

Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

June 2001

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

www.plasa.org/news

Magna

- Rotherham's Industrial Cathedral

AES 2001

- Broadcast meets live in Amsterdam

Smooth Operator

- Lionel Richie is better late than never

Eurovision

- Boom, bing a bong in Copenhagen

Vodafone Ball

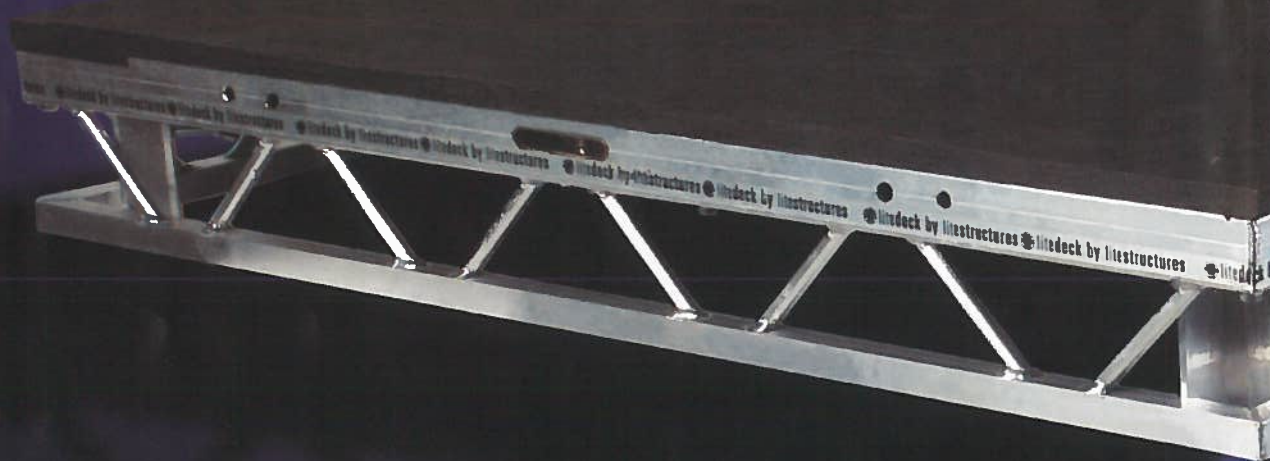
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Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

June 2001 Volume 16, Issue 6

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CONTENTS

NEWS

This month's cover shows Magna, Rotherham

International News Round Up 6
 New Technology Showcase 67-68

REGULARS

Asleep in the Stalls Ian Herbert 54
 Second Take John Watt 60
 Audio File Phil Ward 70
 No Comment Tony Gottelier 80
 In Profile Jacqueline Molloy talks to LD Motoko Ishii 90

FEATURES

Discovering Magna 49-52
 Based in the ex-British Steel Mill at Templeborough, Magna is intended to be a major catalyst to regeneration for the area. Steve Moles heads to Rotherham

AES 2001 57-59
 The Audio Engineering Society does exactly what it says on the tin. Members gather together at conferences and conventions to discuss audio engineering, in its deepest, crispest and most even sense

All Night Long 63-65
 Steve Moles catches up with Motown's smoothest operator, Lionel Richie, at Sheffield Arena

Eurovision 72-76
 After a gruelling round of auditions and heats, the voting panel in Eastbourne eventually selected Steve Moles to wave the L&S flag in Copenhagen

Record Breaker 78-79
 The 2001 Vodafone Ball - Beach Party - held at London's Earls Court, went into the history books as a record-breaking corporate event

PLASA NEWS 12
 CLASSIFIED including full recruitment section 82-83
 DIRECTORY 84-89

Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

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International News Round-Up

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Industry Worth Estimated £10billion Worldwide

According to new research commissioned by PLASA, we are working in an industry that is now worth at least £10billion.

The findings are based on PLASA's major research exercise which was given the go-ahead last year in order to give the Association and its Members a series of benchmarks by which to gauge the size and dynamics of the industry.

The research covers the lighting, audio, staging and AV markets, breaking these down further into an analysis of each market sector - architectural (including PA/VA installation), corporate events, performing arts, night venues, broadcasting and film, amusements and attractions, concert and touring, MI/DJ retail, education, religion, studio and cruise.

This is the first time that the Association has been able to identify the current performance of these market sectors - more critically it allows PLASA to offer market information to its Members about the future potential of each sector, identifying those that are experiencing growth and also those that appear to have reached a plateau.

The Research also looks at the performance of PLASA members in the global market, finding that members are among the top performers in the industry. What is also very clear from the findings is that PLASA members dominate the

UK professional entertainment technology market, and also represent a healthy share of the global market. Since the Research was conducted in the UK, its main emphasis is on the market here, but by placing the findings in the context of the global market, it also reveals some interesting statistics about its likely size and potential growth areas.

The Research doesn't just examine the market from a sector point of view, it also looks at the way in which companies allocate their budgets and the percentage they reinvest in areas such as marketing and R&D, for example. It also reviews the range of issues that concern companies, identifying lack of skills and training as one of the key areas the industry wishes to see addressed. The findings also put the Association in a strong position to lobby for further recognition for the industry, particularly with government and legislative bodies.

The initial research represents a baseline market analysis and since the Association plans to repeat the exercise annually, it will provide a valuable platform from which to monitor future trends.

Full report - page 12



Let us Know Your Training Needs

Any industry anchored to technology needs a well-structured and carefully co-ordinated training programme. Through its Training & Education Initiative, PLASA is seeking to achieve just that by creating a training and development

strategy that not only gives individuals the chance to enhance their existing skills, but which is also linked to people's business objectives.

To do that successfully we need your help. Enclosed with this issue of L&S is a questionnaire that will allow us to assess the training needs of the entire industry. It covers both managerial and administrative, as well as technical and creative, staff. In addition to reviewing training, we are also researching what courses are currently available, so that we can identify what needs to be put in place for the future.

We know your time is valuable, so we've kept the questionnaire brief. It should hopefully take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete - please copy and circulate this to as many people as possible. As an incentive, every completed questionnaire returned by Friday 20 July, will be entered into a Draw to win a Magnum of Champagne.

An online version of the questionnaire can be found at www.plasa.org/association/training



Artistic Licence - Red Hot Ethernet Technology

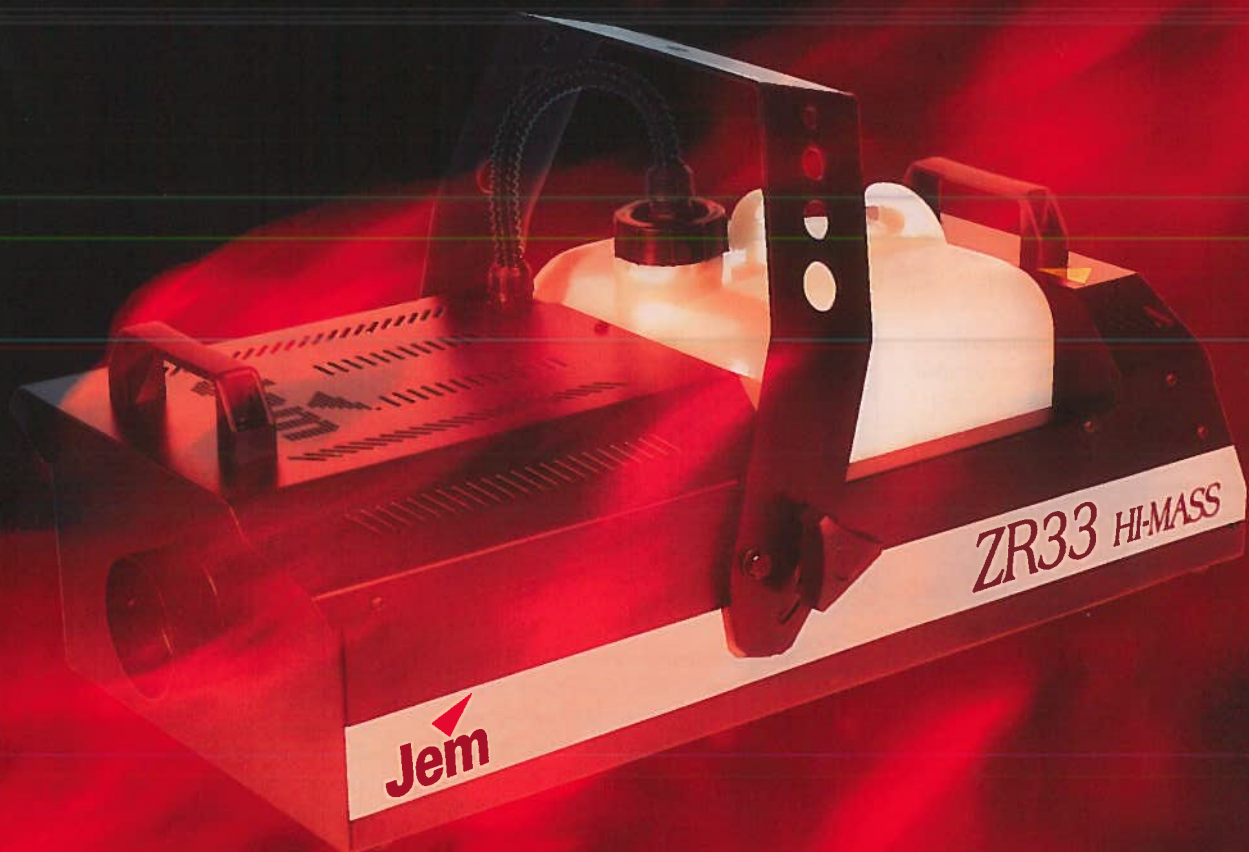
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Pavarotti & Friends

Luciano Pavarotti recently returned to his home town of Modena, to host the annual open-air Pavarotti & Friends charity concert, with funds this year going to alleviate the plight of Afghan children.

The event was held, as always, in front of a packed crowd and transmitted live by Italian state broadcaster RAI's channel I. Daniele Tramontani is in charge of sound for the star-studded show.

"Initially, it seemed a live recording wasn't going to be done, but the organizers decided to put together a well appointed studio in a container backstage, so as well as supervising the FOH system, I was also responsible for the realization of the recording and broadcast mixing set-up - in short, everything apart from monitors!"

Sound engineer Stefano De Maio mixed FOH, with a 72-channel Cadac M-type master desk, a Midas XL3 for the orchestra, and a Heritage 1000 for guest musicians. The audio contractor for the event was Agorà of L'Aquila, and FOH comprised 16 + 16 V-Dosc plus 16 + 16 Meyer Sound 650 subs, plus three delay towers and UPA/MSL4 systems on front-fill - Tramontani once again swore by his trusty SIM II., which is "indispensable for setting the rig's components." Monitor engineer Stefano Martinovic helmed two DDA QII, two Innovason Sentury and an A&H 5000 to mix the orchestra's bug mikes.

Backstage, Mackie's Sandro Chinellato watched over nine of the firm's HDR 24/96 hard disk recording units, brought in to immortalize this unique event, at which 'friends' duetting with Pavarotti included Deep Purple, Barry White,



Views of one of the LED Screens supplied by Euphon, and the v-Dosc hangs, with sound engineer John Pellowe, who mixed the orchestra and Pavarotti.

Cantus desks almost entirely instinctively and this seems to have paid off."

The lighting contractor was Rome-based Limelite, and partner/LD Massimo Gasbarro explains: "The Pavarotti show got our busy summer season off to a great start, to be followed by Vasco Rossi's huge nationwide tour set and the Heineken Jammin' Festival at Imola racetrack. We built a huge flower-shaped rig and Vari*Lite op Luca Maneli and moving light op Alessandro Velletrani controlled 66 VL5s and 44 Coemar CF units (24 Spot 1200W and 20 HE 700W) respectively."

The rest of the set-up included 18 Coemar Panorama 1800Ws, six

Space Cannon 2k Black Devils, 12 bars of Par 64 1kW, 24 of Par 64 250W 28V ACL, 24 Molefay 5200s with Molemags, 18 3k strobes, 24 ETC Source Four 19" and six 2.5k Supertrouper followspots. Control was via two Wholehog II desks with wing and a Jands 60/120-channel console. The audience had its fair share of light too, with 24 Molefay 5200Ws, 24 bars of Par 64 ACL 250W 4s, 16 Jumbo ACL 5kWs, 40 Par 64 1000Ws, 12 Sunpar 1200W HMIs and 24 Coemar Panorama 1800W MSIs.

Members of the audience not blessed with a seat among the VIPs in the front rows or the seated area, were ensured a good view nevertheless, thanks to a pair of 50sq.m. LED screens supplied by Turin-based multimedia giant Euphon.

Mike Clark

Tom Jones and George Benson. Hardware in the main container included a new Cadac R-type desk where John Pellowe mixed the orchestra and Pavarotti and sent a feed to two Stageteck Cantus desks, where Tramontani worked alongside Claudio Masci of Optimes (Stageteck's Italian distributor) and RAI's Marco Cuzolo, who programmed the desks and assisted during the show. RAI's OB truck had another Cantus mixing the stereo music feed with ambient, applause and MC Milly Carlucci's mike.

Tramontani concludes: "Doing a show of this size and importance in four days, including set-up, is a real challenge, particularly when using digital desks, but even if I had the technological back-up of the desks' memories, on the night I used the

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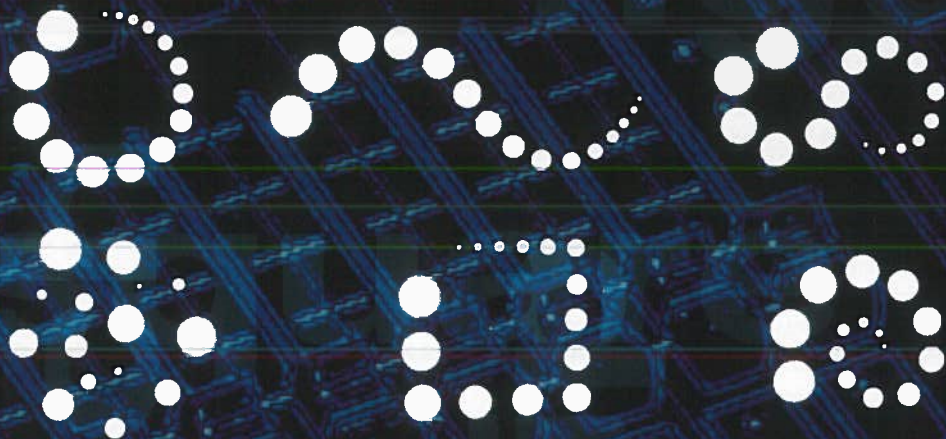
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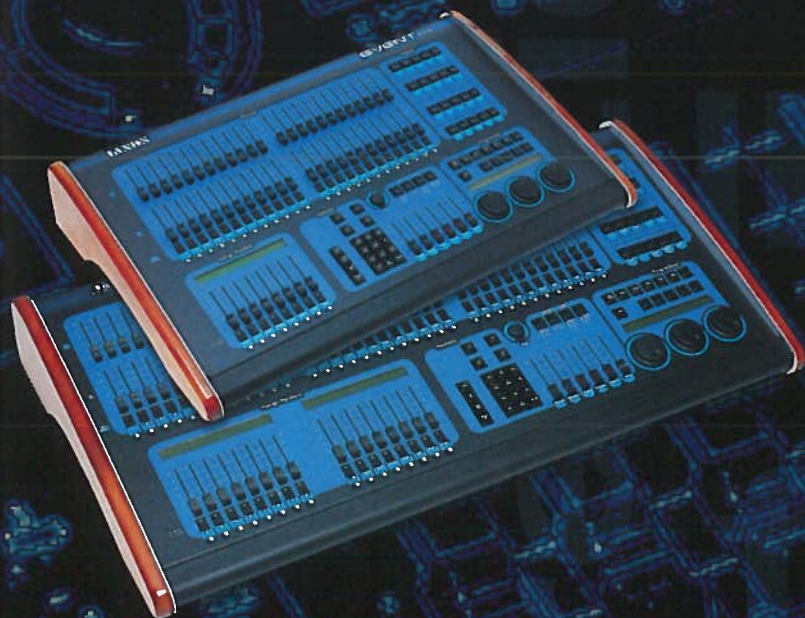
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Light Relief: We need your help to raise money . . .

At the recent Showlight 2001 conference in Edinburgh (see pages 30-31), a new logo for the Light Relief benevolent fund was unveiled by Tony Gottelier and Rick Fisher.

Light Relief is the industry-sponsored fund, supported by PLASA and the ALD, to assist people in the industry when they are affected by catastrophic personal events. "The lot of the freelancer is not always a happy one, just look at the state of Rick!" joked Gottelier, pointing at ALD chairman and lighting designer, Rick Fisher. The duo were attending the Showlight reception, sponsored by Fourth Phase, on the serious matter of launching the newly-designed Light Relief logo and its attendant leaflet, and to raise the profile of the industry's benevolent fund.

The pair appealed to the manufacturing and service companies to come forward with offers of help. "We need you to come up with creative initiatives to raise cash," Gottelier said. By the end of Showlight, something in the order of



£20,000 had been added to Light Relief's coffers, due to the generosity of those attending. In one particularly impressive stunt, Fred Foster, President of ETC, agreed to wear a kilt the following day, provided £2,000 could be

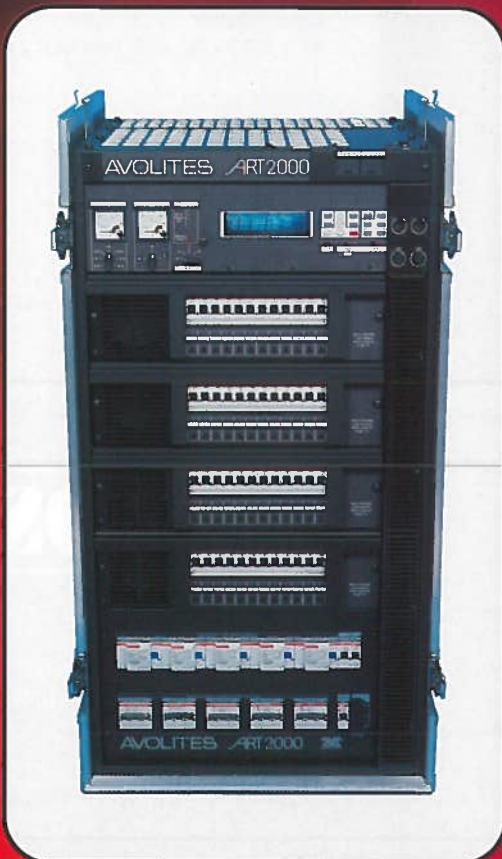
raised for the cause. The money was duly promised and consequently Fred attended the conference resplendent in highland regalia. Not only that, but Foster also attended the tour of his competitor, Strand Lighting's, factory in the tartan. "This is just the kind of stunt we are asking people to come up with to raise Light Relief's profile and to enhance the value of the fund," said Gottelier. "Fred is always willing and we are extremely grateful to him."

If you have an idea for raising money for Light Relief or simply want to make a donation (go on!), telephone us on +44 1323 418400 or e-mail lightrelief@plasa.org.

Penn Fabrications . . .

In our enthusiasm for editing copy in the Industry Directory (which was mailed in early February) we inadvertently rewrote Penn Fabrication's business plan. To the sentence that should have read "Penn is a manufacturer of flightcase, rack mounting and speaker cabinet hardware," we erroneously added an extra 's'

to the word 'flightcase'. We are more than happy to make clear that Penn supplies the majority of professional flightcase and pro audio manufacturers (either directly or indirectly) with components and certainly doesn't manufacture flightcases as we stated. Our apologies to the team at Penn.



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Industry Worth Estimated £10billion

Association NEWS

PLASA has completed the first phase of its major industry research project.

The research will provide PLASA Members with an invaluable insight into their industry. As well as being able to estimate the global market size for professional lighting, sound, staging and AV products and services, the research also gives a very detailed picture of the market in the UK. For the first time, PLASA has information about the value of the product sectors, how fast they are growing and the size and growth of the various vertical sectors into which its members sell.

Was the research really necessary? Matthew Griffiths, MD of PLASA believes so: "We have over 400 members, but until now, we haven't been able to say very much about the nature of the industry that we represent." With members' interests straddling four key product sectors - lighting, sound, AV and staging - and selling to an even wider range of market sectors, the lack of a single source of information can be no great surprise. Griffiths continues: "Building an accurate picture of the market for professional entertainment technology products and services through existing research was virtually impossible. We had to commission our own."

The findings certainly enable the Association to say some very precise things about its members collectively and the nature of the industry as a whole.

The main uses for the research are:

- ▶ to talk to Government bodies convincingly about the industry; particularly with the DTI and Trade Partners looking to identify the support that can be expected both in the UK and overseas.
- ▶ to provide PLASA members with accurate information on the total size of the market sectors that they sell to, indicate which are growing fastest and enable them to compare their own business with the overall industry and the product sector to which they belong.
- ▶ to identify the main areas of concern from members in terms of recruitment, training, marketing, research and development, so that the Association can respond positively and appropriately.

Building an accurate picture of an industry which spans so many different product sectors and vertical user sectors created its own headaches. Trevor Wilkinson, MD of Business Diagnostics (the agency which, in conjunction with BMRB, conducted the research), explains: "We were very concerned to make sure that the findings were robust and valid. With a brand-new exercise such as this, with nothing to benchmark our own findings against, there was a very real risk that the results would contain an unacceptable degree of error. In the end, through a combination of detailed interviews with PLASA Members, cross-referenced with interviews with top

industry journalists and again cross-referenced with published findings from earlier exercises, I'm confident the findings present as accurate a picture of PLASA's industry as it is possible to get."

The Association plans to repeat the exercise every 12 months, enabling it to build up ever-more accurate trend information. A quick flick through the 119-page report reveals that it estimates the respective size by revenue of PLASA's four main product sectors: light, sound, AV and staging; gives growth figures for this year and next across the four product sectors; breaks the sectors down into sales and rental; includes information on revenue from the provision of services such as installation, design and servicing; sizes the target market sectors and indicates which are the healthiest and the fastest growing; includes information on average company size by staff, investment in training, R&D and marketing.

Members who took part in the survey will shortly receive a free 22-page copy of the overview, together with the opportunity to buy the detailed sections at a subsidized price. Members who didn't, will still be able to get hold of a free copy of the overview, but must complete the 2001 questionnaire first and also make a firm undertaking to contribute to the repeat exercise in March and April 2002.

The detailed sector reports - for lighting, pro-audio, staging and AV - contain analysis which includes size, growth, key market sectors and trends and cost £125 each (ex VAT). A 42-page sector report is also available, offering detailed analysis of all 12 market sectors targeted by members - this costs £250 (ex VAT). Members buying any of the above will also receive free a global report providing a comparison of the UK market in context with the world markets. These reports are only available to participating members.



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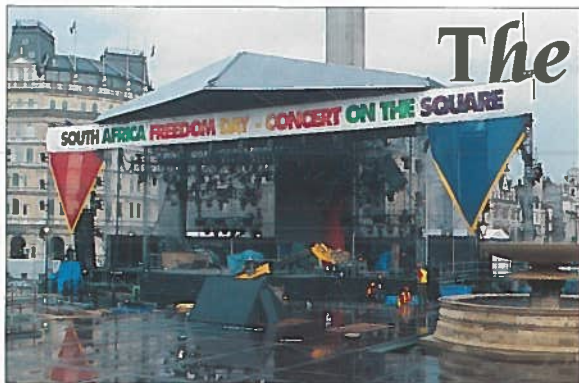
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The Battle of Trafalgar

This summer saw a free concert for 20,000 people staged in the busy heart of London. Mike Mann discovered that such a production has its logistical difficulties . . .

Before even thinking about the problems involved in bringing central London to a standstill, Star Hire's Roger Barrett realised that the stage design for the Africa Day concert would have to be an unusual one: "We would normally have built a higher stage than this - but a major feature of the design was that the famous lions should be visible on stage." Two of the huge statues were incorporated into the stage, which was positioned just in front of

Nelson's Column, facing northwards towards the National Gallery. Flanked by the South African Embassy (who funded the entire event) and Canada House, the central area of Trafalgar Square itself also needed treatment. "One of the first things we realised was that the ornamental fountains obscure sightlines for a large part of the square," explained Barrett. "So we included 3,000sq.m of industrial flooring to raise the outer sections of the audience." This was the first rock'n'roll outing for the Danco flooring system - a modular industrial system which has also seen service in Formula One pit areas.

The stage and audience flooring were delivered to Trafalgar Square by a total of 20 full-size trailers, each one bringing traffic to a complete standstill. In addition to this, a further three trucks for the security fencing, plus other deliveries for sound and lighting systems, meant that Londoners had to cope with repeated delays.

On stage, sound designer Andrew Fregley took the opportunity to give the new Meyer M3D line-array system an airing - a decision which, he says, was influenced by the show's visual and sonic requirements. "The production team knew that the vista from FOH should be of London, not the stage or the PA. Of course, we also wanted to reduce the amount of reflected sound." The system, supplied by north London rental outfit Canegreen, was supplemented by small outfill arrays and even a remote, delayed VIP system installed on the balcony of South Africa House and fed via a UHF radio link.

Lighting design for the show was by Vince Foster, fresh from his latest tour with Kylie Minogue. Foster used rooftop positions for multiple Par bars, which were used for audience lighting for the benefit of television viewers. Skyarcs were deployed to light statues, trees and other points of visual interest. LSD supplied the system - although a rare mid-concert problem with an Icon desk allowed Flying Pig Systems to show just how fast their backup can be!

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Neil Finn & Friends

Neil Finn, of Crowded House and Split Enz fame, has been busy touring an entertaining live show with some semi-legendary muso mates and a very flexible format. L&SI caught up with him in New Zealand and the UK, courtesy of Catriona Strom and Steve Moles . . .



Auckland's St James Theatre was the setting for the start of the Neil Finn & Friends shows, which featured a line-up including Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam, Radiohead's Ed O'Brien and Phil Selway, Johnny Marr and Sebastian Steinberg on electric and double bass, and Lisa Germano doing vocals and a number of instruments.

Oceania Audio supplied sound, with the company's Paul Jeffery acting as both technical manager and monitor engineer. "The concert was certainly a challenge," said Jeffery, "but having worked, off and on, for Split Enz and Crowded House for many years, I'm quite familiar with the way Neil operates."

To complicate matters, three guest performers, could be on stage at any one time. For flexibility, Jeffery chose a Midas Heritage monitor console, along with XTA graphic EQ, Lexicon MPX1 reverbs, and Drawmer gates. "We ran 12 sends of monitors with proprietary cabinets housing 12" and 2" JBL drivers," said Paul. "It was a very unpredictable time in monitor world - people were constantly being brought on and off the stage with guitars being swapped around. It was an exciting show."

The male vocalists were all on Shure Beta 58A microphones. A Turbosound Flash/Flood system was spec'd: the theatre's upper level featured four Flashlight cabinets and two low boxes per side, the circle had two Floods and two lows per side, whilst the ground floor featured three Floods and six lows per side.

While sound engineer Chris Ridgeway, who was also to mix the European concerts, was there to familiarise himself with the band, Peter Lumley was working from a Yamaha PM4000. He admitted that he was kept busy keeping up with the multitude of songs. "We'd get the set list about 30 minutes before the show and then madly write down what we needed to do. . . they had such a vast repertoire. It was also difficult finding out who was playing what - you just have to react quickly."

Paul Normandale was LD, and would hand over the reigns to Frazer Elisha for the UK tour: "The lighting is almost festival-style, given the informal structure of each night's entertainment," he said. "The design was open-ended and needed to incorporate video elements and webcasting. The main difficulty was the fact that they might play one of 60 possible songs at any time with a variety of passing friends."

The lighting, supplied by Spotlight Systems, was spread across three 40ft trusses and featured a mix of fixtures including Altman Shakespeares, Fresnels and Q Lites, Colorset Scrollers, Selecon PCs, LSD 4-Lite strips, and Martin MAC 500s and 600s - controlled by an Avolites Pearl 2000.

By the time Finn & Friends reached Sheffield City Hall, it had caused quite a stir, for Finn had announced that he would allow members of his audience up onstage to perform with his band. But for Frazer Elisha and Chris Ridgeway, front-

of-house lights and sound respectively, there was another little anomaly to deal with: Elisha produced the two entirely different set lists from the two previous night's concerts.

Ridgeway mixes from a Midas Heritage, and relies heavily on the careful set-up of his Meyer MSL4 system (Canegreen, system engineer Pete Hughes using a Soundweb for zoning and EQ), and aims the floor stacks himself: "Aim them right, keep them off the walls, and there's very little you have to do to EQ for the room." That aside, he uses a Lexicon 480 on all the vocals, and runs Finn's vox channel through a TLA100. All other band members, vocals and instruments, receive their compression from dbx I60SLs.

Lite Alternative supplied the lighting for the UK shows, with LD Paul Normandale fortunate in having such a skilled pair of hands to operate for the tour (Elisha's work will soon be visible on the up-coming Depeche Mode tour). "The rig is simple. Paul's original idea was for some projection onto a rear screen and two 3 x 4m screens stacked to one side of stage. Although abstract, the projection was too much, and we now light the screens with four MAC 2000s as purely an effects light."

The rest of the rig is minimal: five MAC 500s, 11 VL5s, a pair of R&V Beam Lights, and a Source Four profile for each band member." Elisha also has some Pars with Chroma-Q scrollers for some muted wash on the band area. It's a difficult show to light, but, says Elisha, "it's a lot more fun than a boy/girl band, where it's exactly the same every night. What makes it easier is the desk - an Avo Sapphire 2000. Having legends is a lot better for a start, and there's easier access to the presets, the step sequence is also easier, as is recalling pages."

This is a tricky show, but with marvellous and engaging musical content. It just requires the lightest, non-invasive touch, to add the necessary sprinkle of fairy dust.

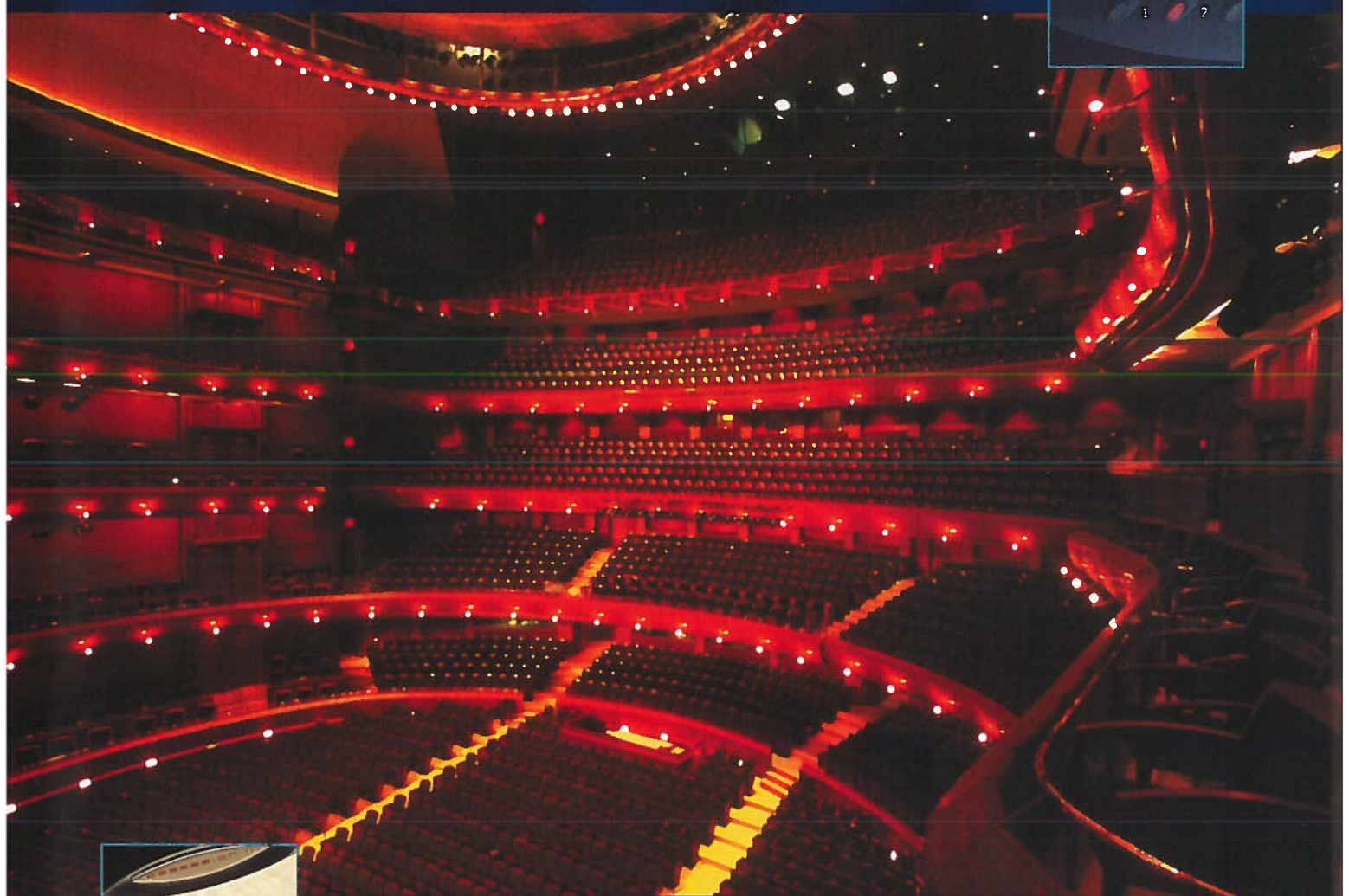
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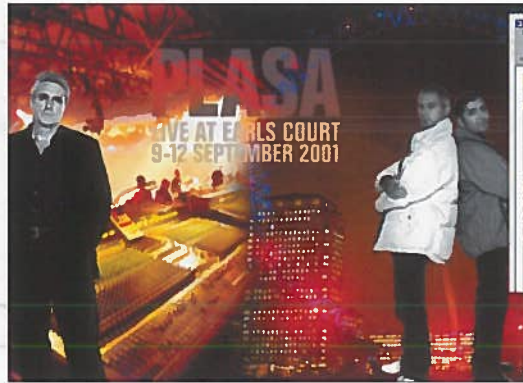


PLASA Show 2001 Online

The PLASA Show 2001 Website is now online at www.plasa.org/show - providing a single source for all the information on this leading industry event that you could need.

The new website has been designed to be easily navigable, with a familiar feel to anyone used to browsing the main PLASA website, but also includes the distinctive graphics from the Show's advertising campaign which will have a high profile in the industry's media over the coming months.

Organized into Visitor, Exhibitor and Press sections, the PLASA Show Website covers everything visitors to the Show will need to know, including which companies are exhibiting, registration details, how to get there and where to stay, venue information, a review of London and details of the feature areas, events at the Show and the seminar and workshop programme. The site will also feature an interactive floorplan so that visitors can plan their time at the Show. For



exhibitors, there is useful guidance on how to get the most out of the Show, including on-line exhibitor manuals, advice on marketing and press opportunities and the PLASA Awards for Product Excellence.

The website's own dedicated online news section carries the latest PLASA Show news and expected product launches. The site will also be home to up-to-the-minute news coverage from Earls Court during the Show itself.

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Festival of Light

The Royal Festival Hall, arguably the UK's highest profile multi-purpose performance space, recently celebrated its 50th anniversary in a blaze of colourful architectural lighting, basking radiantly and beacon-like on the South Bank, for two glorious weeks.

The idea was first suggested by the RFH's head of production, Nigel March, in February. Knowing the event was approaching, he decided that it was time to take advantage of the building's massive white marble facades by lighting it in a visually stimulating style.

"It was an unmissable opportunity," says March who worked hard to get the project approved, realised and within budget, collaborating closely with his associate and production LX Barry Waterman and team of South Bank technicians. The outdoor lighting was sponsored by Accenture (formally known as Andersen Consulting), and March's concept involved the production of a 'liquid' colour fade that rotated slowly and seamlessly around the building throughout the night.

He chose 30 Studio Due City Colors as the primary colour-changing fixtures for the job. This was the first time he's used them, but he was highly impressed with their power and punch, as well as the even beam diffusion and absence of hot spots. Being IP54-rated, they needed no additional weather protection either.

March also utilised 12 Martin MAC 600 Exteriors which he employed as specials to spot the pillars on the riverside balcony, whilst both RFH and sponsors' gobos were projected onto the front of the building by three MAC 2000s. The latter were covered by customised weather-proof domes.



The lightshow was controlled by an Avolites Azure 2000 console located in the RFH's central control room - one of eight Avolites consoles owned by the RFH. The RFH's copper roof prevented the use of radio DMX, so nearly two miles of DMX cabling was utilised in the exterior

installation. The lighting fixtures were rigged on temporary trussing structures erected around the building at ground floor level, but with the units themselves rigged approximately 9ft off the deck to prevent passers-by from walking in front and causing havoc with the beam projections! The spaces that surround the Hall on all four sides remained open to the public, so much attention was paid to being neat and tidy and, naturally, to health and safety issues. The lighting fixtures were all supplied by Essential Lighting to the RFH.

Vertigo Rigging - preferred riggers at the South Bank Centre - undertook all the exterior rigging in addition to constructing a grid 'network' of Thomas 12" trussing in the roof of the RFH Ballroom to enable easy access for lighting the Gala Dinner. This took place on May 3rd 2001 - 50 years to the day since the Royal Festival Hall was declared open as the centrepiece to the Festival of Britain.

The Ballroom was transformed for the occasion into a 450 seat five-course silver service venue, which March's team, led by Brian Hunt, also lit using a combination of Martin MiniMACs and ETC PARnells.

Various white gauzes were rigged around the ballroom, bathed in moody Congo Blue and skimmed with white RFH logos - traditional but effective. Lighting in the ballroom was controlled by an Avolites Diamond 3 and another Azure console. The event was recorded by the BBC and used as part of a special programme about the RFH's first 50 years.

The 50th anniversary architectural lightshow added a whole new dimension and depth to this incredible building. It has hosted many breathtaking performances, events and artists in its time . . . but for this two weeks, it was finally time for the building itself to take centre stage and become an art installation in its own right.

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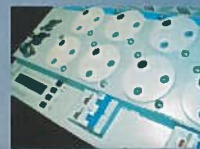
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New Audio for Hippodrome

Originally built as a theatre in 1913, the Golders Green Hippodrome became known for its theatre and music hall productions.

In 1963, the BBC took over the Grade 2 listed building on a 100-year lease and modified it to fulfil a dual role - initially as a television studio, and subsequently as a radio studio and concert venue. Seating was reorganised to accommodate the orchestra stage and a fully equipped studio was installed for recording and live transmissions. It has been the official home of the BBC Concert Orchestra since the early 1970s.

The most recent, and probably the most extensive technical refit in recent years was completed at the end of April and included significant building works, as well as a complete studio overhaul.

John Bowyer was the BBC's project manager with responsibilities ranging from chasing errant builders and service contractors to the more familiar task of the audio systems. The



auditorium sound system was upgraded during the shutdown period with the existing Meyer UPA-I speakers refurbished by Autograph Sound. A new 32-channel Soundcraft K3 mixer for controlling the audience sound balance was supplied and installed by the Oxford Sound Company, with microphone feeds shared between an SSL desk and the Soundcraft via a microphone splitter system.

Oxford Sound also installed the 72-input SSL console, the SL9000J Series and integrated it into the existing infrastructure, as well as adding new cabling for the additional inputs. Much of

BBC project manager John Bowyer with the SSL desk.

the studio equipment was replaced at the same time, including talkback systems and effects units. The main monitoring is via an impressive PMC BB5/XPD system, with Excel-201s for nearfield and surround monitoring. The existing 24 track Studer A800 is used as the standard recording machine and additional cabling was installed for 'guest' recording equipment to provide 48-track facilities when required. "Working in old buildings not designed for this level of technical equipment always brings problems," observed Stuart Edmiston, Oxford Sound's project manager. "This is quite a unique venue with sophisticated levels of recording and live performance equipment working side by side."

The Golders Green Hippodrome is unique as a music venue for the BBC and continues its tradition of free entrance for an enthusiastic audience of regular shows for live broadcast and recording.

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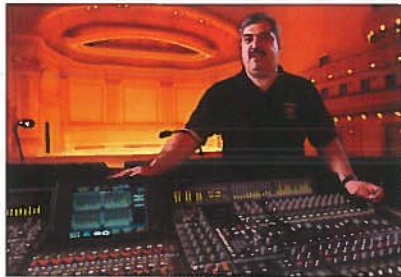


Carnegie's Audio Makeover

New York City's Carnegie Hall has recently had a major audio system upgrade, based around a Meyer speaker system and Yamaha digital desk.

The design was completed by David Andrews of Andrews Audio, John Monitto from Meyer Sound and acoustical consultants Art-Tec, who performed extensive acoustic and RASTI measurements. The decision to purchase a large format digital FOH console came about through recommendations, and the need for future expansion. "We had an analogue board for 11 years, and it worked very well," said head of sound John Cardinale. "However, we were intrigued by the capabilities and the sound of digital consoles when they were first introduced, so we convinced management to make the investment." As a result, Carnegie has become the world's first concert hall to include a Yamaha PMID digital mixing desk as part of its speaker system.

The Hall's main PA consists of a centre cluster, featuring three self-powered MSL4s and four CQI cabinets, with side stacks consisting of



John Cardinale with the Yamaha PMID

four MSL4 and two PSW2 cabinets. "The front-fills are UPM1Ps that lay across the stage, since there's no way they could be installed in the fascia," explains Cardinale. The delay lines consist of 14 Meyer UPM 1s in the balconies. "The main PA is balanced and EQ'd with the Meyer SIM System II, which 'proof tests' and keeps the system running. For the delay lines, we have Meyer CP10s for EQ, and an LD-1 line driving unit to balance the levels. A Meyer RMS (Remote Monitoring System) provides an amazing amount of information on the speakers."

Ground Zero Launch

Three European entertainment industry veterans have announced the formation of Ground Zero BV, which they claim will be 'the first system integrator and show control specialist company in Holland'.

The founders - Sierk Janszen, Rutger van Dijk and Reind Brackman - are all well known figures in the entertainment industry and will work across North-Western Europe and Spain.

They come from diverse backgrounds: Sierk Janszen worked as a sound engineer for several theatre companies in Holland before becoming applications manager for Avenger Systems in Belgium. Rutger van Dijk, formerly a technical production manager on a range of musical productions, more recently was the manager of Vari-Lite Production Services Amsterdam. Finally, Reind Brackman is the owner and founder of Beo (the Dutch Compulite dealer) and Trekwerk, a company specializing in automatic flying systems and their controls.

The new company can be contacted in The Netherlands on +31 294 457 320

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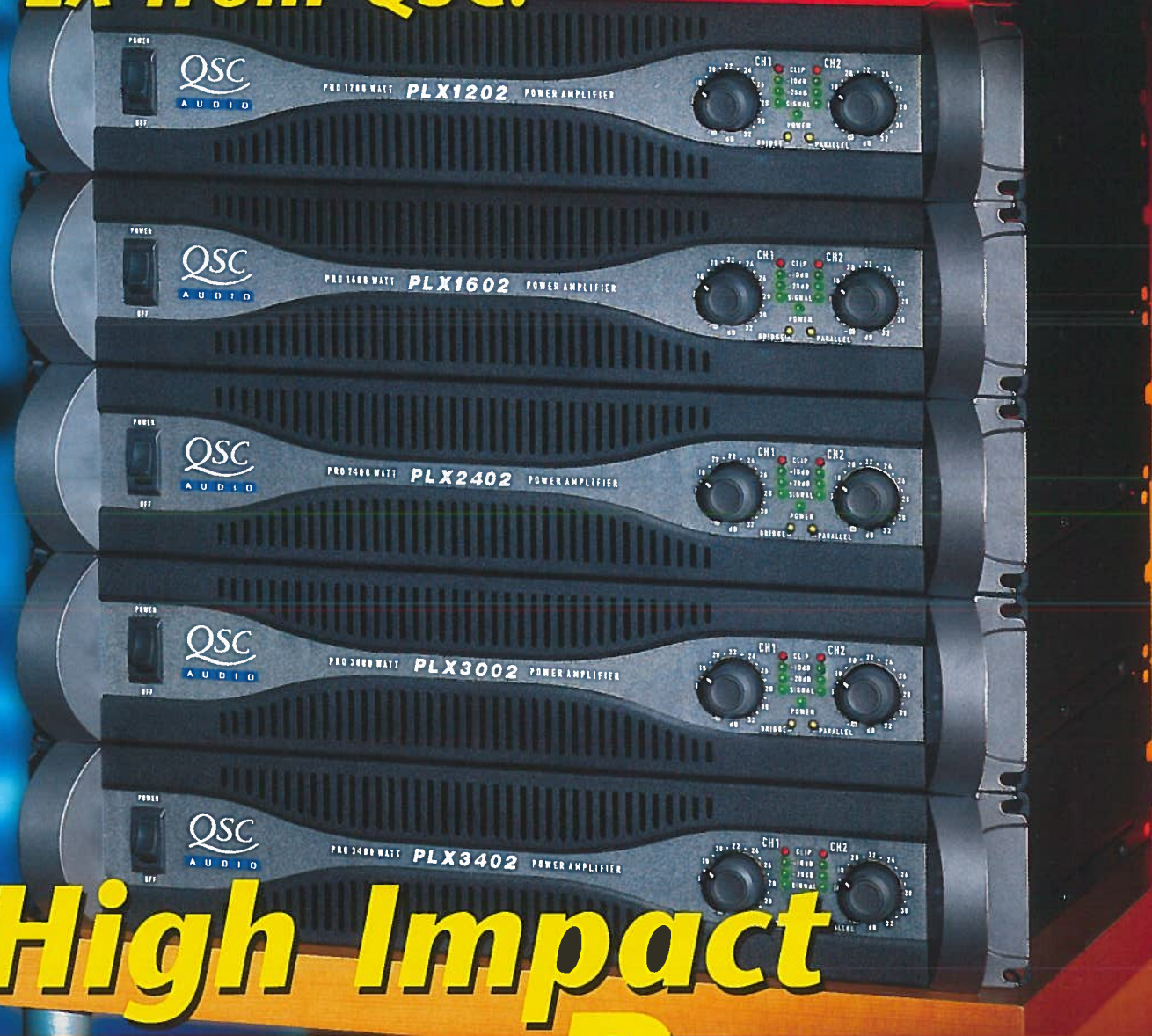


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PCM & Mustang Sally's

Mustang Sally's - The Venue, a new live music venue in Killarney, Ireland, has just opened, featuring a Lodestar motor system controlling a spectacular moving truss lighting rig.

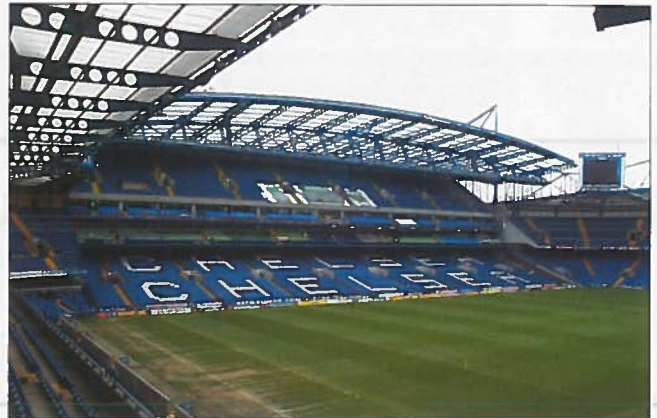
This is the first time Lodestars have been deployed in this way in a European nightspot. The seven Lodestar motors were supplied to Mustang Sally's lighting and visual consultant/designer Grant Collie of Lighting Design and Production Services (LDPS) by PCM - UK and European distributors for Lodestar.

Collie wanted to achieve eye-catching visuals, and also needed high-safety standard VBG-70 hoists, controllable from the venue's WholeHog II lighting console. He turned to PCM to supply the Lodestars and a special controller to interface with the Hog. This works via the Hog sending a

DMX signal to a relay board which gives the positional information - according to which motor cue is being run - to the PCM controller. LDPS and PCM also undertook the installation and commissioning of the motor system.

The fully-jointed moving trusses are designed to 'dance', change shape and morph seamlessly throughout the night and during the venue's operating hours. Physical 'safeties' were therefore not an option - all safety elements had to be incorporated within the hardware. PCM's Tony Dickson worked alongside Collie in developing the system, customising the motor system design and drawing up the requisite safety spec.

This is the first motor system in Ireland to interface with all the other production elements in the space - including the effects lighting, laser, projection screens, video and AV.



ASL Scores With Multiplex

Multiplex, builder of the Stadium Australia for the Sydney Olympics, is currently working on upgrading Chelsea FC's Stamford Bridge ground. As part of this, on-site contractor SVT was asked to look at the arrangements for emergency evacuation. Deciding that a new system was required they turned to a partnership of ASL's PA equipment and Navica Ltd's rack-building expertise. ASL products form the core of the Incident Evacuation system, which will be used to control and evacuate the crowd inside the stadium. The primary fire evacuation system will continue to use conventional sounders, but should it be necessary, ASL's system can be configured to be fully compliant to the standards required of a primary fire evacuation system.

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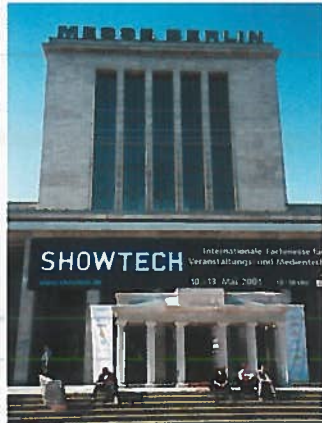
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High Calibre Showtech 2001

I hadn't been to Showtech before, but I understand from those that have, that the Show started out life like ABTT - lots of standard shell-scheme type stands, set out like so many rows of beach huts in a Victorian seaside resort on the South coast of England - as befits an environment apparently conducive to our brethren from the theatre set.



Now, however, the Berlin show is more like an ABTT on growth hormones! Five big halls, segregated more or less by type of product, and large, designed stands that better reflect the egos of the firms concerned than the little market stalls of old. Yet the traffic, in terms of numbers at least, seemed to be dwarfed by the scale of the venture. That's not to say that the visitors were not of a very high calibre, as was certainly the case. This was more like shopping at Harrods, wide aisles, no crush and exclusive clientele. So the parallels with ABTT are justified, except that Showtech would have filled Earls Court all on its own.

But that's where the parallels end, for it was evident that there was none of the marshalling that so dogs exhibitors at Earls Court and, despite the growth, the get-in seemed remarkably relaxed with none of the usual hassle. Mind you, the Messe Berlin is an enormous complex and could swallow this show and several others, plus all their trucks without pausing for breath. When

looking for an e-mail source, I had to walk about two kilometres to a service office (only to be told to go back to where I started!)

As a lighting person, I'm not one for taking much interest in stage machinery, of which there was plenty at Showtech. However, the remotely controllable floating stage trucks, from Eberhard Buhnen and others, impressed. It was also noticeable that there were a large number of AV companies exhibiting, which indicates that the show is spreading into the corporate presentation market and that the exhibitors recognize the role of the lighting designer in big outdoor shows. All of which is meat and drink in Germany.

This crossover was good news for High End Systems, and here I must declare a self-interest,

Left: The grand facade of the Messe Berlin, home of Showtech 2001.

Inset: Neil Darracott (right) of Total Fabrications, representing the PLASA Executive Committee, is joined on the PLASA stand by Paul Robinson, commercial officer from the British Embassy in Berlin.



for the soft launch of their Catalyst product, that enables renters of DLP projectors to adapt them into automated luminaires, for just the sort of events mentioned above. Interest was high, as it was clear, that those with appropriate inventories, could see an opportunity to substantially increase the production value of their equipment for a relatively low additional cost.

Another item that drew an admiring crowd was a very cute, flat, xenon panel from Licht Technik. Basically, a development from a Philips high brightness flat screen, but over-driven. Nevertheless, a life of 50,000 hours was forecast, and with a built-in yoke this will be a very useful light for a TV news studio, giving fluorescent technology a good run for its money.

One other product that caught the eye, and a must-buy for my business partner, was the flightcased hotel-room, with all accoutrements including bed and cocktail cabinet, though the latter would not appeal to my non-imbibing partner. What a luxury addition this would be to life on the road and for those necessary breaks during all night programming sessions.

Congratulations to VGM of The Netherlands for a cracking idea, adding some levity to what was otherwise a very serious affair. PLASA's presence too, with a group of DTI-sponsored UK exhibitors, was its first at Showtech, and it was good to see representatives of the British Embassy visiting the group.

The City of Berlin, bathed in brilliant sunshine for the duration, with its extensive waterways, acres of leafy glades and charming inhabitants, has to be a must for those in a tourist frame of mind.

Tony Gottelier

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Showlight 2001 . . .

Over 300 people converged on Edinburgh in late May for the four-yearly Showlight conference, one of the few international events organised specifically for lighting designers in the television, theatre, film, concert and architectural worlds.

In its brief history, Showlight has made a special name for itself in the entertainment lighting community and can be relied upon to gather together many of the lighting



Delegates at Hopetoun House for the Scottish Gala Dinner, and left Beating the Retreat



industry's most famous names. Its unique format, a conference with an associated trade show, rather than the other way round, allows lighting practitioners to converse with others in the industry and to exchange views and experiences. One of the highlights of the event is the Dinner on the Tuesday evening, which this year took place at the magnificent Hopetoun House. We'll bring you a full report on everything that happened at Showlight in the next issue.



Over 40 companies took part in the exhibition on the stage of the Edinburgh Festival Theatre



Ken Ackerman, founder of Showlight, is presented with a gift by Showlight chairman John Watt



PRG's Anne Valentino, Nick Hunt of Rose Bruford College and Olympics LD John Rayment



Joe Breslin of the BBC, LSI-ADB's Nick Mobsby, Graeme Dott of Van Doet and Raph Janssens of ADB



Harmer PR's Lesley Harmer with L&SI's Jane Cockburn and Sheila Bartholomew



Joe Tawil of GAM with Gil Densham of Cast and Alf Hunter from the STLD in Canada



... Edinburgh



Vari-Lite's Ed Pagett with Sue Gottelier (wife of Tony) and Ellen Lampert-Greaux from Intertec



Strand's Phil O'Donnell isn't fooled by ETC's Fred Foster during the visit to the Strand factory.



As part of the event, delegates got to see some of the landmark sites of Edinburgh and its surrounding areas. Here they can be seen enjoying five minutes by the famous Forth Bridge



Speakers Brian Croft of Vari-Lite with Broadway lighting designer Peggy Eisenhauer



Mark Thompson and Kim Brant of SES Film and TV with LD Chris Watts



Jim Tetlow of Nautilus Entertainment Design with Derek Gilbert of Northern Light



David Cusworth of Strand Lighting with Andy Collier of Technical Marketing



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Fred Bentham

Industry veteran Fred Bentham died on Thursday 10 May at the age of 90. He had a long and distinguished career and was seen by many as one of the founding fathers of the industry. He will probably be remembered best for his ground-breaking work on the Strand Light Console which he designed to run a light show at the 1932 Ideal Home Exhibition. We invited John Watt to offer his personal memories of Fred . . .



Fred Bentham remained active in the industry long after retirement. Here he is pictured at the ABTT Show in 1995 with his light console.

I can't help but think of the loss our profession has suffered with the death of Fred Bentham. He was one of the greatest theatrical innovators of our time.

Many L&S readers will have known Fred and perhaps, like me, feel they have grown up in his presence. In many ways, he was the grandfather of stage lighting. As a schoolboy (yes, I was one once) I attended many of the evening lectures on stage lighting for amateurs held at Strand's Floral street demonstration theatre. Here I came face to face with my hero and author of my bible, simply titled 'Stage Lighting' by Frederick Bentham.

Much later I found myself serving on a committee with Fred - as it happens the committee ultimately responsible for Showlight, of which he was an enthusiastic founder member. At these meetings, I could enjoy his vast experience, wisdom and, above all, wit, at close quarters. Fred and Strand - the two names were synonymous - provided the only forums at the time where lighting people could meet, always over a glass of wine. No meeting about lighting was complete until that tall figure in a neat suit unwound itself from somewhere in the hall, usually just as we were all getting a tad too pompous or launching some state of the art device. "Mr Chairman," hand half-raised, "Mr Chairman, we used an effect like that at the Ideal Home Show in 1934, it didn't catch on," or when Bob Anderson was describing the finer points of BS1234 oblique b, brackets, exit signs, close brackets, Fred's gaze would drift outside the window. "Mr Chairman, have you noticed how the sun catches those statues on the façade of Somerset House across the river?" and off we would drift into uncharted waters where the real debate began.

He had a hand in designing most of the equipment many of us grew up with, and notably, designed the first true lighting console in the thirties. I repeat, the first. Now one person could control the lighting from 'out front' with a degree of pre-setting and dimmer memory hitherto unknown. All this without benefit of solid-state devices, hard drives, drums, discs and silicon chips. If you never fingered those sensitive tabs or went to second touch on a foot peddle on one of Fred's consoles, you missed a treat. Fred's colour music was famous in the days long before moving lights. I could go on, but I won't. Read his autobiography 'Sixty years of Light Work' for a trip through lighting history and a glimpse of the architect of so much of it.

John Watt

There will be a celebration of the life and work of Fred at the London Palladium (courtesy of Really Useful Theatres) at 12.30 on Thursday 28 June 2001 (doors noon) and afterwards in the bar. All are welcome.

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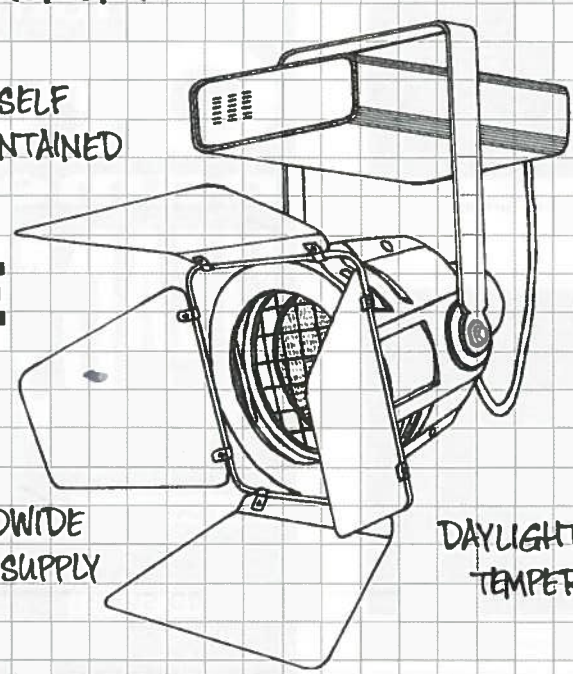
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beyerdynamic & Biamp Agreement

beyerdynamic (GB) Ltd have signed an exclusive distribution agreement with Biamp Inc to represent their full product range in the UK.

The Biamp product line has found increasing applications in conference applications and is an ideal partner for both the beyerdynamic MCS and MCW product ranges. Commenting on the appointment, John Midgley, managing director of the beyerdynamic UK operation told L&S: "With the Audia product, we can now integrate systems even further and offer a complete solution to the conference sector."

Biamp has recently launched the Audia Digital Audio Platform as an open architecture configurable audio matrix system, allowing installers the ability to exactly define the audio system for a given installation with the ability of simple and quick reconfiguration of the input and outputs. The system can be controlled via Panja (formerly AMX) or Crestron protocols via Ethernet or serial communication networks.



beyerdynamic's Bob Harrison (left) seals the deal with Biamp's Ian Hodgkinson

Savage Cuts



It's been pointed out to us that we made an error in our coverage of Savage Garden in the January issue. In our review titled 'Firing on all Fronts' we inadvertently claimed that the band and backing vocalists were all on Sennheiser in-ear-systems, when in fact this should have read AKG in-ear systems. Our apologies to AKG.

PA/VA Roadshow

PA/VA company Federal Signal is hosting a new summer roadshow to highlight the significance of British Standards for PA/VA systems.

The initiative is aimed at consultants and specifiers from across the PA/VA and fire protection industry who need to know more about the issue of operating standards and the importance of BS5839 compliance.

Guest speaker will be Doug Edworthy, formerly of Millbank Electronics, and a leading expert in systems engineering, marketing and quality management. He has been running his own consultancy since 1994. The dates for the road show are as follows: 14 June, Federal Signal House, Macclesfield; 21 June, Birmingham Metropole Hotel; 26 June, London Swallow Hotel; 5 July, Newcastle Malmaison Hotel.

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CyberExpress

The Dickson CyberExpress is a 21st century retail concept, first launched in Hong Kong last autumn. The HK\$380m investment by the Dickson Group of Companies has resulted in a 70,000sq.ft, high-tech development at Kowloon Station.



It's a full-on interactive shopping environment, offering a wide selection of the best known brands in the universe. The 'cybermall' functions as a complementary intelligent retail centre to Dickson's e-commerce venture, DicksonCyberExpress.com.

The idea was to create the ultimate consumer experience for cyber-chic shoppers. The team chosen to pull the project together included UK-based design and production company Media Projects International, retail designer JGA Inc from the US, Hong Kong architects Gensler, UK-based AV systems specialists Electrosonic and various LDs and directors.

CyberExpress's seven 'zones' include Entertainment World (CDs, DVDs, videos, books and magazines), E-World (computers, communications, AV and electronic equipment); Fashion World (clothes and accessories); Kiddy World (toys, sweets and learning games); iCosmetic World (cosmetics and health products) and Sports World (sports and fitness products). Two internet cafés - Exploration World and Cyber Sea - offer connected opportunities for shoppers to take a break.

Each zone has a dynamic mix of vibrant and innovative new media installations, interactive stations, virtual games, video programmes and information portals. Media Projects' creative director, Malcolm Lewis, explains that although screen-delivered infotainment in retail is not new, the way Media Projects applied the concept at CyberExpress definitely is - in terms of scale and intensity. "We used the technology in an evolutionary way," he says, "to sell, present and brand the whole environment." The interlinked, product-related infotainment permeates throughout.

A potent psychological tool indeed, but when used and applied intelligently and inventively, it can also be the provider of many fun elements and an additional dimension to shopaholic heaven! "We wanted to amaze people with the technology," adds project manager Colin Payne. They appear to have succeeded.

One of Media Projects' briefs was to develop a series of stimulating, constantly moving AV installations/screens throughout the space, which can be used by individual retailers for branding opportunities. These can be updated by the local managers and include cartoon characters and other fun elements. It's impossible to talk about specific 'technical challenges' in any meaningful sense on a project this huge. However, one of the most exciting elements for Media Projects was the off-beat software



production techniques utilised to produce - for example - the interactive dancing robots in Entertainment World. They harnessed the skills of computer programmer and DJ Ashraf Nehru - more usually found in the underground club scene in London.

The animated CyberDancers reside at the CD listening posts in Entertainment World. Via touch-screens, listeners can select a series of visual identities for the robot - from Elvis-style to an orchestral conductor or even their own face, mapped from a camera. CDs are copied onto computer hard drive, the software analyses the beats and amount of sonic energy - and the robots start to dance, in a highly naturalistic 'human' way. The listener can interact with and change this movement as they wish.

In the Cyberquarium, visitors can get embroiled in an ongoing story, create their own fish onscreen and release it into the story - which provides a ready-made context. Naturally, there's no shortage of purchasing opportunities... here kids can buy a cuddly version of the cyberfish! Two weeks later they will receive an e-mail asking them to return and feed their fish - imaginative hooking perhaps?

The interactive examples are endless - in Kiddy World children can paint on-screen, in Fashion World, outfits can be modelled before committing to a potential fashion flop. Those short on time can search online at any of many terminals for the items they want and print out a map and directions of how to find the specific stores - or even order online.

CyberExpress is an integration of a diversity of media elements and electronic technology which perform a myriad of functions. Much of it is about immediacy and real time - aided by broadband networking. Unsurprisingly, for Media Projects, the most galvanising aspects were not necessarily technical. "The client changed the parameters quite frequently, so we had to be fully flexible," says Payne, although the pace of progress was also helped by just one man - Dr Dickson Poon - essentially making the high level decisions.

During the six-month development, design and production period, they set up a project intranet/website onto which everyone posted their work. This maximised the speed and efficiency of the decision-making being shared between various companies and individuals working across different time zones. "Sleep was definitely a major challenge!" comments Payne, adding that the exhilaration and excitement of being part of this groundbreaking collaboration more than compensated for the somnambulant months. Payne and Lewis openly admit to a shared obsession between all those working on the technical and creative infrastructure - all were dedicated to one thing - to get it absolutely right. Lewis sums it up: "It gave us the opportunity to be truly creative. A lot of clients would hold back, but this one went all the way and I feel privileged to be a part of this creative energy."

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People

If you ever thought you could keep up with all the changes taking place in this industry, think again - unless you log on to PLASA Media's Online News Service you haven't got a hope. Two companies contributing to the news of late are ETC and PRG/Fourth Phase. The former has appointed **Steve Terry** as vice-president of professional services. Terry, formerly president of the Fourth Phase Systems Group, and prior to that, one of the original owners of Production Arts (which was acquired by PRG in June 1998), will work closely with **Bill McGivern**, director of systems, and **Sarah Spencer**, director of technical services.

Terry's departure has meant some reshuffling for PRG/FP and as a result industry veteran **Bill Groener** will become the Northeast Regional VP assuming responsibility for lighting and audio rentals, large format projection and all permanent installation projects. Another familiar face leaving PRG/FP is **Anne Valentino** who, at the end of this month, leaves the company to become an independent consultant.

Meanwhile back at ETC, **Mike Lowe** has stepped down as managing director of the company's European operation. **Bill Gallinghouse**, vice-president of business development, now takes over responsibility for European sales, whilst **Dick Titus**, chief operating officer, assumes responsibility for leading ETC Europe operations.

We also learned this month that **Alan Hewitt**, managing director of the Lighting Technology Group, has taken early retirement due to a serious family illness. Lighting Tech's founder **David Morgan** will resume the role of MD, supported by the team of **Garry Nelsson**, **Bruce Kirk** and **Steve Pembury** as sales, operations and finance directors respectively.

From the States came news that **Frances Thompson** is leaving the US-based production industry web venture, Shoptick.com. Launched at LDI in Las Vegas last year, Shoptick.com offers 'e-business for show business'. Thompson, who previously worked for US truss manufacturer Tomcat, was responsible for marketing at Shoptick.com.

Stage Electrics has a new face heading up its audio design services department. **Glen Beckley** has recently returned from two months touring the arenas of the USA, and will now contribute to various installation projects in the UK and Europe. **Peter Western** is also joining Stage Electrics. Western, who joins the company as business development manager, has firm roots in the entertainment industry, including 10



MCL's Nick Whitehead and JGP's Noelle Lane

years at Donmar and two years at Lighting Technology. Finally, **Ben Cole** joined the company in May as business development manager for production services. He joins from OnStage Events, the production division of The Sound Division Group.

Following the recent appointment of **Tone Ferne**, Dobson Sound continues to expand its team of project co-ordinators. **Richard Mortimer** is the newest recruit; he will be working closely with **David Lewis** looking after the museum and conference market. A graduate in Music and Technology from Kingston University, Mortimer has spent the last three-and-a-half years working for Dobson Sound on a freelance basis, so is already familiar with the client base.

The highly experienced **Nick Whitehead** has been recruited by MCL to develop the company's London-based lighting inventory and create a support infrastructure. Whitehead was previously managing director of Lighting Unlimited, establishing the company on behalf of Gearhouse Group plc.

Mark Brown of AVW Controls has been appointed a director of the company. In his new role, Brown, who joined the company as general manager in February 1999, will control the operations side of AVW, from the initial purchasing and manufacturing stage through to installation and commissioning.

The LeMark Group has promoted **Neil Baldock** to the role of process manager within the Group's custom gobo making facility, Hot Metal. To maintain the growth of the venture, **Mark Gibbons** returns on a full-time basis and joins Hot Metal as sales co-ordinator after completing his final year studying Marketing & Business Studies. At the same time, the company has announced that general manager **Jeremy Bramley** is moving on to further his career within the lighting industry, having accepted a senior management position at CCT Lighting.

Recently arrived at industry specialist PR agency JGP is **Noelle Lane** who has a background in IT - with some media experience tucked away. With a keen interest in music and songwriting, Noelle will work as PR assistant alongside Jerry Gilbert.



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Technical Standards Launched

At the ABTT Show earlier this year, Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment - a document addressing the standards facing our industry - was launched.

We all know that local licensing authorities impose technical requirements to ensure the safety of the public, staff and performers in places of entertainment such as theatres, cinemas, discotheques, nightclubs and concert halls. An overhaul of these requirements has been long overdue, largely because the regulations were too specific - with the result that the detailed technical requirements were out of date. Another cause for concern was that the expertise and resources available to individual licensing authorities varied enormously, resulting in inconsistencies between them and varying standards of enforcement.

The new publication incorporates a number of features specifically intended to address these problems. It provides functional requirements



Trevor McIntosh of the District Surveyors Association and Bob Anderson of the ABTT launch the new publication

supported by technical guidance, and incorporates Model Regulations which detail the standards that should apply to any premises used for entertainment. The Model Regulations will be sent to each Local Authority with a recommendation that they be adopted. This will help to ensure an appropriate and consistent national standard for all entertainment premises.

The publication also deals with the physical requirements for building (or converting,) equipping and maintaining any entertainment premises through a series of related discussions on subjects such as Site, Means of

Escape, Building Services and Emergency Systems. The publication is expected to provide invaluable help to licensing authorities and licensees, to technical consultants and managers, not least because it is the result of the District Surveyors Association's efforts over the past five years. Wisely, they produced it in partnership with the industry and local authorities, and circulated it widely in draft format for pre-publication comment.

An A4 version (price £30 + £5 post and packing) may be purchased from: DSA Publications, PO Box 266, Bromley, Kent BR2 9ZN. E-mail: ldsa@goldserve.net. An A5 version is available from ABTT, 47 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XT. E-mail: office@abt.org.uk. Alternatively, you can get a copy from the publisher: Entertainment Technology Press Ltd, 1 Kiln House Yard, Baldock Street, Royston, Herts SG8 5AT.

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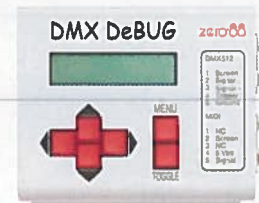
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News
Round-Up



School of Sound

Larry Sider founded the School of Sound four years ago, creating a forum that united a diverse collection of individuals involved in all aspects of film, AV and multi-media sound production - for a lively interchange of experiences and ideas.

Sider's own background is in film: Chicago born, he went to film school at Northwestern University and has worked as a sound designer and editor for 25 years. He settled in the UK in 1979, and in addition to his sound and film work, teaches and lectures on various audiological topics at various academies, including the Royal College of Art and the National Film & Television School.



The fourth School of Sound annual symposium was held this year at the Royal Scottish College of Dramatic Art, Glasgow. The four-day event attracted over 180 people from 15 countries and included presentations and talks by those at the leading edge of the arts and media involved in moving image. Speakers included radical film director Nic Roeg, composer and sound artist Hans Peter Kuhn, producer Bob Last, head of the Medici String Quartet Paul Robertson, musician and composer David Toop and many more.

This year's School of Sound focused on music for the moving image, and the themes were diverse, ranging from exploration of the blurring boundaries between truth and fiction, through sound effects and music, to the use of sound in classic movies. One of the many highlights was producer Bob Last, who explained the complexities of hiring composers for films - often involving three or four, who may or may not contribute to the soundtrack, with the credits going to the incumbent composer at the wrap. Last's point was that this changes the emphasis on film music production from creative input to favour ego, money and power.

Sider explains that the first School of Sound was triggered by the fact that although plenty of lip service is paid to the idea of 'good' sound and creative ways of using it, it's too often an 'add-on' at the end of the production cycle. He wants to encourage the idea that all aspects of sound - from the composition of scores to the technical production of soundscapes and use of sound effects - should become integrated with the movie (or media) making process from the outset. The School of Sound is not restricted to film purists: anyone creatively using mixed and multimedia elements - in documentaries, commercials, interactive computer technologies, animations, video, TV, promos etc - is welcome.

Sider has strong opinions on specific sound points. One is that lessening budgets and the pressure for instant payback are stunting creative use of, and experimentation with, sound: too often he feels it's a case of finding a competent technician to mix effects and a soundtrack at the last minute - with whatever's left in the coffers. Sider also feels that UK film schools put too much emphasis on technical production and not enough on encouraging individuals to develop their own aesthetics and creative articulation of sound. "Technicals are important, but it's not what sound is all about," he states adamantly. "It's not something that should be limited to sound designers, composers and editors. Directors and producers should all know about the role of sound."

It's these and many other issues that the School of Sound encourages. It is aimed at industry professionals - contemporary and future; approximately 50% of half this year's attendees were students, primarily from Europe - itself an indicator of cultural perceptions about the importance of sound in film and moving image related industries.

Louise Stickland

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Lightfactor's Apogee Open Day

Lightfactor Sales, the UK distributor for Apogee Sound products, recently held an Open Day to inaugurate its new demonstration facility and to bring Apogee products to the attention of sound engineers, designers and specifiers. The demo was presented by John Adams, Apogee's director of international sales.

The Open day provided visitors with a chance not just to hear the equipment for themselves, but also to examine it in detail. The session featured hands-on and working demonstrations of most Apogee products, including their ALA line array series loudspeakers, F-series amplifiers, ACS Contractor speakers and the popular flagship AE range of cabinets.

Apogee manufactures products suitable for all professional audio applications - from bars, pubs and restaurant installations to those in stadiums, theatres and opera houses, as well as for concert touring, festivals and events of all types, plus industrial and corporate shows. Brand new at the demo was Apogee's new APL



L-R: Ann Middleton, Jane Jones, Scott Callis, Bill Jones and Brian Henshall of LFS, with Spencer Brooks of Marquee Audio and John Adams of Apogee

series of self-powered loudspeaker products which were making their UK-debut and attracted plenty of interest from visitors.

Lightfactor's MD Paul de Ville told L&S: "It was great to see so many people making the effort to attend, and it's highly beneficial having the time to explore the products thoroughly, in a relaxed and non-pressured environment. The Lightfactor demo room is a permanent display of equipment, so people can arrange to visit at their convenience."

Fourth Phase Opens in London

Production Resource Group company Fourth Phase has opened a London facility in Croydon to service the theatrical and corporate theatre market, with Alan Thomson at the helm as managing director.

Fourth Phase West London (formerly Production Arts Europe), providing large-format projection systems, has also been relocated to this location. Rental operations will remain based in Croydon, while the sales office is located in Central London. Working alongside Alan Thomson will be James Hall and Jedd Hamilton. Speaking to L&S, Thomson commented: "Fourth Phase London is a small facility incorporating the consolidated inventory of The Spot Company, Midnight Design and projection equipment from Production Arts. Our approach is very targeted, assisting designers who are looking for a personalised, friendly and professional service. In the coming months, we will incorporate a state-of-the-art CAD WYSIWYG facility which offers designers a comfortable, convenient location to prepare events."

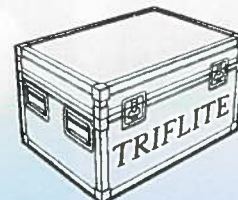
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New Blitz Sound Standardises With Ten X4 Consoles

The newly-formed London-based PA rental company Blitz Sound (formerly TP Sound), has given a significant boost to its hire inventory with the purchase of 10 Crest X4 consoles from exclusive UK distributor The Sound Department - through dealers, Marquee Audio.

The desks are intended for use as Blitz Sound's standard consoles for small- to medium-sized shows within the corporate and conference markets and also for small music and theatrical events. They replace existing stock in an ever-expanding hire facility.

To date, the desks have been in operation on such events as the Opel Vivaro car launch



Pictured are (left to right): Marquee's Andy Huffer, with Blitz Sound's Richard Rogers and Sound Department's Andy Simmons

in Germany and a Millennium Dance Company Show staged in London.

Crest's X4 consoles occupy a privileged position in the marketplace. As Blitz director Dave Perry illustrates, "The X4s are really the only desk of that size, with the number of inputs and outputs that we need - with the requisite build quality that we require, and at a price that suits."

Coe-tech Public Auction

Coe-tech Ltd has appointed FPD Savills to hold a massive two-day public auction/stock clearance sale, in order to make way for the latest range of new Coe-tech products.

The auction takes place at Coe-tech's premises in Northampton on Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 July 2001. It will feature over 3000 lots of all types of sound, lighting, AV and special effects equipment. Viewing day is Tuesday 24 July 2001 from 9am - 4pm.

The diverse array of equipment for sale will include intelligent lighting, moving head luminaires, discothèque lighting, architectural colour changers, theatre lighting (including followspots, profiles and fresnels), trussing, video equipment - cameras, switchers and videowalls, sound processing equipment, loudspeakers, power distribution and cables.

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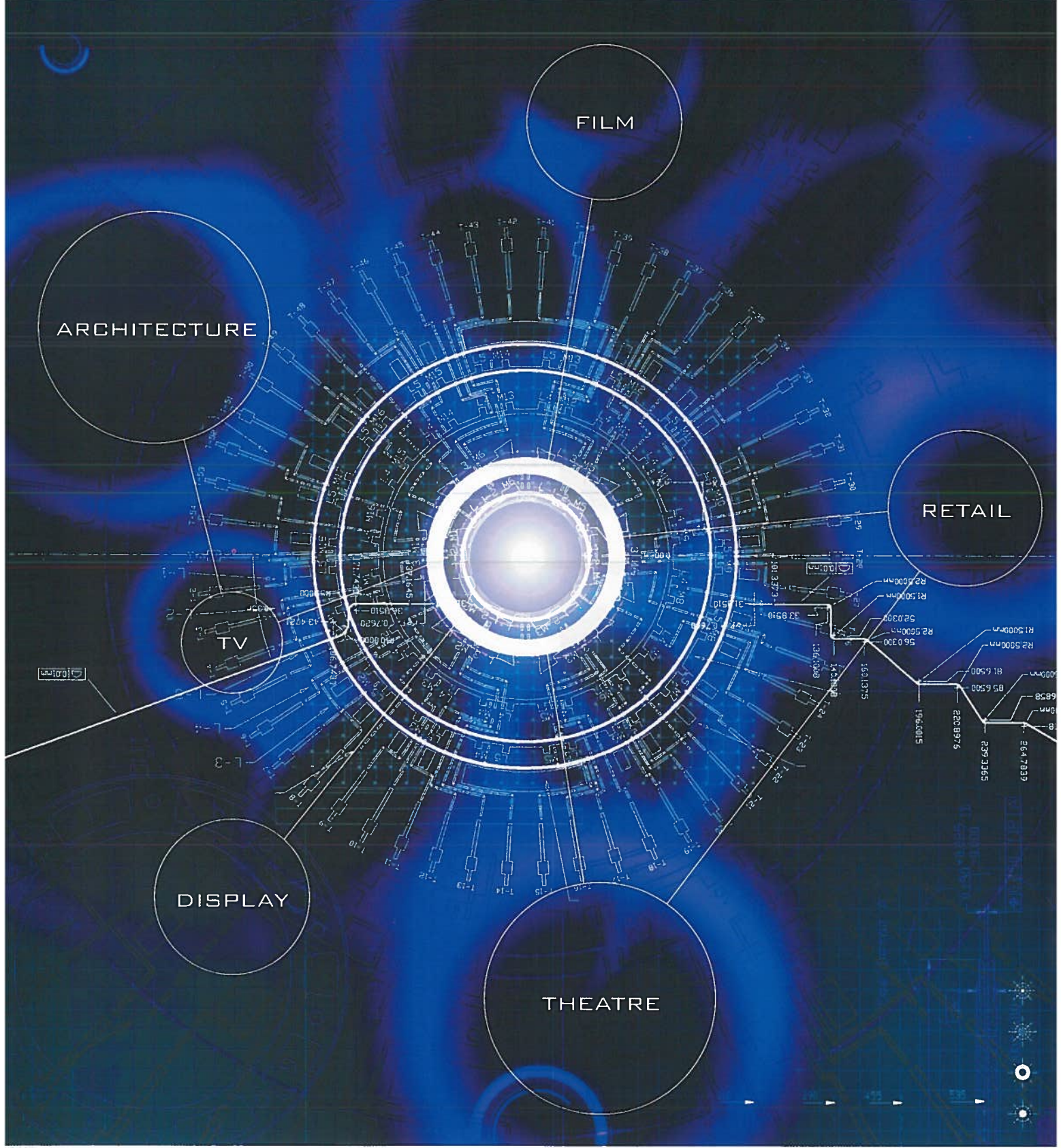
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DISCOVERING

MAGNA

Based in the ex-British Steel Mill at Templeborough, Magna is intended to be a major catalyst to regeneration for the area.

Steve Moles heads to Rotherham

Everything about this place is alien. It's the wrong size, atmospherically it's weird, people pass you in a dreamlike state - and as if that wasn't enough, the red acrylic toilet seat with red-hot chilli peppers embedded in it is enough to upset anybody's number twos.

Don't get me wrong, it's not unpleasant - quite the opposite, it's simply magical; while it might not be imbued with all the paraphernalia and technology of the Experience Music Project in Seattle (see L&S June 2000), Magna has an air of mystery that's potent enough to captivate the most cynical visitor. Tim Caulton, Magna's development director reports over 50,000 visitors in the first two weeks. The opening has been well promoted: Caulton and his team worked exceedingly hard to place Magna in the local media, you may even have seen snippets on television stations South of Watford. But it's curiosity that drives most people . . . hands up all those who've ever wondered what the inside of a Steel Mill looks like?

Templeborough Steelworks in Rotherham was once the largest steel mill in Europe. Closed in 1993, it has stood empty, a dirty industrial cathedral festering quietly while collecting cobwebs on the outskirts of the town ever since. "The original brief was to create a business and expo park with steel heritage as its theme," said Caulton. "But when Stephen Feber (Magna's chief exec) came on board he changed all that." Feber had, in fact, worked with Caulton previously; the two men had met when at the Eureka attraction near Halifax, where Caulton was head of exhibitions.

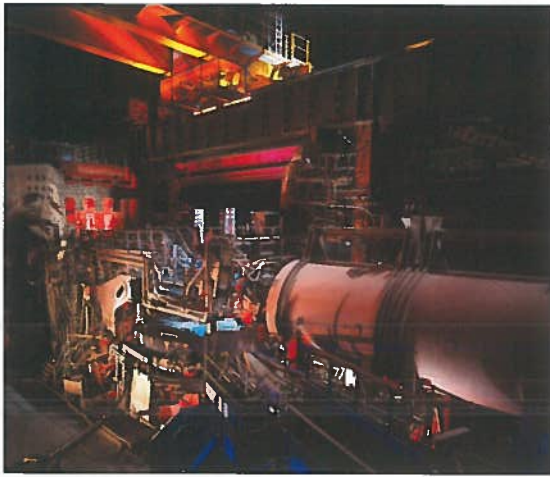
"Stephen [Feber] decided that while that might be exciting, there are already four steel-making expos hereabouts. The biggest gets around 45,000 visitors per year - this place is too big for those kind of numbers."

You quickly learn that Feber is a man ideally suited to this kind of project. Caulton explained that Feber looked at what had taken place here before, and extracted a working model. "He saw the process in terms of its elements - steel making uses rock, air, heat and cooling, it didn't take a great leap of imagination to transpose that to the four cardinal elements, earth, air, fire and water." Magna is thus a 'science and technology centre', somewhere to inspire curiosity, wonder and understanding. That's an oft-repeated mantra in these days of Millennium projects, but before you switch off, contemplate this.

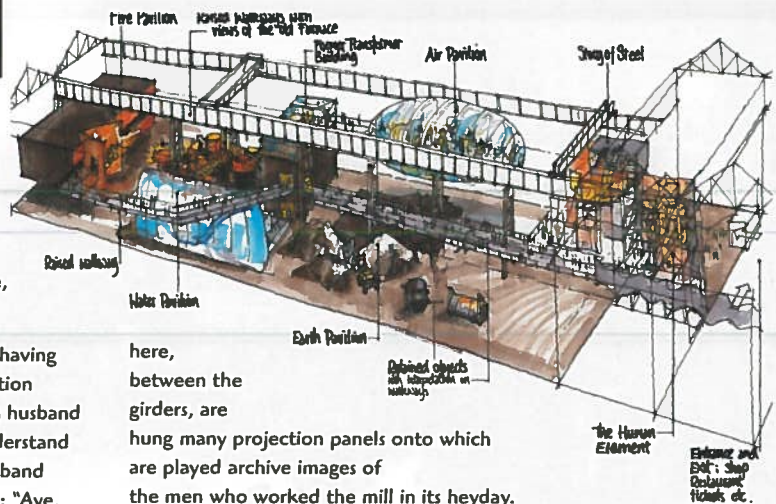
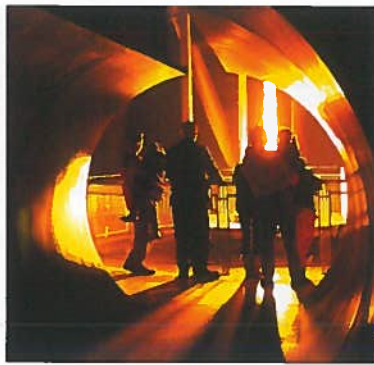
The publicity blurb released on behalf of creative group Event Communications (who managed the project from the end that L&S readers are interested in) contains the familiar language of New Speak: "The core theme is the interaction of the elements with steel, from the dramatic visual language adopted in each pavilion (Earth, Air, Fire & Water) to the content of the multi-sensory visitor experience." A little florid at the end there, but we're with them so far.

"The emphasis is hands-on encouraging interaction, exploration and experimentation in an informal learning environment: it's science, but not as we know it!" Now I





Title page and this page, images from the highly impressive Big Melt sequence.



visited Magna before I read that, and Star Trek allusions aside, the desires of the final statement were self-evidently true.

In all four pavilions I saw adults, children and even teenagers having fun, figuring out how things worked and why. The one exception was an elderly lady, whom I quizzed while her septuagenarian husband wrangled with one of the hydraulic contraptions. "I don't understand it," she told me, "I think it's a load of rubbish." "But your husband appears to be enjoying it?" I interjected, to which she replied: "Aye, but 'e's nowt but a big kid."

No prizes for guessing where she came from. The difficulty for our Yorkshire lady was learning, a function she saw only in terms of formal, desk-bound institutions. The fact that you could learn and have fun at the same time, amply illustrated by her husband, was not part of her upbringing. As an adult of late middling years, I can't say all the 'interactive learning tools' were good, some indeed were crass (unless you're a five year old), but there was enough content in each pavilion to satisfy most intellects.

I mention all this for two reasons. Firstly, the vacuous event that was the Dome has made the National populace rightly cynical. Secondly, as Tim Caulton himself said: "We're in the triangle of death," a reference to the now-defunct National Centre for Pop Music, flanking Magna to the West, and the Earth Centre to the East. The Earth Centre has thankfully just re-opened thanks to further funding, and I urge anyone with the slightest interest in the challenging use of light, sound and set, to visit the Planet Earth Gallery set within a hillside there. Why 'Pop' failed, and 'Earth' faltered was lack of coherent content, but both attractions set their audiences on a path of 'discovery learning'. On first showing, Magna has the vital content, and if the visitor numbers are sustained at anything like the levels of the first few weeks, it will succeed.

Throughout the site various AV techniques are used (Electrosonic the key player in this respect) - single screen videos, interactive computer and video programmes, multiple screen projected programmes, large and small audio systems. All of the equipment is housed in five separate control rooms, each with a Crestron control unit at its heart, scheduling all of the activities for that pavilion. These are all networked together and from the shared Big Melt and Air control room, all of the systems can be accessed from a central computer.

Of the actual content itself, it's probably best to walk you through. From the entrance lobby you turn though a dark concrete tunnel into 'The Face of Steel'. "It was originally known as the Human Element," informed lighting designer Adam Grater of DHA. Frankly, both titles fit.

It's a large open space with a lattice of girders at the far end that contain a staircase up which all visitors must pass to the main gallery, an open walkway 40ft above the main floor. It's aptly named because

here, between the girders, are hung many projection panels onto which are played archive images of the men who worked the mill in its heyday.

The projectors are Panis: big Arc 2 machines from Production Arts/Fourth Phase with PIGI scrollers, playing large (up to 80ft high) images over the whole lattice. Barco 6300s from Electrosonic play the smaller screens, while Grater's lighting deftly avoids whiting out these images, but provides just enough ambience for people to pass safely through. "I just lit it to the minimum; very narrow Pars up-light the verticals, LEDs on the stringers to the stairs, the odd strobe for the Blitz scene." It's a combination of AV and architectural lighting that sets the tone for the whole building. Dark and mysterious.

Similarly, the audio is tantalising and ephemeral. The main audio element of the show is replayed through an EAW speaker system fed by a Fostex hard disc unit, with amplification coming from both Cloud and Crown and processing from the ubiquitous BSS Soundweb. (In fact, this is a combination deftly applied throughout most of Magna). Dotted about, usually in the dark voids overhead, are small very directional speakers from B&W that play back short, generally narrative snatches of archive recordings. The directivity is enough to compel the listener to remain 'in field' and thus watch the video that complements it. It's gently tantalising, if you've ever listened to a Gavin Bryars composition, where he interweaves 'voices' to sounds, you'll get the impression.

For the wheelchair-bound and hard-of-breathing, there's a lift running up the centre of the stairwell; while you'll miss some of the story, most is still accessible. Once up, you're in the domain of other worlds, the walkway stretches away to the right, seemingly forever into the gloom. This is a very, very long building, big enough to swallow three Earls Courts.

The general lighting within is by Jonathan Spiers of Spiers and Major; as Grater did in 'the Face' so Spiers has done throughout - it's all dark and mysterious, but inviting. Ignoring the virtuous artistic reasons for one moment, it's probably just as well. The walkway, as I said, is 40ft up, it's composed of decking open mesh steel common to any gantry, and were the huge confines of the Mill any better lit, then many visitors would experience vertigo I'm sure.

Instead, the darkness below forms a solid floor, broken only by the distant glow of the Water and Air pavilions. The walkway gives visitors ample time to contemplate and marvel at the sheer scale of the place: it's a long, slow walk to a central lift-shaft that takes you either up to

Air, past to Fire, or down to Water and thence to Earth. And it's here again, in the lift lobby, that we discover Feber's skill in taking 'found objects' and making them work. It was an enthusiastic Grater who pointed this out to me: "He's just great at hanging onto odd bits of machinery, and then making them work."

In this instance, glass jars lining the walls of the lobby crack and sparkle with electric arcs, like some benign Frankensteinian experiment. "It could have been some well-lit information posters about the use of electricity in the steel making process - instead it's this." Grater was not the only one enthused by the project and its chief executive, Howard Eaton of HELL, and Jim Tinsley from Stage One, are just two of the suppliers who became so excited they went beyond their brief in making it work.

In short order:

Air upstairs is enclosed in a dirigible, an airship maybe 40m long, beautifully lit externally in pale blue by cold cathode lights specially adapted by Metropolis AV who did much of the lighting installation work for Spiers. It hangs, ghost-like, truly floating on air, a chimeric of a Zeppelin.

Within the airship envelope visitors encounter a range of interactive 'toys' (and I use the word advisedly, in terms of fun - it is not meant to be derogatory), toys that introduce the concepts of air power. What's best about this pavilion, and to a similar degree in the others, is the low-tech approach to all things interactive. Nothing looks 'state of the art', it's all very retro, very Heath Robinson, and as such will remain timeless. Big levers and large knobs seduce even the most computer-phobic punter.



Water is a steel tube, slightly flattened top to bottom; it's two open ends appearing like eyes in the darkness. So far off is the facing 'eye' when you first tread upon the main walkway, that you could be looking through the flight deck window of some distant space ship parked on the surface of the moon, watching the tiny figures within go about their business.

Again, Water is filled with the weird and wonderful, and atmosphered by mist and humidity, so much so that it demands an IP67 rating for everything electrical. The two lingering impressions Water leaves are sound, the constant tinkling of water, and sight, in the endless reflections of ripples that play up the bright, silvery metal walls.

To reach Fire you must pass by 'The Big Melt' but we'll save that for last. The Fire pavilion is a blackened box, only visible as a red slot - the companionway that leads to it - in the darkness. Its entrance is through a chamber of flames, five video panels relaying a compressed story of lightning sparking fire in a forest and then ultimately being quenched by a following rainstorm. Audio design is by Peter Key of Sound Design & Production, using Martin Audio's EM architectural speakers; the combination of floor to ceiling visuals and surround-sound fire crackles are convincing enough to toast marshmallows by.

Fire is a tricky element to let the public play with, but Event Communications have come up with some first class examples, from the jaw-dropping 'twister of fire' to the simple interaction of human body heat to distort and colour crystalline forms. They work, and they engage.

Earth is probably the one area where imagination ran out a little, and that may be my own imagination - nobody appeared to

Right, the Water Pavilion and inset, the Electrosonic racks in the Air Pavilion



be enjoying it any the less, however. After all, how many men out there have ever wanted

to use a JCB back-hoe digger? Judging by the number of dads monopolising that part of Earth, I'd say most. Where Earth lost out was its ambience: whereas everywhere else had been dark and mysterious, here, underground, where it should have been at its most dank and foreboding, we were brightly lit.

'But what of The Big Melt?' you say. "Originally, the old electric arc steel smelter was to be a static lit sleeping giant, and we were going to present the history of steel making in a small cinema," said Caulton. "So I was just going to do some atmospheric lighting for the great hall where it resides," chimed Grater. Then fortune smiled, in the manner of both opportunity - never to be under-exploited in this business - and greater funding.

"We'd had to put in a large gantry crane to install the Airship," explained Caulton, "and it would have actually cost us money to have it removed." The gantry crane sat on the same roof beams that the original one above the smelter had done 10 years earlier. "We asked Adam and the team at DHA if they could exploit this into some kind of show."

Grater didn't have to be asked twice: "We quickly produced a storyboard, Steve Lumby from Event being very much involved in the process." Grater, along with Peter Key, Richard Taylor (a script writer), members of the HELL team and several others went to visit two local steel makers still in production to get a feel for what it was they needed to present.

"One was very modern, state-of-the-art - sanitised almost. The other was old-fashioned, dirty and smoky. Because Templeborough was old, we instantly went for the drama of the old and dirty. There's something very graceful about watching a group of men; men with sweaty brows and

thick, horny fingers, deftly juggling huge cauldrons of molten metal weighing tons."

If you're in any doubt about scale, the electrodes alone for the arc furnace featured in this show weighed in at 50 tons each, and used a 33,000-volt supply.

Just four months before Magna was due to open, the team went into action: "The Magna Trust managed to more than double the funding," acknowledged Adam Grater. "That and the crane made it all possible. Even so, everyone involved became so enthused that a lot of the work was done for bottom-line prices." The chamber is mainly lit by Key and Fill light, lots of Source Four Pars and Sil Floods in open white. Grater also uses some Selecon Pacifics for gobo projection to support the narrative. The whole area is suffused indirectly by a deep primary red, thanks to Spiers' enlightened policy of colouring the only glass in the area, a huge wall of skylight that flanks the chamber.

"But it's the effects that carry the show; we had Stage One fit their Q Motion system to the crane to control and choreograph its movements." The crane is fitted with DHA Pitching Digital Light Curtains for a touch of drama and artistic licence, as it plays out the role of dropping scrap iron into the gaping maw of the electric furnace.

And that's when the gas flares and sparks fly. Grater had seen Howard Eaton's gas flares on JC Superstar a couple of years ago. "The point was it was a flame effect, something we've all seen before on big, expensive one-offs. But this was repeated daily, and had to adhere to the necessary safety restraints. That repetitive element meant it had to be affordable." Could Eaton enlarge and enhance the effect for Magna? Well, the task certainly provided him with his biggest challenge at Magna. Unable to find anything that could produce the eight metre showers of sparks required, Eaton and his team took some steel wire and melted it. The resulting molten mass was then blown out in a jet of air provided by a large compressor system. To enhance the illusion of sparks, the jet oscillate as it goes. The licks of flame were produced using multiple poker-type burners, each with an individual ignition and flame recognition feedback. The 'whooshes' (Eaton's own technical term) came courtesy of a number of pressure vessels, charged with propane and then discharged through a pilot flame.

Other effects include lots of smoke (provided by Look Solutions), coloured by a clutch of whirling Martin Pro MAC 600s behind the



cauldron, and Key's use of Martin Audio EM251 sub-woofers to enhance the thunderous process and lend it some physicality, could not be ignored. The vocal playback system told the story briefly and succinctly, although both Grater and Caulton expressed reservations about it, and indeed it was severely butchered before opening day. I thought it was fine; it gave just the right sense of power, pride and danger without being kitsch or patronising. Not an easy line to tread.

Many other companies contributed to Magna: there's an AV element spec'd by Electrosonic in each pavilion, the Fire footage composed by Elbow Productions for example, the Water effects are by Aquality based at Swanley in Kent, but ultimately the content and exhibit design was down to Event Communications led by Steve Simons and Feber's Magna team, not forgetting Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

who spawned the original idea for a visitor attraction many years earlier.

The predictions are for just over 300,000 visitors a year, and at that level the Magna Educational Trust, a charity established to run and manage the site, expect to make a profit, though running costs haven't been nailed down yet. If you choose to go, one word of warning: wrap up warm. Apparently, even in the height of summer, workers would enter the main building to cool off from the hot summer sun. Amazing.

photos: DHA, Electrosonic, Event Communications, Mike Mann



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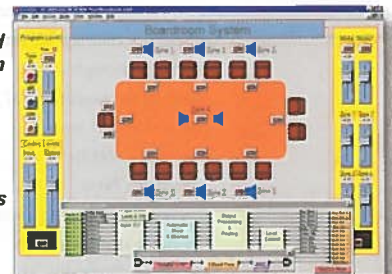
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Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

Ten or so years ago, when I was taken on a short tour of Hungarian theatres with some colleagues from OISTAT, there was a situation of some confusion. The old regime had paid for the reconstruction and renovation of a number of the country's fine old theatres, but the arrival of the free market had managers worried that they wouldn't afford to programme them - a little like our concerns with the Lottery building boom.

We are in a highly-realistic TV studio, the audience for a futuristic chatshow compered by the world-famous dominatrix, Frau Plastic Chicken, whose guests tonight are Alex from *A Clockwork Orange* and Rex Madison from *American Psycho*.

FIVE YEARS LATER, no theatres seemed to have closed, though a few had 'gone commercial', with star-led revivals and MacWebber musicals. Now, Hungarian theatre seems to have settled down very satisfactorily, at least on the evidence of a few days visiting Budapest's Festival of Contemporary Drama, a week-long event that brought together the best of recent local work and a sampling of overseas productions, along with workshops and readings.

LET'S STICK TO THE LOCAL SCENE, which is vigorous enough on its

own. The Katona Jozsef in Budapest continues as the country's flagship theatre, and their main festival offering was a new play, Kornel Hamvai's *Headsman's Holiday*, a picaresque, lightly Brechtian story of a guillotine operator swept up

by the more lunatic aspects of the French Revolution. In his travels, the naive headsman loses his job, his papers, his money and his standing as a faithful husband, but gains a great deal of self-knowledge in the wicked world of revolutionary Paris, where he meets both Lavoisier and a young Napoleon. The play is both funny and touching, although I didn't feel that this unfocused production (by Katona doyen Tamas Ascher) did it full justice: his large cast adopted varying strategies, with equally varied success, to cope with the play's magic realism. Surprisingly, the sets were also drab and unimaginative, though they came from Hungary's top designer, Zsolt Khell.

KHELL WAS ON far more characteristic form at the Csiky Gergely theatre in Kaposvar, the one regional theatre to challenge Budapest's hegemony. He supplied witty, economical sets for *We Bombed in Kaposvar*, another large-cast showcase opportunity, grasped with pleasure by Janos Mohacsi's resident company. A very free (and rather overlength) adaptation of Joseph Heller's one play, *We Bombed in New Haven*, its combination of Sergeant Bilko and Doctor Strangelove proved highly effective, with the two bombing raids that close each act created brilliantly by Khell's collection of computer junk, poised on four scissor-lifts, on which the 'bomber crews' made their deadly manoeuvres.

THE BOMBING of Kaposvar (a town not far from NATO's base for its recent raids on Belgrade) was made highly realistic, not only by a full-screen filmed aerial backdrop of the town, but also by some superb sound effects, which turned out to be produced live by the small stage band - excellent work by Marton Kovacs in his first score for the theatre. All credit, too, to lighting designer Tamas Banyai, who made brilliant use of the theatre's rather antiquated resources (plus a couple of lasers) to create some stunning effects in the air-raid scenes. Props highlight: an omniscient super-computer that looked like an

LED-encrusted brain, suspended in a glass case, which exploded spectacularly when it overloaded. The 'brain' was actually a cauliflower.

NO PROBLEM with the kit for Arpad Schilling's latest show, *Nexxt*, a co-production with Avignon and a number of other European producers which benefited from a plethora of moving lights (LD Tamas Banyai having to improvise less this time), body mics, mega-speakers and the big box space of the Barka theatre. We are in a highly-realistic TV studio, the audience for a futuristic chatshow compered by the world-famous dominatrix, Frau Plastic Chicken, whose guests tonight are Alex from *A Clockwork Orange* and Rex Madison from *American Psycho*. The aim of the piece is to examine the nature of violence through a recap of these two guignol stories, but any higher moral purpose is submerged in the tremendous array of special effects, film, hand-held video and on-stage band that keeps the action buzzing throughout, culminating in a dramatic escape by our two hero-villains that owes much to *Miss Saigon*. Schilling's handling of his huge range of technical resources (he even produces a horribly realistic snatch from a fake snuff movie) is more impressive than the play itself, and very different from the *Baal* which made his reputation. Schilling, the Katona Jozsef's wunderkind discovery, who now has his own company, had another festival production in their studio theatre, a version by *Nexxt*'s young author, Istvan Tasnadi, of Michael Kohlhaas, now titled *Public Enemy*.

AT THE SAME TIME as the Contemporary Theatre Festival, Budapest was staging a festival of Fringe Theatre, and one show, Bela Pinter's *The Gate to Nowhere*, appeared in both. If it was meant as a swingeing attack on religious cults, then the play didn't succeed. Pinter's gentle, well-plotted satire would easily translate into a very funny Ealing-style film comedy. As it was, it gave comforting evidence of a lively theatre beyond the main subsidised houses.

THOSE, TOO, are taking a creative approach to maintaining the large audiences that are still a feature of Hungarian Theatre - the Vigszinhaz is playing Caryl Churchill's *The Skriker* in its studio alongside Shakespeare, Ibsen and Neil Simon in its 1000-seater main house, with *Stones in His Pockets* on the way. But Fringe companies, as elsewhere, have constant funding worries. Eva Magyar of the Shamans, Edinburgh favourites, has a pittance to back her show for this year (*House of Deer* - watch out for it at the Pleasance) and extra work like the choreography for *Nexxt* doesn't really keep the wolf from her door.

ALL THE SAME: 10 years ago I worried about where Hungary would find the money to sustain good theatre. I worry still, as do the Hungarians, but the good stuff, almost miraculously, keeps on coming.



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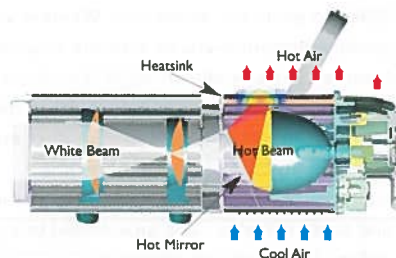


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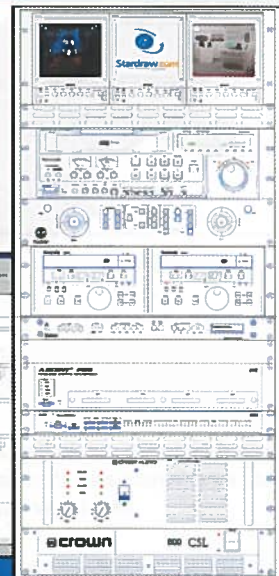
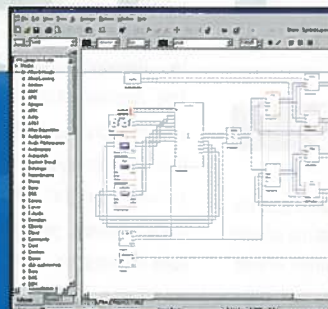
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*Phil Ward reports
from Amsterdam on*

AES 2001



The Audio Engineering Society does exactly what it says on the tin. Members gather together at conferences and conventions to discuss audio engineering, in its deepest, crispest and most even sense.

For this reason the two annual trade exhibitions organised by the Society display a modest number of exhibitors and relatively little trade - relative to Frankfurt's Musik Messe, for example. Commerce and academia have never sung from the same hymn book, and AES welcomes the most learned scholars of audio in the world.

Wandering the calm exhibition floor, it's easy to forget that all day, every day there are papers and workshops commanding vigilant academic attention elsewhere. A high number of delegates spend little more than a few hours inside the exhibition in four days. But there is a reason why the rarefied atmosphere of the show in general is attractive to those who exhibit.

An AES Convention is a forum at which manufacturers can establish and consolidate their professional credentials. If high professional standards are important to the company, it is beneficial to win the hearts and minds of the consultants who eventually wander past - as much as it is to win the accounts of the dealers interspersed between them. In weighing up the costs of a stand, consider the price of a good reputation.

Such fundamental soul-searching takes an oxyacetylene torch to the barriers between traditional market segments, and from IT to theatre show control, you'll find technology companies at AES making the most of the platform. Although it cannot be denied that the advance of audio within broadcasting continues to give the exhibition its cultural identity, leading exponents of sound reinforcement are a significant presence - especially those whose product ranges are as

likely to be found in television studios as on the stage.

In fact, this relationship between broadcasting and live events explains a lot. It explains why 14 of the 31 exhibitors of large-format mixers make consoles for both broadcast and sound reinforcement. It explains why PA companies are increasingly booked for televised events. And it explains why, a year ago, Kidderminster-based Midas introduced the B2000 broadcast production console, drawing on home-grown live production expertise and parent company Telex's broadcast technology.

But at AES last month, Midas was comfortable enough with the occasion to use it as a launchpad - if not actual take-off - for a new range of purely sound reinforcement mixers. Admittedly, the new Legend brand was not to be found on the Midas stand. Instead, on the first evening of the show, a cruise boat with a Legend 3000 console and 80 Midas dealers and guests on board pulled away from Amsterdam harbour laden with corporate hospitality. The occasion was right, as Dave Cooper of Midas explained the following day.

"There was no hard sell, just a vibe," he said. "The timing of this show was right, and of course it's not difficult to persuade people to come to Amsterdam usually. Our presentation brought a lot of potential customers here, and we've seen a lot of them around the show over the last few days."

On the boat, guests saw a console aimed above the Venice and below the Heritage 1000, that is to say with as many features squeezed in as possible up to a fixed budget. The design blend has XL4 mic pres and XL3 EQ in a non-modular frame in three blocks of eight - mic pres, aux/EQ and faders. Uniquely, Legend doubles up all the level faders and EQ pots to function equally as a

FOH desk, a 20-send monitor desk - or both.

"Normally there's a compromise if you're monitoring from the FOH desk," Cooper pointed out, "because all FOH adjustments affect the sound on stage. By providing separate control on the one surface, we've eliminated that compromise." Legend will also function as a side-car to the 48-channel Heritage, with fully compatible automation, Cooper added.

"Rental companies worldwide are really busy, which is positive," he observed. "A few years ago everybody was worried, and it's true that touring has declined. But that only really applies to long-haul tours, with a few notable exceptions. Tours are shorter, and there's been a big increase in one-off events."

With cameras present, like as not. Midas shares accommodation with Klark Teknik, of course, and David Wiggins was on hand to show off the company's flagship DN9848 4x8 loudspeaker processor, along with an upgrade to the DN1248 active splitter system - the DN1248 Plus, which adds a duplicate I/O set.

"Loudspeaker management has plateaued," observed Wiggins. "Its genesis was TOA's SAORI system, then Yamaha's D2040 and the first Omnidrive. That's when it was really growing. All of the manufacturers' systems now are OEM, so the world doesn't really need another one. We did the 9848 to bring in at least something new - which was packing four ins and eight outs into 1U."

Wiggins drew further parallels between sound reinforcement and broadcast. "Fifty-five per cent of our business worldwide is permanent install. The 9848, for example, can be password-locked so that no function is available to the casual tamperer. But you have to remember that we count broadcast applications - especially trucks - as install; that's the big market for the splitter."



And what's the likelihood of further influence from Telex as these markets converge? "We're heading in the direction of Soundweb and Media Matrix territory," Wiggins admitted, "but like digital loudspeaker management, it's a well populated market with some excellent products. Until we can do what we've done with the 9848 and move the game on a notch, there's little point in us joining in. Let's just say that certain industry luminaries are helping us with our enquiries . . ."

Local loudspeaker manufacturer Stage Accompany, based 30km north of Amsterdam in the town of Hoorn, took advantage of the Convention to open its doors to delegates on an official AES Technical Tour. Sales and marketing director



Tom Back conducted a tour of the factory, and traced the history of the company to this, its 25th year of operation. "There's always a market attached to the technology we have," said Back later, "but you can only focus on so many markets at once. This was a chance to show our knowledge at a purely technological level."

In the exhibition, Stage Accompany continued its campaign for the Ribbon Compact Driver, showing monitors with applications in cinema, sound reinforcement and the studio control room - underlining the trans-market effect of the AES rather well. If the issue is technological breakthrough rather than target marketing - SA's ribbon tweeter 8535 claims power handling of up to 2,000W - this is the place to discuss it.

Innova Son's Christian Royer is always happy to discuss theoretical issues, especially when there's a pencil and pad handy to illustrate a few concepts. "The broadcast and sound reinforcement markets are converging because of the media coverage of events," he said, sketching out a diagram. "Events need exposure, so broadcasting requirements are appearing in sound reinforcement; at the same time, broadcast events demand bigger and bigger live audiences as they are being broadcast. In the end, it's all the same game."

Around him, a greatly reinforced team is putting the ideas of Christian and his brother Philippe into burgeoning practice: 14 new staff have been appointed since February, including Englishman Andy Simpson, who outlined a boldly direct strategy. "The US will remain a dealership with Sennheiser, but elsewhere we won't be working with distributors per se - there'll be no exclusive rights to various markets," he said. "Our dealers will be rental companies who take on Innova Son products to use for real - touring, theatres, events. It won't be a static investment, and they'll sell by example."

Simpson is overseeing Northern Europe, assisted by Pierre 'Papy' Steinmetz, while the South is being managed by Gauthier Dalle with Ludovic Florez. The idea is that while Simpson and Dalle seek out the financial muscle in European rental, experienced sound engineers Papy and Florez win over the shop floor, convincing the engineers hands-on.

Already convinced is SSE Hire's Chris Beale, who has supplied a Sensory Live console to a typical broadcast/live application at flagship BBC pop show Top of The Pops, recently relocated to Riverside Studios in West London.

New at AES was the Sensory Actor series, aimed at theatre and opera with snapshot automation, instant recall/reset, timecode and cross-time fade. "Theatre applications require snapshots, but we realised that we could provide the means to vary the time of the crossfades between them," Royer explained. "We call it 'smart automation', because it allows the user to update the crossfades in real time during rehearsals. You can edit the automation as the production evolves."

"It's perfect for those surround effects when the director wants, say, the wind to blow from the back of the theatre to the stage, and the cue is variable. If the action is delayed or advanced, the sound designer must be able to slow down or speed up the effect. This is what the Actor Series provides."

In Los Angeles last September, Meyer Sound had also played the local card by showcasing its Meyer Acoustical Prediction Program in grand style. Two years prior to that, in San Francisco, it had pre-empted Stage Accompany's Amsterdam gesture by putting on a similar technical tour to the HQ in Berkeley. This time around, Meyer's Tim Chapman felt that more could be done to attract sound reinforcement professionals to the show.

"One of the company's tenets is to do as much education as possible," he said, "and doing AES papers is part of that. But I'd like to see more people coming to the stand to see our mainstay products. We get the regional customers, but not the same international spread as Frankfurt or PLASA."

There are engineers and techs, some of whom do both studio and live work, but we haven't seen any potential distribution channels."

The extent to which manufacturers can enjoy a synergy between AES-style broadcast markets and PLASA-style sound reinforcement markets is dictated by product type. Mixing consoles appear to be a lot more flexible in this regard than loudspeakers, even though loudspeakers will always be required wherever there is a large audience.

This did not trouble EAW, which not only launched its line array system KF760 at the show, but also hosted demonstrations of the product in Jaap Eden Hal, a nearby ice rink. EAW's touring systems market manager Paul Carelli contrasted the European AES Convention with its US counterpart: "Over here you can see that this is a recording and broadcast show, with less sound reinforcement traffic than the States. But having said that, our demo has resulted in an order to Argentina - so it's hard to predict."

EAW's director of R&D David Gunness pointed out the KF760's unique characteristics. "In the cabinet itself, each section is unique in one way or another. The HF section, for example, is a unique horn configuration: if you draw a horizontal cross-section, the horn stops short of the grille; vertically, the horn is continued all the way out to the mouth.

"It uses the top and bottom of the mid-range horn, and a wing that's in the centre, as the vertical walls. It's inherently a good-sounding horn, which is the great difficulty - making a long horn that produces a flat wavefront all the way to the front of the cabinet."

No wonder his e-mail address is 'HornDawg'. Meanwhile, Karl Brunvoll of Renkus-Heinz reiterated the quality-not-quantity point of view. "The quality of visitors is very good, while other European shows provide more business. For me, though, separating pro audio and lighting at the Frankfurt show has raised the professional level of visitors there, too.

"The AES is the prime place to show innovations in technology - even innovations that aren't quite ready yet, so you can get feedback from very knowledgeable people. We see more consultants than contractors here."

Brunvoll also sounded a note of caution in assessing the trend towards catch-all trade exhibitions. "There is a danger in trying to make a show all things to all people," he said. "It's better to be able to focus on one niche, and allocate the time to covering a defined audience. As exhibitions add in more markets, in an attempt to get bigger, you have to present yourself in smaller, less-focused segments. You don't know who might walk by. The more diversified the

show, the more negative it is for manufacturers."

Renkus-Heinz has signed up with Peak Audio's CobraNet technology, and is developing digital signal processing and distribution for its loudspeakers.

"We're also going

to announce our take on what line array should be, at the next AES in New York," added Brunvoll, "and it's a little different from the competition, shall we say . . ."

"A lot of science has come into sound reinforcement," commented L-Acoustics founder Christian Heil, again describing the AES as a technology forum. "We need to talk to the people at the highest level of understanding. Even without the link to broadcast, the AES is a place to show our latest research and exchange information. It's true that it's not so much of a trade exhibition, but we shouldn't be so basic all the time!"

As the originator of sound propagation through cabinets arrayed together to form a line source, Heil finds himself discussing the theory of line array amid a growing number of rival practitioners - especially at AES. Here was no exception: "This is our domain," Heil said proudly, "along with how to use coaxial design for sound reinforcement. It has nothing to do with broadcasting and studio monitors, but it's a high-technology principle. We need to be here."

Cadac's Tony Waldron has found that his company, the clear market leader in theatre sound mixing, is having a lot to do with broadcast for very similar reasons to those outlined by Innova Son's Christian Royer: We're



doing much more work now with broadcasters than we ever thought we would," he said.

"It's because a lot of live sound requirements - like live-audience TV productions - involve a stereo or even 5.1 broadcast

and a video recording, and one of our consoles only has to be slightly adapted to do those three things together."

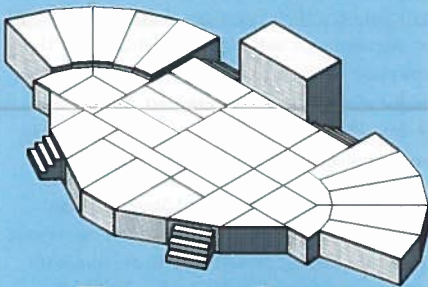
Cadac has produced a version of the F-Type - the B-Type - optimised for precisely these requirements: a live TV recording, with PA to an audience, backed up onto digital or analogue recording media for later post-production. "It's for live sound engineers - hands-on, plenty of knobs, not so much programmability - in a situation with cameras and lots of very high RF stuff, which can create problems for many manufacturers," Waldron added.

Finally, sales engineer Mark Ray recounted a recent application in Italy for the company's M-Type console. It just about summed up the moral of this AES: that 'live' means audio; it means engineering; and, thanks to TV and disc sales, it increasingly means something to the society beyond the four walls containing the event.

"It was a live presentation with foldback to the orchestra and artists, together with the stereo programme mix and, simultaneously, a 48-channel digital recording. So we had a theatre-style sound designer calling the tune, with one console, to the audience, the TV viewers and all of the potential buyers of the production on CD . . ."



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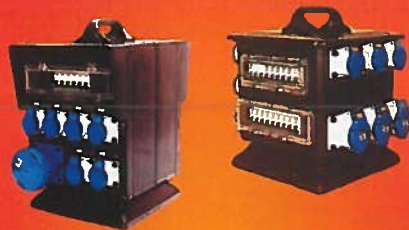
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John Watt

Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

I'm thinking of re-titling this piece to 'Blankety Blank' as that seems to cover both my ideas file (the back of a Safeway bill) and the contents of this column rather well. As a select 300 know to their cost, I've been chairing Showlight 2001 recently, the run up to which has created the illusion that I've been busy. Pleasant but hard work for no

money, so no change there, except perhaps for pleasant, which not all jobs are!

ANYWAY, in spite of Tony Gottelier's professional review of what went on in Edinburgh (which you'll get to read in the next issue, though there are pictures to whet your appetite on pages 30 and 31), it's unlikely that I'll make it through more than a few paragraphs before getting diverted there myself. After all, it's election time as I

write, so we have to preserve a balance between the parties. Incidentally, like all that's good in Britain, Showlight is run by a committee and I haven't been able to resist the thought that now they are unemployed we could form a government.

POLICIES WOULD INCLUDE concessionary petrol coupons for members of the STLD (the ALD don't need them as they all work in the West End, and the BSC can afford two pounds a litre for their Jags); compulsory purchase of the complete year's output of blackwrap from Rosco to cover the lenses of traffic cameras; a ban on all TV programmes not using actors; Channel 5 to produce a new morning chat show - 'At Home

with Roop and Marge', featuring Rupert Murdoch and Margaret Thatcher, so they can find out what they've got us into (this to be produced seven days a week in a cellar in the Tottenham Court Road under very hot lights).

AS I'VE mentioned before, there's a rich vein of knowledge for lighting designers running through 'Breakfast With Frost' on Sunday mornings. Maybe they should publish a book called 'Five hundred ways not to do it' . . . I could write the preface. Now it should be said that even the best lighting designers can appear to be absolute no-no's when the producer traps him into a situation that is un-fixable, maybe because of time, money, location or a combination of all three.

NOW, ONE RECENT SUNDAY, the Prime Minister was interviewed from his constituency in Sedgefield (there's a good pub there) and naturally they wanted him backed by a window to show that there is civilisation north of Watford. So far so good, but we all know it's likely to be bright outside, so our hero will have some ND (neutral density filter) at the ready. I'm never quite sure why they make the stuff, as to carry a few rolls on the truck is nearly always a triumph of hope over experience and this show did nothing to make me change my mind. The sheet of ND gaffered to the outside of our leader's window certainly reduced the level but, with the aid of a gentle breeze, completely upstaged him. I've no idea what he was on about as the ever-changing and dancing highlights and reflections provided constant entertainment with the tantalising bonus that a chance reflection might reveal Peter Mandelson operating the autocue.

IN THE INTERESTS of balance, the other two parties had better work against moving lights. Any road up, as they say in Sedgefield, the answer is a sheet of acrylic ND which stays more or less flat and doesn't draw too much attention to itself. Yes, it's three hundred quid, gets scratched, is difficult to transport and of dodgy colour integrity to boot, but better acrylic on the

window than egg on the face, I say. I expect it was the accountant's fault.

NIGEL LYTHGOE, ex-head of Light entertainment at LWT, having amazed us with pneumatic bodies and two thousand Par cans on Gladiators and created an instant pop group to the delight of his bank manager (remember to be nice to those you pass on the way up Nige', you may meet them on the way down) has done it again. Picking up a well-tried idea of pitching people out of a helicopter over the Scottish highlands, armed only with a two-bob bit and a tin of pilchards and a brief to get to Carlton before take-over, he has invented 'Survivor'.

THIS BASICALLY SHOWS the pursuit of money, a career in the media and malaria by a now familiar group of misfits marooned on a desert island. It's a hostile environment populated by biting insects, poisonous snakes and various species of deadly camera crews. It's short of water and has high humidity too, which merely confirms the suspicion that it's actually shot at LWT. No criticism of the lighting - was there any? A few grand off the budget at a stroke anyway. Intriguingly, the producers think it necessary to put up a caption saying 'night cam' over pictures that make the average security camera's output look like a Rembrandt. We can work that out chaps from all that electronic noise, the sound of crickets and the new moon.

THE LAST episode I saw (and I do mean the last) showed our intrepid adventurers about to eat some large white grubs to survive . . . it could be worse, have you seen that lumpy custard in Central/Carlton/Granada's canteen at closing time? Dear Lord Reith, is this quite what you had in mind? What was it - information education and entertainment? Now it's misinformation, ignorance and semi-consciousness.

IN MAY, Fred Bentham died. Much will have been written and said about Fred before this goes to press, but he was the nearest to a boyhood hero that I ever got. I don't want to let the moment pass without saying thanks for the inspiration he gave to an 11-year old schoolboy and for all that he gave to the art and craft of lighting. He pioneered so much and will occupy a special place in the history of our business.

FRED WOULD HAVE enjoyed Showlight and added a few pithy comments too. The enormous variety of speakers served as a timely reminder that in some places lighting is alive and well, though TV does seem to be the poor relation. Whilst film, architecture, theatre, concert and events all strive for creative quality, TV settles for 'newsprint'-style pictures: it aims low and misses mostly. That said, Bernie Davis showed a shot which reminded us all why we came in to the business, one frame can re-charge your batteries for a year. Can I indulge myself and say a big thank you to all those who took part - it was great to see you all.

"Policies would include petrol coupons for members of the STLD (the ALD don't need them as they all work in the West End, and the BSC can afford two pounds a litre for their Jags)."

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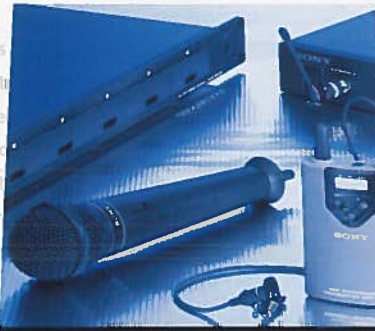
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All Night Long

If nothing else, this was a lovely, lovely show. Richie was due on stage at 8.00pm, he arrived 40 minutes late and in the intervening period the crowd became rowdily restless. Slow handclaps, whistling, and two or three individuals blessed with foghorns of larynxes also kept up a steady barrage of lighthearted abuse.

But when the lights went down and the opening bars of Hello, his biggest ever hit, began to percolate through the steady, frictional zing of 40 denier tights as most of the crowd tucked their handbags beneath their seats and prepared to dance, all was forgiven.

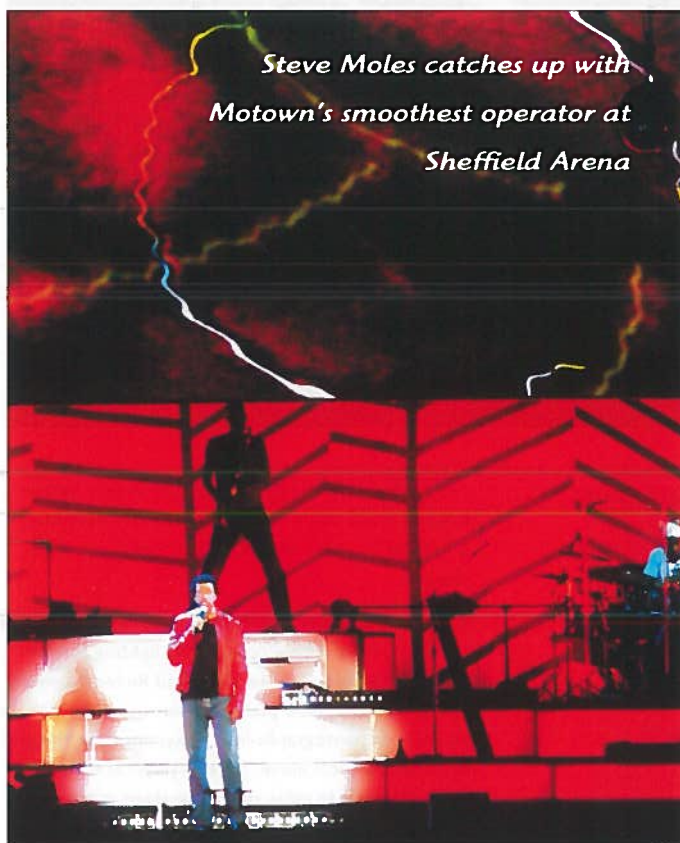
My wife worked for Lionel when he was still in the Commodores, and says he looks better now than he did over 20 years ago. There's no denying he's a handsome figure, and trim too, but it's that expansive smile - it can reach even the furthest seats, and audiences can easily sense that he loves being there.

There's nothing spectacular about this show in terms of production, but it's class. If you examine the statistics, then it looks quite low-budget: Vari-Lite provide the lighting rig, but there's aren't huge numbers of lamps up there; the stage set is an amalgam of Aliscaff stage system, Stage One hydraulics, and set and risers from SSE Hire, put together by production manager Charlie Boxhall. The PA is Clair Brothers S4s - Series II admittedly, but now looking very dated in the era of Line Arrays. As Boxhall explained: "The tour's only out for six weeks, you can't throw money away on a custom stage set for that short a period."

Not that this prevented Lionel's promoter and co-manager Barry Marshall from indulging the tour with five full days of production rehearsals, but then Marshall Arts has always stood out as a promoter who understood where its income comes from - the paying punters - and woe betide those who don't present their public with a polished show. This one falls somewhere between Vegas and a TV special. Jeffrey Hornaday is the show producer responsible, and he brought in Chris Medvitz of Juice Corporation to design the lighting. Hornaday and Medvitz regularly work together, Juice being a subsidiary of Hornaday's production company.

LIGHTING

"I've known Chris since the old days, when we both worked at Obies," said show director Michael Keller. "He might spend most of his time in the commercial sector now, but he really knows how to put a show together. Hornaday and Chris presented Lionel with a 28-shot storyboard, and had already developed the colour tones to be used on stage for most of the songs. I have to say it looked interesting, and has kept pretty much to concept."



Steve Moles catches up with Motown's smoothest operator at Sheffield Arena

Asymmetry is the key to the design, the most noticeable element being the Lighthouse LED screen from XL Video (formerly Nocturne Europe). Set in wide format, it was cornered to the classic 'stamp' position if you visualise the backdrop as an envelope.

The lights are built around this, a three by three grid of lamps on three stacked sections of Slick pre-rig truss are vertically hung independently each side of stage; VL6 to stage right, and High End Systems' Studio Colors to stage left. The large blank space to the right of the screen is filled by a wall of Studio Colors; the top line of the screen (and not beyond its boundary) is defined by a row of eight VL7s. Before this turns into an equipment list, you get the picture? Parcels of one instrument type, sectioned off to break the monotony. Used carefully, they present a large number of strong, alternative combinations.

"Chris is very creative in his programming," explained Keller. "He knows the Hog 2 really well and can utilize every function on the desk. For example, he uses a lot of the effects engines really well, he knows all their parameters, and can hold them in his mind when he's programming. That, and his timed cues, makes it really straight ahead and easy to operate." Keller, it should be pointed out, also knows most of the cues really well, having run many Richie light shows over the past 20 years, ever since his mentor Peter Morse first put him in the operator's slot.

"The show is not straightforward; there are a lot of gags, and they all work, but because nothing is custom-built, it makes things difficult," says Keller. "For example, the white drapes that cover the screen for the opening numbers disappear up 'sniffer tubes' (simple weight devices that whip the lightweight cloth up a tube when released by solenoid) and these have presented us with the odd challenge!" That said, from the audience perspective, you wouldn't notice. The SSE riser system was dressed with white fronts and looked really nice, especially when Keller brought up the nook lights dotted around each player's position to up-light the kit, percussion or keyboards, and then down-light the actual musician in contrasting colour. And something I've not seen on a concert stage for a long time, a concealed, full-width, front floor-batten (MR16s) to bring





THE LOWDOWN ON MR RICHIE

RICHIE OR RITCHIE?

Nobody seems quite sure how to spell his surname and there is even a US band erroneously called 'Lionel Ritchie's Head' after that famous toe-curling/clay-moulding moment from his Hello video.

HAS GOD LOST OUT?

His original plan to be an Episcopal priest ended when he was spotted touting a saxophone at his college freshman show.

WHAT NEXT?

That moment led to the Commodores (originally called the Mystics). After three years playing the 'chitlin' circuit of the Deep South, the group signed with Motown.

HE'S PRETTY GOOD WITH THE OLD LYRICS THEN?

Richie's nine-year streak of writing at least one number one single a year, is a feat matched only by Irving Berlin.

KER-CHING?

Richie has sold a staggering 60 million albums worldwide and is one of Motown's highest-grossing artists.

some warmth to the fore-stage performers' nether regions, really made a big impact on the definition quality of image presented to the Lighthouse LED screen.

The only thing that didn't work, and I emphasise this is purely a personal opinion, was the lighting for the acoustic interlude. As the band and Richie assemble centre stage, a grand piano appears from beneath - as it does so, six pantographs lower Skyfans from the grid. It's a fairly typical move, lower a physical element of the lighting rig to close down the stage space and increase the intimacy; and let those lights be soft, rather than tight focus.

A movie soft-light, the Skyfan looks for all the world like those big dish-shaped lamps you see above the operating table in 'ER'. This would have been OK if the screen had been turned off, but no, we still get our eyeballs roasted by a big bright picture, which for most of the audience meant a TV image with six large white blobs five metres in front of it. All chances of intimacy were lost; it just didn't make any sense.

That aside, to sustain interest, a fair number of drapes were used upstage, first the white to conceal the screen, while later the black behind it was drawn to reveal a cyc with an abstract line motif, and finally the inevitable coloured starcloth. (All supplied by Blackout Triple E). That, and the constant juxtaposition of the

mentioned parcels of different lamp types and the way they were used, meant that our attention never waned.

The new VL2416, the 1200W version of the VL5, arrayed at low level, in a line across the floor behind the risers, gave several powerful alternative perspectives. "What's nice about them is the zoom function,"

said Keller. "You can take them from a pretty tight beam, to a really potent cyc wash." Unfortunately, due to their location I can't vouch for evenness of field. "The colour range is good, and they have a fairly decent strobe factor. Yes, we have had a couple of over heats, but generally they seem a pretty sweet light." And the light intensity was visibly more powerful than any other instrument on stage, which makes one wonder whether a lot of older VL5s are now condemned to gather dust in the corner of the warehouse? Beyond the VL2416s, Keller was very



Sound engineer Chris Ridgeway

pleased with everything he got from Vari-Lite, even if two of the VL7s did decide to take a break during the show. His only regret? "I do wish we had the VL6C over the VL6Bs we're carrying. I've just heard such good things about them."

VIDEO

I have to say, this Lighthouse LED screen with 10mm pixel pitch, is the best indoor TV image I've ever seen: the screen appeared as a single, coherent whole, just like a CRT at home. It's due, in no small part, to the superb lighting and for the camera crew and director Michael Davidson it must be a dream. For almost an hour I couldn't fault it for quality, then the white cyc with the line motif appeared behind it and for the first time, the intensity of light from behind, clearly exposed the screen's modular construction. That only applied if you were sitting square onto centre stage, but even so, can't these things have a black behind them?

The five-camera system Davidson uses consists of three crewed cameras - FOH, hand-held onstage and a dolly-mounted unit in the pit, plus static digital mini cams stationed at the drums and percussion positions onstage. Again, Davidson is blessed by two musicians who know how to play to the camera, some of the stuff these two skin beaters did was just brilliant: think 'Animal' on his drum kit in the Muppets, and you get the picture.

There are the obligatory screens off-stage right and left as well, and yes they're fed by the predictable Barcos (Reality 9200s), but again it's not typical, the screens are deliberately cranked at 30 degrees relative to the front-of-house, so they work specifically for the side-seated audience. This flatters the audience to the side, because it looks directly to them, and is much less distracting to the front-on audience. "That idea came from production - Charlie Boxhall to be precise. We change the angle depending on the seating layout, venue to venue. We send B roll footage to the side screens, and then mix Lionel in over it. We want these screens to look part of the show, not an afterthought." You may think that a small thing, but in the wider context it struck me as a simple but obvious idea, and you wonder why you don't see it more often.

Davidson worked through rehearsals with a set of moving and still images that Hornaday supplied, animating and editing them for use separately or as augmentation within the live camera rendering.

AUDIO

It may have been an ageing system, but this was the best-sounding show I've ever heard out of an S4 PA. Yes, house engineer Dave Natale is a very old friend (he and I both met our future wives while out touring together with Tina Turner back in the eighties) and yes he's had 15 years since then to hone his art; I even began to doubt my own objectivity, and ended up walking all over the arena twice just to make sure. But there's no denying it, great coverage, transparent mix and beautifully rendered.

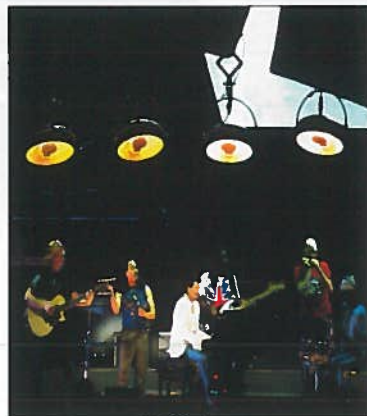
Sure, you could get picky: the front few rows heard a distinctly different sound from the P11 front-fills, than the rest of the audience, but the essential ingredients were all still clearly present, and largely balanced, if a

little bright on the vocals. And yes, as you walked further to the back, it was easy to detect the roll-off as you walked out of one horn field and into another, but it was never acute, and even in the deepest null zone all information was discernibly present. Frankly, I didn't know this level of fidelity was possible.

Like Davidson, Natale is helped enormously by the band: "All the dynamic comes directly from them - they're just an unbelievable bunch of musicians." It was a phrase repeated emphatically by Richie himself, several times throughout the evening, and it's an observation well made. As was stated at the beginning, there's no substitute for class.

Natale also had a safe pair of hands on monitors, Ian Newton operating a totally in-ear system: all RF on stage is Shure - mics and IEMs - from a Midas Heritage. One can make no wiser observation on Newton's monitoring abilities other than they don't warrant mention. Discrete is the word. Stage sound is controlled further by the application of perspex screens to the drums and percussion and only the drummer has a thumper, so with this, and the back-line safely tucked away, this is a studio environment stage.

Which may go some way to explaining why Natale's Yamaha PM4000 stands virtually alone, almost rack-less, at the centre of the venue. One small rack contains all the system stuff: four Clair Brothers CTS crossovers (two



long-throw, two short) and six TC1128s for EQ on the long- and short-throw, plus front-fills. And a pair of dbx 160 XT compressors which, like the other four in the effects rack, were in Natale's words: "just there largely to fill a space in the rack."

"I've got three Aphex 612s, just for gating on the drums, kick and toms, and there are four SPX990s, one for a bit of reverb on everything, one just for the kit, and one for a bit of harmonising. The fourth's a spare" And that's it, unless you want to get anal about the playback stuff, a Sony DAT player and CD.

"I use a standard Shure SM58 for his vocals - it's been around for a long time and it works. Lionel sings as good as he's always done, and what with the Plexiglas and the in-ears, the loudest thing on stage is the vocals."

That all makes it sound easy, and in a way it is that simple. Maybe the uncluttered signal path from stage to desk to PA is what makes it so, and yes the sheer standard of musicianship contributes a great deal, but Natale mixes with verve. A quick +20dB for a guitar break or drum roll, takes some nerve, and the lesser flourishes he brings to the mix are equally well-placed.

It's nice to witness an engineer have the chance to mix a show and concentrate on balance and clarity, and be able to extract maximum fidelity from what's already there. Rather than being preoccupied with finding level off a young boy's voice, a boy too busy working on his choreography to sing properly, and the engineer forced to paper over the cracks of that voice's shortcomings in order to fulfil the audience's expectations of what is an entirely contrived, studio assembled, product band. (Pardon me, a little anti-boyband burp seems to have popped out.)

Marshall Arts have much to be pleased with here: this is a quality meal set before a discerning group of diners. That they leave well sated is as much down to choice as content. They're one of the last great independent promoters - long may they continue to serve up such delicious fayre.

photos: Steve Moles,
Diane Scrimgeour/courtesy of
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Artistic Touch in Plymouth

Artistic Licence has developed a custom colour-changing LED module called 'Street LED' specifically for a new installation which opened recently in Plymouth, Devon.

The Plymouth Pannier market project was designed and installed by Pyramid Productions using an all-Artistic Licence system. Individual control of the Street LED modules was provided by an LVD-12 in the base of each tower. Each LVD-12 was controlled by a Show-Control 60-channel DMX512 controller.

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Changing the Face of Lighting and Video



The entire future of automated lighting and, the application of high powered video projection, moved a big step forward at Showtech in Berlin, with the European soft-launch of High End System's new product, Catalyst (pictured left).

The product has been developed for HES by English design company Wynne Willson Gottelier (WWG). Mounted on the front of a Barco ELM R12, a 12,000 ANSI lumens output, triple-DMD video projector, Catalyst allows an image to be moved smoothly and positioned accurately, time after time, within a global envelope. As it is video-based, Catalyst allows unlimited colour mixing, with a selection of masks that act as framing shutters or overlays on video clips.

The system is delivered with hundreds of gobo patterns, that can again be overlaid, including the entire DHA and High End libraries. All of these facilities are accessible from any DMX desk, and were demonstrated at Showtech from a Wholehog II. The package, which consists of the dynamic hardware, a control rack, DMX system control software, and video processing software, is to be marketed by High End Systems to rental companies which already own suitable DLP projectors, as an add-on. Aside from Barco, these could include models from Christie Digital Systems, Digital Projection, NEC, Panasonic and others.

The official launch of the production version will be at this year's PLASA Show.

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1000 DHA Digital Light Curtains

DHA Lighting has sold its 1000th Digital Light Curtain. The company has supplied seven pitching six-lamp Digital Light Curtains (DLC) and three standard six lamp units to the Australian production of *Mamma Mia*, taking DLC sales over the 1000 mark.

Tel (UK): +44 (0)20 7771 2900

Mirage Colour Mixing System

The NJD Mirage Colour Mixing System has arrived. Shown in its prototype 12V format at the PLASA Show 2000, the Mirage has received eight more months' development and now boasts many additional features, including a 30V version that now allows up to 64 heads to be connected to one power pack. The Mirage works on the RGB colour-mixing principle. By using microprocessors to mix minute amounts of colour from the three 50W dichroic filtered lamps, a choice of 65,000 colours can be projected onto any convenient surface. Accessories include a downlighter kit for flush fitting, a swivel bracket fitting for surface-mounting or 'G' clamping, an uplighter bracket to enable subtle wall illumination, and an uplighter shroud to hide the fitting if desired.

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Non-Stop Fog

MDG's non-stop haze, fog and low fog generators, which come with a 10-year warranty, are now available in the UK from AC Lighting. MDG machines employ CO₂ gas for their propellant and have an in-built Automatic Purging System (APS) which purges the heating module after the first heating cycle and after every emission of fog, preventing residual build-up and clogging. The complete range includes the Atmosphere and Touring Atmosphere Haze Makers, the MAX 3000 and MAX 5000 fog makers, the ICE Fog low fog generator and ICE Fog touring low fog generator.

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Adam Hall to Distribute Racklight in Europe

The Adam Hall Group has announced its agreement with California-based RPM Optoelectronics to distribute RPM's innovative new Racklight cabinets throughout Europe. The unique design of the UV-resistant acrylic light guide provides heat-free, concentrated light with no hot bulbs to handle or change, and is guaranteed for five years. Racklight illuminates one metre of rack space with cool, even light. Built with high quality materials around dependable solid state lighting, 'Racklight' is a safe and durable addition to any rack equipment.

Tel (UK): 01702 613992

Image Plus for MR16

James Thomas Engineering, has introduced the latest evolution for the Par 16 lantern - the Image Plus.

Image Plus is a simple and cost-effective focusing device that attaches to the lantern's colour frame runners. The Image Plus 3 takes a standard size E Gobo, enabling any desired image or logo to be projected onto a surface or wall up to four metres away. James Thomas also offers an MR16 gobo rotator that will rotate one or two gobos. Two types of lens are available - for narrow or wide effect options. There's also a set of four shutters for beam-shaping and masking of the projected image.

Tel (UK): +44 01905 363600

Outline Soundtracker

Italian loudspeaker manufacturer Outline has developed the Soundtracker - a high power, pollution-free sound system.

The Soundtracker is a ceiling-mounted tile that works as part of a matrix. The patented design incorporates a 21ft horn, and a dual concentric 10" and 2" driver configuration. The Soundtracker is aimed at venues that either have a noise pollution problem, because of their location or indeed because of the Noise at Work Regulations Act which dictates limited working hours in areas of high SPL. Soundtracker can also be used as an extremely cost effective solution for hotels, exhibition or any public venues where sound pollution is a problem.

The Soundtracker is constructed of fireproofed composite material, which is incredibly lightweight. When a matrix of at least units are installed, the off axis sound rejection is 30dB.

Tel (UK): +44 01778 344110



CDJ-1000 Digital Deck

Pioneer GB has introduced the futuristically-designed CDJ-1000, which includes a range of innovative new features such as Vinyl Emulation, Wave Display, Multi-Media Card (MMC) and Loop In and Out Adjust.

With its design rooted in CD and sampling technology, the CDJ-1000 is modelled on a traditional vinyl deck and features a Jog Dial, designed to emulate the characteristics of a turntable. This allows DJs to treat CDs exactly the same way as they would a vinyl record: cueing, pitch-bending, back-spinning and even scratching.

The Wave display reads every track on the CD and displays the corresponding sound level in a graphical format. This enables the DJ to cue up a track just as they would with vinyl by reading track break-points in advance for use as a mix point. There is also a Zoom facility which lets the DJ scroll along the Wave display to obtain even greater information. The MMC memory card feature allows the DJ to store favourite cue and loop points, as well as all the track Wave data from the CD.

Tel (UK): +44 01753 789789

Intelligent White Light

Color Kinetics, a pioneer of full spectrum digital lighting, is claiming a breakthrough with an LED-based white light technology that uses a non-RGB method of producing high quality white light which can be intelligently controlled over a range of colour temperatures from warm to cool shades of light.

This patent-pending technology couples a unique optical design with Color Kinetics' patented Chromacore technology, achieving an LED-based high-quality white light solution. Chromacore uses microprocessor-controlled multi-coloured LEDs to generate millions of colours and a variety of lighting effects.

President and CEO of Color Kinetics, George Mueller, envisions Color Kinetics' intelligent white light technology leveraging the advanced control capabilities of Chromacore to give users an entirely new level of flexibility with white light. The intelligent white light technology can produce a high colour rendering index, (CRI) for example, users would have the ability to select any shade (colour temperature) of white light they desire, whether it is cooler tones that make the most of certain retail displays, or warmer tones for more comfortable home lighting.

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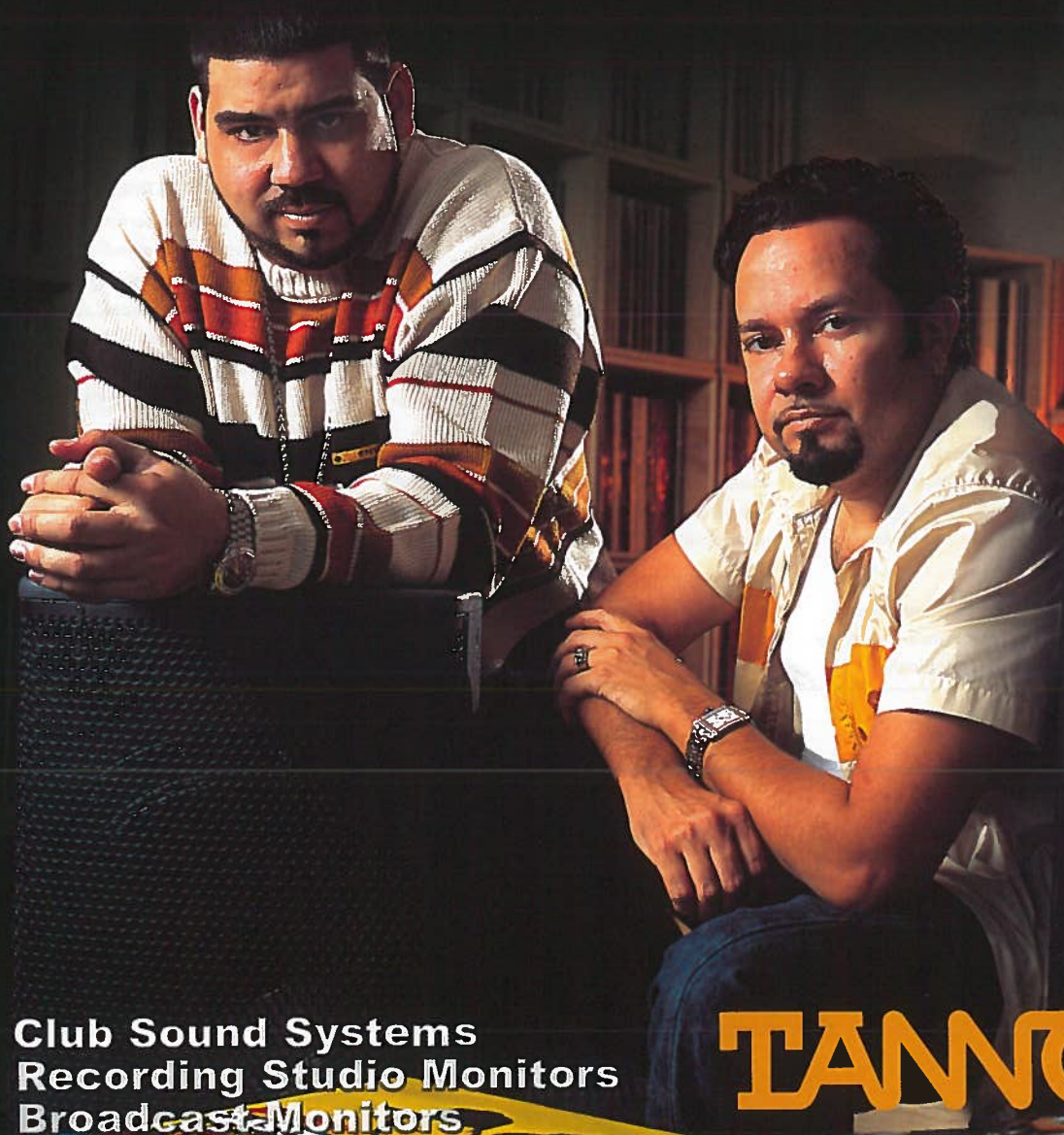
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... Audio File

Only last month I mentioned the phenomenon of theatres throwing open their maroon curtains to the great unwashed on Sunday evenings. By the great unwashed, of course, I mean audiences interested in musical acts that just make records, and don't appear in panto at the turn of the year.

AND BY SUNDAY EVENINGS, of course, I mean the one night of the week when regular theatre staff and performers have the night off. It's a bit like stately homes opening the grounds to the masses, or University campuses suffering business incentive workshops throughout the summer recess.

WELL, no sooner had I e-mailed my copy to Lighting & Sound International when news emerged of the

Royal Opera House doing exactly that. Tony Hall, the new executive director of the ROH, has sanctioned talks with Icelandic singer Björk for a September appearance, and the rumours are that the ROH establishment would welcome Sunday night appearances on the hallowed stage by the likes of Elton John, Celine Dion and Barbra Streisand.

THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE between those three and Björk. Björk is arty, performs regularly with string quartets and writes genuinely

challenging material. Elton, Celine and Babs are money-spinning, MOR dinosaurs who make music as challenging as the late Screaming Lord Sutch in a General Election. Lowest Covent Garden denominators to a man, in fact.

THE FINANCIAL REASONS for the initiative are clear. Apparently, the ROH is barely breaking even after the £200 million redevelopment that kept it closed for an age at the turn of the Millennium. Any artistic reasons are probably irrelevant in the face of such economic reality, but for appearance's sake, several have been trotted out at this watershed in ROH history. Chief among them is the strategy to counter elitism and widen the repertoire available within the broad church of ROH aesthetics. Nice theory, but in practice the values being reassessed are very confused.

I REMEMBER SEEING Sinead O'Connor at the original Sadler's Wells theatre on a Sunday night, at a time when her sound was still pretty punky, and so was her sound reinforcement. Probably a coincidence, but a few weeks later the entire site along Rosebery Avenue was rubble. I don't think rock or pop acts have been invited back since the rebuild, but the theatre is available for corporate events during the day.

THE FUSS SURROUNDING that concert was muted by the fact that it took place in a condemned building, with many hardened Wellians no doubt secretly hoping for a pre-emptive strike of the bulldozer before the last chorus of Sinead's spiky contemporary hit 'Mandinka'. But the new ROH has finished with iconoclasm, and the builders have gone home. Everything is spruce, and intruders are doubly unwelcome.

ACCORDINGLY, there are those who would keep the hobnail boots of Björk and her followers off the premises, while tacitly accepting the soft shoes of MOR - unaware of the aching irony

attached to this. Guarding a temple of art from one of our most exciting and original artists, while opening the back door to the sentimental bilge of Celine Dion - that's a plot thicker than Wagner.

USUALLY, THE OBJECTIONS handed down from the moral high ground of culture to the lowlands of pop are accompanied by a complaint about the noise. In some quarters, this practically makes sound reinforcement a political issue. The mere sight of a loudspeaker can send many purists into a tailspin, let alone the sound it makes. A microphone, they'll bleat, is cheating.

WHAT THIS MEANS is that, despite the advances that are being made by highly-skilled sound engineering companies to compensate for bad acoustics everywhere, somehow all their efforts are counter to the genuine interests of art. I can think of several high-profile productions that have injected new life into opera, ballet and classical music thanks to innovative sound design, not the least of which was Aida through TiMax. But to some, Verdi was turning in his grave, not a 3601 sound field.

WHAT'S INTERESTING is the number of people who enjoy such a performance until they are told sound design is involved. Then they join in the chorus of disapproval. Good sound design is meant to be transparent, so in many instances it clearly protects people from their own prejudices. And quite right, too. Why spoil a good night out with unnecessary knowledge? Opera and ballet audiences are highly informed, and mustn't be distracted by minutiae such as a full and proper appreciation of their evening's experience.

YOU CAN TRACE this ostrich-like behaviour back to one man, John Ruskin, who founded the Arts & Crafts movement in the 19th Century as a direct antidote to the choking industrialisation of the age. So powerful was the chord he struck with the Western psyche, that his influence is still abroad today. Anything mechanical was bad, anything organic was good - that pretty much sums up the ethos. Echoes of it can be picked up in both mainstream culture - like The Good Life - and alternative culture, like the whole hippie movement.

ONE RESOUNDING EXAMPLE of it was the furore which greeted Bob Dylan when he switched from acoustic to electric guitar in 1965, marking out electricity itself as a symbol of industrial evil. It was, indeed, the beginning of the slippery slope to synthesisers, TiMax and loud pop music at the Royal Opera House.

BY THE WAY, the microphones used on the acoustic instruments at the Newport Folk Festivals were Shure, I believe - but don't quote me on that.

"What's interesting is the number of people who enjoy such a performance until they are told sound design is involved. Then they join in the chorus of disapproval."

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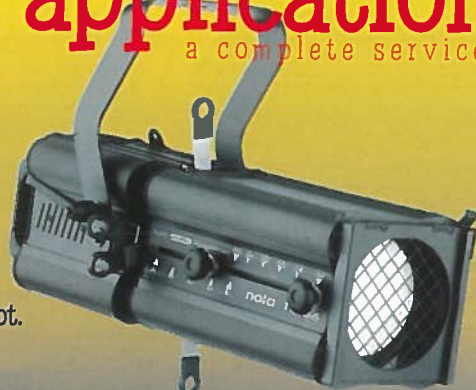
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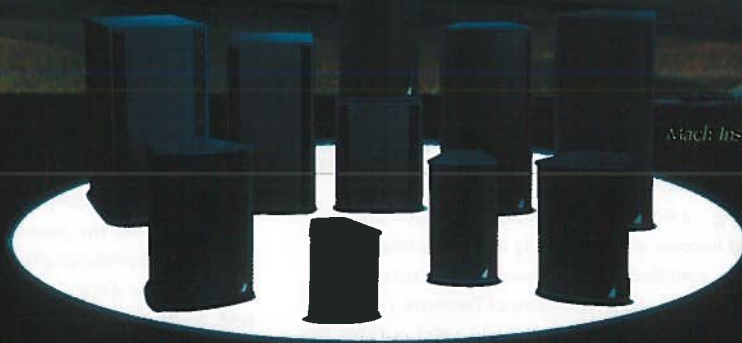
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vision

Euro

After a gruelling round of auditions and heats, the voting panel in Eastbourne eventually selected Steve Moles to wave the L&SI flag in Copenhagen

It's easy, almost too easy, for the likes of Terry Wogan to cock a snook at the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC). The early years of boom-bing-a-bong established the Euro-formulaic approach that blighted it for so long. Long indeed - did you know the first Melody Grand Prix, as it was known, was broadcast in 1956? But anyone from our industry who dismisses the ESC with a shrug and says, 'can't be bothered' is a fool.

The show is big, can be well-funded (see below), and to be frank, on present standing has an open-ended life expectancy, so it's not to be ignored. Besides, look at the viewing figures, 100 million in Europe alone. Whether through Nationalistic ardour, the morbid voyeurism that makes watching car crashes so compelling, or a European propensity for masochism, everybody watches it.

That all said, the event at Copenhagen was a benchmark event; significant in several important ways. The overwhelming factor was scale. Who would have thought it sensible to stage a TV show like this in a 36,000-seater football stadium? "They must be mad!" was my first thought as my plane touched down in sunny Kastrup. By the time I left the Parken (the National Stadium) that first evening - a full two days before broadcast - several things had become clear. Not only was it possible - a given really, considering the historical precedents of, say, Live Aid - but also the little nation of Denmark (with a smaller population than Ireland, I might point out) has the infrastructure, resources, equipment, and pool of talented people, to pull it off all by themselves. And I'll tell you something else as well, I interviewed all sorts of people, right up to Jorgen Ramskov, the show's executive director and a happier, more contented, unflustered, unstressed group of people you couldn't hope to meet. And at this point I should like to extend L&SI's special thanks to Poland for adding five minutes of hysterical laughter to our evening's entertainment. See? Bet you wished you watched it now.



LD Lars Nissen of Seelite

Production

I posed the question, "Did anyone think you were completely bonkers staging the ESC in a stadium?" directly to Jorgen Ramskov. "When I went to the International ESC Committee, I knew straight away they were good guys. They weren't concerned about the idea, just two things - 'Would the roof be on in time?' and 'How would it sound?' I was in a position to guarantee the roof, and also that we would employ the best sound engineers available." You gather straight away that Ramskov is a man not to be intimidated by considerations of scale.

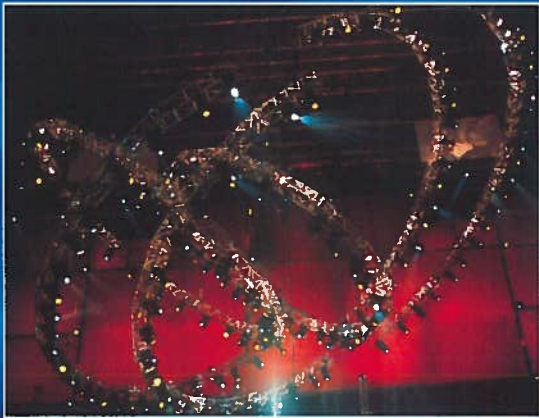
The two considerations voiced by the committee were well made; the roof for Parken, a retractable device across the existing grandstands, commenced construction just last October. As for the sound, Jens Elsborg of audio contractors Lydkompagøet (no, that's not a misprint), told me: "The decay in the stadium, especially at the low end, anything below 200Hz, lasts many seconds." Nine point five seconds, I was later informed by Claus Hansen, Scandinavia's d&b audiotechnik dealer, who supported Lydkompagøet, not least by rendering an EASE plot of the venue.

I don't want to dwell too long on the roof, it's hardly L&SI's domain, but there is one element of great significance that should be brought to everyone's attention. Although retractable, the designers had elected to use air-inflated fabric panels between the retracting roof trusses. The panels



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Left, the winning entry from Estonia.

Inset, a Martin Mac is rigged in preparation for the event.

Facing page, Martin's Brian Friberg and Seelite's Jens Ole Christensen. Centre: Who'd have thought it was a football stadium? Bottom, Kinovox MD Steen Peitersen with the Sennheiser system.

are self-contained envelopes, with a horizontal planar divide running through the middle of them. The top section is filled with warmed air, the lower with cold air. The result? Both top and bottom skins stay in tension, even against strong winds; a factor that eradicates the flapping noises of the more conventional inflatables used in US stadia. That tense fabric surface did little to ameliorate the sound problems of such a cavernous venue, but it's still arguably better than a flat tin roof.

Ramskov had a clear agenda: "In the eighties and early nineties Eurovision reached a point of absolute kitsch. It was crap, frankly." Ramskov is a renowned plain-speaker. "Several countries tried to re-invent it - to modernise it. They wanted something that could compete with MTV, and to shift the presentation away from a VIP audience of just a 1,000 into a big party." Ramskov took such ideas to heart. "What I wanted was a show with the energy of a rock concert and the excitement of a big sporting event."

So, as Ramskov took up the challenge, all he needed was a venue. "We were offered the Parken by its owners, I didn't even have to ask, and there's no bigger venue in Denmark." (It being the National Stadium, as well as home to Copenhagen FC). "Now we had the venue I could create a large stage, something transparent, scenically." The big open stage was crucial: "Did you know I had no idea of the show content until just 10 weeks before show day?" asked Ramskov. "Most people know the songs aren't picked by each country until March, but even then you don't know the order in which they'll appear. That means you could have the show opening with five consecutive artists who appear on stage seated on a stool, playing guitar. Not very exciting. With the stage open, we could use lighting and graphics to really change the feeling."

Lighting & Production

Ramskov called in Lars Nissen as his lighting designer. Nissen, a partner in Seelite, the Danish lighting rental and design house, has a well-earned reputation in the concert field, but more recently has been doing TV work, mainly rock shows. "It was the combination I needed," explained Ramskov.

The path to Nissen also proved somewhat fortuitous, though in a convoluted way. "We initially talked to Seelite and Vari-Lite Scandinavia, but because Martin is a Danish company, and in Denmark they rent as well as sell equipment, they were in a position to sponsor the show." A thorny issue: as a rental house, Martin was Seelite's biggest competitor, an awkward scenario neatly overcome by Seelite making a reverse takeover of Martin rental on 28th April, just prior to ESC. Cynics will say the ESC revenue funded such a move, others will recognise it for the opportunity it was. "The sale made perfect sense to us," said Brian Friberg, Martin Denmark's managing director. "We don't operate as a rental operation anywhere else in the world, and of course our core business is development, manufacturing and sales."

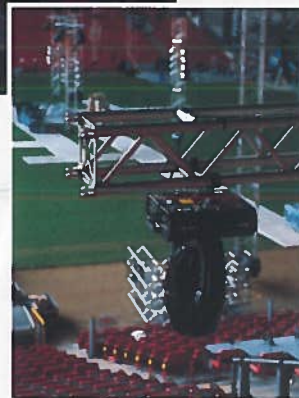
Simple, but as Frank Paulsen, Seelite's managing director said, it wasn't quite that straightforward. "We had been contracted from the start as the supplier for rigging and trussing, and Martin were still our competitor. There came a point where I suddenly had to turn round to both groups of technicians and say, 'the one you used to hate is now your best friend'."

"Jorgen came to me," continued Friberg, "and said 'I want it bigger than Stockholm' which was around 260 Vari-Lites. We went

for 400 moving lights - little did I know we'd end up with almost 900. This was not just the biggest Eurovision show, but the biggest automated light show ever."

Doubling the number of lamps is a measure of the people involved, and their confidence in the big vision. "We did the

Denmark National Show," said Ramskov, "using the lighting elements of what we we'd intended for Eurovision. Playing in front of just 5,000 people we realised straight away we'd be in deep shit." The budget for lighting went from 2M to 4.5M Danish Kroner, "that was a tough negotiation," says Ramskov convivially - it seems like nothing's too much trouble for these Danes. Sponsorship is the modern tool, and it works: Martin and Sennheiser



were among the corporations who put their name, equipment and pocket books, to this show. But some of the money came from show revenue: "Some 80,000 tickets were sold in all," informed Ramskov. "We had nearly full houses for both dress rehearsals, and a sell-out for the actual show." With tickets ranging in price from 85DK (about £7) for the cheapest rehearsal seats, to 1800DK (£145) for VIP seats to the Broadcast show (£32 for the cheapest), this was no small amount of cash.

"Of the 900 moving heads, something like 75% were rented from Procon in Germany," explained Friberg. "We simply didn't have those kind of quantities in the Martin Rental stock. The desks, four Vari-Lite Virtuosos, came from VL in the UK."

"I chose the Virtuoso because you can work on many things at the same time," said Nissen. It was this choice that proved the key to why all concerned with lighting were so relaxed. "The whole stadium has a Niff (VL) DMX ethernet looped around it. This means we can put desks anywhere we like for programming, but more importantly, different programmers can be working on different parts of the system at the same time." As far as Nissen is aware, the Virtuoso is the only desk, with the cue data residing in the DMX universes, where you can programme different parts of a system simultaneously. Although Nissen has trained on the Virtuoso, he wisely chose to wear the director's cap and brought in a team of seasoned programmers from Vari-Lite. Mark Payne, who designs for Rod Stewart among

others, sums it up best: "Lars has it all very, very well planned out. Two of his guys from Seelite (Leif Hellberg and Frank Beck) pre-plotted the whole thing on WysiCAD before the rig even came in. We're using 26 separate DMX universes - Andy Voller is the programming genius who mapped it all out - there are over 1500 conventional lights as well as all the automation, and yet there's never been any confusion about who, or what, is doing what where. Plus the system itself has been rock solid. When you're working with a rig of moving lights this big, you reckon on maybe 20-30 lamp problems a day, there's been nothing like that." An observation endorsed by Nick Barton, another VL man on the scene (usually found nursing the Rolling Stones lighting rig around the world) who reduced this figure: "Some days, there's been just one or two."

Nissen worked with Birger Christian on the set design: "Because of our experience on other TV shows, we knew it would always change," said Nissen. "So I didn't make a physical lighting design until the budget was set, about two months ago." Cool-headed or what? "The important thing was to have a big show, something that filled the hall, not a little black box." Astonishingly, Danish TV gave no benchmark to Nissen for light level on stage, "All the levels were set by me, but I did start out specifying 1200 moving heads with 2000 conventionals, so I knew I would have enough."

Huge numbers of instruments resided out in the Stadium; Nissen put horizontal trussing and floods over every seating area, plus 32 vertical hangs of truss around the huge void above the football field, which did much to make this cavern far more intimate than you might imagine. What helped support the live image, even to the most distant seats, was the rear wall of projection screens, a central piece some 30m wide, plus a plethora of smaller rectangular screens all around it, that stretched to the furthest confines of the stadium's full width. Nissen used a combination of projection from MAC 2000s and VT from the latest Barco DLP projectors, ELM G10s, supplied by Comtech in Copenhagen. "The great thing was that with the control set-up I was able to blend MAC to Barco, to the point where sometimes I found it impossible to tell what is doing what on screen."

Nissen's other big coup was truss movement. The eight semi-circles of James Thomas trussing that comprised the main-stage rig were all mounted to horizontally-moving beam trolleys and vertical lifting motors, all controlled by a Stage Master system (just approved to VBG70 standard in time for this show). The rig reconfigured for all 23 country's performers, which when you

consider just the engineering variables of flying curved trusses, let alone the potential for collision in a tightly-choreographed sequence, makes this another breath-taking display of chutzpah by Nissen. The rig only started fitting up nine days before show day, and a boffin from Stage Master had only been there two days before show day to increase the processing power of the system to cope with the complexity of the moves! Why this worked in such a tight time frame was down to three factors: exhaustive planning by Nissen, the multiple programming ability of the Virtuoso (if you can afford so many at once) and the apparently bomb-proof nature of the lamps.

Sound & Production

"I never doubted we could make a great lighting and TV show," said Ramskov, for the first and only time introducing a hint of reservation, "but sound was a concern." And not just for Ramskov - the



Nation's Press had expressed similar reservations when the Parken was first announced as the venue. "I brought in Ole Liviid, a TV audio consultant from DRTV, and together we chose Lydkompagøet. They've been absolutely great. Right from the start he identified them as having the capability, and they've proved it."

In brief, Lydkompagøet have covered the venue using, in essence, a classic centre cluster approach to ameliorate conflicting reflections as much as possible. Paul Ibsen mixed front-of-house from a Midas Heritage 2000 (XL4 back-up) with Ashley Cook running a pair of XL3s at the stage for monitors, but it's Jens Elsborg who managed the whole project. "The stage was the most difficult," he explained, "nothing could interfere with the cameras or audience

sightlines, so we could put nothing on stage, PA or monitors, and little underneath it. We positioned 24 wedges, MAXs and the new d5b M2s, under stage grilles, but then the director kept moving the performers around. What can you say when you're the lowest part of the food chain?" he commented ruefully. Luckily, sponsors Sennheiser, having handled the mic technology for 16 Eurovisions (and working together with their Danish partner Kinovox), provided a large in-ear system, made up entirely of their 5000 and 3000 RF systems, the move from studio to stadium having prompted the decision to go fully wireless. 48 radio microphones and 16 IEM systems were allocated discrete interference-free frequencies across six separate 24MHz bandwidths.

The low order afforded to live sound considerations carried radically further.

Because the hallowed turf beneath the new roof had to be maintained in peak condition, the roof was opened every day, except the last two before the show, to allow sunlight to the grass. "This meant the roof had to open with everything hanging from it," not least 52 tons of lights, grid and trussing. "So the PA centre cluster was moved from its planned position, to 10 metres out from the stage edge to spread the load."

Time alignment aside, this is what precipitated Elsborg's pointed comment about only being allowed to put a little under the stage. Some of the most expensive seats in the house were now way upstage of the PA, and a row of the usual E3



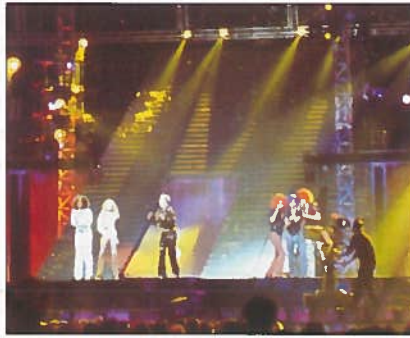
front fills wouldn't be enough. "Luckily, I was able to squeeze in five C7 cabinets, just enough to cover the 30m of stage width that needed front-fill. As with Nissen, Elsborg did much pre-planning to make this as painless as possible. "We have been very fortunate to receive the support of d5b in this venture.

Claus Hansen, who runs their Scandinavian office, used CAD drawings of how the stadium would be when the roof was constructed, to model how we might deploy the sound system to best effect. I must say I'm quite impressed with the results, it might be mono, but that conforms to the EBU standards." (The European Broadcast Union retains the Mono option as many of the recipient countries still broadcast in this format).

Elsborg not only took Hansen's advice for he is himself a veteran of the venue. "I've done shows here using a centre cluster with left/right refreshment. I also attended the U2 Pop Mart show with the big Clair Brothers S4 centre cluster. Those experiences, particularly comparing Pop Mart to shows with conventional left/right PAs, convinced me."

There was an easily perceivable benefit from the centre system approach, namely a single fronted sound wave kept the stadium reverb' from being slappy, plus at Elsborg's request Ramskov had devoted a fair chunk of budget to dressing the concrete- and glass-fronted edifices that sat at each corner of the stadium with large quantities of soft goods.

The centre cluster is a monster: 10 cabinets wide, by eight deep, mainly C4 tops and subs, with sections of the tops rigged to sum in virtual in-line, and project out the 60m to where the delays hang.



"Claus came down and set all the delays for us, (there was a further distributed system of 14 C6 cabinets for the higher, further nosebleeds), and then he and I walked the room for days, tweaking. The result was very, very close to Claus's EASE projection."

To maintain Ramskov's requirement for the 'excitement of a Rock concert', Elsborg was obliged to keep a fair bit of power in the low end, not ideal in the Parken. "Although I had 10 B2 infra sub bass either side of stage on the floor, I kept most of the ultra low energy out of them. Put 50Hz in this room and it's there for at best 6 to 7 seconds. I have TC1128s inserted on the system and keep almost everything up above 200Hz, to compensate. I've also used TC dbMax to put some power and dynamic into the low-mid. The system is set so the mixer only really has to worry about level."

In terms of speech intelligibility you couldn't fault it. I walked the room extensively during the rehearsals (something impossible for the show), and although the stadium was less than full, the rear 20% of the pitch being unoccupied, those irksome rhyming couplets of the compères were irritatingly clear. For music there was what I'd describe as a bass lobe around the centre rear of the pitch, but this seemed to have evaporated for the show proper, as I discovered when I exited that way before the Aqua finale.

Frankly, for a TV show where high house levels are largely unwanted, it was loud. I measured 100dBA throughout the evening, with peaks around 110dB, mainly from the enthusiastic audience. So yes, it was exciting to listen to, and if some of the musical content was questionable, at least the stuff of virtue could be appreciated. Much like the lighting, this success with the audio was down to exhaustive planning by the people responsible, and the equipment, especially the PA system, performing exactly as the computer modelling said it would.

with Eurovision 2001, Denmark proved it could fulfil all necessary requirements for such a show. In my opinion it went way beyond proving itself, as Brian Friberg said: "Denmark has much to be proud of."

photos: Allan Toft/Simon Camper



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The 2001 Vodafone Ball – Beach Party – held at London’s Earls Court, went into the history books as a record-breaking corporate event. With 11,483 diners, it was adjudged by Guinness World Records as the Largest Silver Service Dinner Event in the world!

Jim Hepplewhite from corporate lighting design specialists Rainmaker, was again lighting designer/director for this extravaganza, produced by Skybridge for the Vodafone Group. Hepplewhite, along with Skybridge’s technical director Lee Eld, has now been involved with the event for seven years. The first took place in 1995 at Alexandra Palace, where approximately 3000 people gathered for their annual corporate bash. Its growth mirrors that of the Vodafone Group, now one of the largest and most successful communications companies in the world.

The sheer scale of the event presented the main lighting challenge for Hepplewhite - despite having lit it in the same venue for three years now. This year, the dining area alone took up the whole floor of Earls Court 1, plus a 100 metre semi-circular sweep of decking around the first floor balcony to accommodate additional diners, for which LEL Enterprises commandeered virtually every piece of Steeldeck in the Home Counties! The main stage, the two B stages and all the barriers, plus the FOH tower, were supplied by Stage Hire.

The spectacular main stage show was headlined by The Corrs and also starred Ronan Keating, Hear’Say, Right Said Fred and Hadley, Norman & Keeble (ex of Spandau Ballet). The show was presented by Tim Vincent and opened with some large, colourful and slick choreographed support numbers, one featuring Paulette Anthony, star of the West End production of Disney’s *The Lion King*.

This year, Hepplewhite adopted a different aesthetic in lighting the main auditorium and stage, utilising 30 Icon moving heads spread out along horizontal trussing running lengthways down the two sides of the hall. This replaced last year’s melange of Molefays, which looked good, but proved long-winded to rig and focus and gluttonous on power consumption. Using Icons enabled a radical reduction in the amount of dimmers and distro required, although the several kilometres of cabling is still an impressive statistic!

Using Icons also gave Hepplewhite plenty of flexibility and scope for creating different moods and for reacting to the changing ambiances in the hall as the evening’s revelling progressed. He further enhanced the house lighting with 18 assorted-colour 2m Air Star balloons dotted around the hall, complete with halogen lightsources, and over 2km of festooning, which was draped around the balcony and along the side walls upstairs and downstairs. Rainmaker’s remit also included supplying the 16 tunnelled entrances to the dining area with emergency lighting.

Stage lighting consisted of another 30 Icons, hung on circular overhead trusses and 30 High End Studio Color 575s in the air and on the floor. Hepplewhite used Coda 4s to uplight the rear cyc - producing night or daylight beach scenes, and some very pokey 1800W Coemar Panorama Cyps to light the enormous pros arch surrounding the stage - effectively filling the entire width of the end of the hall. The 60m wide x 18m high pros arch was built specially for the event, and covered with three stretched-tight cloths made by Gerriets UK:

Hepplewhite chose two E\T\C Audiovisual 4k xenon projectors with single scrollers to beam various coastal images - both photographic and graphical - onto either sides of the pros. They formed an attractive tropical vista into which the stage was inset. The projectors and films were supplied by CT and overseen and operated by Peter Wilms. CT also supplied a five-camera PPU for live video IMAG requirements. Three LED screens came from Screenco, the main one measuring 16 x 9 metres and rigged above the stage, in the middle of the ‘pros’ surround. Two smaller repeater screens relayed images further down the hall, rigged beneath the overhang of the first floor balcony.

All the main hall lighting - stage and house - was controlled from the Icon Show Controller console, operated by Mark Cunniffe - himself a veteran of three Vodafone Balls. Cunniffe and Hepplewhite collaborated closely on lighting the show and auditorium, producing a flamboyant array of large lighting statements demanded by the occasion. Hepplewhite also got top West End production LX Gerry Amies on-board as crew chief to deal with much of the on-site logistics, management and equipment distribution.

For The Corrs and Hadley, Norman & Keeble, Cunniffe worked with direction from Liam McCarthy and Dave Gibbon, their respective LDs. All moving lights were supplied by LSD Fourth Phase, whilst all

record breaker

the generics, for the entire building including all the breakout areas, were supplied by Lighting Hire, part of the Essential Group.

The draping and starcloths were supplied by Blackout Triple E with pyros coming from Pyrovision. The audio in the main hall was a very sleek-looking L-Acoustics v-Dosc system, supplied by Delta Sound.

Rigging was undertaken by Vertigo Rigging, project managed by Paddy Burnside, who also has a long association with the Vodafone event. Vertigo hung nearly 600 metres of trussing, sorted out the PA points, screens, and also draped the pros arch with the three Gerriets cloths. They flew the 6 x 18 metre cantilevered plinth for the FOH tower - formally a section of the Monsters of Rock, Donnington roof - which was suspended whilst its legs were built underneath, then lowered into position. Vertigo also installed a belay line (an abseil with travel controlled by someone other than the abseiler) for Tim Vincent's entrance, safetyed with a fixed-rate descender.

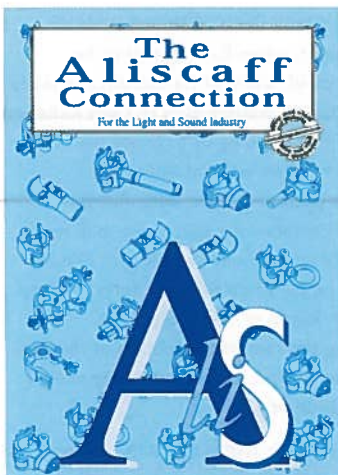
Behind the main stage, Earls Court Two was filled with a full size fun fair, side stalls and a 140-vehicle coach park. Ten Winnebago trailers were craned up to first floor level for artist dressing rooms. Lighting for the nine satellite areas also fell under the auspices of Hepplewhite's creative eye. Many were small rooms with just 12 Pars and a small manual desk or ambient lighting. The largest alternative stage was in Brompton Hall and featured Bjorn Again plus a Blues Brothers band. This was lit with a 48k rock and roll rig, operated by assorted Rainmaker crew. Other breakout rooms and areas around the main hall contained every conceivable type of seaside entertainment possibility - from coconut shies to palm readers, tattooists, video and VR games arcades. Other acts included a DJ set by Tony Blackburn, a comedy club and numerous other live bands . . . to ensure that even the shortest attention spans were sated. For those finding the excitement too much, a plethora of chill zones and inflatable crash-out furniture abounded.



Left, Rainmaker's Jim Hepplewhite (left) and crew chief Gerry Amies. Below, lighting operator Mark Cunniffe



The Vodafone Ball remains one of the most ambitious and unique corporate productions of the year. "This year was definitely the smoothest yet," commented Hepplewhite after the event. They were aided greatly by having two additional days of get-in and rehearsal time. Lee Eld agrees. "The 52 45ft trucks of production equipment started loading in on the Tuesday before the Saturday of the event. Everything was clear by 8pm the Sunday after. The 11 volumes of Health & Safety documentation (an aspect co-ordinated by Skybridge's Tom Goode) are expected to be used as a model for future events by the venue.



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No Comment...

The big story of the past month was the news that Steve Terry was to leave Fourth Phase (ex PRG) and take up a new post with ETC.

REGULAR READERS OF THIS COLUMN will be aware that I had promised not to mention 4Ph again until July, when the then new CEO would have had 12 months to prove that his strategy was working. However, such a momentous change could not go by without comment, so I

booked a conference call with Steve and Jere Harris in order to get the low-down and to let Harris know that I intended to breach the embargo by 30 days. Harris was in a positive frame of mind with regard to both the progress of his grand scheme, and in regard to Terry's move, and I need not have been unduly concerned. But a promise is a promise and some will have noticed that I didn't mention Bill Gallinghouse's earlier departure to the same destination.

BOTH PARTIES WERE

keen to paint Terry's jump as good news. While I think it is fair to say that Steve was never very comfortable with the huge task that he was landed with after Production Arts was sold to 4Ph, his expertise in project management and as a major renter will, I am sure, prove extremely useful to ETC, while still being available to Harris and his team as a supplier. "We will still be in the same building in New York City, so Steve can't get away," quipped Jere Harris. "This is a win-win situation for all sides." How times have changed - there was a time when Terry

would have been considered absolutely crucial to the future success of the lighting group.

KNOWING MY CONCERN ABOUT risk-taking with individual's livelihoods, Harris also told me that a new devolved management structure, to each branch of the Group, would follow in the wake of Terry's departure and that "all but one of those managers are industry people."

The other piece of good news for those whose futures depend on 4Ph being successful - and that means most of the industry, especially in the USA - is that in the past few months they have written down considerable debt, in large part by Harris and others injecting more equity. Thus, the balance sheet now looks more like a feasible proposition. "He's a magician," joshed Steve, "it was all done by sleight of hand, if you ask me." Harris was also able to confirm that 4Ph had made a deal to acquire the inventory of the (now defunct) Four Star as and when existing rental contracts expire. "Their rental income, meanwhile, goes to the banks," said Harris.

AND WHAT DOES FRED FOSTER THINK about his new man? "It is a terrific coup for us. Steve and I have been friends for years, ever since he helped us out with our original Idea console, so he was instrumental in our success before he even joined us. We had often talked about whether we could work together as friends, and now that has become a reality. Steve will bring all his knowledge of systems integration to ETC, plus his vast experience from the customer's side of the fence so that we can better understand their needs."

WHILE ON ETC, there has been a rumour smouldering for several months that Foster was thinking of buying a majority stake in High End Systems from the venture capitalists, Generation Partners. By the time of Showtech in Berlin, the slow burn had

become a forest fire with promises of 'imminent announcements' from unimpeachable sources, and even that a deal had already been done, attributed to the 'certain knowledge' of one senior industry individual.

BY THE TIME OF SHOWLIGHT 2001, the fire was all but out and, while Mr. Foster was playing straight poker when I tweaked him on the matter, I got the distinct impression that, while ETC may have looked at the possibility previously, they have no immediate plans. This industry is as leaky as a sieve!

MEANWHILE, FRED FOSTER ALSO PLAYED a starring role, at the simply wonderful Showlight 2001 (of which more next month). Fred was hosting one of the sponsored tables at dinner on the first night, when David Gray, of ETC Europe, challenged him to wear a kilt the following day in aid of Light Relief. Fred, always a sucker for any sartorial challenge in a good cause, readily agreed, on condition that a target of £2000 could be raised by the next morning. In the event, the resultant collection raised over £2001, a truly splendid effort, and Fred duly donned the tartan. I thank David Gray and congratulate all the contributors.

I DON'T SUPPOSE ANYONE HAD TWIGGED it, but the second day was the also the day that included a programme of optional tours, several of which included the Strand factory. I am not sure whether or not Phil O'Donnell had anticipated Fred's perspicacity, but he duly turned up on one of the visits, and was even photographed shaking O'Donnell's hand on the way out, still resplendent in kilt and sporran. We may be leaky, but we are a friendly little industry, are we not?

WHAT VERY FEW PEOPLE WOULD HAVE BEEN aware of, when Fred agreed to be swathed in plaid, was that he had already made a very substantial contribution to Light Relief on behalf of ETC, leading us to invite the company to become Light Relief's first corporate patron. Others, who may be interested in following suit, can e-mail me at lightrelief@wvg.co.uk. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank John Simpson and Bryan Raven of White Light for sponsoring the cost of production of the new Light Relief leaflet. Copies are being mailed with this issue of L&SI.

I CANNOT END THIS COLUMN without a word about the bright candle that was the life of Fred Bentham: snuffed out it may have been, but in his allotted span he filled our lives with much light and colour, as the true father of entertainment lighting as we know it today, and thus his genius lives on in each of us.

"I am not sure whether or not Phil O'Donnell had anticipated Fred's perspicacity, but he duly turned up on one of the visits, and was photographed shaking O'Donnell's hand on the way out, still resplendent in kilt and sporran."

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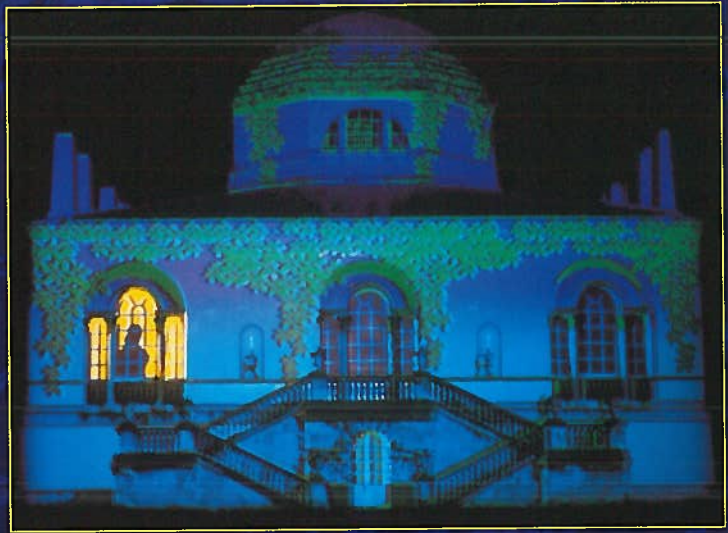
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In Profile...

L&SI Talks to the Industry Trend-setters

Aclaimed Japanese LD Motoko Ishii has achieved many plaudits and career goals since she first began practising lighting in the 1960s, but one that she still aspires to is a rather unique collaboration in the lighting business: "I would love to undertake a project with my daughter Akari, who is also a lighting designer. Akari developed an early interest in lighting and is following in my footsteps developing her career in Paris where she has been blessed with work on many wonderful projects."



as part of her lighting ethos. "People are gradually learning that light is not just there to brighten things up. Brighter is not always better, and light does more than make things visible. I think Akari and Hikari have more functions and fundamental meanings than is immediately apparent and I want to get more deeply involved in this idea. It's not widely known that Japan's myriad of gods and deities are dominated by Amaterasu Omikami, who is the Goddess of light, which I think is rather fitting."

Concern for the spirit and essence of a place underlies even the most practical of Ms Ishii's projects. In recent years she has undertaken the lighting of the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge, which is now the world's largest suspension bridge, spanning the 2.5-mile-wide Akashi strait. The bridge's main towers are equal in height to the Eiffel tower and it took 10 years to construct. The bridge lighting has revitalised the landscape of the surrounding areas and is illuminated from sunset to midnight to enhance the dramatic beauty of the bridge.

Other recent projects have seen her create exterior lighting for the exclusive Louis Vuitton store in the main street of Waikiki, Hawaii. Once again, the design was carefully implemented to reflect the cultural and historical nuances of the area. Research is a vital aspect of Ms Ishii's work and she is constantly involved in design studies for potential projects with huge implications for societies, cultures and cities. Shanghai is currently under her spotlight with her involvement in an intense study to create a master lighting plan for the booming city.

Motoko Ishii is a lighting designer with a sympathetic approach to the impact of light on daily life and this, coupled with her immense knowledge and experience, sees her collaborate on public projects worldwide: "For me, the blending of natural and artificial light is crucial to creating a harmonious environment for people to live and work in." ■

Lighting designer

Motoko Ishii

is profiled by

Jacqueline Molloy

Judging by the eclectic range of projects that Ms Ishii has undertaken in her 30+ years of lighting, this dream mother/daughter project could take place anywhere in the world, using fixtures and styles of lighting that date from the 1600s to the present.

Ms Ishii is considered a lighting pioneer in Japan

for her work on urban illumination and architectural lighting and is a recipient of over 40 awards from the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, as well as numerous awards from the Japanese government. Her lighting philosophy and areas of expertise are infused with her passion for light and the positive impact it can have on people's lives.

After spending time learning her craft in Finland and Germany, Ms Ishii returned to Japan to establish her own design consultancy business where her projects covered urban landscapes, public buildings, bridges and, more recently, whole cities: "The scope of my work is always evolving. When we were first experimenting with exterior light doing 'light-ups' of buildings, it was a new concept in Japan and now it is becoming part of the culture. At the same time though,

there is still a lot to be achieved in this field. I'd like to see beautiful lighting right across Japan that local people can take pride in, where the lighting also contributes to comfort and safety and is in harmony with the natural environment."

To promote the study of light, Ms Ishii established the Inter Light Forum in 1991 to develop and popularise a culture of light through academic and practical activities. Lighting as an art form in Japan suffered a major blow during the oil crisis of the 1970s with Ms Ishii explaining that during this period people regarded light, even neon signs, with enmity. In the 1980s, lighting design began to bloom after a long period of dormancy initiated by the oil crisis.

In her work, Ms Ishii uses aspects of the Japanese culture as inspiration and is influenced by the lighting concepts to have emerged from the Edo period (1603-1868) of Japanese history. "The Edo period gave us candles shrouded in magnificent Japanese paper to create a very soft and beautiful light which we call 'Akari' (the inspiration for her daughter's name). The Akari created by 'Shoji' (translucent Japanese paper used for sliding screen doors) is wonderful. The opposite to Akari is 'Hikari' which is sharp, direct light like sunlight."

These concepts are intrinsic to Ms Ishii's use of light and she hopes to carry these lighting traditions forward and continue to develop them

Lighting & Sound

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Aliscaff	79	E\T\C UK	81	Leisuretec	61	Par Opti	44	Stardraw.com	56
Alistage	59	ETC Europe	17	Lightfactor	20/60/67/70/80	PCM	66	Strand Lighting	45
Altman	38	Enlightenment	28	LightProcessor	22	Peavey	53	Tannoy	69
Artistic Licence	6	Flashlight	52	Light Engineering	56	PLASA Show	33	The Effects Company	66
Avolites	10	Fuzion	IBC	Light Relief	52	Performance Light & Sound	65/76	TMB Associates	32
Beyerdynamic	31	Hand Held Audio	62	Lighting Technology	48	Procon	OBC	Tomcat	39
Blackout Triple E	77	Harkness Hall	54	Litestructures	IFC	Ra'alloy	79	Trifibre Containers	44
Blitz	23	High End Systems	3	LX Designs	68	RB Lighting	65	Used Flight Case Co	65
Bridgehouse	44	Howard Eaton	42	MACH	71	RCF	40	Vari-lite	5/29/47
City Thetrical	14	HW International	15/25	Martin Professional	73	Rubber Box	59	White Light	26
Clay Paky	21	InspHire	13	Mobil-Tech	36	Selecon	55	XL Video	18
Coe-tech	19/27	Jands	9	Multilite	59	Sennheiser	37	Zero 88	41
Colourhouse	79	JEM	7	Navigator	16	Set Lighting & Sound	46	Classifieds	82-83

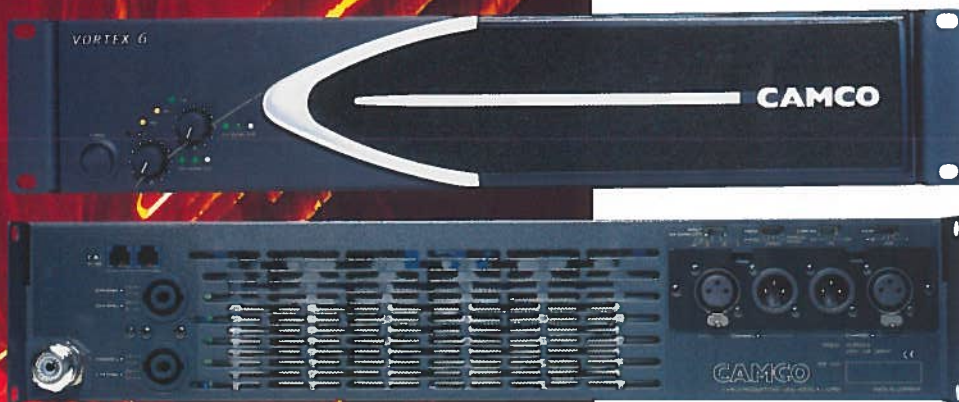
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