canada): +1 416 597 2278

Matrix Launches Zoning Amplifier

Matrix Audio Developments, the pro sound audio amplifier specialist, has launched its brand new MZA1 modular zoning amplifier.

Ideal for shopping centres, restaurants, airports and large domestic installations, the MZA1 is fitted with a number of innovative features. Contained within a 4U 19" master main frame, the MZA1 features slots for up to eight amplifier zone modules, each rated at 50W rms per channel at 4 ohms. There is a music source and microphone selection on each zone module, as well as two microphone and four stereo music inputs. The MZA1's versatility is exemplified in its ability to be used with the FI compact loudspeaker system.

Tel (UK): +44 (0)7000 162874

Holy Smoke

An Italian manufacturer is doing its bit for 21st century religion with the invention of a smoke machine for priests, which will allow them to deliver clouds of incense smoke at the touch of a button. The company, Belltron, says the machine will put an end to the difficult job of lighting incense during Mass. They say the battery-powered machine is very easy to use, and is environmentally friendly because it uses less incense. Belltron specialises in high-tech solutions for the church: among its other products are loudspeakers and microphones, as well as solid-state digital storage units which can faithfully reproduce organ music and church bells.

Tel (Italy): +39 861 753521

Hz's DPX Amps Upgraded

Hz Audio has announced a facelift to its DPX 600 and DPX 1100 amplifiers. The new versions now feature Hexfet output stages, which have increased power to 400W and 750W per side respectively. The amps have therefore been re-named the DPX 800 and DPX 1500. Other new features include bridge mode capability, dual input/output on balanced XLR, an extra Speakon output for 4-way speaker cables, and improved heatsink and internal airflow.

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Twice as Smart

Proel has announced a key addition to its Smart Series PA speakers - the new 'Double 15' 215P full-range enclosure.

The 215P's custom-designed twin 15" speakers are matched with a 1" compression driver, enabling an overall handling of 500W (AES) continuous (1000W peak). It has a frequency response of 45Hz - 20kHz +/-6dB and delivers a maximum SPL of 128dB. Significantly, the Smart Double 15 has a 90 x 40 degree exponential horn for accurate high frequency reinforcement. By incorporating low-pass filters in each of the LF drivers, the Smart 215P offers a smoother performance through the crossover region.

Tel (UK): +44 020 8761 9911

Cerwin Vega Upgrade E Series

Cerwin-Vega has introduced a second generation version of its E-Series of hi-fi loudspeakers.

These are now available through the company's exclusive UK distributors, Lamba plc. Features common to all models include diecast aluminum woofer; immense power handling, and greater output with less applied power. Thanks to the Acoustic Contour Controls, the E-Series promises optimum sound, while the Multi Density Cabinet has been designed to help reduce distortion and improve tonal accuracy.

Tel (UK): +44 01727 840527

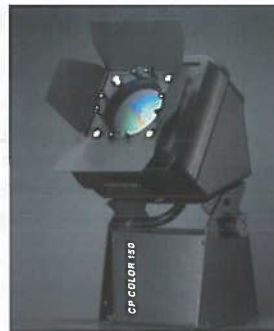
CP Color

Clay Paky has launched a new series of colour changers.

The CP Color 150 and CP Color 250 are designed for use in professional venues, such as theatres and television studios, as well as being ideal for retail and conference environments.

Each differs in lamp power, but both have revolving barndoors for beam shaping. The CP Color 150-E has been custom designed for outdoor use and its design offers protection against dust and moisture. All three models adopt a colour mixing system with CMY three-filter colour mixing for creating any colour tone, and all have dimming capability. Both of these functions can be controlled via DMX and all have optional diffusion filters for different beam apertures.

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Sennheiser Plug & Go

Sennheiser will launch a new Hidyn-plus miniature plug-on wireless transmitter at this year's AES convention in Amsterdam, which enables any cable microphone to be instantly converted for RF operation.

Developed to meet the requirements of PA companies, and broadcast, film and video sound recording professionals, the SKP 30 includes 48V phantom powering to enable use with condenser microphones and features Sennheiser's HiDyn-plus companding system, making it compatible with the full range of Sennheiser 3000 Series and 5000 Series professional wireless systems.

Suitable for worldwide use, the SKP 30 is available for UHF frequencies between 518 and 870 MHz, and features a switching bandwidth of 32 MHz. The plug-on transmitter comes in a roadworthy metal housing with recessed operating controls. Combined with Sennheiser's EK 3041 miniature camera mount receiver, the SKP 30 provides a versatile package for ENG applications.

Tel (UK): +44 (0)1494 551551

Nu-Light's Laser Animator

Nu-Light Systems has released its Laser Animator software package.

The software runs on a PC-based system and includes 250 graphics images and 20 animations, all of which can be customised by the operator. The new system has been two years in development and complements NuLight's product range. With laser heads available from 20mW to 3W, the company can now cover most eventualities - full laser systems can be designed for either touring or installation use. The company is looking at the possibility of developing an animations library that customers can download from its website. Interested parties can download a demo version of the software from the company's website at www.nu-light.co.uk

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Remote 'Kabuki Drop'



The Type 70/71 Load Release Mechanism - Kabuki Drop - manufactured by the Woking-based Emesem Solenoid Co, is an electro-mechanical 'quick release' device which takes the risk out of

conventional manual Kabuki systems.

It will instantly release cloths, curtains etc and any items requiring a controlled release, and can handle weights up to 125kg. The 'energise to release' version holds without power until the unit is electrically pulsed to drop the load. It is 'fail safe' in operation and re-settable with no replacement parts needed following activation. An internal spring arrangement ensures clean release of the lightest load, and for peace of mind, a test pin is incorporated to allow testing, without dropping the load.

For flexibility it can be installed either vertically or horizontally within defined limits. The unit will work with a number of standard voltages both DC and AC - using a rectifier plug. A control box is also available to remotely control and simplify the operation of the Type 70/71 - this features a button with key switch to prevent accidental release.

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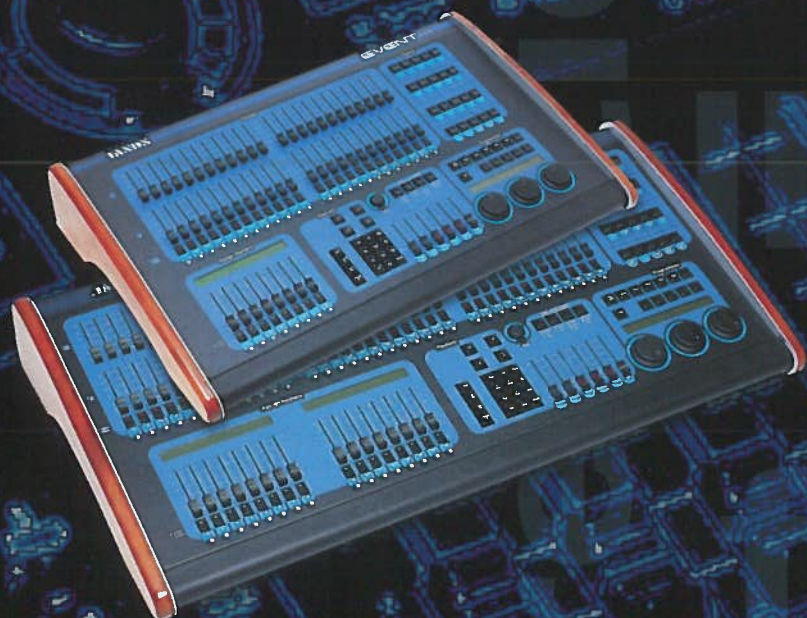
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Phil Ward.

... Audio File

Before microphones, entertainers had to make the most of natural acoustics as much as possible. This is both why ancient amphitheatres are shaped and situated how and where they are, and why bouncers were employed in the first place. (You can picture it now: "Come on, sonny, calm down and I won't have to make the most of the natural acoustics . . .")

escorted several Dave Martin-inspired crates to the interior, I simply made sure I was on that side of the doors when they were duly shut. Sorted.

UNFORTUNATELY, this meant that I was in the front row when the band came on. The Liverpool Stadium was a boxing ring, but there the similarity with today's sophisticated 'in-the-round' productions ends. A better description would be 'in-a-round', with John Conteh. By the end of the first song, the doughnuts on sale at the back of the hall had reverted to batter.

legal and a new generation discovered the unlucky link in mayors' minds between licensed and licentious.

BY SPORTS VENUES, I mean stadia and arenas more than bowling greens. Had bowling greens taken root in the infrastructure of rock and roll as arenas did, no doubt many of the licences denied to long-haired promoters would have been forwarded with alacrity. Imagine the impact that would have had.

THE WORD ARENA is from the Latin word for sand, an especially absorbent substance when there's plenty of blood around. 'Stadium' has its origins in both Greek and Latin words for pulling weights and holding great forces steady. You can see where rock music fits in, can't you? But nothing has had such an impact on the demands of production touring as television, and especially Music Television. MTV is almost exactly contemporary with the CD, and the combination of slick video presence and slick (if not very good quality) audio packaging quickly made the scruffy and often shy performances of rock's heyday a shocking anachronism.

ACTS SIMPLY cannot attain a certain height today unless the live show is fuelled largely by the techniques of televised presence. In audio terms, this has led to several innovations that have origins or parallels in broadcasting - and it's no bad thing. Without mixer automation, in-ear monitoring or networked control of distributed amp and speaker systems, modern mega-gigs would be like good children: seen and not heard.

MEDIUM-SIZED POPULAR MUSIC CONCERTS do not necessarily need all of this paraphernalia, of course. It mustn't be construed that just because the top end is top heavy with videowalls, people are losing the art of noise. One very encouraging development over the past decade has been the appropriation of theatres - proper, box-laden, frilly curtain and pictures of Donald Sinden theatres - for credible rock/folk gigs on Sunday evenings, when the place is empty.

THE SAME PRINCIPLE could have been applied to any night at The Prince Edward Theatre while *Chess* lasted, but that's another matter. It's still television that draws crowds to pop and rock venues in the first place, whether or not there's an even bigger screen on display when they get there.

WHEN I LAST lived in London, there was a phase when I would scan Time Out for interesting new bands and solo performers, but when I got to the gig it was obvious what percentage of Time Out's circulation figure was motivated to do the same. Given the size of these intrepid audiences, Hugo Ball would have been quite at home.

ANOTHER SOLUTION was employed both in the circus and in art. An acoustic megaphone was used by the Dada movement's leading light Hugo Ball in 1917, as he introduced his 'phonetic poetry' to the world. However, as this consisted mainly of a series of deep, guttural vowel sounds, devoid of any meaning and intended to "draw attention across the barriers of war and nationalism to the few independent spirits

who live for other ideals," he didn't exactly need a megaphone to reach the back row.

THIS WAS IN STARK CONTRAST to my own first experience of live sound, compliments of Uriah Heep at the Liverpool Stadium in 1973. I say 'compliments' advisedly, because I didn't pay to get in. Exhibiting an early interest in the machinations of sound reinforcement, I waited by the back doors for the truck to arrive. Having

I MENTION THIS because I've just re-read the introduction to Mark Cunningham's splendid book *Live & Kicking* (Sanctuary Press), in which he compiles his own various reports down the years on the technical details of live production. Books of this kind are too rare, and I still believe that radio and television would make excellent platforms for similar documentary.

MARK'S INTRODUCTION traces the main influences on the development of live production techniques, and it's amazing how recently any significant development took place at all. 'Recently', as in something a boy immature enough to enjoy Uriah Heep in their prime could witness, that is.

SINGLE ACT, or act-plus-support, bills had only just replaced the dance hall and cinema package tours on which you were as likely to enjoy Sooty and the magician David Nixon as you were The Tremeloes. Contemporary with this change was the introduction of speaker stacks of the two bins and a horn variety, replacing the columns made ubiquitous by Tannoy, JBL and WEM.

HAPPENINGS AND FESTIVALS had also recently introduced aerodromes, sports venues and open fields into the roster of rock venues, local authorities willing. Only once has this era of council-baiting been matched for antagonism, when in the early nineties, raves attempted to go

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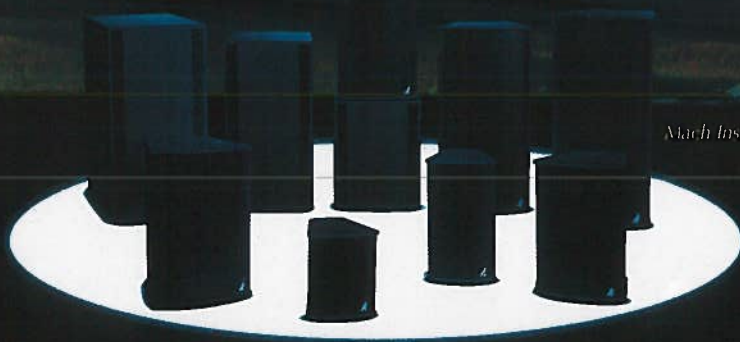
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Steve Moles at York Barbican

So now we know: there are two good things to come out of Eastbourne - the best mag in the entertainment biz, and Toploader.

If you need reminding who Toploader are, they're the bunch who perform 'Dancing in the Moonlight' (you know, the singer with the mop of blond crinkly hair), which might lead you to make two assumptions. One, they have just recently burst upon the music scene, and two, that they are ostensibly a pop group.

Wrong on both counts. As we learned from the band's house soundman Andrew Thornton, they've been around at least three-and-a-half years. And as for their music? Well, not a few young things in trainer bras that'd come to swoon at Joe Washbourn's Adonis looks were visibly perturbed to discover that Toploader are a loud, raucous rock band. Two guitars, bass, drums and keys, and our man Joe at the microphone, says it all really. If they turn out true to type, and somehow popular music seems to be constantly revisiting old pastures, then with this line-up and some more good songs like those performed at York Barbican, they're assured outrageous success in the USA. Sadly, that may be the UK's loss, but then it's about time we regained the high ground in rock music. We shall see.

AUDIO

As noted, Thornton's been with the band a fair time: "Before that I took a Diploma at SAE in London." So, a sound engineer with some formal training, "but there's only a single module in the course for live sound, it's more a studio course."

However, it was always live engineering that Thornton was going to embrace; he began by running a small Trace Elliot PA, and then moved on to resident engineer at Alley Cats in Reading using a Turbo Floodlight system off a Soundcraft K3 desk. "I mixed all sorts

in that club, everything from just pushing up two faders for a DJ, right through to big funk bands."

I was just beginning to wonder why Thornton was such a compliant interviewee when the truth emerged: "When the club closed, I ended up doing PR with the Keith Grant agency (KGA), mainly to make a living, while I freelanced for bands with good music, but no money." It was time well spent. Besides becoming adept at self-promotion - without recourse to big-headedness - he developed some useful contacts. "We [he and Toploader] played some horrendous places in those early days, awful PAs and bad rooms, but because of my time at KGA, Sennheiser really helped us."

Thornton repays the debt now, with both mics and in-ear systems coming from them. "Most important is the Sennheiser Evolution radio mic I'm using for Joe with the same cap as an 835. The RF is superb, we've never had a problem." Not bad going considering some of the low-ceilinged, sweaty clubs they must have played in those early days - humidity has never been the kindest environment for radio.

That said, Thornton now has a request for Sennheiser: "I've been experimenting with the new Neumann TLM 105 on the backing vocals; it's their version of a cardioid 58-type mic. It's very smooth, especially at the top end. It's not too rock and roll, not too aggressive. I'd like to use the cap in the Sennheiser radio." Which you'd imagine - with the two microphone companies being bedfellows - shouldn't be that difficult to arrange?

The system supplier is Canegreen, who are busy bees this spring, it would seem. While others languish, they're max'd out, such are the vagaries of the touring market, but then Yan Stiles has always been a consummate salesman. "They've been great," confirmed Thornton. This is our second tour carrying our own production. I'm using EAW KF750s and SB1000s and Pete Hughes from Canegreen showed





Despite a fairly simple lighting rig, LD Pete Barnes has managed to give some real texture to Toploader's performance

THE LOWDOWN ON TOPLOADER

THE NAME?

A technique for rolling herbal cigarettes (it was better than the briefly mooted Bloodbath or Human Spider).

A BIT OF HISTORY?

Toploader were the last British band to play Wembley stadium (they supported Bon Jovi at the final concert last year).

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DOES EASTBOURNE GET IT?

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PUKKAH?

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ONKA'S BIG WHAT?

The bands hit album, Onka's Big Moka (named by the band's guitarist Julian Deane) refers to a Papuan Tribal practice (Deane is an anthropology graduate). What it means exactly, is not for publication.

me how to run the system. I'd used 750s a fair bit, at festivals amongst other things, but I still A/B'd it against Canegreen's Meyer MSL4 system. I think this is more in your face, better for the band, but I would like to try at least one show with the Meyer."

Thornton runs the PA through XTA226 controllers. "After running a swept tone through the system to get a picture of the room, I do most system EQ by ear. I usually have a bump at the very low end, and then dip out anything around 400Hz. There's a lot of low-mid from the band, especially from the Hammond and guitars, with so much going on I dip the system rather than having to do the same thing on a dozen separate desk channels."

Lead vocals pass through a TLA Ivory, straight from the radio into the mic pre-amp, with a BSS 901 inserted on the vox channel. "Live engineers tend not to use compression in such a forceful way as I learnt in the studio. Having compression on just about everything gives me greater control of the dynamic range. With this band's music, every note needs to be heard and doing it this way keeps it in a nice tidy package." Hence, besides the Ivory there's a rack-full of DBX160As, and a Summit DCL200 for the acoustic guitar and backing vocals. Thornton also uses the new TC Electronics D2 for delay on the vocals: "It's the replacement for the 2290," he said. "It does some interesting things and is very easy to use."

Live, Washbourn possesses a classic and distinctly bluesy rock voice - listen to High Flying Bird on the album and you'll get the idea. In performance, Thornton achieves his goal with good separation, if at times a touch bright; the obvious result of all that compression being a show that sounds high energy without being too loud.

It wasn't just Thornton who was chuffed with Canegreen. "Did he tell you about the valve DIs?" asked Charles Bradley on monitors. "We were having trouble getting a good sound from the acoustic guitar last tour. Part of that was the instrument, which they've now changed, but that wasn't enough. Then I remembered using these Gas Cooker DIs - a mains-powered valve DI box from Ridge Farm. Not an everyday item, Canegreen hunted them down, and they've proved perfect." Certainly a toasty warm

sound, even with York Barbican rigged in its rather harsh sports hall configuration.

Bradley has been with the band just seven months and readers may recall him from last year's coverage of Garbage. A freelancer, he's also worked for the Brand New Heavies in

recent years. For Toploader he has a pair of the new self-powered Meyer PSM wedges: "I'm road-testing them for Canegreen really. So far I can tell you they are very powerful and sound very good," this was just their sixth show.

The rest of the band has USMs - the drummer using cable-fed in-ears and a pair of USWs for some low end. "It's that usual mixed bag when you have normal and 'ear' monitors," said Bradley with a slight air of resignation. "There's two big guitar stacks, and Joe moves around a fair bit. Luckily, we've got these new latex ear moulds that isolate about 20dB of stage noise. Overall on stage it's not quiet, but it is controlled - they do know what's going on and will turn down if asked." Even so, a quirk of the Toploader audience meant the latex inserts proved a mixed blessing. "They are so effective at blocking out ambient sound that I have to rig an audience mic for Joe's mix," nothing unusual in that. "Trouble is, I really have to watch it. For some reason the audience is unable to clap along in time and it can really put Joe off."

Bradley is also the happy owner of a Soundcraft Series 5M, "a desk I've wanted to try for a while," he says. "I've got 19 mixes to deal with and it's ideal for that. Having low- and high-pass filters on every channel is really great for control, especially with all the in-ear stuff. The challenge is limiting the range, but keeping it dynamic when you've only got 10-12dB of headroom. Truth is, the desk does exactly what it says on the tin, and it doesn't sound like other Soundcraft desks." That's two unprompted endorsements in the last two issues of L&S1 - Soundcraft must be very happy.

LIGHTING

Lighting design is by the omnipresent Pete Barnes with the able hands of Graeme Feast running the show from the equally ubiquitous Wholehog II. All kit is supplied by LSD/Fourth Phase, a deceptively simple two-truss rig with 60 Pars, 10 High End Studio Colors, five Studio Spots, and four Coemar CF7s. "That might sound simple enough, but we only had one day to programme 19 songs," said Feast. 'Luxury!' I hear you

cry . . . 'When I were a lad we 'ad to travel in 't back o' truck wi' tiny, hamster-driven generator and desk, an' programme through night, between gigs . . .'

Feast and Barnes' preparatory good fortune went further, for Feast is a good friend of Dave Stewart who runs Stage Electric's WYSIWYG suite, and negotiated a day in there. "It was brilliant, really saved our mustard. I patched the desk, did all the beam palettes, colour palettes, song pages, and had time to put in two or three key looks for every song. It was invaluable; when we got to the Forum for our day's production rehearsal it was really well-used time, rather than spending most of the day doing all the nuts and bolts stuff."

Barnes has placed just the CF7s on the front truss, along with 60% of the Pars in a three-colour wash. Despite the simplicity of his rig, Barnes has created some very strong looks for this show, as Feast explained: "He was very specific in rehearsals, 'big looks, not lots of twiddle twiddle,' he said. I really like working with Pete - he says it like it is, and

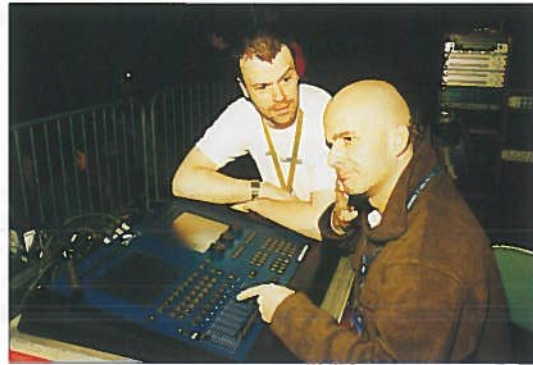
"There's a lot of low-mid from the band, especially from the Hammond and guitars, with so much going on I dip the system rather than having to do the same thing on a dozen separate desk channels."

he's quick too. By the end of that first day we had the meat and two veg' for every song." Obviously, Barnes' lingua franca is rubbing off on Feast.

The looks are indeed simple but strong; the singular backdrop of tree trunk silhouettes (by Hangman) with offset Sharks-tooth and MoleMag up-lights between, stops this being just a 'band on risers' kind of show. The interplay between Studio Colors and the Par washes gives enough variety in wash source and style to key in distinct looks. What was most noticeable for me was the FOH spot; Barnes had kept the vast majority of the rig

lighting upstage (to the slight detriment of Shea Seger the opening band - an act well worth a look-see if you get the chance), which meant wherever Washbourn went he stood out distinct from the rest of the band. This caught my eye because of the balance - with so much of the rig upstage on the band, the relative light levels between them and Joe in the beam of just one spot were well matched.

"They're a very good band to light," concluded Graeme Feast. "With music like this, finding the big looks for each song was very easy."



Toploader LD Graeme Feast strikes a pose at the Wholehog II desk, whilst sound engineer Andrew Thornton raises a Graham Norton-style eyebrow

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Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

The movement towards smaller-sized theatres is gaining pace. Trevor Nunn is muttering about splitting the Olivier to gain an extra hall, Adrian Noble has got Alison Chitty taking seats out of the Royal Shakespeare before what is almost certain to be a less voluminous new house is built, and Cameron Mackintosh has moved *The Witches of Eastwick* from Drury Lane into the more accommodating (i.e. smaller) Prince of Wales.

"For all Anna Friel's charms - and Rob Howell's costumes make sure we see most of them - the designers are the undoubted stars of this rather unsatisfactory production."

THE SUCCESSFUL theatres, the fashionable theatres, are 250-400 seaters like Stratford's Swan, the smart new Soho, the leather-look Royal Court, and the Donmar. Only the Almeida has bucked the trend by choosing to convert King's Cross Coach Station as their temporary venue while their Islington base is being rebuilt - and I believe even this includes a smaller studio space.

STEVE TOMPKINS AND PARTNERS have achieved more wonders with the coach station. Their Gainsborough

Studios conversion concentrated on the auditorium, since it was intended for only a short life, but King's Cross has an alluring, neon-lit approach and an enormous airy foyer bar, which keeps at bay any thoughts of this as a temporary structure.

THE THEATRE ITSELF is wide, almost too wide, and while its pillar-box stage is at least higher than the joke theatre in Sydney's Opera House, it's going to present designers with similar problems in future. No problems for Rob Howell with the opener, *Lulu*. He's put sliding glass screens across the whole width of the stage, with another lot five metres behind, to emphasise the voyeuristic nature of Wedekind's sexy play. Stage right, a band occupies the area. Downstage in front of the screens, Jack the Ripper lurks. Later, as *Lulu*'s descent back into hell continues, the screens give way to a bare, deep set - the dingy present-day King's Cross basement where she will meet her grisly end.

THROUGHOUT, the lighting is exemplary - Mark Henderson, of course. For all Anna Friel's charms - and Rob Howell's costumes make sure we see most of them - the designers are the undoubted stars of this rather unsatisfactory production, and one wonders whether it can fill its space for its intended longish run.

RATHER SURPRISINGLY, another recent mix of high and low life, Neil Bartlett's *Lyric*, Hammersmith version of *The Servant*, features a dull, portentous set from Rae Smith and some solemn lighting from Paule Constable - usually one of my favourite design teams. Both these productions are deliberately monochrome, a trend taken to stylish heights by Philip Prowse's *Semi-Monde* at the other *Lyric*. This is designer theatre as only the Citizens' team can do it - Gerry Jenkinson has come down to do the lighting, too - and yet even the mighty Prowse is off target here. The play, no more than a series of camp sketches really, takes place in the lobby of a grand hotel.

THOSE OF YOU who saw the musical of that title will recall that most of its scene changes were achieved by the simple movement of a few dozen chairs. Prowse has chairs, too, and I suppose they have to be rearranged to provide varying acting

areas for his huge cast, but he doesn't half make a meal of it. Not only are his hotel staff forever fiddling with the furniture, they keep wheeling two huge bars around, at one point letting one of them mask most of the action as it sits plumb centre downstage. The great set coup is at the beginning, when the room's splendid cupola descends from the flies to sit over the action.

BUT IT IS NOTHING more than a coup - in real life, hotels with ceilings that drop on you are surely to be avoided. At first sight, the frocks, most of them black, are magnificent, but on closer observation many of them are really very ugly. Perhaps Mr Prowse is making a point here - he makes a big enough one near the end of the play, when in the best Citz tradition an anachronistic slice of Nazi chic intrudes on Coward's bright young things - but it's hard to see what point he intends to make.

MORE BLACK FROCKS are at the centre of Anthony Ward's design tour de force for *My Fair Lady*. There are so many features of the original stage show and film that stick in the memory, and Cecil Beaton's black-and-white Ascot is the stickiest. Ward has taken out the white: we are in mourning for the late King Edward VII, and black rules. Absolutely beautiful, and incidentally a lighting challenge that is easily met by the old master, David Hersey. But this is not the only change - time and again Ward expands on the original sets: building up the opening scene until we are under St Paul's portico, going indoors off the street to Doolittle's favourite pub, and later offering us a complete miniature music-hall for another of the cockney interludes.

WARD'S SURE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE is much in evidence, too, notably 'on the street where you live'. But unlike *Semi-Monde*, where the simplest bit of scene shifting is a distracting hiatus, *My Fair Lady* whizzes along through the most complex of changes. I counted 20 seconds for a complete transition from a street scene to Professor Higgins' heavily furnished study - with not a moment's break in the action. Much of this is achieved by clever flying and the intelligent use of two travelers; the design team have obviously had Drury Lane's limited wing-space well in mind.

ONE FEATURE IS GOING TO IMPROVE mightily at the Lane: at present the band sits behind a gauze at the back of the stage, whence it is gratingly amplified out into the Lyttelton auditorium. Once accommodated in the Drury Lane pit, it should sound a million times better. Otherwise, you can pay Paul Groothuis's sound the ultimate compliment - nobody sounds miked.

ALL THIS EXCELLENCE can only get better when the show moves to the larger, but friendlier space for which it was destined. There's still a few shows around for which size matters.

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Bench Service Engineer

Location: Northampton Salary: £15k

A trained individual who is conversant with the fault-find and repair of electronic audio equipment. This individual would be responsible for the development of a repair facility, which would also encompass providing and cataloguing spares.

To apply for this position, e-mail or call Ian Kirby, quoting Job Ref: TP01181/3

System Support Manager

Location: Midlands Salary: £20-£25k

Field-based working from home, you will be experienced with lighting, audio and video products manage and undertake preventative maintenance visits. Assist with service calls, first line repairs, diagnostics and re-programming.

To apply for this position, e-mail or call Julie Kirby, quoting Job Ref: TP506/1

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Locations: London/SE & Midlands Salary: £15-£20k

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Location: London Salary: £15-20k

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
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
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In Profile...

L&SI Talks to the Industry Trend-setters

"It's pretty simple. My great-grandfather was a theatre manager and a tailor in the West End. He immigrated to the US before the turn of the century and ended up managing a vaudeville theatre in Albany, New York.

My grandfather grew up there and became George Abbott's general manager for those late-forties, early-fifties musicals and subsequently my father became a successful general manager and producer on Broadway.

He runs PRG, and is perhaps the most commented-upon man in the industry. So it seems fair for Rob Halliday to ask: just where did Jere Harris come from?

My mother's side was also in the theatre business - my maternal grandfather was a famous vaudevillian actor, my grandmother the understudy to Irene Dunn in the original Irene, and my mother was one of the George Abbott girls."

"There was no influence to go into the theatre - so I went to college to study criminal justice and finance, but realised after about a year-and-

a-half that my career was meant to be in theatre. So I went back to work for Pete Feller, where I'd previously had a summer job, and for about 10 or 12 years, I was shop carpenter, iron worker, labourer, ending up with a bent towards the automation side of the business. Coming from a theatre family, you live your life thinking that you have to make as much money as you possibly can. The adage was that you lived on one salary and banked the other - not that hard if you left the theatre after 11 and had to be in the workshop at 7am. You could only drink so much between those hours!"

Harris eventually moved on to become head of production at management company Theatre Now, then branched out into freelance production management of the English, rather



than American-style. "That was the start of Jeremiah Harris Associates, which eventually became Harris Production Services - at first just myself and an assistant in a small office." In quiet periods on Broadway, Harris turned to the corporate market: "The theatre is where the degree of execution and the discipline is the greatest of all the other worlds; we were successful in the corporate world because we brought that discipline with us."

The next big break - and change of direction - came with *The Phantom of the Opera* and the surprising news that Feller Precision, the choice for automation in America at the time, were not going to do the Broadway production. Phonecalls were made and Harris, and one of his partners Fred Gallo, were invited to the bid session. They were appointed to supply the automation for *Phantom*, borrowed a million dollars on the strength of that contract and the partners' houses, and built an automation system from scratch, combining standard computer control systems with a custom-written, theatre-based control program under the name East Coast Theater Supply. Harris is quick to give credit to Martin McCallum at Cameron Mackintosh Ltd: "He has been an innovator in the theatre not always because he was the guy who invented the concept, but because he gave others the opportunity to do it."

Phantom New York was followed by *Phantom*, *Les Mis* and *Miss Saigon* tours across America, then by other shows. "On the corporate side, you only have one opportunity to do the show - your

reputation is on the line. So where we were having trouble getting the quality we needed from vendors, we started doing some of it ourselves." If that was the start of the integrated supplier concept, two shows seem to have led to the company we see today. One was *Beauty and the Beast*: "Disney has deep pockets, but they run their business very differently to the way we're used to. Everything is budget and schedule; I learnt a lot about looking at the business in a different way."

The other was *EFX*, a \$45million 'bigger than life' Las Vegas spectacular covered in L&SI's February 1996 issue. Harris was a creative consultant, and his companies built and automated the scenery. "It was one of the first times where any one discipline could initiate a cue in any other. I came away from that thinking, OK, the guy who can integrate all this stuff and deliver it to the customer is going to win the game."

And so to the PRG of today. Harris, sitting in his New York office dressed in polo shirt and khakis, is adamant that he has not sold out to 'the suits', citing in particular his determination to support the next generation of lighting designers. But he feels that the evolution was inevitable, given the other changes in the industry. "In the five or six years to 1994, technology winged its way into the theatre. We continually had to put more and more money into the business to buy the moving lights the designers wanted. Personally, I got to a point where I decided I wasn't going to leverage my whole family every time I needed to build a new show."

That transition has now been made, give-or-take some ongoing re-branding and settling down. The industry waits to see whether PRG's new operating model will hold together. In the meantime, what motivates Harris as he continues to put in 14 to 16-hour days, even after the birth of his daughter last December? "What makes me get up in the morning is that I want to accomplish what we set out to do. I have a responsibility to all the people that work here. And I never failed at anything that I ever did in my career - and I don't intend to fail here." ■

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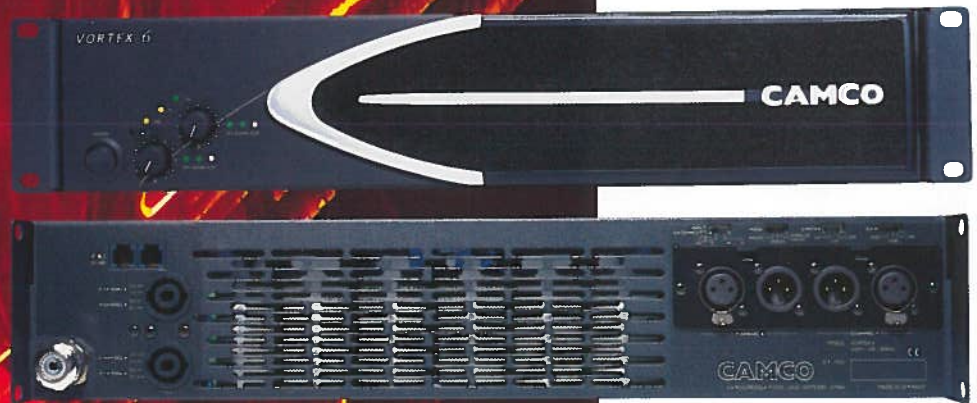
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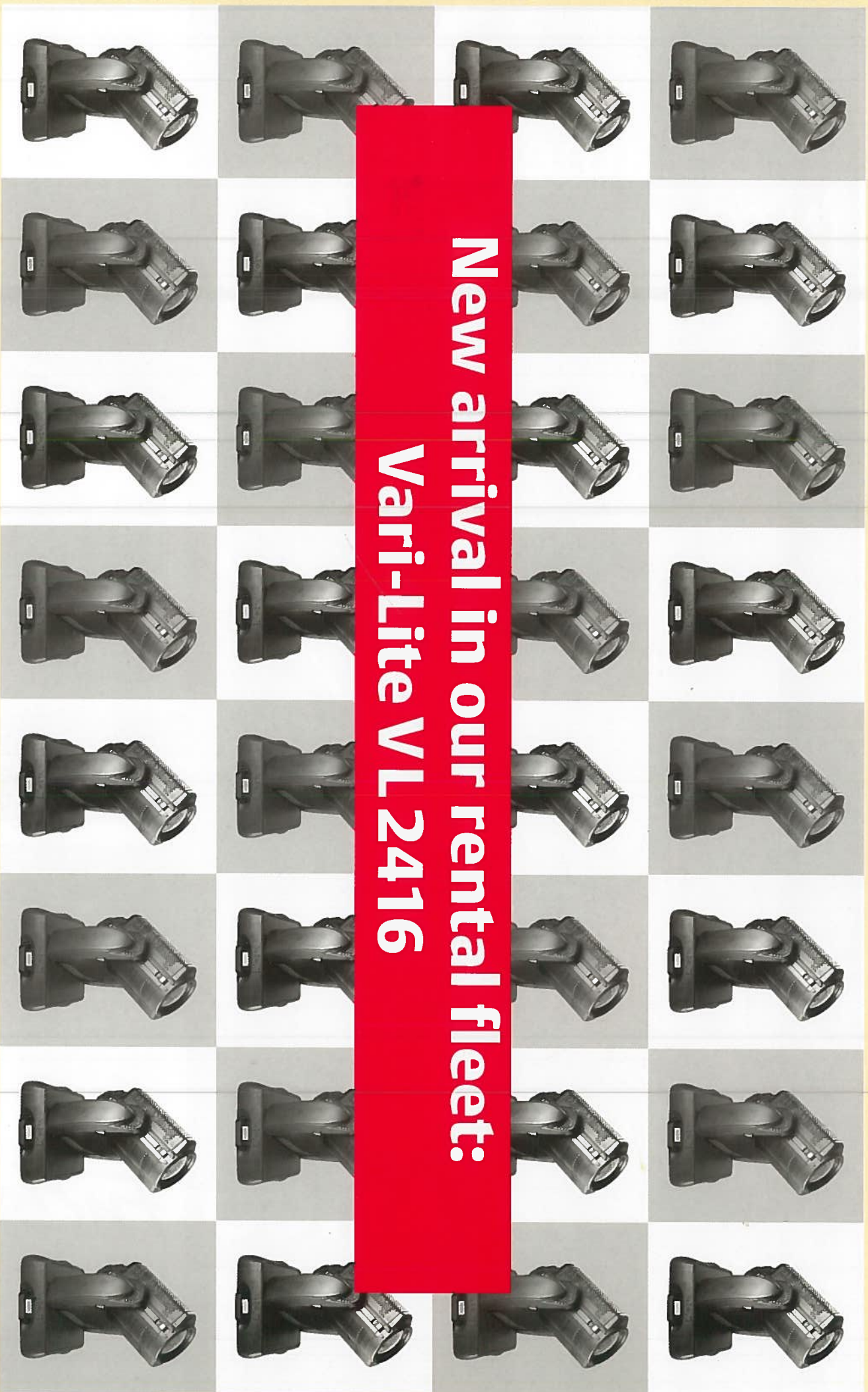
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