

# Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

September 2001

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

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**PLASA**

LIVE AT EARLS COURT  
9-12 SEPTEMBER 2001

Pre-show highlights: pages 97-106

## Shaw Thing

- My Fair Lady at Drury Lane

## Summer Tours

- Robbie Williams, Alejandro Sanz, Route of Kings

## La Bohème

- Bregenz stages the Puccini classic

## Bitten by the Bug

- Mosquito Club, Liverpool

## Noise of Time

- Artistic collaboration at the Barbican



# Giotto Spot 400: beats them all!

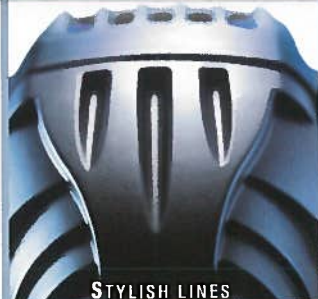


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 GOBOS (TEXTURE) \_ GOBO SCROLLING WITH VARIABLE SPEED \_ GOBO SHAKE \_ MINIMUM GOBO ROTATION SPEED (0.1 RPM) \_ COLOURCHANGER  
 AND GOBOCHANGER WITH BLACKOUT \_ COLOURCHANGER AND GOBOCHANGER WITH MUSIC SYNC \_ 2-TONE BEAMS, ANALOG COLOR SELECTION  
 AND 16-SPEED RAINBOW EFFECT \_ 1 ROTATING 4-FACET PRISM WITH VARIABLE SPEED IN BOTH DIRECTIONS \_ 9-FACET HALF PRISM (COMETA)  
 WITH ADJUSTABLE ROTATION SPEED IN BOTH DIRECTIONS \_ FROST FILTER SMOOTHLY VARIABLE FROM SOFT-EDGE TO FULL-WASH \_ WOOD FILTER  
 (UV), FULL CTO FILTER, HALF CTO FILTER \_ ELECTRONIC BALLAST 90÷245V \_ AUTOMATIC REPOSITIONING WITH BLACKOUT \_ 16-BIT MOVEMENT:  
 540° PAN (2.8 s) AND 270° TILT (1.7 s) \_ POWER FACTOR CORRECTION \_ SAFETY COOLING FANS ONLY OPERATE IN THE EVENT OF OVERHEATING  
 \_ MACRO \_ MICROCOMPUTER WITH DISPLAY FOR SETTING FIXTURE FUNCTIONS AND STATUS.

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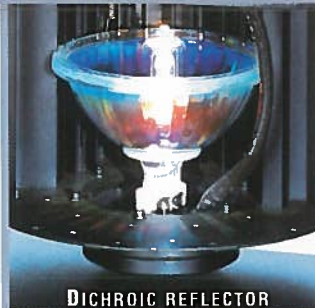
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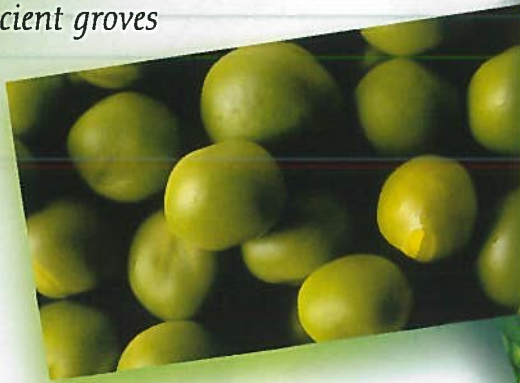
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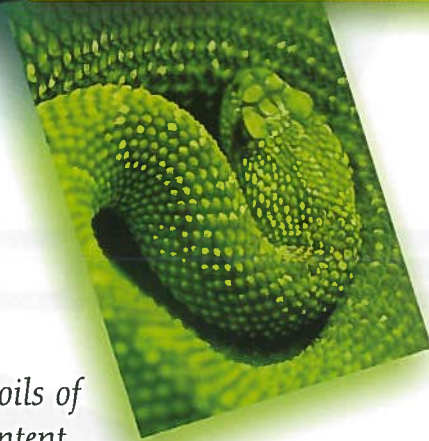
*the pale tracery  
of a new leaf*



*the ripe richness of  
ancient groves*



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*shifting coils of  
sinuous intent*

# The Art of Light



# Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

September 2001 Volume 16, Issue 9

Lighting & Sound International – published monthly by the Professional Lighting and Sound Association.  
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 The views expressed in Lighting & Sound International are not necessarily those of the Editor or PLASA.

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## Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

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

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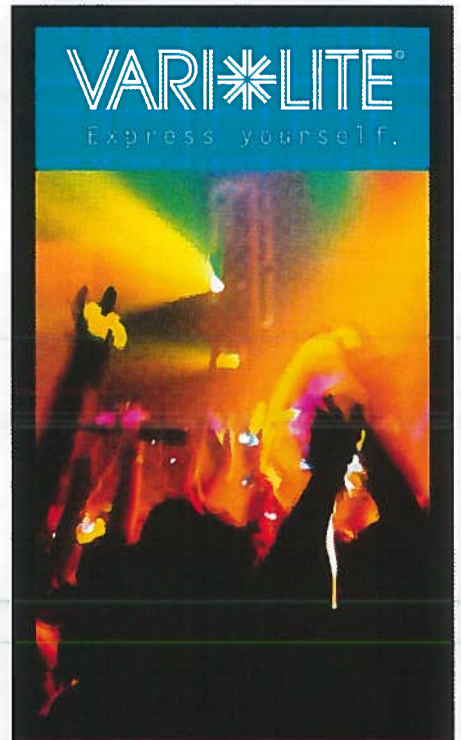
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Published from the PLASA office:  
 38 St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3UT, UK.  
 Tel: +44 (0)1323 418400 Fax: +44 (0)1323 646905

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

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## International News Round-Up

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# PLASA Show 2001

To highlight these technical innovations, Lighting&Sound International is sponsoring the PLASA New Technology Showcase, situated on the Top Deck, where visitors will get a chance to see all the nominated products in one place.

It's clear from the large volume of news that has arrived on our desks that PLASA will offer plenty to talk about. Behind the scenes, we've been busy bringing you unrivalled access to

What's more, our efforts to bring you the latest news online will continue through to the end of the show. During its four-day run, all the news and events from the show floor will be featured on the PLASA Show website. And if you don't have time during the Show to log on, our team of expert contributors will be scouring the show floor to deliver comprehensive post-show coverage in the October issue of L&SI.

In between these and other tasks, we've also found time to produce the PLASA Show Catalogue - an indispensable 154-page guide to everything at the Show: each exhibitor is listed with full contact details, names of personnel available on stand and a comprehensive description of exhibits. Full-colour floorplans will provide your vital guide to getting about at the Show, while details of the Seminar & Masterclass programme, special feature areas and Awards Nominees help to make this quite simply the best and most usable Exhibition guide you will find (modesty was never our strong point). Your free copy will be waiting for you at the distribution point inside the exhibition entrance - don't miss it.

To whet your appetite for the main event, this issue of L&SI carries a pre-show taster (pages 97-106); give yourself a head-start by reading up on some of the key highlights of the event. Once at the Show, come and see us on the PLASA stand, K19 (yes, we've moved!).

**By the time you read this, there will be less than two weeks to go before the PLASA Show returns to Earls Court. Yet again, the Show is set to be a record breaker, with the floor area covered already outstripping last year's total at the time of going to press.**

The PLASA Show has a well-deserved reputation as a major launchpad for new technologies, and this year will be no exception, with hundreds of new products making their debuts on the show floor. What's more, around 60 of these have been nominated for the highly prestigious PLASA Awards for Product Excellence - the largest ever number of nominations.

all the latest information on the hugely successful PLASA Show website at [www.plasa.org/show](http://www.plasa.org/show). By the time the show opens on 9 September, we estimate that the website will have received more than 180,000 page requests from industry professionals the world over. Its usefulness as a showcase for the event has never been better demonstrated. Visitors to the site can find up-to-date details of all 370+ companies exhibiting at the Show, an interactive floorplan to help you plan your visit, all the latest news from exhibitors on product launches and special events taking place during the show, and a host of other features. You can also check out our online 'Product Launches' listing, which provides a single-page view of more than 400 new products appearing at the Show this year.



See the Entire Product Range  
at the  
PLASA Light & Sound Show,  
Stand G24  
and at LDI Orlando, Booth 1457.

## Artistic Licence - Red Hot Ethernet Technology

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## One for the Record Books

**Blackout Triple E Ltd has just completed what it believes to be the biggest draping job ever undertaken in Europe.**



The brief was to construct 11 acoustic friendly session rooms, in addition to providing the rigging for lighting, sound and video throughout a hall measuring over half a kilometre in length by 100m across and 15m high. The project involved over 100 motors, 5000m of catenaries, over 1000m of truss and a staggering 1000 drapes, which alone weighed over 30 tonnes and required three 45ft trucks to transport them to the newly commissioned Montjuic 2 exhibition centre run by Fira de Barcelona in Spain.

Of the 11 rooms, nine were to hold 880 people, one to accommodate 1,650 and another for 2,050 people. The task was to create a cost-effective solution which could be built in a limited timeframe and to provide a high quality finish

complete with the all-important soundproofing. Planning began early, as Blackout Triple E and production company Ultimate Events embarked on a series of audio tests with Delta Sound Systems. These required a complete test build of one room, plus various temporary structures,

which all took place in the venue before the building had actually been commissioned.

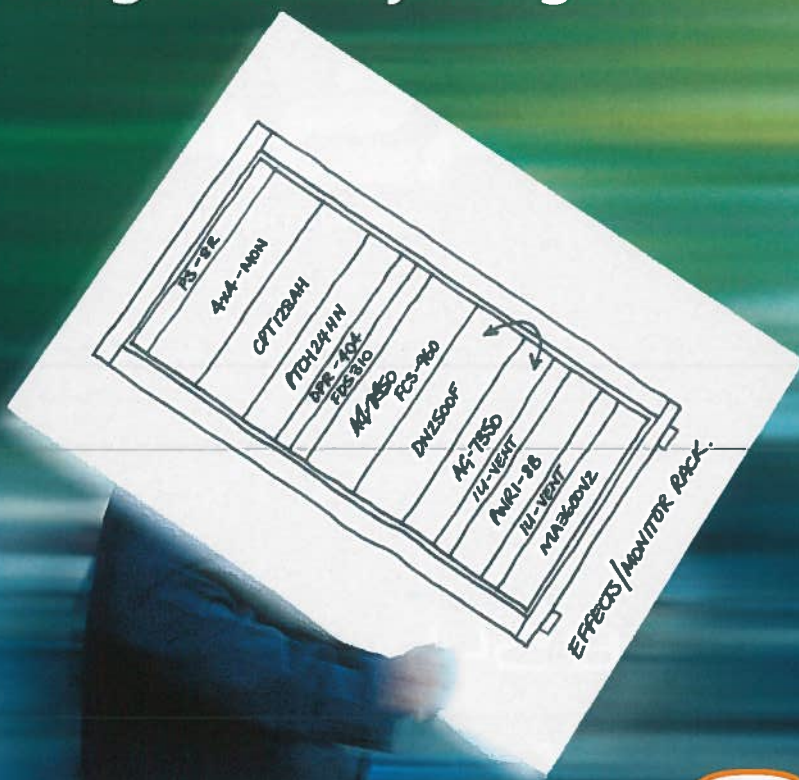
The solution was to build the rooms with double-lined drape walls, hung from catenaries attached directly to the roof structure. The walls included an essential acoustic air gap and were finished at ground level by temporary walling. Specific attention was applied to the air-conditioning system, with staggered gaps left between rooms to allow airflow. The final event was a huge industry project involving a crew of 350 from many international suppliers working for a period of nearly four weeks.

## Smoke Design Calls Creditors Meeting

**L&SI has learned that Smoke Design, the Bolsover-based manufacturer of a range of silk flame effects, haze generators, fragrance systems and smoke generators, is experiencing problems.**

Financial recovery and restructuring agents, Silver Altman, have written to all the companies who have conducted business with the company, informing them that a meeting of creditors will take place in Nottingham on 4 September. Those who attend will receive a statement of affairs and will be asked to nominate one or more insolvency practitioners and, if necessary, to establish a liquidation committee. The company was founded in 1996 by David and Sylvia Taylor.

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## Hemming Launches Live Business International

**A new specialist sound, lighting and video design and installation company, Live Business International, has opened in London.**



The company is headed by technical director Roland Hemming, former head of sound at the Millennium Dome, and backed by Live Business, the UK's largest provider of live entertainment. Live Business International specializes in design, installation and maintenance of sound, video and lighting systems in entertainment venues, including cruise ships, hotels, theatres, clubs, stadia and conference venues.

Hemming's background spans 15 years in the entertainment technology business, beginning at the sound department of Theatre Projects where he pioneered MIDI-based show control in the late 1980s, going on to work as a sound engineer, event production manager, audio

consultant and installation designer. More recently he has been responsible for major cruise ship installations.

Prior to forming Live Business International, he managed the design, installation and running of the 57 sound systems at the Millennium Dome, the largest sound installation in the world, running a team of 42 engineers. He also spent three months this year as production manager in charge of decommissioning every sound, lighting, video and broadcast system at the Dome, with a crew of 192 and 30,000 items of equipment to dismantle.

Hemming told L&SI: "Having successfully carried out various high profile installations in recent years, we want to build on that success with an installation company that offers real quality and expertise. We have some of the industry's best project managers and engineers on board, and some exciting projects in the pipeline."

[www.livebusiness.co.uk](http://www.livebusiness.co.uk)

## UK Light Jockey 2001 Final

**On Tuesday 17 July, the world famous Ministry of Sound played host to the Final of the DI UK Light Jockey Contest, sponsored by Clay Paky and Pulsar.**

Battling it out in front of the judges were Simon Elliott, Chris Penney, Richard Whiteley and Rob Calvert. Simon Elliott emerged as the new UK Light Jockey Champion, with Chris Penney and Richard Whiteley being awarded a silver and bronze medal respectively.

The difficult task of judging the final was given to DJ's Paul Fowler, Ministry of Sound's Lorenzo Meddi, lighting designer Carl Dodds and current World Light Jockey Champion Chris Shead. Each contestant had to program a five minute lightshow to a piece of music of their choice.

The standards were very high throughout, with originality and creativity making each lightshow unique in its own right. As part of his prize package Elliott also won a customised gold plated Masterpiece and an all-expenses paid trip to Italy.

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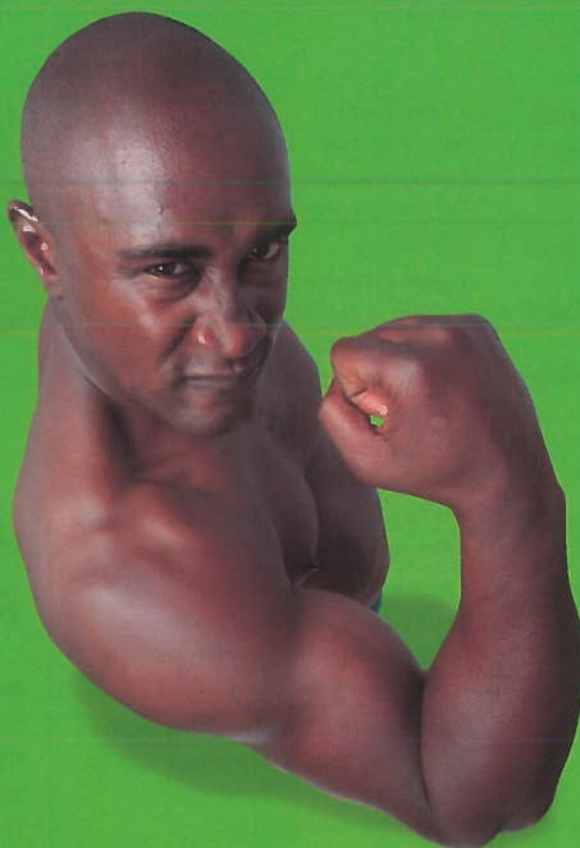
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# PLASA @ PLASA

# Association NEWS

At this year's PLASA Show, the Association has moved its stand to a new, bigger area towards the back of the main hall - stand K19.

The move from the usual spot at the very front of the hall on stand F1 has been made in order to provide more room for the PLASA stand - which will now incorporate the PLASA Technical Bookshop - and also to allow us to develop the PLASA Clinic, which will run adjacent to the PLASA stand, on J52 (see below).

Equally importantly, the move puts us right next to the busy after-show bar (inside the new Pizza Express restaurant), which will be open every evening after show closing, allowing everyone at the show a little extra time to continue those all-important conversations!

Upstairs, meanwhile, Lighting&Sound International is sponsoring the New Technology Showcase - a major display of every product nominated for a 2001 PLASA Award for Product Excellence.

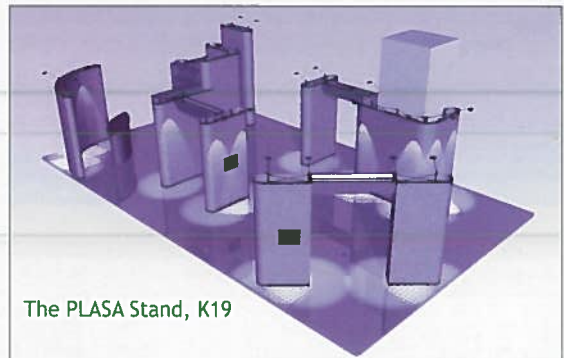
## PLASA Clinics

In a new PLASA initiative for 2001, PLASA is inviting all members and prospective members to take time to visit the PLASA Clinic on stand J52, to find out more about the range of services offered by the Association. Representatives from PLASA's service providers and Head Office staff will be available on the stand to answer your questions and to show you how you can benefit from taking advantage of what PLASA offers.

Among the range of services offered by PLASA are the following:

- **Comunicado** - a telephone-based interpreting service, offering fast access to over 100 languages.
- **Legal Advice Service** provided by Sherman Philips. Covers intellectual property, contract and company matters.
- **PLASA Insurance Scheme** provided by Allan, Chapman and James. Offers a single, comprehensive policy with a wide range of benefits.
- **Human Resources** provided by CP Associates. Advice on human resource issues including terms of employment, pay reviews, redundancy, etc.
- **Business Financial Reporting Service** provided by Dun and Bradstreet. Reports evaluating a company's performance, credit recommendation, etc.
- **Business Support Helpline** provided by IRPC Group, offering advice on business matters including legal, PAYE, copyright and patents, debt recovery etc.

Further information on these and other PLASA Services can be found on the PLASA website at [www.plasa.org/association](http://www.plasa.org/association)



The PLASA Stand, K19

## PLASA Industry Research

Members who participated in the survey will now have received their free 22 page overview and will shortly be receiving the reports that they have ordered. The research is available to participating members as follows:

- Free overview (for anyone who participated in questionnaire)
- Product sector reports (lighting, pro-audio, staging, AV) at £125 (plus VAT) each
- Detailed market sector report at £250 (plus VAT)
- Free Global report (for anyone who purchases any of the above)

Qualifying members can order all of the above reports at a special price of £500 sterling (plus VAT) - an overall saving of £250.

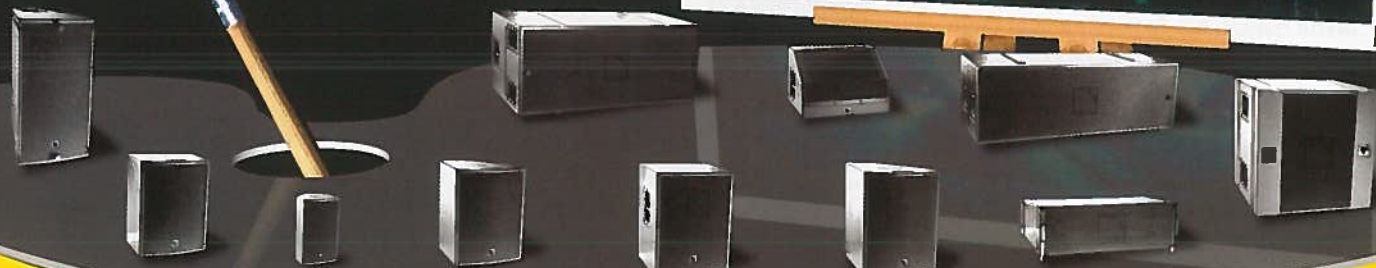
Members who did not participate can still gain access to all the above invaluable information by completing a questionnaire and undertaking to participate in the equivalent survey next year.

Any queries on the research project should be directed to [research@plasa.org](mailto:research@plasa.org)

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## Six of the Best

**Spirit Design, founded earlier this year by lighting designers Danny Evans and Justin Adams, has teamed up with Dave Bryant and Mike Townsend, following their recent departure from Midnight Design.**

They join an already expanding team with Maxie Knowles having come on board as general manager in May, and Damian Dowling, who joined in July, in place as business development director. Bryant and Townsend have joined at a critical stage in the development of the company, which hopes to be able to announce in the coming weeks a team of associate designers, who will play an important role in the future growth of the company, and further increase the already formidable design team.

Since it doesn't own any equipment, Spirit Design can source the most relevant kit for a project and as it has a wealth of international experience within the company, can back this up with high levels of technical knowledge. "I look forward to having even greater creative freedom



that being independent affords, and also the opportunity to look at the international expansion of the business," said Dave Bryant.

"Spirit Design is very much the new style of company within the live event industry, operating as an independent lighting design house, incorporating a team of dedicated design professionals," said Damian Dowling. The company, working out of its West London offices, has already had a very busy year, working on projects such as the launch of the

new Mercedes A Class series, the HMV Conference in Spain, UDV for Bailey's in Brazil and Guinness in Dublin, as well as a Nike event in London and Newcastle, the Cable & Wireless AGM and the sponsors village at the FA Charity Shield in Cardiff (pictured) to name but a few.

The company is set for a busy end to its summer with projects such as the International Festival of the Seas 2001 in Portsmouth and the Avon Roadshow in August, as well as the BBC Proms in Hyde Park in September.



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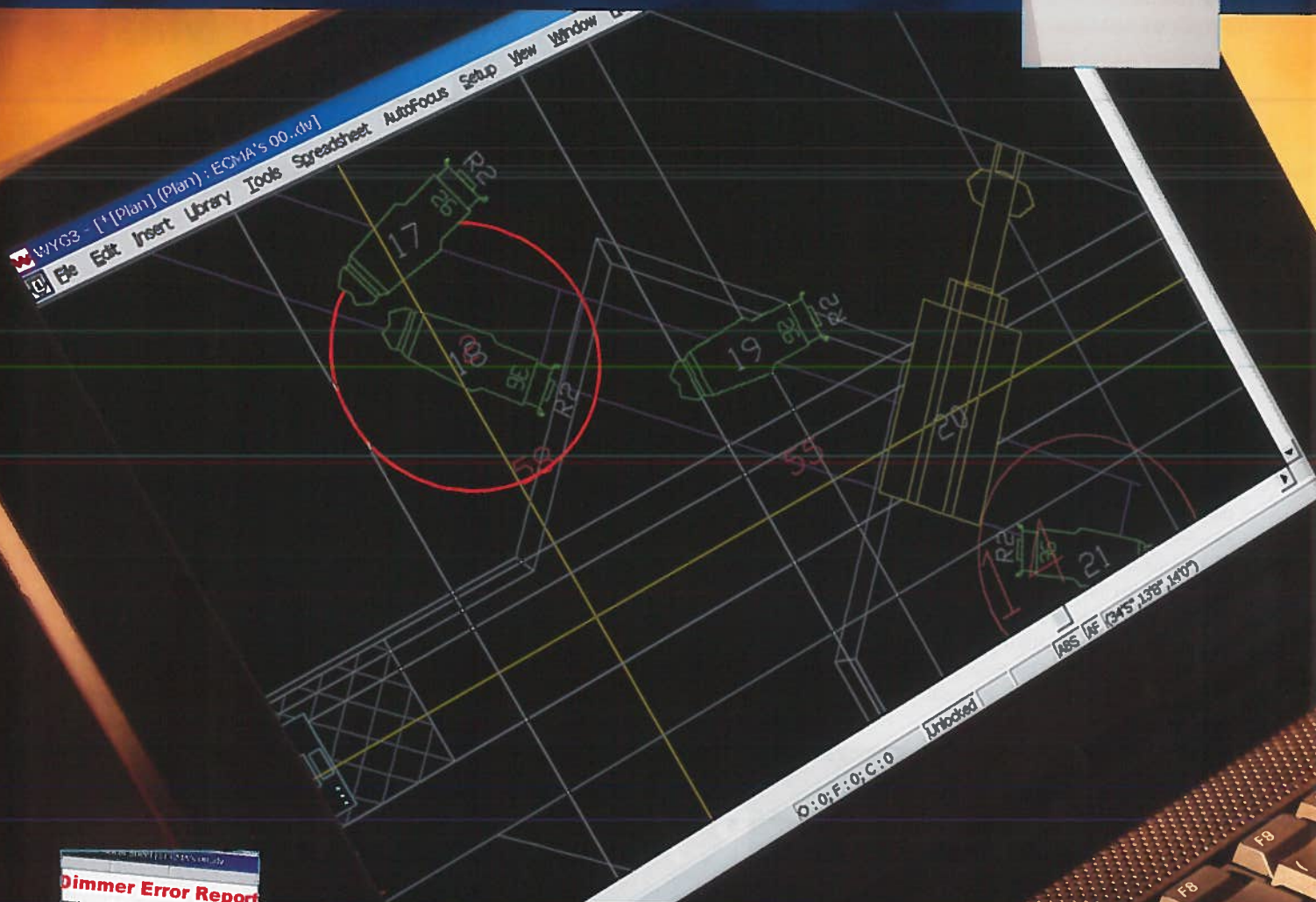
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# Don't keep them in the dark!



**Dimmer Error Report**

Project: Center 200  
Designer: Gil Dombach

Dimmer	Dimmer	Stat	Lamp	U
	Error		HPL 575W/120V	16
	Error		HPL 575W/120V	20
MX 1	Error		HPL 575W/120V	7
MX 3	Error		HPL 575W/120V	3
MX 5	Error		HPL 575W/120V	5
MX 6	Error		HPL 575W/120V	6

Error Log

Spot	Patch	Position
EDMX7	FL Truss	
EDMX13	Inner Oval	
EDMX32	Outer Truss	
EDMX21	Inner Oval	
EDMX9	FL Truss	
EDMX14	Inner Oval	
EDMX22	Inner Oval	
EDMX3	FL Truss	
EDMX4	FL Truss	
EDMX5	FL Truss	
EDMX6	FL Truss	

Data View

## When a performance goes dark – WYSILink shows you the light.

A performance needs lighting and you have to keep it that way. No excuses. Dimmer feedback tells you there's a problem, but not specific circuit locations and lantern data – and you don't have time to search. Now, WYSILink gives you that data. The first product created by the alliance of ETC and CAST Lighting, WYSILink combines award-winning WYSIWYG visualisation software with Sensor™ Advanced to create the world's most sophisticated system diagnostics. When Sensor Advanced detects a problem, WYSILink logs it, posts a detailed alert and highlights the image of the affected lantern along with lamp and dimmer data. All the information you need to fix the problem – fast.

When they're counting on you, you can count on WYSILink.

*That's ETC.*



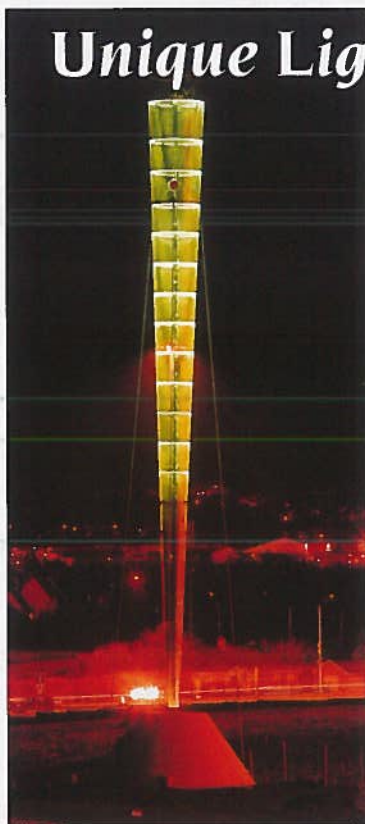


*The Dublin skyline witnessed the arrival of a unique feature when AC Lighting, working on behalf of London-based architects Hunt McGarry, commissioned a lighting scheme on a telecommunications mast in the city centre.*

The revolutionary 30m high mast, known as the Esat Digifone Telecommunications Millennium Landmark Structure, is located next to an M50 motorway interchange in Tallaght, Dublin. The mast has the shape of a slender inverted cone and is constructed using laser-cut perforated stainless steel.

Under the direction of AC's Peter Keiderling, various options were considered from neon to side-emitting fibre optics. The team opted for neon and a scheme was devised utilizing custom-manufactured segments of green neon to form double rings round the mast at 17 levels. Over 200 lengths of neon were produced in a variety of radii to complete the project. The neon was then connected through special IP66/67-rated converters to enable dimming/switching via an 18-channel Pulsar Datapak lighting power pack. This is, in turn, controlled from a Pulsar Masterpiece Replay Unit 216, programmed to perform a variety of chase sequences up and down the tower. The project has already caught the eye of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland who selected it for a Regional Award.

## Unique Lighting for Mast



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grapevinejobs is a new internet jobsite, designed exclusively for professionals in and around the broadcast, film and music sectors. The site launches on 6th September 2001 and aims to become the destination of choice for jobseekers and employers in those sectors.

Created by specialist recruitment consultants, Searchlight, the service will be free for jobseekers, with only a minimal cost to advertisers. A year in the making, the site can filter out jobs that aren't likely to be of interest to a particular user and will monitor new job postings and send an e-mail alert if a relevant job comes in.

[www.grapevinejobs.com](http://www.grapevinejobs.com)

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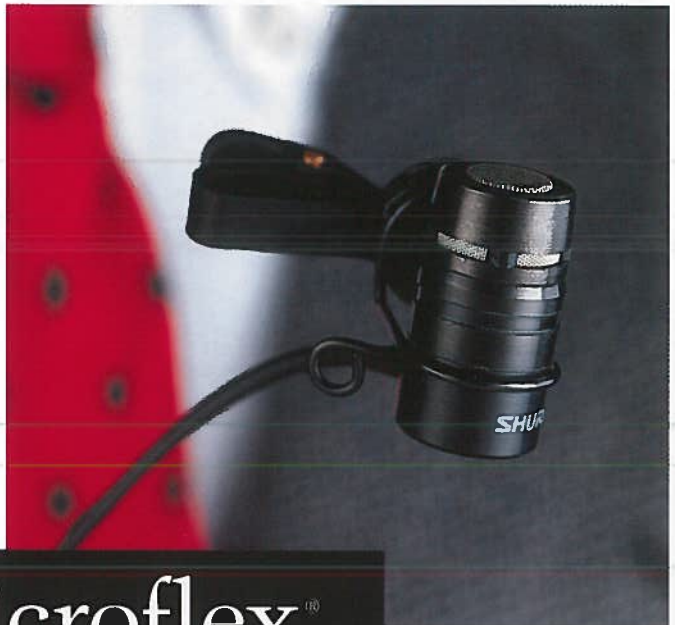
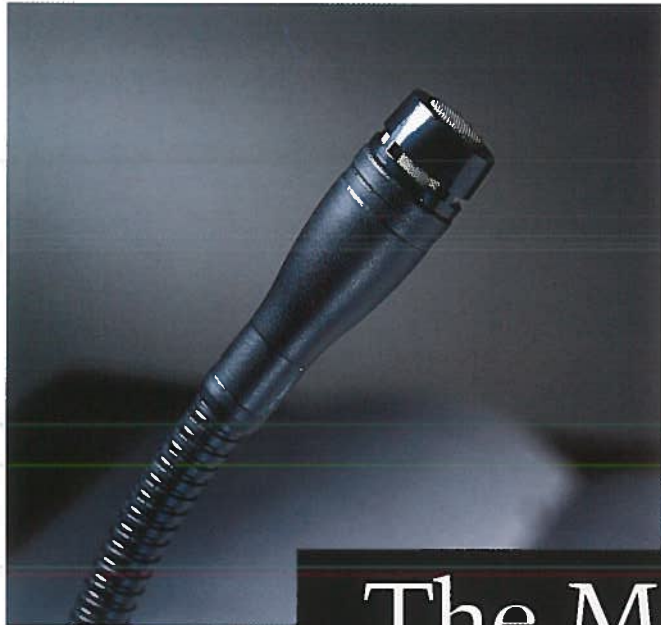
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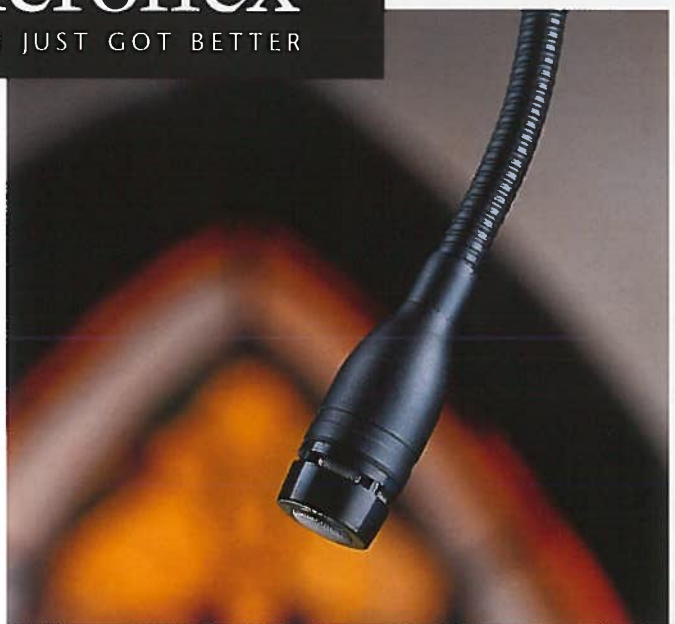
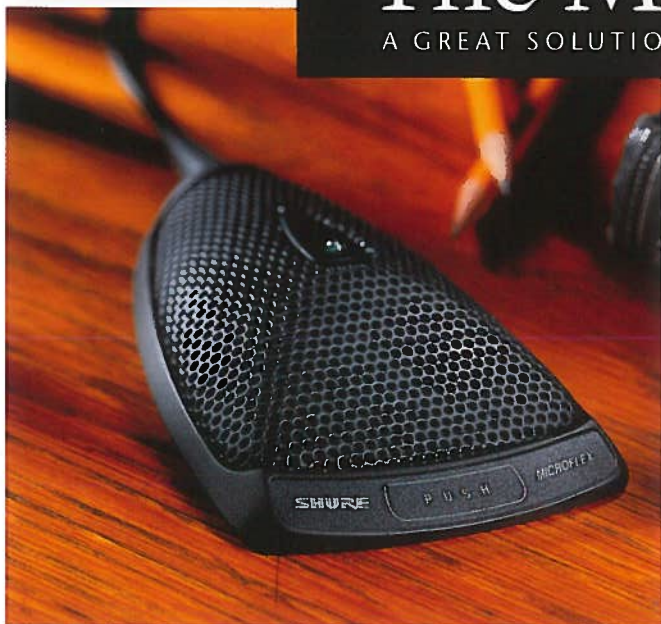
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News  
Round-Up



## Garden of Light



**Victoria Park in Hackney, East London, exploded into life in June as legendary French pyrotechnic artists Groupe F performed their high-energy Garden of Light spectacle - with live fire and music.**



The result was an unforgettable incendiary experience: Groupe F used the park environment as a backdrop, filling the surrounding space with sparks, flames, bangs and flashes - as well as a colossal jet-flamed Catherine wheel. Groupe F's relationship to fire and 'fireworks' is certainly not a classical one. The show opens with an alchemist character, stoking

and playing a 'keyboard' of fire - and just as alchemists changed the properties of real substances, Groupe F transformed fire into water for the finale of the 45-minute show.

Thousands crammed into the park to enjoy the two nights of free performance, part of the month-long London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT). Groupe F are a team of professionals from all areas of performance - engineers, actors, show technicians, composers, directors and producers - who work collaboratively to produce multimedia visual and sonic works based around fire - real fire! Christophe Berthonneau and his 'fire instigators' work internationally on a huge variety of events. Recent credits include the closing show for soccer's 1998 World Cup in Paris, the closing ceremony for Expo '98 in Lisbon and the stunning Millennium Eve fire show on the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Berthonneau explains that Groupe F first performed at the LIFT festival in 1995 where they created a fire show on the Thames. As director of the *Garden of Light* show, he wanted to add a new dimension to the performance and remove it from any commercial constraints. He is careful, however, not to reveal too many technical details about Groupe F's unique control and pyrotechnic systems, but is happy to admit that for *Garden of Light*, they utilized 3,000 shots of pyro for the aerial effects and 10,000 for the flames. Parts of the show and fire effects were triggered via timecode linked to the music, while other parts were improvised spontaneously. All the flames are produced by highly controllable pump mechanisms devised by Groupe F, and the show controller which they have named the Groupe F Tir Safe.

It's imperative for Groupe F that their creative impact is open to all, and that they can offer different ways of experiencing an environment. They thrive on transforming a location.

Louise Stickland

# ADVANCED ZONE MIXING TECHNOLOGY

## PUBMIX DIGITALLY CONTROLLED ZONE MIXER

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The new Z135 'PubMix' Digitally Controlled Zone Mixer brings the power of more expensive DSP based systems into the budget of smaller venues such as Pubs, Clubs, Restaurants and Retail outlets. Featuring a full routing matrix of 1 microphone and 3 stereo line sources into up to 23 zones, the 'PubMix' system offers superb flexibility and value for money for quality conscious installations.

- Simple key touch programming
- Programmable Routing, Priority, Level and Equalisation
- Absolute security with key coded software lock
- 4 levels of user access
- Automatic Volume Dependent Equalisation
- Master Remote Control and individual Zone Remote options
- Paging unit option
- Standard CAT5 network installation
- Externally controllable via RS232



Master Remote Control Unit



This simple to operate, wipe clean unit, allows user control over an installation from a single location. The unit provides the installer with the capability to name both sources and zones, which are displayed on an LCD. The user can then control the volume, and with the right access level, the source, in each zone.

Remote Zone Controllers



The wall mounting ZNR1 and ZNR2 Remotes allow volume only or volume and Source Select from individual zones. Installation via CAT5 cable.

Paging Unit



The desktop paging unit allows priority paging to 6 zones or groups of zones. Two paging units may be operated on the system network. The back illuminated zone designation strip is sealed beneath a wipe clean surface.



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**PLASA** STAND T36





## Picnic With Big Lucy

**Luciano Pavarotti's triumphant return to Hyde Park earlier this year in a Prince's Trust concert provided an opportunity to hear two new pieces of top-of-the-range audio technology.**

Using a system supplied by classical specialists Sound Hire, engineer John Pellowe and sound designer Alexander Yuill Thornton II (Thorny) were tasked with presenting Pavarotti, Vanessa Mae, Russell Watson and Charlotte Church to an audience of over 60,000. Pellowe commented on the new Meyer Sound M3D, which formed a large part of the main FOH system: "I like the M3D very much indeed - it uses broadly the same principle as V-dosc, and it carries well over a long distance without sounding ghastly close up."

Line-array technology, though, is not an instant solution to every problem, he added. "Everyone brags about how quickly these systems go up in the air - but there is still a big learning curve involved in getting them to work properly. I wouldn't say that the sound in Hyde Park was perfect, but Thorny and I are still learning the box. Even so, the M3D is probably better than 90% of people's home hi-fi when it's set up correctly - it's a frighteningly accurate loudspeaker."

Despite Pellowe's doubts, the one-off show received rave reviews in several newspapers, one or two even commenting specifically on the audio quality. The M3D arrays were complemented by a variety of Meyer's conventional products, including self-powered MSL-4s, MSL-10s and



CP-10 parametric equalizers, which were used to control the heavily-zoned system.

The requirement for 16 separately-fed zones around the vast site was met by the main front-of-house console, a Cadac 54-channel R-type. "One of the reasons I use Cadac boards is their large matrix section - it means that I can break out elements properly into groups and adjust their relative levels if it becomes necessary."

Pellowe generates a majority of mono mixes for his audience. "The main left and right system is the only part that we feed in stereo. Outfills, infills, frontfills and delays are all run in mono, because I see no reason why people sitting to the right of the stage should be deprived of the first violins!" Pellowe is also complimentary about the Cadac console's noise floor - of vital importance



The main stage with inset, the Cadac R-Type

in dealing with programme material with a dynamic range of more than 100dB. "It's extraordinarily low," he enthused, "there's still nothing that comes close. This is one of the best-grounded desks around; it's very well shielded from RF interference - unlike many, it's not affected by walkie-talkies or mobiles going off."

Pellowe's microphone choice (almost exclusively from Schoeps) stems from his years spent recording classical albums for Decca. "Pavarotti has used the same microphone for a long time for both outdoor and arena shows," he revealed. "It's a Schoeps Mk4 cardioid condenser capsule, fitted to a 1200mm Active Tube and a CMC6 amplifier body. It's a regular, standard cardioid - without the usual high frequency lift - it's as flat as one can reasonably get." Strings and harp are captured using MK21 sub-cardioid heads - a wider pattern mic that

represents, Pellowe claims, a good compromise between the sound of an ideal omnidirectional and the practical benefits of a true cardioid.

"Using mics like this means living a little bit dangerously - sometimes we get too close to the wind as far as feedback is concerned, and occasionally I have to swap some of the mics for tighter-pattern MK4s. This is always a problem if you don't close-mic the orchestra - but if you do, the strings can start to sound scratchy. I'm just trying to recreate that lovely fat old sound that we could get in the studio with only six mics."

Mike Mann

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## PSL Supply Summer's Largest Dance Event

*PSL Concert Touring and PSL Lighting were both contracted to supply site video and lighting for Ministry of Sound at Knebworth 01.*

Over 15 large screen projectors, 300 lights and several miles of cable went into producing one of the largest dance events of the year, comprising not only the main stage featuring headline act Jamiroquai, but also 12 dance arenas and a cinema tent. The two teams, headed by Scott Russell and Stephanie Jefcoate at PSL Concert Touring and Mick Scullion at PSL Lighting, worked together to bring stunning visual effects using some of the latest equipment recently purchased by both companies.

One of the largest portable production units ever used in a festival setting supplied by PSL, controlled the video and five cameras for the main stage and allowed the two 4 x 4 LED Screens to each display different effects at the



*Knebworth attracted 55,000 people, over 160 DJs and Live acts and the first major UK gig in two years from Jamiroquai*

same time, while the recently-purchased Barco ELM R12s projectors featured in the Renaissance tent, projecting onto a 7m round inflatable screen last used at the Brit Awards. A 30ft wide screen was also supplied for the cinema tent.

PSL Lighting, designed a rig using 6 x 50ft trusses and over 50 moving and generic lights in the Renaissance tent alone, and were involved in the design of all the dance arenas using a WYSIWYG system and most of the lighting equipment in their warehouse! PSL Concert Touring is also providing technical support for the upcoming European tours for Radiohead and Orbital. They will also be touring with *Lord of the Dance* in Japan and Russia.

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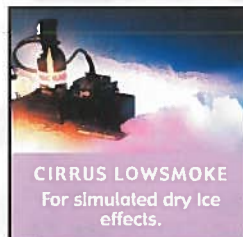
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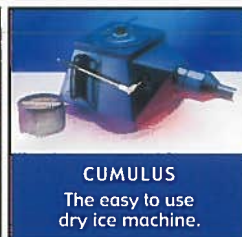
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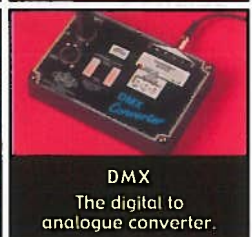
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We've got it all under control



## Digital Talkback Launched

**A new company - Digital Talkback - has been formed to manufacture a new range of wireless communication products.**

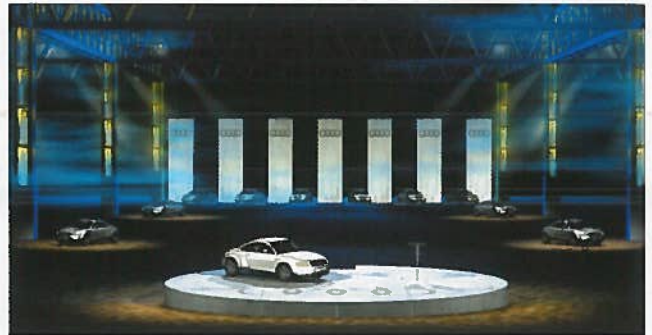
The company has been set up by Mike Weaver of Mike Weaver Communications, and already has Andy Lillywhite (also of Mike Weaver Communications) and Richard Barman - formerly a director of Autograph Sales - onboard. Lillywhite and Barman are undertaking technical and marketing/sales roles respectively.

The first product launched by Digital Talkback is the DTB-2001 wireless beltback system which has been developed over the last 12 months by radio communications specialist Weaver. The product debuts at IBC in September (and will be previewed the preceding week at PLASA in Earls Court on the Autograph Sales stand).

The DTB-2001 beltback/base station system is based on DECT technology and is licence-exempt in the UK, as well as the rest of the EU and many other territories. The system avoids competing with the already clogged radio frequency networks, and over 100 users can use the system in a single location, with no frequency management or time-consuming and complex set-up necessary.

Digital audio transmission also enables all packs to be fully duplex, and ensures that audio quality is always crystal clear. Each beltback has its own dedicated base station, and each base station can be integrated with either 4-wire systems, standard two-wire 'party line' intercom systems or even both at the same time. Digital Talkback can be contacted at Unit 6, Fullwood Close, Coventry, CV2 2SS, UK.

Tel: +44 (0)2476 617743



## Beautiful Result

Event design company, Beautiful Neptune Design, turned a crisis into an opportunity after an office break-in earlier this year left the company without computers and software. The company, a partnership established in 1995, offers lighting and set design, technical drawing and visualisation for live events, performances and exhibitions to producing companies.

Company director Steve Hicks decided to turn the situation to his advantage by investing in new IT equipment. Clients can now expect greatly reduced modelling and rendering times during design development and final presentation. Through the use of 'bi-directional drawing linking' and parametric modelling, designers will be able to easily manipulate and modify elements in a 2D or 3D environment.

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## Sugar Sounds Sweet

Trafalgar Leisure, who already own several sites in Newcastle, including the impressive Powerhouse, have just celebrated the opening of their latest club, Sugar, in the heart of Newcastle's city centre. Once again, Trafalgar turned to Sound Control's 'Big Paul' Yeats to specify all the audio equipment for this five-floor entertainment complex which includes bars, a cafe and a restaurant, as well as the club itself, all beautifully designed. As with Powerhouse, Paul opted for a full EV/Dynacord audio solution to the venue's exacting demands.'

The basement and fifth floors, which house the bathrooms and restaurant respectively, are the quietest parts of the building and both have been supplied with a 100V line system based around Dynacord DL70W ceiling speakers. The ground and first floors are home to the café and bar areas where Yeats has specified a system based around EV Sx80 cabinets supplemented by Shuttlesound GSS15 bins. The ground floor sports a total of eight Sx80s and two GSS15s, while the first floor utilizes 12 Sx80s and four



GSS15s. The club system on the next floor is a simple but more heavyweight, comprising four Sx300s and a single Xi2181 bass bin with a powered Dynacord AM12 acting as DJ monitor. Amplification is provided by Electro-Voice P Series and Dynacord S Series amps throughout. "Essentially, the system gets louder as you travel up the building culminating with the club system on the fourth floor which is very

powerful for its size. The fifth floor is the restaurant where it's nice and quiet again," explains Paul.

One of Sugar's most visually spectacular features is a huge spiral staircase which twines its way up from the basement to the first floor. "It's the most amazing structure," says Paul. "I've honestly never seen anything like it - it's almost like a human spine. We found it useful since it gave us the opportunity to do something which, to my knowledge, has not been done before. We have arrayed seven Sx80s around the top of the staircase which provides seamless coverage for the whole of the first floor, and the areas we couldn't reach, because there were pillars in the way, are covered by a number of separate cabinets dotted around the place. On both the first and ground floors we've chosen to go for quite a lot of cabinets so that the system sounds good both quiet and loud. During the day it's an extremely polite system which ticks over nicely. In the evening once the DJ has turned up to take residence, it starts to get louder, but it's never running flat out. In fact, the bar staff have independent level controls for their own area on each floor in case the DJ gets too enthusiastic!"

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## Swansgate Voice Alarm

**West London-based Ampekkko was recently contracted by Lasalle Investment Management to supply a sophisticated voice alarm and public address system for the Swansgate Shopping Centre, situated in the heart of Wellingborough.**

Ampekkko worked closely with project manager Neil Horswood of Neil R Horswood Services, after winning the tender to design a dual-purpose system to be integrated into Swansgate's four spacious shopping malls.

Before finalising the system, the company's design team performed a number of acoustic modelling tests on-site, including a full RASTI test, required because of the harsh nature of surfaces throughout the centre. They then decided on an integrated PA and voice alarm system, based around Bouyer's digital GD 2299 - a

specialist spot-messaging hard disk recorder and player that allows for up to 100 voice messages to be stored and accessed when needed. Bouyer PGM 5008 microphones were used to offer built-in monitoring and intercom facilities. RB 39 Bouyer projector loudspeaker cabinets were specified in white to blend unobtrusively into the shopping mall. These are powered by eight amplifiers and use the Ampekkko SPM10 line monitor.

The system allows for coded messages to pre-warn staff in advance of a possible evacuation, thereby helping to minimise a dangerous situation. Working not only as a security voice alarm, the system provides valuable add-on features including up to 100 repeat voice messages. The messaging system can be pre-programmed to deliver a host of messages from vital security information through to promotional messaging as well as important customer notices.

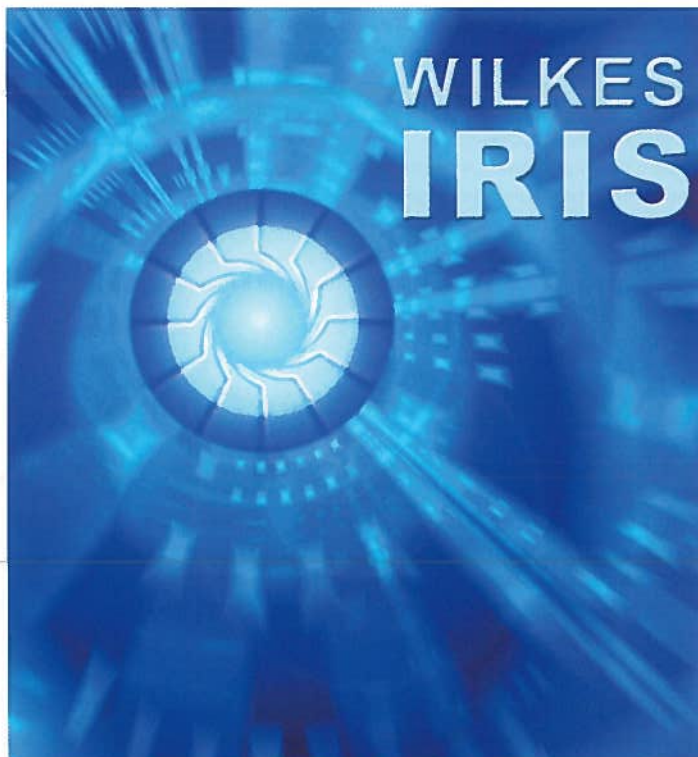
## Creative Technology Open Day

**Newly-formed CT London held its official open day and new building launch on 26 July. A major development for the Avesco**



**Group, the new 8,500sq.ft premises in Chessington, Surrey, are home to 20 staff, including technical crew, covering hire and project management.**

CT London provides PC and IT rental equipment, including networking and internet services - specifically aimed at the exhibition market and other live events. CT's product base incorporates data display technology - including flat LCD screens, touch screens, plasma screens and indoor LED modules. A clear opportunity to exhibit the features and capabilities of their large indoor LED screens, the open day gave centre stage to the new Barco iLite 6, in addition to a specifically-prepared Dataton Watchout presentation - using image manipulation techniques on eight synchronised Plasma screens. CT-London director Steve Rowan (left) is pictured with CEO Graham Andrews.



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## News Round-Up



A special 'ready-to-tour' deal has been announced for Allen & Heath's flagship ML5000 27-buss live sound VCA console. In addition to the mixer, each ML5000 Pro Touring Package includes a high quality Amptown touring console flightcase, a pair of rugged MPS14 power supplies with autoswitching in a wheeled 7U Amptown flightcase with 3U lockable drawer, a console dustcover and four Littlites.

Allen & Heath and Amptown have gone to great lengths to devise the ideal case for the ML5000. Among the features created to meet the needs of the touring industry is a specially-designed cable compartment with a hinged lid that can be easily slotted in and out to allow full access for patching. The console is protected by rubber shock absorbing, enabling the ML5000 to safely travel upright on six heavy-duty castors. Up to 20 handles are provided, and the inside of the case is fully foam lined and strengthened latterly to improve rigidity.

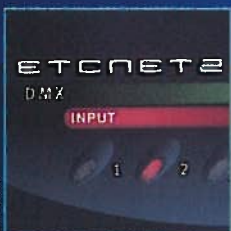
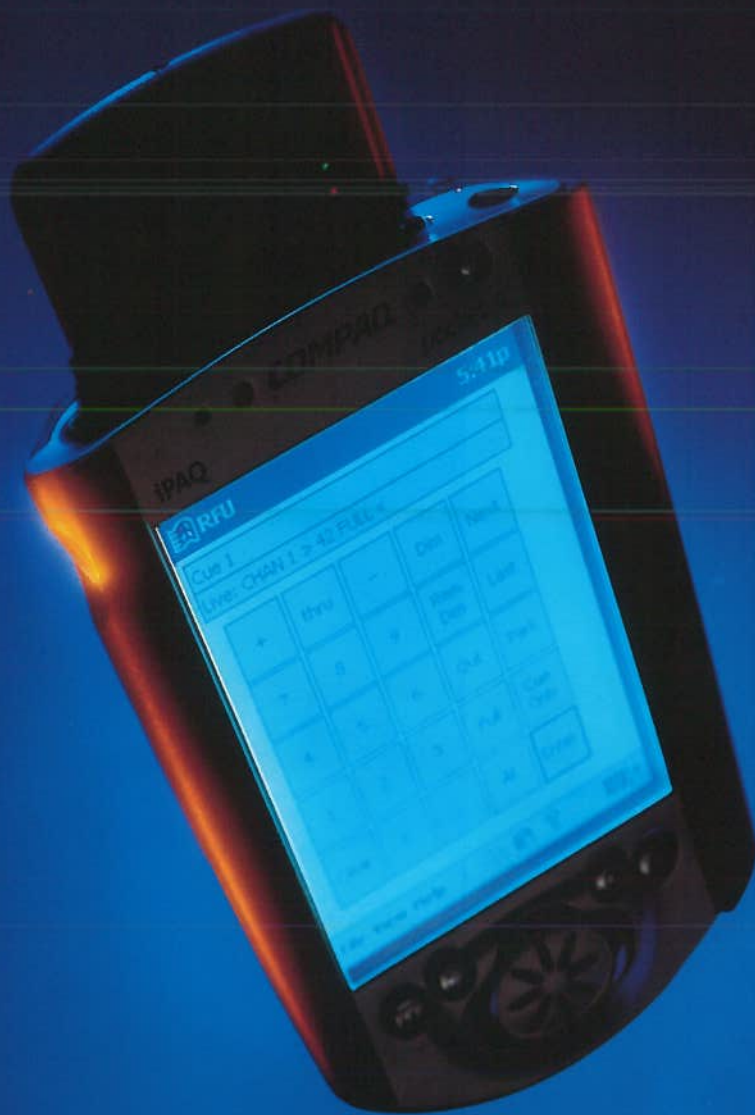
Martin Daley, UK sales manager at Allen & Heath, told L&S: "As well as taking the hassle out of getting cases and accessories together for a new desk, the Pro Touring Package makes it easy to arrange finance for the whole deal rather than individual elements. With a lot of help from John O'Neill and the Amptown team, I think we've come up with a really robust, practical solution, that can make life that bit easier on the road." The ML5000 pro touring package is only available in the UK and can be purchased for 32-, 40- and 48-channel consoles. Allen & Heath's 24-channel sidecar expanders for ML5000 can now also be supplied in matching Amptown cases, allowing the creation of a touring system boasting up to 96 channels.

## LDPS Moves to New Offices

Irish lighting design and technical consultancy LDPS Ltd has moved into new offices in central Cork as part of an ongoing expansion and recruitment programme. The recent move is designed to integrate all aspects of the growing LDPS team into one creative and administrative space. The team has also been strengthened by the appointment of Bertie Buckley as company administrator. Buckley previously worked as assistant to the Director of Cork Opera House.

LDPS was formed by Grant Collie in 1998 to offer consultancy, lighting design and project management services and solutions to all areas of the pro entertainment industry - including clubs, theatres, conference and multi-purpose venues. The operation has developed rapidly in the last two years, particularly on the consultancy and technical services side of the business. LDPS has also experienced a steady upward trend in supplying project management and equipment procurement facilities - for an eclectic variety of clients. Recent projects include being onboard as technical theatre consultants for the new Cork School of Music, due for completion in 2003. The company can be reached at Studio Office 11, Fareham House, 26/27 MacCurtain St, Cork, Ireland. Tel: + 353 21 450 8162.

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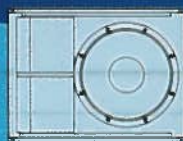


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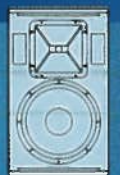
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## High Tech Transformation



*Vertigo Rigging has recently completed a demanding project at the new high-tech factory of Spanish tile company Porcelanosa. Vertigo was brought in as the rigging consultant by Fisher Productions, who produced a special celebration dinner event in the factory space - marking the acquisition of the new building. The creative brief was to transform the factory from its everyday working state to a comfortable and chic environment for the occasion.*

The sets were designed by Johnny Roxborough, and for Fisher Productions by Nigel Prabhavalkar. This involved large areas of the factory being draped off to create new and interesting spaces, with Vertigo supplying the rigging infrastructure needed to support the draped materials. In the reception area, where guests entered the factory, Vertigo assembled and flew an octagonal trussing mother grid to support the various metalwork, wood and pieces of carpentry that formed the temporary walls. When complete, it resembled a 25m diameter circle, fully draped around the perimeter with a scalloped-style material wall and a stretched ceiling. Directly above the tiered band platform in the middle, Vertigo flew an 8m circular lighting truss.

The dining area proved a more galvanising rigging equation. The 400 guests were seated at one 155m long dining table. Vertigo built a 155m long by 5.5m wide box truss to run above the table, suspended in the factory roof by 30 half-tonne Lodestar hoists. From that, drape specialists Omega hung white cloths, creating a long white tunnel effect on the inside of the space. However one section of the drape 'wall' was composed from white sharkstooth gauze, its transparency revealing the latest robotic production line machinery - atmospherically lit with glowing hues and moody shafts of light.

To ensure lights could be rigged in the right places above the robots, Vertigo also hung two 55m trusses. The full production line was over 250m long, so only about one-third of it was revealed to the diners. Additional scaffolding and metalwork was mounted above the white cloth of the dining room tunnel ceiling for PA and lighting (provided by Dobson Sound and Fisher Productions respectively).

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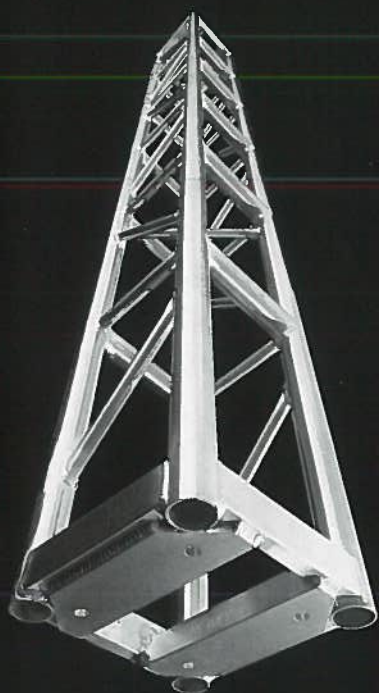


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## News Round-Up



### People on the Move . . .

Bryan Wilson and Jon Gee formed central London-based Flying Squad Aerial Rigging Services late last year to offer a specialist team devoted to flying performers and acrobats. As part of its expansion, the company has just welcomed a newly-appointed director, **Rory McKeown**. At the forefront of imaginative rigging design for over 20 years, McKeown's CV reads like a who's who of the entertainment industry. In his new position, McKeown is currently establishing the rigging department at Excel Event Services, in London's docklands.

Internationally recognized lighting designer **Jeff Ravitz**, principal of Visual Terrain Inc, has received a Prime Time Emmy Award nomination for his lighting design on the recent Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band special on HBO. Marking the first time Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band have been presented in concert on television, the special was shot last summer in high-definition format during Springsteen's record-setting, 10-show sell-out at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

**Darren DeVerna** has joined PRG's management team as vice president, Production Resource Group, and will be supported by the resources of Fourth Phase, ProMix Electrotec and Scenic Technologies. DeVerna, formerly the president of Four Star Lighting, has been involved with countless theatrical productions. In his new role, DeVerna will provide service and support to the extremely demanding Broadway and theatrical touring markets. He will be based out of PRG's Mount Vernon, New York office and will report to Bill Groener, Northeast Regional Vice-President.

West London-based Ampekkko continues to grow, and, as part of its expansion programme, which includes a move to new premises, has recruited **Pat Bradley** to head its national sales division. With 25 years' industry experience in the sales of complex integrated systems, Bradley is well positioned to take on his new role and will handle the UK sales of pro audio brands, including SLS from the US, WHD from Germany and Commax from Korea.

Sennheiser Electronics Corporation (SEC) has promoted **Jeff Alexander** to director of distributed brands. In the newly created position, Alexander adds Neumann and True Systems to the Sennheiser brands he is already managing: DAS, Chevin, and Innova-Son. By picking up the former two brands, Alexander



Alfred van Wyk



Saffron Wynn-Jones

fills a void left by the recent promotion of Karl Winkler, who is now director of marketing communications.

**Bob Cashill** has stepped down as editor of *Lighting Dimensions* magazine. In a notice posted on the publication's website, a brief statement says that on July 28, publisher Jacqueline Tien appointed David Barbour to head up the editorial staff for the magazine. Barbour, a veteran of the Entertainment Design/Theatre Crafts and *Lighting Dimensions* team, has 11 years' experience with the publications. Prior to that he was the director of the Drama Desk Board. Cashill had been appointed editor of the magazine in 1996.

UK distributor HW International has appointed **Saffron Wynn-Jones** to head its marketing department. Based at HW's North London headquarters, Saffron will be responsible for all aspects of the marketing and work closely with world leading brands such as Shure, QSC, Phonic and PreSonus. Wynn Jones was formerly employed by pro audio reseller LMC Audio Systems as marketing manager.

**Chad Ward** has joined Bandit Lites UK as operations manager. He was previously responsible for Bandit's account whilst he was a sales representative for Wirral-based Tomcat UK. Ward has a wealth of knowledge from his time with Tomcat and previously Unusual Rigging and will be responsible for procurement, logistics and purchasing.

As part of a major restructuring, Philips CSI has made two new appointments. **Alfred van Wyk** has been appointed national sales manager and **Paul Ward** is now southern regional sales manager. Van Wyk takes overall responsibility for all UK sales of PA, intercom, paging and congress systems. Ward, who joins the company from Direct Communications, will focus on supporting dealers in the south, as well as consultants and specifiers especially for public address and voice alarms.

**Kurt Kern** has joined TMB's sales department, working out of the New York office. Kern is widely experienced in entertainment lighting having been department head of electrics and sound for the New York Shakespeare Festival for three years and production manager for the New Haven Symphony Orchestra for seven. Additionally, his four years as national director of purchasing for PRG/Fourth Phase Lighting Group, gave Kern direct understanding of the needs of the supply side of the industry.

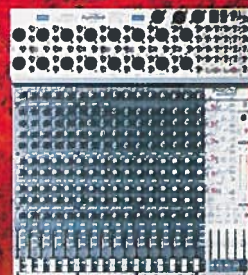
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# Stereophonics' Day at The Races



*Apologies to the Stereophonics, but this is going to be an unsung heroes review. Unlike other shows, I'm going to concentrate attention on the peripherals, everything other than light and sound.*

Following the appalling tragedy at Roskilde, crowd management has ridden to the top of all festival organiser's agendas. This was the first big show at Donnington since the demise of the annual Monsters of Rock five years ago, and security arrangements were uppermost in many minds. Showsec, the contracted party, has much experience of Donnington, not least from Monsters, so in many ways choosing them was a given. Company founder Mick Upton managed a team of 250 Showsec staff from the control room, which he shared with local emergency services and licensing officials, monitoring events by radio and CCTV. Mike Harding, group operations director, was at the sharp end of crowd control, with responsibility for some 40,000 individuals. "As it happened, the event was very good-natured. The crowd tended to be younger and less intoxicated than the old Monsters crowds, and presented no major challenges, even back at the campsite after the show."

Harding's low-key post show report belies the planning that led to this benign state of affairs. One of the key areas of concern was the front of the crowd and pit area. Following the commitment made by SFX director Stuart Galbraith at the International Live Music Conference (ILMC) this year, where he said that SFX would "proactively discourage crowd surfing," plans were drawn up. A primary D barrier system (from Mojo) was incorporated in



the risk assessment for the event prepared by Harding and Upton; this barrier-design limits the number of people in the area immediately in front of the stage, and means that Showsec staff also had easy access well back into the audience.

"We met with the promoters (SFX and SJM) to discuss crowd surfing, which has been a growing concern at rock concerts in recent years," said Harding. "We implemented a policy whereby our staff asked people not to crowd surf as they were entering the site and making their way in the front pit enclosure, which generally worked very well. The few people who did come over were taken into a marquee at the side of the stage where the dangers of crowd surfing and their consequential liability if they injured anyone were explained." Quite a sobering prospect for most fans.

Like all big outdoor events, this one involved an enormous army of support staff, from Star Hire's

## News Round-Up



*Stereophonics - not the most animated performers in the history of pop*

*Below, Showsec's Mike Harding and Gerry Slater - co-founders of Showsec*



roofing and staging team, through to security, they all needed to be fed, up to 800 of them at the event peak. Eat to the Beat (ETTB) got the gig, by default of being tour caterers for the Stereo's, and largely down to the efforts of one man, 'Tommo' (he's known by no other name), their tour chef for the past three outings.

Eat to the Beat's manager Fiona Esmarch co-ordinated the logistics for the event, which were based in the Donnington 'Pit Stop' café, over half a mile from the production area. "The Pit Stop is normally only used for reheating food such as burgers," explained Esmarch, "so we had to convert half of the dining room into a full kitchen and install our own walk in cold-room, ovens, cookers, a dish washing unit and serveries."

No small task, ETTB supplied 11 staff augmented by three local crew, managed by event leader Suzie D'Andrea. Because of the long distance from the production area, shuttle buses were laid on to ferry the crew to the café, which meant that people arrived in larger groups rather than the normal steady trickle of roadies taking a break. Likewise, the artists' dressing rooms for the five bands that appeared on the day were also situated some distance from the Pit Stop, so their food and drinks were driven across to them, once they'd been prepared in the ETTB kitchen.

Despite some fairly pressured days, Esmarch was able to declare: "It was a pleasure to work with the Stereophonics. They were typically stress-free and no trouble, as were all of the support bands." Nice to hear the support acts, surely at the fag end of the industry, get some recognition there.

Arguably one of the hardest jobs, considering the weather, was roof erection days before the event. Star Hire provided one of their new Vertech systems, a 42m wide stage plus PA wings, with an 11m trim (above stage deck) for the roof. "The wind was our main challenge this week," explained Neil McDonald, the band's tour manager. "A Force 8 gale during set-up meant that it was unsafe to try and raise the roof on the stage on Thursday. Star Hire's crew pulled out all of the stops the next day, working in still difficult conditions to get the roof and covers up ready for the rest of production when it arrived." Which solved most problems. "We simply moved the sound checks back to Saturday morning and everyone coped comfortably."

Sound and lighting was supplied by Capital Sound (Martin Wavefront 8), and VLPS (with Vari\*Lites, naturally) respectively. Dave Roden mixing house, Arturo Ollandini designing and operating the lights.

The Stereophonics perform with all the animation of Bill Wyman in a coma, so video was essential for some dynamics; director Dick Carruthers called in Black Pig to supply LED screens each side of stage, plus a scattering of 24 panels at various heights, across the back of stage.

None of which would have been any use at all were it not for the availability of highly-agitated sub-atomic particles (electrons) whizzing round at amazing speed in the middle of a field where the nearest pylon was eight miles away. Pete Wills is a familiar face at such events, but his new company, Power Logistics Ltd, is not. Wills and his team



installed a pair of Caterpillar 650kVA generators for lights, plus a pair of 400kVAs for sound and video, and a further 20 small-capacity generators around the site for concession stands, site lighting, etc. "It was nice to be back at Donnington, having worked most of the shows since the first Monsters 20 years ago," said Wills. This was a big step for Wills, virtually everything used was bought new, a major investment for a fledgling company, but then he's always been a safe pair of hands.

Final word should go to Tony Wheeler's Aztec Productions who managed the event, John Armstrong being the man on the day: "The suppliers have worked well as a team through some rough weather during the build up. They have been professional to a man." So, let's hear it for the support industry.

**Steve Moles**

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## Events Diary

a quick run-down of forthcoming trade shows . . .

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### AES, NEW YORK

21-24 SEPTEMBER, NEW YORK, USA  
AES conventions always feature a full programme of technical papers, seminars and workshops covering current research and new concepts and applications. Accompanying these is a comprehensive exhibition of professional audio equipment. AES events primarily cover audio for broadcast, although the sound reinforcement market is also well represented.

▶ Tel: +1 212 661 8528  
▶ [www.aes.org](http://www.aes.org)

### LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

2-4 OCTOBER 2001, NEC, BIRMINGHAM, UK  
International Leisure Industry Week is Europe's largest out-of-home leisure show featuring a range of solutions to help today's multi-use leisure sites succeed. The event features the products and services of more than 400 leisure market suppliers.

▶ Tel: +44 (0)870 429 4548  
▶ [www.liw.co.uk](http://www.liw.co.uk)

### LDI & EXPOLATINA 2001

2-4 NOVEMBER, ORLANDO, USA  
LDI is the leading entertainment technology exhibition in North America, alternating year-on-year between two of the USA's major entertainment hotspots - Las Vegas and Orlando. The show attracts 440+ companies and more than 13,000 visitors each year. It covers professional lighting, audio, stage engineering, special effects and associated equipment and services. It also includes a full programme of seminars and conferences. This year, LDI will incorporate ExpoLatina - a dedicated exhibition for the Latin-American, Spanish-speaking marketplace.

▶ Tel: +1 800 288 8606  
▶ [www.ldishow.com](http://www.ldishow.com)

### IAAPA

13-17 NOVEMBER, ORLANDO, USA  
More than 1,300 companies - including every major attraction supplier and manufacturer - fill the exhibition floor with the next generation of products for the amusement parks and attractions markets. There's also a conference programme and range of special events linked to the exhibition.

▶ Tel: +1 703 836 4800  
▶ [www.iaapa.org](http://www.iaapa.org)

### SBES 2001

14-15 NOVEMBER, NEC, BIRMINGHAM, UK  
The Sound Broadcasting Equipment Show is the niche UK exhibition for sound in radio, TV and associated broadcast media. The show brings together some of the key players in the audio broadcasting industry, and features seminars focusing on audio networking with exhibitors being able to present their products and theories within a conference-style facility.

▶ Tel: +44 1398 323700  
▶ [www.sbes.com](http://www.sbes.com)

### PERFORMANCE 2001

17-18 NOVEMBER, NEWCASTLE, UK  
Launch exhibition with conference, seminars and workshops aiming to bring together manufacturers, venues, producers and promoters, plus a complete range of associated services related to the live performance industry. The 1500sq.m of exhibition space will house exhibitors displaying the latest in lighting and sound equipment, staging, studio technology, special effects, transport, catering and support services.

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### NAMM

17-20 JANUARY 2002, ANAHEIM, USA  
The Anaheim Convention Center will once again play host to thousands upon thousands of music industry professionals from around the world in January of 2002. The 2002 event is expected to become NAMM's largest and most successful show to date.

▶ Tel: +1 760 438 8001  
▶ [www.namm.com](http://www.namm.com)

A full listing of all forthcoming events for this industry can be found on the PLASA website at [www.plasa.org/events](http://www.plasa.org/events). If you're planning to attend any of these shows, then we can make your life a little easier: PLASA Media has put together a series of comprehensive Fact Sheets covering the key details of some of the major trade shows, including contact information, show and visitor profiles, an accommodation and travel guide, a focus on the host city and travel tips. These are being added to all the time and can be found on the PLASA website at [www.plasa.org/events](http://www.plasa.org/events). Alternatively ring us on +44 1323 418400 or e-mail [ruth@plasa.org](mailto:ruth@plasa.org) and we'll send the FactFiles to you.

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## Robot Wars

*Chainsaws, angle-grinders, axes and flame-throwers - just some of the impressive weaponry being demonstrated by participants in this summer's Robot Wars tour.*

Thousands of eager fans were treated to over two hours of destruction and mayhem, all carefully choreographed by director Hugh Wooldridge. "It's an amazing mix of old and new cultures," he explained. "We're acting out the ancient idea of gladiatorial combat, but with cutting-edge robot technology. In fact, almost the entire show is controlled - our job is to make the audience think that it's not."

Even under controlled conditions, the sheer power of the robotic stars of the show (some of which weigh in excess of 150kgs) meant that humans were excluded from the combat area. "Not only do we have to keep our distance from the action, but we're also shooting through thick Macrolon screens," revealed video director Raurie MacPhie. Fortunately for MacPhie's camera operators, Macrolon is not only bullet-proof, but is also used as a shield by bomb disposal experts. "We have to watch the cameras' iris controls almost as closely as their focus. Close-ups, especially, are a nightmare because of the visible scratches on the screens - and of course the kids all want to see big shots of the damage being done!" MacPhie included a single truss camera in his arsenal (all supplied by XL Video), alongside handheld Sony D35s, a standard XL SDI digital PPU and a three-screen projection rig.

Sound reinforcement for the tour was provided by south London-based Orbital Sound, who supplied a distributed d&b C7 system to handle the thrust stage. With no acoustic sources apart from presenter vocals, sound effects and stings were cued manually by operator Paul Johnson. "We did originally have



Left, the main arena where leftover bits of Stepford Wives go for the kill  
Inset, the XL Video team.



a couple of effects mics, but we lost them - literally - they just got burned up!" Since microphones are not considered by Orbital as a consumable item, a keyboard-triggered Akai S6000 sampler was used to create all the crashes, thumps and assorted whines required to add impact. "The idea is to punctuate the running commentary from our MC," pointed out Johnson, "but by using a careful choice of effects, we can also add a bit of personality and humour to the robots."

Human action was provided by three roller-blading 'Robobabes', who were there, Hugh Wooldridge admits, "for the dads! However, we did make sure that they don't show too much flesh, so as to not alienate the mums." The Babes, like their other co-presenters, Craig Charles and Andy Collins, were kitted out with Shure Beta 58 hand held radio mics, while the men also sported Trantec IEM systems.

Lighting operator Tellson James was also affected by the Macrolon 'box' that surrounds the stage. "It means that we haven't been able to use conventional followspots on the robots," he said. "Instead, I'm using the Trackpod laser system from Martin Professional. It really works better with moving mirror fixtures than these big MACs, but they're still pretty fast - which is just as well because these robots can really move when they want to!" Like Orbital, lighting provider EL&P also suffered losses - these were potentially rather more expensive, as props and pieces of dead robot are hurled up into the grid. An extensive system of Propane flame-throwers was provided by the BBC's special effects department, which is also responsible for studio pyrotechnics during the filming of the series. For the live event, the pressurised cylinders were located outside the Macrolon screens and controlled by a manually-operated custom console, under the watchful eye of two fire officers.

The cavernous backstage area, more normally used for housing empty flightcases, was devoted to a series of fully-equipped workshops, where damaged or defective robots could be brought back to life by their creators. Hugh Wooldridge, who is better known for his work on large-scale spectacles with big-name stars, claims that these mechanical monsters are only slightly easier to deal with than their human counterparts. "They can be just as temperamental as Elaine Paige or Michael Crawford, but at least they don't ask for flowers in their dressing rooms!"

Mike Mann

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### 40w Nd:YAG - The Emerald

The Emerald is a 40 watt high power, frequency doubled, Q-switched Nd:YAG laser. It is the only commercial laser designed and built in the UK specifically for the leisure market. The laser resonator is based on a unique in-line design, allowing operation at lower lamp currents than existing models. Warm up time is less than five minutes. The system is micro-processor controlled with monitoring of all key parameters, and LCD display for status messages.



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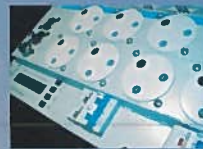
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## Licence Fee Changes

The Radiocommunications Agency (RA) has announced a new fee structure for radio microphone licensing which took effect on 19 July. The changes are part of the introduction of Spectrum Pricing into the Programme Making and Special Events sector (PMSE), which is managed by JFMG.

The aim behind changing the fee structure is to simplify the licensing of 'UK Shared' radio microphones. (These are those available for shared use at unspecified locations). This is achieved by setting a flat fee for any number of Shared VHF frequencies and a flat fee for any number of Shared UHF frequencies.

A two-year licence is introduced as an alternative to the one-year period. The difference in fee between 'own-use' and hiring out is removed and the licence also now

covers the use of Shared frequencies at Fixed Sites instead of the Fixed Site fees used previously.

The RA and JFMG hope that the price reductions will encourage a greater take-up in licences - a better reflection of the true value of the frequencies to the PMSE industry sector. Other changes have occurred to the premium hours charge and the 'Local' area fee category. The fixed charge will change to £55 for a schedule of frequencies (not £50 per frequency). This is a small increase for customers applying for a single frequency, but a dramatic reduction when more than one frequency is needed. The RA has also announced that the 'Local' area fee category will be removed.

For full details of the new rates contact JFMG Ltd in London on Tel: +44 (0)20 7261 3797 or visit the website at [www.jfmg.co.uk](http://www.jfmg.co.uk)

## DJW Awarded ISO 9001

Audio-visual and multimedia specialist, DJ Willrich Ltd (DJW), has recently been awarded ISO 9001, the quality management and quality assurance standard.



The award is made in recognition of a company's standard of business management and business excellence. DJW was also required to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide products that meet customer needs and enhance customer satisfaction.

Since the company was formed in 1986, DJW has been one of the leading developers of innovative and creative solutions for many of the UK's key museums and attractions, including the Millennium Dome (London), The Big Idea (Scotland) and Wild Walk and Explore@Bristol. In addition, DJW has developed a growing global presence, including an office in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates and an associate company, Mad Systems, in America. Our picture shows DJW's Tony Knight (left) and David Willrich (right).

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## Sarner Makes History

*Sarner, in collaboration with the Natural History Museum, is breaking new ground in conference technology and the use of video streaming in an educational environment.*

Following a competitive seven way pitch, Sarner has been appointed to handle the design and technical installation for the Natural History Museum's innovative new Darwin Gallery. The museum chose Sarner for this unique project, due for completion in Autumn this year, having previously worked with them on other projects. Sarner's brief was to conceive, design and install leading-edge technology which would enable academics and businesses who are giving lectures or presentations in the Darwin Gallery to be able to simultaneously transmit these lectures to specific recipients around the world and have an interactive discussion with those not present at the Gallery. Video conferencing, which will include digital audio and visual formats, will be



sent across the world using the internet as a medium to broadcast the information.

The live presentation will be sent via data lines linked between the Natural History Museum and other sites. Video has to be streamed onto the museum's network, rather than using a conventional coaxial line transmission, and this is proving quite a challenge as there are over 20 sources,

some at MPEG 2 resolution, and currently no single product in existence which can fulfil all the requirements. Ross Magri, technical director of Sarner, explains: "We have overcome the problem by proposing a system which will preview the 20 sources whilst MPEG 2 streams are picked up by the video projectors. To do this, Sarner has developed its own software and integrated it with off-the-shelf hardware."



*The Darwin Centre will enable visitors to the Museum to see for themselves the incredible range and diversity of the collections and the cutting-edge scientific research they support. Specimens range from the old - sea bass collected by Captain Cook in Australia on his Endeavour voyage, to the*

*new - recently-discovered river sharks collected by scientists in Borneo.*

*Visuals: Blu Design, Angela Green.*

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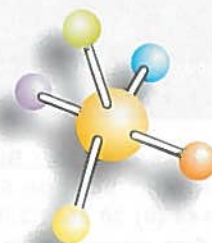
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# light to accentuate effects



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

## vocal lights



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



## colour to dramatise

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



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

## exploding lights

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

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## Opera on the Piazza



*This is better than telly.  
Below, Rhys Beetham on operating duty*

**The Royal Opera House live relays are making a welcome return to the Covent Garden piazza following the success of their revival last summer.**

A three-year sponsorship scheme with BP has

meant that three operas and now the very first ballet have been relayed live from the main stage of the ROH into the adjoining piazza. An estimated 5,000 people enjoyed the recent free performance of Tchaikovsky's timeless ballet, Swan Lake, which was broadcast onto a huge screen supplied by Screenco.



The complex audio requirements were provided by Dobson Sound who have worked with the Royal Opera House previously. The system put in place was the result of collaboration between Paul Dobson and Eric Presley, head of sound for the ROH. Presley, who mixes the sound in the ROH and sends the feeds out to the piazza, wanted a system that would incorporate an element of surround sound for a fuller ambience, so he and Dobson designed it accordingly. The main system, which was all d&b, comprised a C7 top and sub either side of the stage for screen sound and three delay positions down either side of the piazza, each with an E9 mid/high cabinet over a C7 sub for the main programme material. BSS TCS804s and Klark Teknik DN410s provided system time alignment and EQ respectively, while a 24-channel Midas Heritage 1000 ran front-of-house. "We had to have masses of delay and time alignment to compensate for the inherent delay in the video signal," said Dobson. "We took VT from Screenco and a BBC OB truck which was there to provide facilities to relay the video, although the event itself was not broadcast." There was also a live element to the show when Deborah Bull, herself a principal ballerina with the Royal Ballet, brought out all the Swan Lake dancers to take a curtain-call on the stage beneath the great screen. Shure SM58s were on hand to deal with all of the live presentations onstage.

The surround sound element came from an E3 placed at each of the delay positions, plus a further pair of E3s at the back. Paul Dobson commented: "We were really pleased with the surround sound effect. It was very subtle; not something necessarily to be noticed in its own right, but the difference would be clear without it. Eric deployed a highly complex system of microphones within the Royal Opera House in order to derive the signal for the surround sound, and the result was much greater depth and richness.

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## Islington Music Workshop

beyerdynamic has supplied the Islington Music Workshop with the first Klein & Hummel 5.1 surround sound speaker system in the UK for its Music Technology College. The circumstances of the speaker system sale were unusual to say the least.

Starting as review samples for a pro-audio trade journal (Audio Media), Simon Tillbrook the reviewer, who works with the Music Workshop, was impressed and decided that the studio should buy a system as they were about to upgrade the monitoring system for 5.1 operation: "Surround Sound is now an important part of the Sound Engineering course we run at IMW and we are planning to extend the system further to cover all surround formats, with the Martinsound Multimax. This will give us 7.1 and Omnimax capability."

As a charity-aided faculty, IMW provides a unique resource for students to gain a Sound Engineering qualification to take them into Sound Recording and Music Technology. With



a wide range of 'industry standard' products, including a 40-input SSL G+ Series console, a range of popular microphones and outboard equipment, the studio provides a realistic working environment replicating the facilities found in most major studios.

beyerdynamic was only recently appointed the UK distributor for Klein & Hummel, which has been manufacturing reference speakers for over 40 years in Germany. Our photograph shows Simon Tillbrook of IMW (left) with Matt Nettlefold of beyerdynamic.

## CTS' Performing Arts Trio

Birmingham-based Central Theatre Supplies has just completed its third Performing Arts School installation.

All three venues feature Zero 88 dimming and control along with Selecon lanterns. Two of the venues are using a Sirius desk for control, whilst the third has opted for the recently-launched Fat Frog. CTS specified these particular desks as they will largely be operated by students, enabling them to learn about lighting on manual pre-set controls before moving into advanced environments. Fat Frog was recommended for one particular school as they are developing out-of-hours activities for community use.

Selecon Profiles were specified throughout for all three venues, including the new Axial Profile and Pacific luminaires. Each venue was also fitted with a full sound system, video projection, hall perimeter tracks with full stage drapes, whilst one featured recording studio facilities with an inductive loop system as standard.

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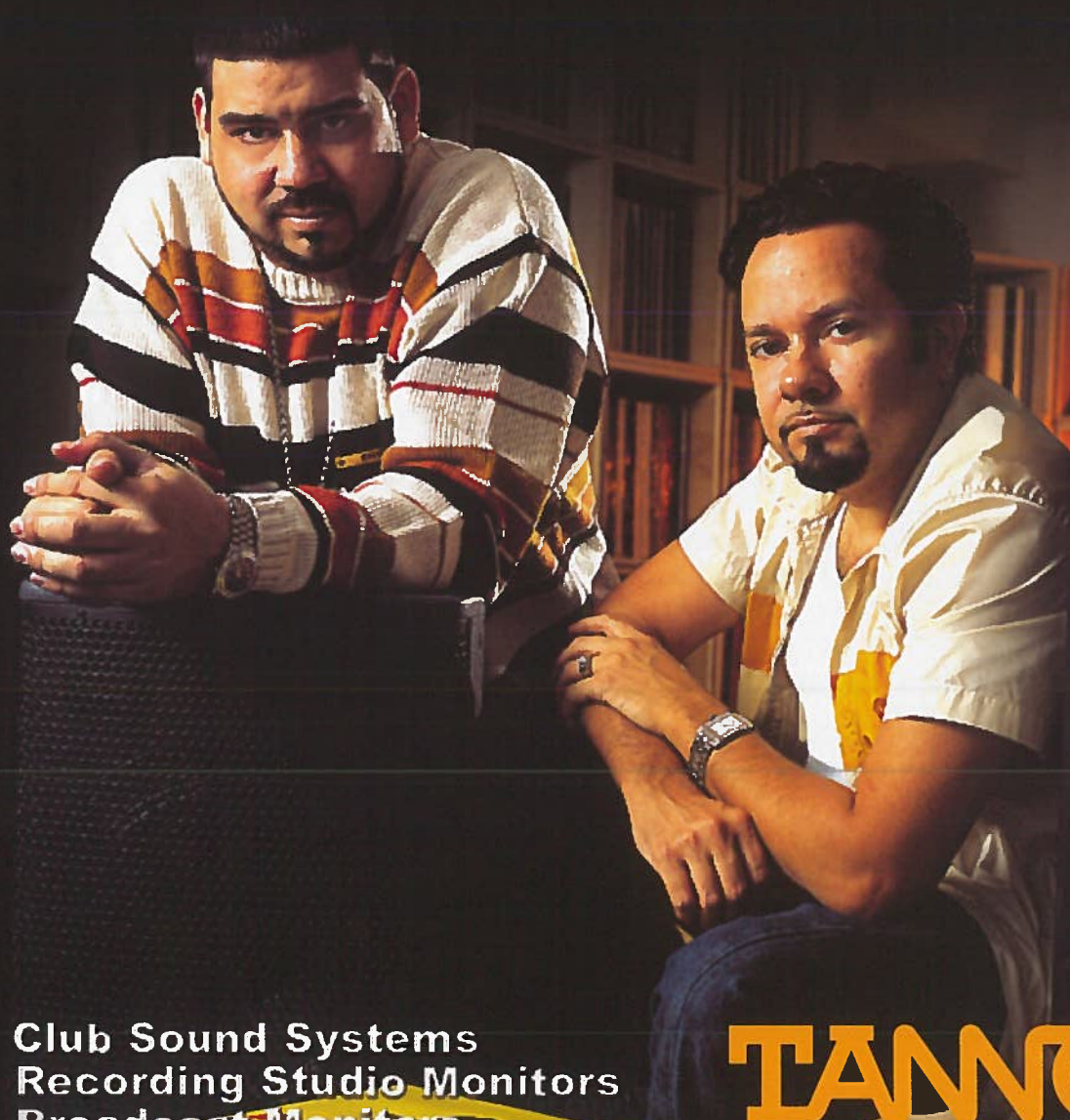
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## LiSA Line Array

The new LiSA (Line-Source Array System) is the first Italian-manufactured line array system. Since it was designed for one of the country's leading rental firms, Laboratorio Musica, Mike Clark talks to owner Vanis Dondi about the system.



Designed by a workgroup of three Italian acoustic researchers (Mario Di Cola, Davide Doldi and Davide Saronni), the

system consists of three-way full-range high directivity line array elements for long-throw applications. Laboratorio Musicale's Vanis Dondi, explains: "Two direct radiation 18" woofers reproduce the full bandwidth down to 32Hz, virtually eliminating the need for additional sub-woofers in many applications but, if necessary, there are also optional sub-woofers with three long excursion 18" for extra VLF power."

Three Stage Accompany neodymium ribbon compact drivers are the system's cylindrical HF source for true line source array radiation at HF and Italian 18 Sound cone speakers (used throughout) incorporate features such as Double Demodulating Ring, Double Silicon Spider, Interleaved Sandwich Voice-Coil and custom weather-proof protection. Two horn-loaded 10" mid range speakers ensure improved vertical control in the mid band.

Dondi continues: "Arrays are configured to give required vertical coverage, while horizontal coverage remains the nominal 90 degrees of a single element, resulting in full vertical coverage predictability of the entire cluster, uniform SPL and frequency response over the area covered, minimizing problems associated with traditional arrays, such as comb filtering and lobing. Cylindrical HF radiation, thanks to the ribbon drivers, ensures the unique attenuation property typical of this type of sources (3dB each time the distance doubles), giving better fidelity and high intelligibility even in highly reverberant conditions."

The two direct radiating 18"s for the low range (from 32Hz to 140Hz) feature completely water-proof custom fibre reinforced and coated cones, ISV aluminium voice coils that are dual layer coils (internally and externally wound) with twice the cooling capacity and consequently a power compression level of no more than 2.4dB at full power (approximately half that of a conventional transducer). The mid range is handled by two 10" horn-loaded transducers operating from 140Hz to about 1100Hz. The patented Stage Accompany HF ribbon driver is the most natural cylindrical source and is the closest approximation to an isophasic line source; its harmonic and intermodulating distortion is about a tenth that of compression drivers, ensuring natural, high definition HF sound.

Dondi concludes: "Up to 16 LiSA boxes can be hung per array, element-to-element angles possible range from 0 to 10 degrees and flying is precisely addressed using the set-up's integrated hanging system. LiSA is designed for use with a DSP unit, currently a Crown USM810 digital matrix processor, featuring four SHARC DSPs externally controlled by IQ software. The main system power limiting is via an Avalon VT 747 Stereo Vacuum Tube Comp unit for safe, smooth, inaudible protection when operating at maximum level. Power is courtesy of Crest P8001 amplifiers for the whole system, except the subs which are powered by P9001s. The power ratings per element are 1400W, 600W and 200W (AES) continuous power for low, mid and high frequency respectively."



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## Life in a Day

Michael Keller is a US lighting designer who gained his major experience working for Bill Graham at FM Productions. Working as house LD at the famous Winterlands in San Francisco, Keller designed for such luminaries as Jefferson Starship, Santana, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Mott the Hoople, and the Commodores. It was several years before he was to meet that last band again, or rather their highly successful progeny, Lionel Richie, when in 1982 Keller designed for the *Can't Slow Down* tour, named after Richie's biggest selling album. On and off, he's worked with Richie ever since . . . which is where we tracked him down this year.



**How'd you get into the job?**  
Fell in.

**Why get out of bed?**  
I still love the work, love seeing the world, and seeing my friends around the world.

**And those duvet days?**

What I like least is the travel, because of the lack of a stable home life it engenders.

**Has technology been an ally?**

There's no doubt in my mind that intelligent lighting is the thing that has made my life easier. Using less to achieve more is always a bonus in my book.

**Or a foe?**

Technology can be your worst enemy when it doesn't work. I couldn't single out a particular piece of kit, but they all fail at sometime.

**What would make a difference?**

The next Hog - the Whole Hog III, I can't wait [neither can we, come on Piggies].

**Which moment would you consign to history?**

The biggest mistake I ever made was getting into this business.

**And which would you frame?**

Well, I'm proudest of the Tina Turner *Private Dancer* tour.

**What's the best advice you ever received?**

I've known so many generous people; I wouldn't like to miss one out.

**And the worst . . . ?**

Now that's easy 'here, try this' [and Keller deftly mimics handing over a mirror and rolled-up bank note].

**Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?**

I'd still really like to be doing the same thing, maybe not working as hard, but still in the lighting business. Even if my numbers came up on the lottery, I just wouldn't have to work for the people I don't like.

**What's your dream gig?**

In terms of artists I'd like to light, Bruce Springsteen comes top of my list, and Julio Iglesias definitely bottom. [Despite some spoken reservations about other artists, Keller won't overtly exclude himself from their employ in the future - unless that lottery ticket comes up.]

**And the strangest you've ever done?**

I was on a barge in Bremerhaven working with the Scorpions - Patrick Woodroffe was designing the lighting for them. We loaded all the stuff onto this enormous barge, then, accompanied by two huge floating cranes for the flown PA, we were towed out for two hours, eventually reaching a place just 300 yards offshore. Everything barely worked, the intercom died, we lost sound a couple of times, and sure enough we lost the lighting board at one point.

**Have you ever used a piece of kit for something it wasn't designed for?**

Yes. [Revealing his decidedly un-American propensity for irony, he then wouldn't be drawn further, but you get the feeling that rigging gear and Anne Summers might be part of the scenario].

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## Marquee Provides Boost for AV Inventory

Marquee Audio has supplied one of London's longest-established audio-visual companies with a full audio inventory based around Martin Audio sound reinforcement.

Owned by Eric Bastin, Projection & Display Services is shortly to change its name to Avcom, to bring it into line with its other companies. And it will celebrate by being able to match the capability of its full motion picture and video size presentations, with a comparable sound spec. "Our sound inventory was in need of replacement so we decided to do something about it," stated account manager, Robert Morrison.

With an eminent pedigree in concert touring in his native New Zealand, Morrison remembers picking up part of Delicate Productions' Martin 'Philishave' system, when the

legendary Supertramp tour in the 1970s ground to a halt in LA. Prior to that he had relocated to London for the first time in the early 1970s where he would hang out at the Marquee Club. The two names have left an indelible mark 30 years on, he says.

Still touring with the 'Philishaves' until 1987, Morrison adds: "I loved the Martin stuff because of that, and so we went out to their factory for a listen." Seeking the versatility of a system offering different flying accessories, he opted for the arrayable compact Wavefront Theatre WT2 system, with a pair of WT3 three-way boxes, a pair of WS2A 2 x 15 subs and a pair of the DX1 digital controllers. To run the system he also purchased eight QSC Powerlight PLX3002 and PLX3402 switchmode amplifiers from the Shepperton suppliers.



Skyhigh Stage FX has recently purchased the licensed explosives site it has been leasing for the past four years.

The site couldn't be more suited to its purpose since it was originally a World War II gun site and features five gun emplacements each surrounded by its own blast walls. Each emplacement also has its own sub magazine, with the main magazine where the Ack Ack shells were stored some 75m away. The arrangement is ideal for Skyhigh's purposes. Each emplacement now houses process buildings which are licensed for up to 12 people to work on explosives. Outside these are process buildings for non-explosive work, plus the licensed packing shed. As a result, the company is now setting about doubling its production capacity, largely to accommodate increasing sales of its new range of PDS firing systems.

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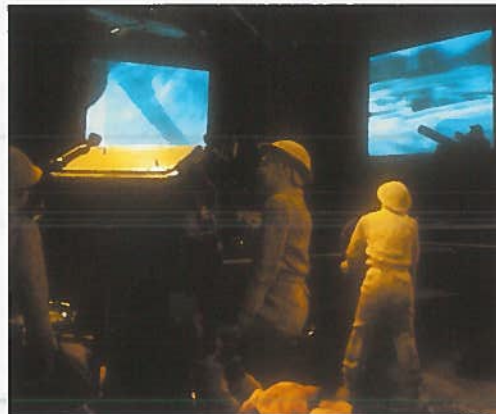


## Firepower!

**Firepower is the new Royal Artillery Experience, set in the historic buildings of the Royal Arsenal on the River Thames at Woolwich.**

The attraction was designed by Event Communications, whose main challenge was to overcome people's discomfort with the reality of war. They tackled this by highlighting the role in the fight for democracy and freedom played by the armed forces, especially the Royal Artillery, which has been present at all major theatres of war involving the British Army over the last 300 years.

The centrepiece of Firepower is the 'ground-shaking' Field of Fire - a spectacular multimedia presentation that recreates what it feels like to be in the middle of a real battle. On entering, visitors are surrounded by various pieces of artillery. Suspended above these are four 5m wide front projection screens. Projecting onto each screen is a Barco 6300 LCD Video Projector with the video sourced from an Electrosonic MPEG2 Server. Overall show control is from an Electrosonic ESLINX



show control system, and there are 36 channels of dimming using Celco Fusion dimmers. The audio system, designed by Peter Key, uses Crown amplifiers and EAW loudspeakers with a Bose Acoustic Wave Cannon, Bose 402C controller and 2600 VI Amplifier.

The historic site is being opened up to the public for the first time since the Regiment's establishment in the early 18th century. Four listed buildings are being renovated in order to house the collection, including Europe's oldest Military Academy.

## ESTA Standards Projects

**The Entertainment Services and Technology Association is about to embark on the drafting of three new American National Standards. The new Standards will address power cables, ground fault devices and remote device management.**

**BSR E1.18** is intended to offer guidance on how to select, install, use and maintain single-conductor portable power feeder cables. **BSR E1.19** covers

the installation, use and maintenance of ground fault protection devices. The project is intended to promote the use of these devices to protect people and property from hazards associated with using electrical equipment in wet locations. **BSR E1.20** seeks to develop a method of bi-directional communication over a USITT DMX512/1990 data link between an entertainment lighting controller and a remotely-controlled dimmer, moving light or other device. Interested parties are invited to contact ESTA on +1 212 244 1505 or to visit the ESTA website at [www.esta.org](http://www.esta.org)

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## Sennheiser Awards LIPA Students

Sennheiser presented a total of five Student Achievement Awards and £2,500 in prize money at this year's LIPA (Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts) Graduation ceremony.



Sennheiser managing director Paul Whiting with the winning LIPA graduates

Sennheiser UK managing director Paul Whiting presented the awards during the ceremony in the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, conducted by lead patron Sir Paul McCartney, principal and chief executive, Mark Featherstone-Witty, and members of the Council and Trust.

The winning students, all studying for or graduating with Sound Technology BA Degrees and Theatre Performance Technology DIPHEs, were nominated by peers and tutors for outstanding work in the course of their studies. Winning projects ranged from radio drama production, to songwriting, recording and production and theatre stage management, and included work from first and

second year, as well as graduating students. Included for the first time were specific Sennheiser Awards for the TPT DIPHE, for both group and individual project work. Graduating this year, with a BA Honours Degree in Sound Technology was Chandra Fleig

from Cologne. Chandra earned considerable praise from colleagues during a work placement opportunity with BBC Resources.

Sennheiser funds a number of ongoing sponsorship initiatives at LIPA, principal among them the international scholarship for students studying for the Sound Technology BA degree. There are currently three Scholarship students studying at LIPA. Further support is provided by the donation of professional theatre and studio equipment to assist in expanding the resources available for teaching and production activities.

## SPS: Record Profits

Show Presentation Services (SPS) has announced that it increased its turnover from £8m to £13m in 2000 and achieved a 58% increase in pre-tax profits for the same period, as a direct result of its integrated event services strategy.

The results reinforce SPS's position as a leading independent AV rental and staging businesses. High business growth rates were achieved by the scenic construction and lighting rental departments in particular, of 241% and 148% respectively. SPS's investment in a Barco D-Lite7 Modular LED screen was validated by the turnover generated with the successful launch of its LED rental business. "This year has seen more challenging business conditions," said Robin Coles, managing director of SPS. "The first half of 2001 has been flatter than we anticipated, but the launch of our new Event IT division in February, is adding positively to our already comprehensive service offering. We are seeing booking levels increase for the second half of the year, and an impending strategic acquisition will consolidate our position."

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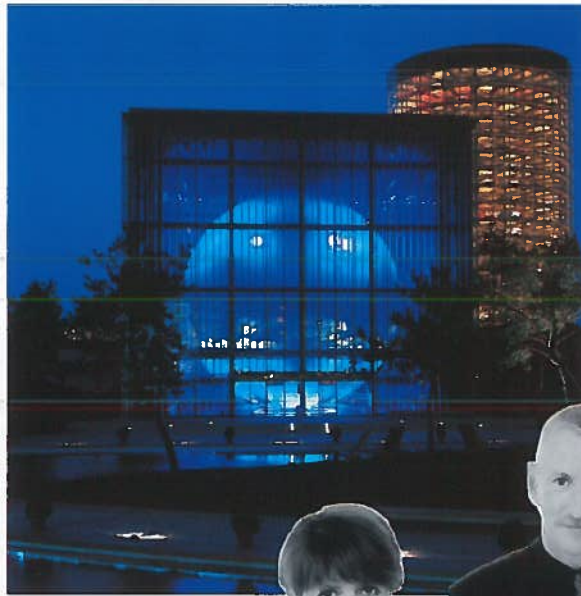
## Design Led - Ruth Rossington profiles Furneaux Stewart

You can tell a lot about a person from their business card, so I'm not quite sure what I was meant to make of my first meeting with John Furneaux, Nick Swallow and Caroline Buchanan of the Furneaux Stewart agency. Each proffered a handful of their own business cards in a range of different colours. Afraid my choice of colour might give them some insight into the murkier workings of my mind, I took one of every hue and a few to spare. I later came to realise, of course, that this simple exchange was not about me, it was about them: the business cards are simply another expression of what they do - take the familiar and think outside the box.

As a design and communications agency, it earns its living transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary, whether it be for a product launch, exhibition stand, new visitor attraction or an interpretation project at a heritage site. I guess it's fair to say that it has also played its part in the growing presence of Brand Experiences - Autostadt in Germany being a prime example - providing an interface between client and customer. In these areas, the team at Furneaux Stewart has matched creative skills with technical expertise to create events that exploit the growing sophistication of lighting, audio, AV and display technology. They are your original alchemists, although they rarely start with base metal, as the client list will attest.

Design directors John Furneaux and Laurie Stewart are both graduates from the Royal College of Art, though they didn't know each other at the time. After leaving the RCA in the early seventies, they established their own companies - Stewart founded a graphics agency, whilst Furneaux set up a 3D company specialising in the creation of 'environments'. Their paths eventually crossed, and the two found themselves working jointly on a project; it wasn't too long before it became clear that linking 2D to 3D would provide a template for a new kind of company, and thus Furneaux Stewart was born.

Although always a fluid business, it is in recent years that it has seen real dynamic growth and through the addition of new members and new skills to the team (including commercial director Nick Matthews, architectural director Ray Hole, new media director Adrian Little, the aforementioned Nick Swallow as communications director and Caroline Buchanan as business development manager), it has won major contracts the world over, not just for its skills in architecture or design, but also for its ability to handle the highly technical elements of projects.



The heart of Furneaux Stewart's operation is in London, where the main body of the design and communication team is based - some 35 people in all. A satellite office in Banbury houses the project, commercial and accounts end, whilst a recently-established US office, headed by client services director Julie Barnard, is taking the Furneaux Stewart house style to a new American audience.

It's hard to name another company which has so many irons in the creative fire. That's not to say that Furneaux Stewart is looking to take on the world - we all know that the road to corporate hell is paved with thinly-spread people - but that John Furneaux and the team see no reason to draw an artificial line halfway through the creative process. To the team of architects, designers and technical people have been added copywriters, graphic designers and new media experts, so that any associated marketing of an event or attraction can be handled in-house. In fact, the New Media division has added yet another strand - taking Furneaux Stewart into the realm of video and imaging technology.

And the company isn't unwise enough to feel it has all the answers. Most of the projects it works on will come together conceptually in-house, and

then it will look to people outside to work with them in translating the ideas into reality. The company has already worked with a number of high profile designers including Dave Bryant, Dave Atkinson and John Pope, all of whom now collaborate regularly with the company.

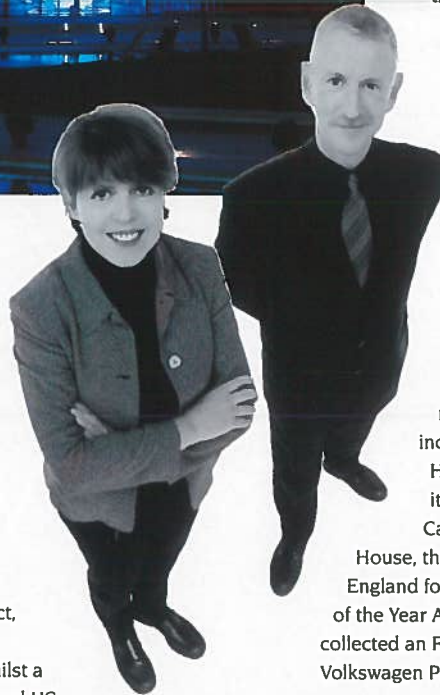
And to prove how successful this hybrid formula has become, the company has an impressive back catalogue of projects and an equally impressive portfolio of clients. You don't get to count Bentley, the BBC, the British Council, the Commonwealth Institute, English Heritage, Gillette, National Trust, London Transport, the Natural History Museum, Rolls Royce, Porsche and Volkswagen amongst your clients unless you're extremely good at what you do. When you're creating something on behalf of clients like these, the message has got to be pitch perfect.

And clearly others have felt so too, for the company has collected numerous awards along the way - including three AHI (Association Heritage Interpretation) awards for its work on Riveaux Abbey, Dover Castle and Charles Darwin's Down House, the latter also earning it both England for Excellence and Small Attraction of the Year Awards. The company has also collected an FX Design Award for its work on the Volkswagen Pavilion at Autostadt.

Talking with the three members of the Furneaux Stewart team arrayed before me, it's clear that the company ethos is very simple - if they can't do it well, then they won't do it at all. Not surprisingly, their preference is for a project that allows them to start with a blank canvas, and John Furneaux has no doubt that this is when the company produces its best work.

Take the Volkswagen Autostadt project for example. Not exactly a blank canvas, but certainly a chance to influence the finished product. To those not familiar with the project, Autostadt is the VW Group's permanent visitor experience based in Germany. One of its most striking aspects is the Volkswagen pavilion, one of two (the other being Bentley) that Furneaux Stewart worked on.

When first approached by VW, Furneaux Stewart knew it needed a different mindset to interpret a marque like Volkswagen to its home market, so they opted for a concept - a sphere inside a cube - that was simple, without embellishment, and



# News Round-Up



one which perfectly illustrated the VW ethos. Although simple on the surface, in truth, elements of its execution were technically very advanced. 19m in diameter, the structure appears to hover above the glass floor of the pavilion, thrown into relief by shifting and kaleidoscopic coloured lights. In reality it is ground supported by four entry ramps, an amazing piece of structural engineering design.

The sphere was central to the visitor experience but was surrounded with a carefully-planned exhibition. Around the inner walls of the cube, plasma screens run a sequence of images showing the evolution of life on earth during this cycle, louvres which stretch from floor to ceiling on all four sides keep up a constant rhythm of change, opening and closing to admit light and then reverting to full blackout. At the point of full blackout the visitor is admitted to the inside of the sphere - a performance space with seating for 100 people and a screen 360° x 220° - something that has never been done before.

To fill this vast canvas, they then had to script a show. To do this they sourced a team of specialists who worked almost entirely on this task. The team responsible - which included film production company Zenturio, and post-production house Glassworks - created a six metre test-dome in West London to prepare the show and iron out the inevitable technical 'glitches' that attend first-time projection techniques such as this.

Equally bold was the subject matter of the film. Furneaux Stewart proposed to the client that there should be not a single Volkswagen car featured throughout, and that it should instead be a celebration of the human ability to learn,



adapt and succeed - the parallels to the VW ethos are all too clear - but told through the eyes of two girls, one learning to play a musical instrument, the other honing her skills as a skater. VW didn't need much persuading, and the resulting film was shot in South Africa,

Prague and the Italian Alps, directed by Hollywood's Tom Ackerman with music composed by Merv de Peyer. Once shot, the next challenge was to prepare it for the 360° x 220° canvas and to do this they had to deploy four projectors, perfectly synchronised, thanks to technical director Ian Dall. This is similar to Imax: however, the viewer can see ice skaters dancing upon a frozen Alpine lake and then turn to see the rest of the scenery edging the lake around the entire horizon.

The technical hoops that had to be jumped through to produce this effect were many. Each image had to be digitally scanned to ultra-high

Far left, the VW sphere at Autostadt. Inset, Furneaux Stewart founders Laurie Stewart and John Furneaux. Left, the centrepiece of the Bentley pavilion at Autostadt, and inset, the Gaia Centre at the Athens Museum.

resolution, then 'split' into four, before being artificially distorted to a shape similar to that of a quartered section of orange peel. When the image is projected upon the inside of the spherical surface, the human eye 'reads' it as true. In post-production terms alone, the task was remarkable simply because it involved the four projectors, working at 30 images per second, for a 10-minute show, with each image subjected to considerable digital manipulation and post-production.

The biggest challenge was, of course, the sphere projection system. After much research, the company undertook a fast-track R&D programme and produced a scheme using the latest Digital Mirror Device projectors and High Definition players synchronized together to relay the film. As with similar projects Furneaux Stewart has worked on, the project was a great opportunity to test and run with the latest in computer graphic, video and projection technologies (helped along by Furneaux Stewart's own control software) and marry these together to produce the required single seamless image.

Though this is just a small snapshot of what Furneaux Stewart undertook at Autostadt, it does illustrate perfectly the company's approach to a project and the chameleon-like way it adapts to suit its environment. An approach that will serve it well in the future. John Furneaux foresees a dramatic growth for the company and the challenge in the next few years will be to control, rather than stimulate, that. The company is clearly passionate about what it does and one gets a sense that everybody is deeply committed to the cause. As to the future, well Furneaux Stewart could go anywhere and you can be certain that you will be reading more about its work in future issues of L&SI.

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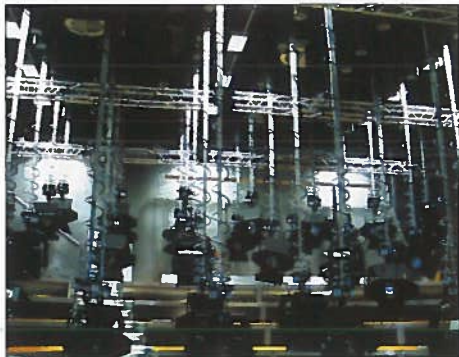


## Voyager Automates SZM Studio 6

The transtechnik group were recently commissioned by SZM Studios to install a new lighting system, as well as Voyager automatic positioning systems, in the television broadcaster's Munich-based SZM Studio 6.

Originally, SZM Studio 6 was split into two smaller studios (6A and 6B) by a dividing wall. One was used as a production facility by the news broadcaster N24, but following their recent relocation to Berlin, the dividing wall has been removed.

The ambitious project, which has a price tag of 1.43 million Euro, involved transtechnik fitting 114 monopole hoists, including ARRI Studio 2kW Fresnel spotlights, to the studio's 19m x 14m grid. A Voyager system was chosen to control the vertical positioning of the monopoles. However, since the studio ceiling is currently too low for a standard monopole installation, a special structure has been designed to hold the monopoles. This allows for a height gain of 1m. For lighting the studio cyclorama, a two-rail system (Helm 100) has also been provided,



which uses a special lowering mechanism developed by transtechnik.

The scenery hoist system features 24 hoists (Gerriets P250JR) and is also controlled by a Voyager system. The scenery hoists include a pipe for flying audio, video and special effects equipment. To suit the studio's Ethernet cabling, transtechnik has also supplied two Focus NT lighting consoles equipped with Ethernet interfaces. Signals will be converted from Ethernet to classic DMX format in the dimmer room.

## DHA and Rosco's New Agreement

DHA has announced a new licensing agreement with Rosco, granting the company exclusive rights to manufacture the most popular gobo designs from DHA's catalogue for supply to Rosco dealers around the world.

The new arrangement now means faster delivery of standard gobos for Rosco's customers. Complementing DHA's international network of dealers, Rosco continues to be DHA's exclusive distributor of gobos in the USA, South America, Australia and Canada.

Until PLASA 2000, Rosco and DHA shared an exclusive marketing agreement. This was then redefined, in a move to align DHA's international marketing strategy with its UK business practice and to enable the company to market its full range of products direct to overseas customers.

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## Airscreen at Cambridge Film Festival



**A huge 17m x 10.5m Harkness Hall Airscreen took centre stage at two open-air screenings during the revived Cambridge Film Festival.**

Shown as part of the Festival's first run Children's Film Festival, the highlight of the week-long programme of events took place on two consecutive evenings with free screenings of Disney's Immensely popular *Toy Story 2* and Aardman Animation's smash hit *Chicken Run*,

which entertained audiences of some 5,000 late into the night. Registering another first for the Festival, *Chicken Run* was shown in a special subtitled version, making it the biggest screening ever to take place for deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences.

The Airscreen, a giant inflatable frame incorporating a projection surface from Harkness Hall, was rigged and de-rigged for each show in a little over 25 minutes. A powered air pump quickly inflated the PVC frame, which was anchored by guy ropes to four water-filled ballast weights. No other supporting structure was required.

Outdoor screenings have been a speciality of the Cambridge Festival and technicians from the Festival's umbrella organisation, City Screen, are regularly called upon by other organisations for their expertise in this area, so it is with particular pride that the Festival returns with such a spectacular event. Revived this summer, in association with the Independent, the Film



Festival provided Cambridge and its regions with the full wealth and breadth of cinema - from the very big with screenings in widescreen 70mm, to the not so big in the Shortmatic strand; from very early archive prints to debates about the digital future. The Children's Film Festival element, with its own panel of reviewers and Children's Jury, entertained younger audiences with a host of exciting new films, parties, games and competitions. Overall, a whole programme of events, short films, and brand new features celebrated the best in international and independent film.

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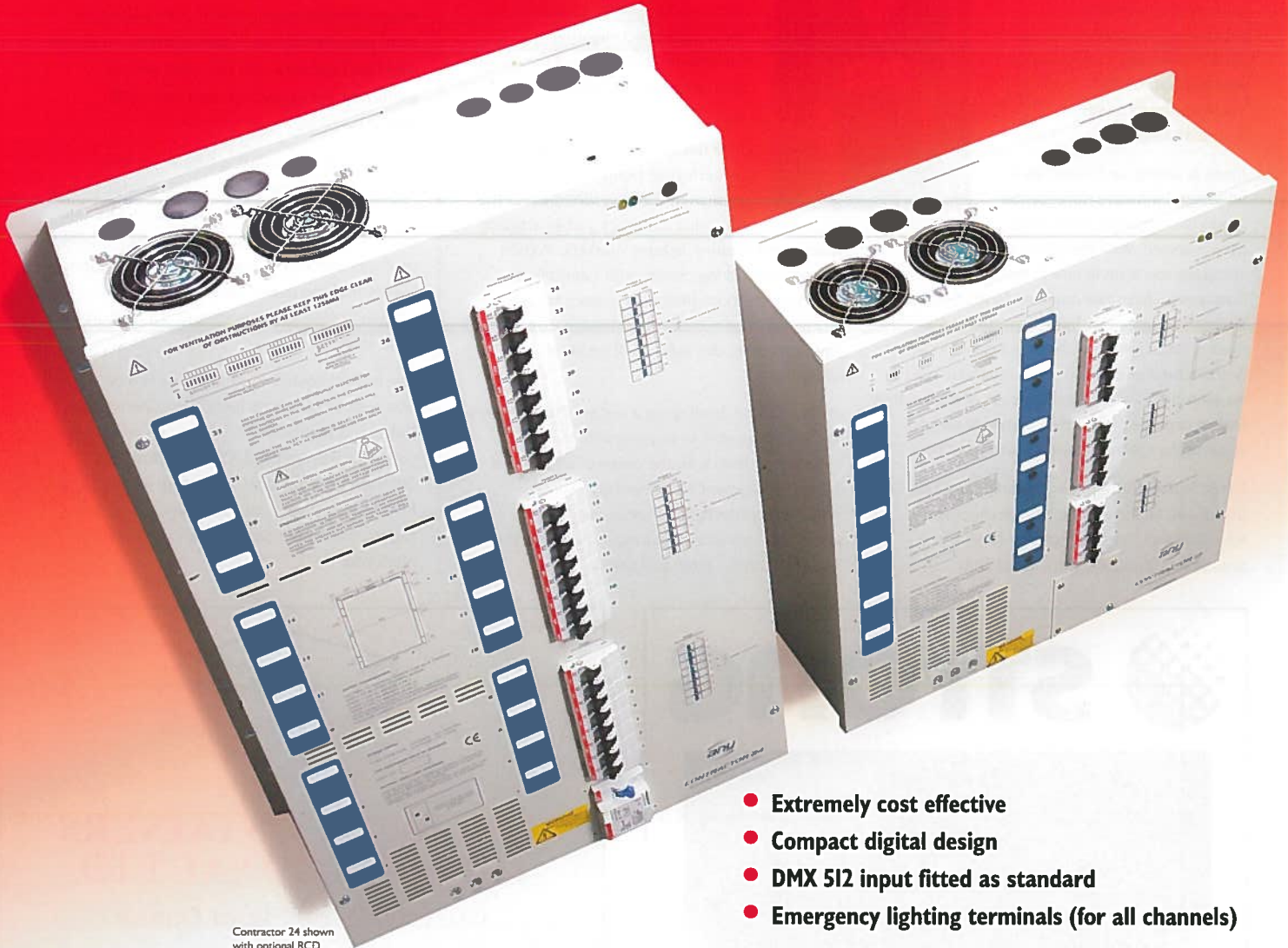
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## i-Vision Launches

i-Vision is the brainchild of Geoff Jones (right) - well-known in the entertainment technology industry, latterly for his company Laser Studio and as chair of the Entertainment Laser Association (ELA).



Jones is setting up i-Vision as an integral infrastructure for the group of companies with which he is involved. With the i-Vision launch, the company starts up in new premises in Wales, in downtown Chepstow, adjacent to the Severn Bridge. Contained within the group is Laser Studio, JMC Lighting, i-Vision Banners, i-Vision Architectural and i-Vision Hire. The plan is to develop the i-Vision brand as a visual production facility capable of servicing a huge array of challenging entertainment industry projects.

Laser Studio continues to manufacture, sell, install and hire the latest laser technology. Recent installations include the Ministry of Sound and Mono, Dublin's latest club

destination. i-Vision is currently developing a new laser controller. JMC Lighting continues to hire, sell and install effects lighting equipment and to market the Italian Coef range and other products.

i-Vision Architectural continues to offer design, install and service of cost-effective permanent and semi-permanent lighting schemes for the specialist buildings, public arts and

spaces and 'feature' lighting markets. i-Vision Banners is working closely with Landrells to maximise the possibilities of banner art and technology - from creating an imaginative scenic environment to the subtlest of ambient advertising.

i-Vision is also developing a series of light fittings specifically geared to working with banners. i-Vision Hire deals with the rental of all types of lighting equipment for temporary events, festivals, architectural schemes, weddings, parties and projects requiring a wide selection of lighting fixtures - large and small.

## ESS Provide V Stages for V2001

Edwin Shirley Staging provided two identical stages for this year's V2001 Festival which took place in two separate locations in Essex and Staffordshire and featured artists including Texas and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

The two V stages, utilizing ESS's Lite tower system, boasted an impressive 52m wide façade and were assembled in just four days. The 14m high, 10-towered structure with an ESS inflatable roof was specially designed to provide support for the massive sound system and the two 32sq.m Screenco video screens which flanked each stage.

The festival hosted 48 artists over two days. The acts appeared at both locations - Chelmsford, Essex and Weston Park, Staffordshire - over the course of the weekend. ESS also provided essential additional infrastructure, including two FOH mixing towers, camera platforms, delay towers, followspot positions and disabled viewing platforms.

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## James Thomas Builds 3D Stage

James Thomas Engineering has completed the design-and-build of an ambitious new concert stage for Leeds-based production and rental facility 3D Productions. The stylish structure, based on a series of four arches, was designed, engineered and project-managed by James Thomas' Paul Young, who worked in conjunction with JTE's regular structural engineers The Broadhurst Partnership.

The four arches form bays 4.8m apart and are built from standard 52cm Thomas SuperTruss - eight pieces per arch - which fit at the base onto an integral stage decking system giving a full area 19.2m wide and 16.8m deep, complete with thrust plinth along the downstage edge. Headroom is an impressive 10m at the apex of the arches. The front edge of the stage also features an elegant cantilevered 'eyebrow' protruding five metres over the thrust at the top-of-the-roof elevation. Each arch can take a



sturdy 2000kg load - giving an SWL of 8 tonnes across the entire roof structure - which works at windspeeds of up to 25m per second. Fully rated lighting flying points are also integral to the stage, so visiting productions can easily be accommodated, just as in a permanent venue.

3D productions wanted a good-looking, flexible and versatile modular staging system with the option of having a 50 or 60ft width stage in a variety of different depths - the stage reduces in depth by 4.8 metre sections. Young's biggest challenge was turning the project around in an incredibly tight timescale. Although in the pipeline for three months, once the green light was finally given, ITE had just three weeks to complete the design and manufacture of all components before delivery and first assembly. The stage's first gigs were at Leeds City Council's free Opera and Party in the Park weekend events, set in the beautiful grounds of Temple Newsam Estate, and enjoyed by over 70,000 people each night.

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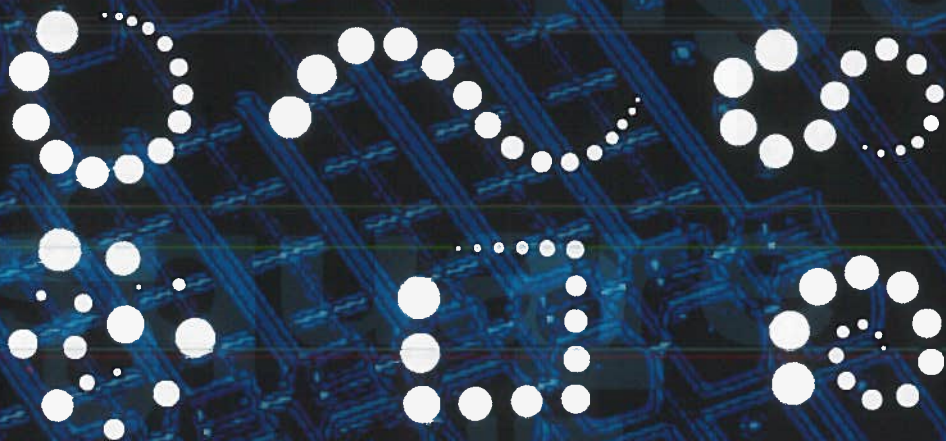
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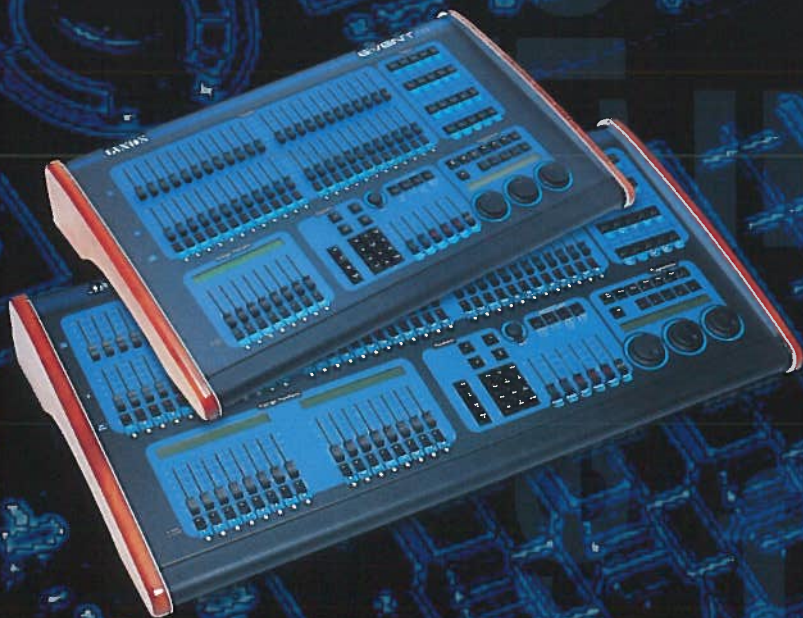
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## News Round-Up



# Integrated Install at Munich Airport



The new Terminal 2 under construction at Munich Airport.  
Copyright Werner Hennies/FMG

**Klotz Digital was recently awarded the contract to develop, design and install one of the most modern integrated ELA installations at the new Munich Airport Terminal 2, scheduled to go in to operation in March 2003.**

In addition to providing flight information and other pertinent announcements to passengers, visitors and airport personnel, plus supplying background music, this system can either broadcast throughout the entire airport or can be localized, if necessary, to specific areas. Furthermore, the system allows personalized emergency bulletin broadcasts, with priority-driven repetition.

The ELA system consists of 27 independently operating ELA stations. All stations are connected to one another and to the central/main station via fibre optic cables. To ensure the necessary high safety standard, the entire system is fully redundant so that in case of an emergency or disaster, communication is guaranteed for all areas of Terminal 2.

Each station is equipped with several Klotz Digital VADIS 880 frames for input and output connections, with digital signal processors and controllers taking care of the audio routing and communication. A separate PC-based Ethernet network, developed by Klotz Digital, is controlling all implemented system functions.

Approximately 200 configurable paging desks/terminals of various design are widely spread over the entire installation area. Each of the desks is equipped with an audio recording facility for intermediate prerecord of announcements. To control these stations and the distribution of digital audio signals, they are connected to the ELA main station via Ethernet network cabling. For authentication reasons, all important announcements via ELA-system are automatically documented and archived within the system.

A number of easily-reachable fire department access desks are spread throughout the terminal, used to broadcast high priority announcements. To run a speaker system with more than 11,000 loudspeakers of various design, more than 600 power amplifiers (with 100V technology) are set to support groups of 10-30 loudspeakers each. The VADIS software package allows instant and intelligent system management throughout the new terminal.

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## Audio Spotlight

*In mid-July, Showsound hosted a demonstration of a new sound technology known as the Audio Spotlight. The device, which was demonstrated by inventor F. Joseph Pompei, represents what the company believes to be the first successful development of a truly directional loudspeaker. Whereas a traditional loudspeaker produces a large field of sound, the Audio Spotlight emits a narrow beam of sound - as little as just 3° at 3m.*



*Inventor Joe Pompei with the Audio Spotlight*

In practice, the Audio Spotlight generates a beam of sound that can be accurately pointed at specific locations. People within the field of the beam will hear clear audible sound, whilst others standing just outside will not. The sound can be aimed directly at targets or reflected off almost any surface in a method known as Projected Audio.

Joseph Pompei has developed this innovative new system at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Laboratory. A significant number of the devices have already been built, and new manufacturing techniques are about to see the production scale increase to meet the anticipated demand. Showsound will distribute, install and operate the patents-pending Audio Spotlight in the UK and Europe.

### **How it Works**

The Audio Spotlight uses ultrasound generated by specially developed transducers that are fired into the air. The natural non-linear properties of air interfere with the ultrasound, breaking down the very short sound waves into different ultrasound patterns along with outputs within the audible sound range. The effect of the air on the projected narrow beam of ultrasound is not random and can be mathematically predicted.

Pompei's breakthrough is based on his system's ability to alter audible sound signals (such as those from a CD player) before they are emitted by the ultrasound transducer in such a way as to allow the reproduction of clear, audible sound after interaction with the air. The Audio Spotlight effectively uses the air itself to generate audible sound from ultrasound waves along the path of a narrow beam.

Further details can be found at [www.showsound.co.uk](http://www.showsound.co.uk)

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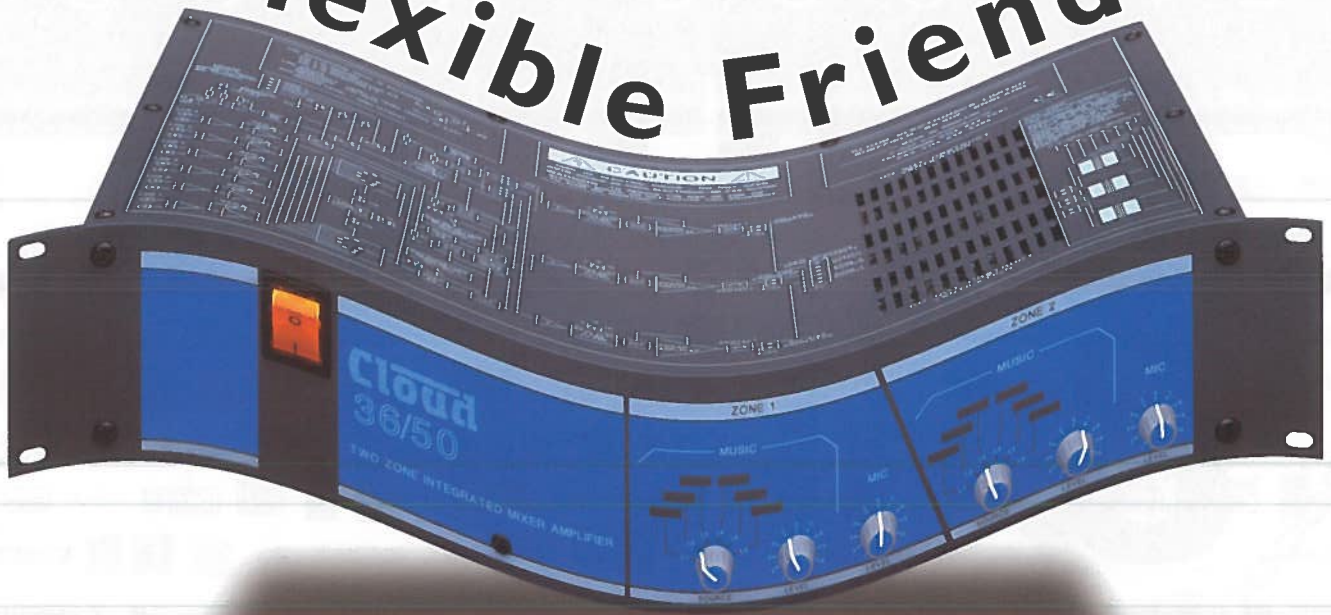
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## Stakeholder Pensions

*Employers in the industry will be aware that the Stakeholder Pension scheme is about to kick in. Although it isn't relevant to every business, those of you who have five or more employees may soon have no choice in the matter - the arrival of stakeholder pensions on 8 October 2001 means that there isn't much time left to act.*

Stakeholder pensions - the new type of pension available since 6 April this year - offer a simple, low-cost, flexible pension option for your staff. From October, many employers will be obliged to offer their staff access to a stakeholder pension scheme (unless they already have a pension scheme in place for their employees). Those who don't bother could wind up with a fine of up to £50,000.

Providing access to a stakeholder pension - and that is literally all you have to do - doesn't need to cost you anything. You don't have to run the pension scheme - you don't even have to set the thing up - all you have to do is choose a scheme provider after consulting your staff and allow your staff to contribute directly through the payroll if they choose. You don't have to contribute to your employees' stakeholder pensions - but you can if you wish.

To find out if you are exempt, use the 'decision tree' on OPRA's (Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority) Stakeholder website at: [www.stakeholder.opra.gov.uk/decisiontree](http://www.stakeholder.opra.gov.uk/decisiontree). Alternatively, take a look at the government's booklet 'Stakeholder pensions - an employer's guide'. You can get a free copy from the Inland Revenue on 0845 764 6646.

If you're not exempt, you need to choose a stakeholder pension scheme. The easiest way is to look at the stakeholder pension register on OPRA's Stakeholder website, which you can find at [www.stakeholder.opra.gov.uk](http://www.stakeholder.opra.gov.uk). This will give you a full list of all the registered stakeholder schemes, together with contact details and links to the pension providers' websites. You can get a free copy of the register by phoning +44 (0)1273 627600. Alternatively, you could just follow up one of the adverts in the press or on TV. The most important thing to remember is that the stakeholder scheme you choose must be a registered scheme.

If your situation is particularly complicated or you really can't face doing it yourself, then you could talk to an independent financial adviser (IFA) - but make sure you talk to a few so you don't end up paying too much. It's not



necessary to use an IFA - many pension providers will do the work for you at no extra charge.

When choosing a stakeholder pension scheme, bear in mind that the whole point of stakeholder pensions is that they have to meet certain conditions controlled by law. So you can't go too far wrong. And members can transfer from one stakeholder pension scheme to another without penalties or extra charges. This means that if you want later to change your scheme, your employees can move the funds they have already built up to the new provider without incurring any costs - easy as that.

As part of the move towards stakeholder pensions, you'll need to set up a payroll facility to deduct contributions from employees' pay and send them to the scheme provider, if the employee asks you to. Your payroll system may already be set up to deal with deducting pension contributions. If not, don't worry - some stakeholder pension providers, as part of their service, may help you to set up a payroll deduction system.

Remember that you are responsible for paying contributions on time. Again, there is useful information in OPRA's 'A quick guide for employers' about contributions to personal pension and stakeholder pension schemes, so you know what you have to do (it's on the OPRA website at [www.opra.gov.uk](http://www.opra.gov.uk), or call 01273 627600 and ask for a copy).

### Useful Publications

**Stakeholder pensions** - a guide for employers (Department for Work and Pensions)

**A quick guide for employers** - Contributions to Personal Pension and Stakeholder Pension Schemes (OPRA)

**DTI Small Business Service Factsheet** - Pensions (Tel 0870 150 2500)

**Stakeholder Pension Schemes** - an employer's guide (CBI)

### Useful Contacts

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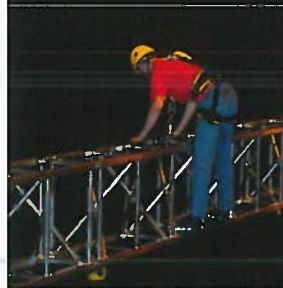
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## PSL on the Move

PSL is moving all of its London rental divisions (except for PSL Central) into new customised 70,000sq.ft premises in Potters Bar. The new facility (pictured right) has six loading docks, specialist-handling facilities, a customer demonstration area and purpose-built offices.



The companies amalgamating under this one roof will be Presentation Services Limited, including Exhibitions and Concert Touring, PSL Multimedia, PSL Lighting, PSL Set & Stage, PSL On-Screen Creations, PSL Proquip and PSL LED Screen.

PSL has told PLASA Media it intends to create a true rental and staging company offering customers a wide range of presentation staging services from one building. All of the individual divisions will continue to trade in their own right. The front-end project management team will have full access to all of the services supplied out of Potters Bar. The new address is The Heights, Cranborne Industrial Estate, Potters Bar, EN6 3JN, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1707 648 120.

## Ground Zero in Berlin

Ground Zero BV, the Dutch systems integrator and show-control specialist, has opened a branch office in Berlin. Franziskus Scharpff, who has over 15 years' experience as a lighting technician and operator, will head up the new operation.

The new office can be reached at Kniggeweg 7, D 13465 Berlin, Germany. Tel +49 30 4010 9663.

## Stage Electrics Travels the UK

August and September are proving busy months for Stage Electrics. Nine 45ft trailers were on the road heading for the Edinburgh Fringe in early August, providing lighting and power distribution to over 33 of the venues. Stage Electrics is the largest technical supplier to this annual three-week event.

The company has also provided Martin MACs, generic lanterns and control to the Fame transfer from Victoria Palace to the Cambridge Theatre in the West End, as well as generic lanterns and a Wholehog II to the Shaftesbury Theatre for *Peggy Sue Got Married*. The special projects department installed a four-axis automated flying system for *Peggy Sue* which opened on 20th August.

Stage Electrics is also supplying equipment to Dr Dolittle's second year touring the UK, and for the Manchester opening of *Chicago* in September.

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**'All The Queen's Horses' - a live equestrian spectacular with a cast of 3,000, including over 1,000 horses, is to be staged at the Royal Windsor Horse Show in 2002, as part of the tribute to The Queen in her Golden Jubilee Year.**

One of a number of national events marking The Queen's accession to the throne 50 years ago, 'All The Queen's Horses' will be set against the backdrop of the floodlit Windsor Castle during three days of the annual Royal Windsor Horse Show, and will tell the story of her 50-year reign.

A purpose-built stage will be erected to house the orchestra, choir and dancers, together with an all-weather arena, to accommodate the 2,000 participants and over 1,000 horses that will perform in the show, which will be produced by Major Sir Michael Parker and directed by Simon Brooks-Ward. Parker, of course, has been the producer for most of the 'Royal Spectaculars' both here and abroad for the past 30 years.



## All the Queen's Horses



*Overhead and side on views of the planned arena.*

The finale of the show will recreate the 1952 coronation procession with the inclusion of the Gold State Coach with its eight grey horses in harness, a sight that has not been seen since the 1977 Jubilee.

The event that will be more 'Broadway' than 'Horse Show', according to Brooks-Ward, and if previous Parker/Brooks-Ward collaborations are anything to go by, should feature some serious quantities of lighting, audio, staging and screen technology. It runs on the 16th, 17th and 18th May 2002.

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## Scenic Tech Re-emerges from Entolo Brand

*The Production Resource Group is to unwrap the branding strategy it has adopted for the past few years.*

For approximately two years, Harris Production Services and Scenic Technologies, the original, founding companies of PRG, had been bundled and branded with more recent acquisitions as Entolo, with the intention of more effectively promoting PRG's overall capabilities rather than focusing on a group of brands each with their own distinct business.

Now that decision has been reversed and the New Windsor, Manhattan, Las Vegas and Orlando, locations will be identified by their former brand name, Scenic Technologies. The Minneapolis and Houston locations will retain the Entolo name and continue to develop the retail and tradeshow exhibit business. While Scenic Technologies will continue to service those markets, its main focus will remain the physical production and support of live entertainment productions and other entertainment-related environments.

This effort will be led by original co-founder of Scenic Technologies, Fred Gallo, who will be appointed President. Fellow co-founders Roy Sears and John Wolf will also play leading roles in the new company. With support from Brian Ashmead, now based in New Windsor, the team will focus on the development of the corporate event market.



Home nightclub in Leicester Square, London, has been placed on the market by KPMG, the receivers for Big Beat Holdings Ltd. Leisure specialists, Davis Coffey Lyons, have been appointed to dispose of the venue. The high profile club hit trouble earlier in the year when an undercover police investigation showed there was open and serious Class A drug dealing and usage taking place at the venue. Westminster Council immediately revoked its entertainment licence.

Its closure led to Big Beat Holdings going into receivership. At the time, the established pub, club, restaurant and hotel business operated 23 licensed premises around the world. The sale also covers the range of Big Beat venues in Scotland, the recently-opened Media in Nottingham and the Australian Home in Sydney. The sale is likely to attract a great deal of interest from the leisure industry.

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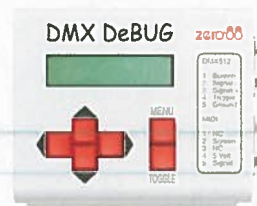
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## Nautilus Entertainment Design Illuminates the Angels

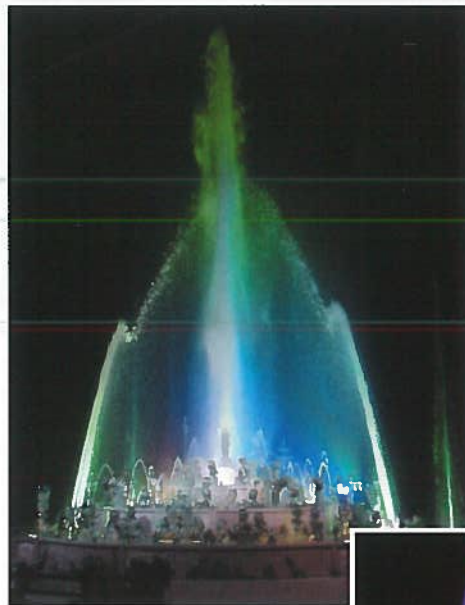
*The small Midwestern town of Carthage, Missouri, in the US, is home to a unique amphitheatre that draws tens of thousands of visitors annually.*

When Samuel Butcher, the creator of the American figurines and greeting cards featuring Precious Moments and his sons Jonathan and Don decided to develop an attraction in their home base, they turned to a creative team that included the lighting designers of Nautilus Entertainment Design for their inspiration.

The 'Fountain of Angels' is an open-air music and water production featuring a plaza of large programmable fountains centred around 252 bronze sculptures - some weighing as much as 1,000 pounds each. The action centres on a fountain containing a water jet that shoots 75 feet into the air, surrounded by a cathedral arch and two foam jets that are smaller versions of the main water jet. The water is held in a 100,000-gallon underground reservoir; during the peak of the performance, 16,000 gallons of water are pumped through the fountain per minute. 13 pumps with a total of 550 horsepower force the water through 560 valves, connected by over two miles of tubing to 260 water nozzles.

Surrounding the central sculptural display are two Water Castles and two Dancing Water fountains, which are animated with movement. There are four additional foam jets in this area. Finally, at the rear of the plaza is a giant fan-shaped 80ft wide mist screen and a candelabra comprising 60 individual jets creating another wall of water. The entire plaza comprises an area 170ft in diameter.

Jim Tetlow of Nautilus Entertainment Design (NED) created the original lighting design, which consisted of underwater fixtures, exterior fixtures and automated fixtures in protective enclosures. The main lighting positions included two weatherproofed 'bunkers', which were built into the grade at ground level on either side of the plaza and housed Cyberlight CX units. The bunkers were equipped with temperature controls to keep the fixtures cool and a clear glass window facing the fountains. Two telescoping 40ft lighting towers were located in the side bunkers and two front-of-house positions were used for 1kW Par 64 Exterior fixtures, using pink, lavender and blue dichroic filters. A weatherproof booth placed for rear-projecting 70mm film onto the mist screen provided an additional location for backlighting purposes, containing three Cyberlight CX fixtures. Waterproof 1kW Par 64 and 500W Par 56 units, as well as 75W submersible MR16s, were utilized around and



within the fountains themselves. The Par 64s were located at the base of the water effects and functioned as uplights. These were modified to accept dichroic colour filters. The smaller 75W fixtures were used without colour to illuminate the statues within the fountain.

In late 2000, NED was contacted a second time to design a new show - The Everlasting Promise. The lighting plot and setting remained essentially the same, except the site was enclosed, allowing the event to run year round. A new 20-minute musical score was created by Bob Krogstad and recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra.



The production begins with a chorus of gospel singers who start the Biblical journey of the world's creation through the birth, death and resurrection of Christ. The singers are only present for the beginning of the production; after their departure, the music, water and lighting tell the story.

In May of this year, NED associate lighting designer Mia Bane returned to create the lighting for the new production. She worked closely with Michael Connery and his staff at Show Fountains of Houston, Texas, who designed and installed the water effects. Fountain designer Carol Connery and programmer Bob Harvey created the movement of the water in real time to the musical score during exhaustive programming sessions. While they were working, Bane began the task of lighting each of the five songs in the production, with about 11 hours of programming time each day.

Walter Gundy acted as production manager and line producer for the new production. David Chance programmed the lighting during an early

programming session and Brian Howard for the final programming, using an Expression 2X control console and digitizer tablet. NED's Denis McCubbin acted as production electrician, while Fourth Phase managed the installation itself.

Photos: Brian Howard

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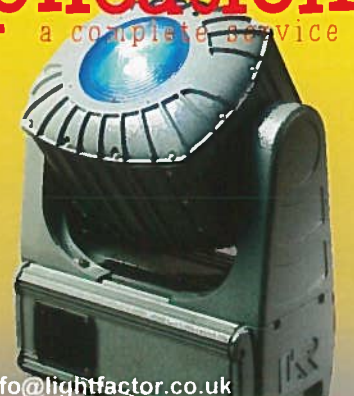
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## Madness!



Graham Brown (pictured second from the right), managing director of Resource PR, and a well known figure in the events production industry, recently completed a 260-mile charity fundraising cycle ride to Paris. Along with five other very averagely toned athletes, he set off from the village of Pailton, in Warwickshire, on Sunday 5th August and arrived in Paris four days later. Half of the proceeds raised from the ride will go to The Iain Rennie Trust, which cares for children with life debilitating diseases. The remaining half will go to Pailton Village Trust, a fund for installing disabled access into Pailton village hall. Anyone interested in donating to the charities should contact Graham Brown, Resource PR - Tel +44 (0)1788 833918 E-mail: [graham@resource-world.com](mailto:graham@resource-world.com)

## WYSIWYG Emmy

The Cast Group, developers of advanced computer software for pre-planning and visualization of entertainment and architectural lighting, have been awarded the coveted Emmy for Outstanding Achievement in Engineering Development. The presentation was made recently at the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences 2001 Primetime Emmy Awards ceremony that took place in Hollywood, California. This is the first time a Canadian company has been awarded an Emmy in this category. Accepting the award for the Cast WYSIWYG software product were president Gilray Densham and vice president Rick Szijarto.

WYSIWYG is the one tool that allows all production people to see their ideas come alive virtually, in a computer-generated format. It enables users to develop lighting, design sets and perform blocking functions prior to actual production. The software does it all virtually, enabling producers and others to see the final product in a computer-generated 3D format. The software has been used widely for television and film productions, and high profile international events, including the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

Prior to this year, and since the first Emmy was awarded in this category in 1948, only two other statuettes have been given to recognize outstanding achievements in lighting technology - and both have been awarded in the last decade. This would seem to indicate that technology is taking a more prominent role in the television and motion picture industries. Emmys for technical achievement predate those awarded to actors. Previous recipients in this category include: 1955, RCA Tricolor Picture Tube which made the commercial colour receiver practical; 1970, Apollo Colour Television from Space; 1973, Sony for the development of the Trinitron picture tube; 1981, Rank Precision Industries which developed a telecine that converts film to video; and 1997, Panasonic for its Laptop Editor.



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## Lightpower & Partners

*As one of Germany's biggest distributors of lighting equipment to the entertainment industry, German distributor Lightpower handles brands such as Clay Paky, MA Lighting, Rosco, ETC, Eurotruss, Rainbow Colour Changers and Pulsar. The Paderborn-based company recently provided L&SI with an insight into its role in two very different projects in southern Germany.*

Known as 'the Tent Event', the Zelt (or 'tent') Musik Festival (ZMF), took place in Freiburg this summer, for the 19th consecutive year, in the heart of a very hot and humid Black Forest. With more than 100 events spread over 19 days, ZMF has a diverse appeal, attracting around 150,000 people of all ages and musical tastes, from across Europe. It also has a strong family appeal, with a cosy beer garden atmosphere, and entertainments for children during the day.

Lightpower's involvement, which is as old as ZMF itself, has always been closely linked with their long-term 'partner' company, Tent Event, who not only supply all of the tents for the Festival, but also provide an 'all-inclusive' service, taking care of the sub-hire of lighting, sound, projection and staging equipment.

The company was originally founded by Felix Thoma as 'Lighthouse'. Andreas Gause joined Thoma as an equal partner in 1993, and the company officially became Tent Event in 1996.



running for long periods - up to several years - while the theatres were extensively refurbished.

The ZMF 'tents' range from the 3,000-capacity big-top 'zirkuszelt', to the antique and beautifully ornate 'spiegelzelt' (mirror tents). MA Lighting control and dimming featured throughout - from the grandMA control desk (with grandMA replay unit for back-up) for the



However, the 'all-inclusive' capability and the relationship with Lightpower has remained unchanged. This multi-discipline approach has seen Tent Event provide complete tent-based temporary theatres in both Freiburg and Erfurt, allowing the performance schedule to keep

main stage in the zirkuszelt, to the Scancode and Lightcommander consoles found in the other spaces. Clay Paky fixtures of all kinds dominated the lighting rigs, with six each of the Italian manufacturer's Stage Zoom, Stage Color and Stage Scan fixtures in the main tent. Other Clay Paky luminaires, including Golden Scan III and HPE models, Shadow QS followspots, Mini Scan HPEs, Stagelights and VIP image projectors (projecting logos in the hospitality tent) all added to the wide range of lighting effects around the festival. Also in evidence, providing a touch of colour to the setting, was the new CP Color 150-E - a 150W exterior (IP65-rated) colour-changer for the display and architectural markets, which will be seen at the PLASA Show this month. Audio throughout ZMF is provided by Cologne-based audioworks, and features

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Europa-Park, it should be noted, is a first class leisure park, boasting more attractions (and a lower entrance fee) than the better-known Eurodisney. The park is a popular location for television production companies, with over 400 productions - both live and recorded - made each year, including 100 episodes of the music request show 'WunschBox'. The park has a technical crew of 150 in total, working under technical manager Stephan Hercher, including 16 lighting and sound engineers



events. The park's extensive loudspeaker systems, both interior and exterior, are supplied and installed by German manufacturer Zeck Audio.

As Lightpower's Michael Althaus explained, Tent Event is not just a customer for Lightpower, but a 'partner', signifying an equal, two-way - and far more fruitful - business relationship. This partnership philosophy, so important to the company, also applies in the opposite direction - up the supply chain to the manufacturers that Lightpower represents.

predominantly GAE loudspeaker systems driven by Chevin amplification. Front-of-house duties in the zirkuszelt were covered by a Midas Heritage 3000, while an XL3 looked after monitors. Yamaha 01V consoles were used for the smaller stages.



and 10 set and scenery builders; the rest are mainly electricians, responsible for the entire range of electrical installations throughout the park.

Again, the MA Lighting and Clay Paky combination was much in evidence, featuring in

Lightpower and Tent Event have also enjoyed a long-term relationship with the supply of equipment and expertise to Europa-Park, in Rust-Baden. Europa-Park is owned and operated by the Mack family - of Mack truck fame - who began their manufacturing empire in the 18th century as coach-builders, later diversifying into carousels and ghost trains, before building their first rollercoaster early in the 20th century, and building trucks in the US from the 1950s onwards.



all the permanently installed systems in the theatres and performance spaces, and flexible spaces used for functions and corporate events. MA's digital dimming systems are also used for the lighting of the rides themselves. Tent Event, in collaboration with Lightpower, is responsible for the provision of lighting equipment - both sale and rental - to the park, and also for the supply of additional crew support for special

*Facing page:*

*Scenes from the Zelt-Musik Festival in Freiburg - the site at night and a live performance in the zirkuszelt*

*This page:*

*Above left, 'Euromaus' the symbol of Europa-Park, greets visitors at the park entrance*

*Above right, the Dome - one of the park's major venues*

*Andreas Gause (left) of Tent Event, with Ralf-Jörg Wezörke, managing director of Lightpower (centre) and Michael Althaus of Lightpower*

*Bottom, Enrico Caironi of Clay Paky and Michael Althaus pictured in - naturally - the Italian zone*

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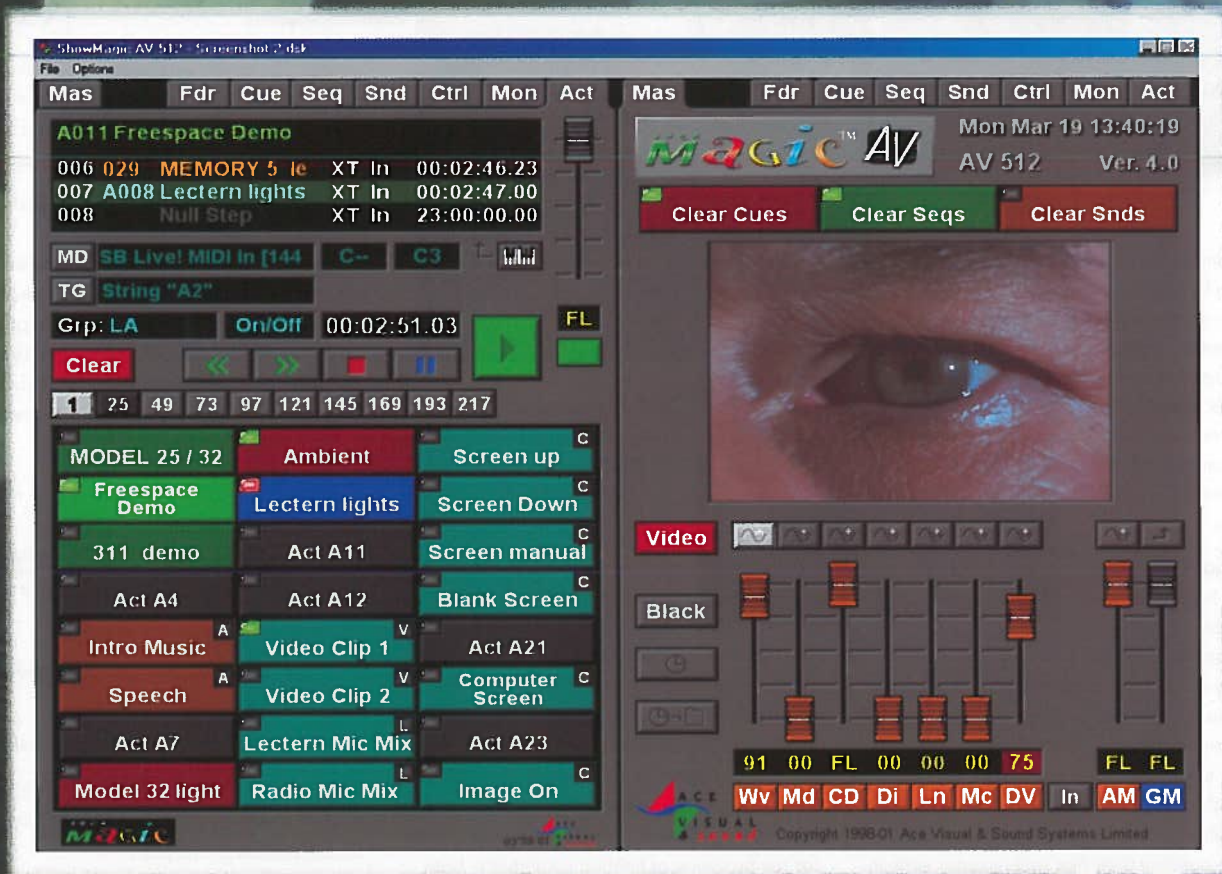
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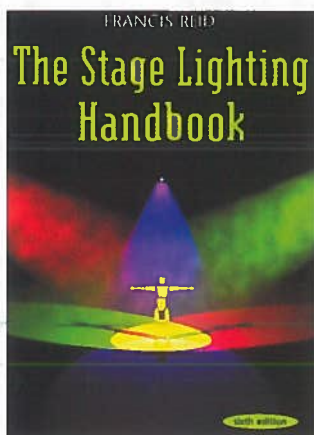


## Stage Lighting Handbook

First published in 1976 and well established as the classic practical lighting guide, *The Stage Lighting Handbook* marks 25 years with the publication of a sixth edition.

Since the publication of the first edition, there have, of course, been revolutionary changes in stage lighting technology - all quickly embraced by the regular new editions of the book.

This latest edition naturally embraces all the latest technology, but also continues to discuss the basic principles - even to the extent of advising how to use one single spotlight if that is all that is available. It also includes up-to-date information on new equipment and discusses its impact on working methods.



While continuing to provide an introduction to readers with no previous lighting experience, the scope of the book has been widened to include more advanced aspects of lighting design and technology. Consequently, the number of pages has doubled between the first and sixth editions. The book was officially launched at the recent Showlight event in Edinburgh, an appropriate backdrop since the author was educated at the city's George Heriot School and later at

Edinburgh University where, despite four years' study, he failed to graduate in science because, fired by the early Edinburgh Festivals, he developed a passion for theatre.

Although this book normally costs £15.99, you can buy it through PLASA's technical book service for £13.99. Call Sheila Bartholomew on +44 1323 418400, or order online at [www.plasa.org/books](http://www.plasa.org/books)

## L&S Eye

*'Fringe Comedian Refused Licence to Stage Show in Car'*

The above headline followed Edinburgh Council's refusal to grant a licence to a comedian whose performance involved driving round the city, performing a 10-minute monologue to one passenger at a time. The application was rejected as being too hazardous.

*'Smashed Potato Clears Royal Opera House'*

Headline referring to a potato that halted a performance at the Royal Opera House. The potato in question hadn't liked being microwaved by a member of the San Francisco Ballet and exploded, causing a blaze and triggering the smoke alarm.

*'Lampies'*

The name of a BBC cartoon broadcast on Monday mornings which means that the truth is finally out - half our industry is a figment of someone's imagination. (Thanks to L&S reader Steve Edwards for spotting this one).



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## Chorion Adds to Portfolio

Leisure operator Chorion has picked up three of the West End's most high-profile nightclubs. In a move that makes them the largest nightclub operator in the West End, the group has acquired Sugar Reef and Red Cube close to Leicester Square, and the Chocolate Bar in Berkeley Square, for around £7.5 million.

The hat-trick of deals follows Chorion's earlier purchase of the 700-capacity 10 Room in Covent Garden for £2.75 million. These will all now join the stable which includes Tiger, Tiger and On Anon.

The move has left property entrepreneur Mark Fuller, who sold his Red Cube and Sugar Reef interests to Chorion in June, free to buy Legends in Mayfair - one of London's longest-running nightclubs.



*Tiger, Tiger in Leicester Square: The roll out of the brand is now well underway across the UK.*

Backed by a consortium of investors, he has paid a £1 million premium for the lease on the property to Perthshire Leisure, the group that owns Abigail's Party on Brewer Street.

## The Evolution of Theatre Lighting

The Gaiety Theatre on the Isle of Man has unveiled a permanent lighting exhibition covering the evolution of theatre lighting.

Building on from a 10-year long restoration process to reinstate the theatre back to its former Victorian appearance and ambience, the management decided to convert the three old projection rooms into a permanent exhibit of the history of theatre lighting. The idea had been lying latent for a while and was brought to life at ABTT earlier this year, following a conversation with lighting designer Jim Laws.

Designed by the legendary Frank Matcham, the Gaiety Theatre was built in 1899 and opened in 1900. Located at the rear of the auditorium above the balcony, the exhibition houses lighting equipment from the early days of electrical theatre lighting. Most of the old lighting from the theatre has found a new home there, as has the 1960s control system from the Royal Albert Hall. Alongside the Pattern 23 and Pattern 123 (both industry standards in their day) you can now find the ETC Source Four, which the theatre's production manager, Séamus Shea, was particularly keen to feature in the display. The Source Four was presented to the Gaiety last month by ETC's Mark White.

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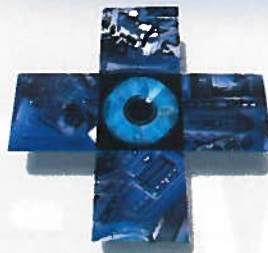
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## Soundcraft Going Live!

*"I thought that after eight years it was time I turned up and had a look," and this from a man who hardly needs instruction in the use of consoles. Graham Blyth, along with Phil Dudderidge, is the creator of all things Soundcraft, having founded the company 28 years ago.*

Nevertheless he was there, attended all sessions, and was indeed attentive. While Blyth might not need the ministrations of Andy Dockerty, Chrys Lindop, Dave Kay and Andy May, he was not alone; there were four engineers from the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS), and plenty of others with more than a passing knowledge of what all those thousands of knobs are for.

'Going Live' is in its ninth year - Blyth was just slightly off - and continues to be heavily subscribed. "We've always been over-subscribed," said Elizabeth Gates. "There's over 100 this year. We've had to turn people away."

For a two or three-day packaged event (depending on your level of knowledge) it is very, very affordable, which is surely why I found so many freelancers here who'd paid their own way. "There's nothing else like it around," said one. Chrys Lindop, as the inventor of in-ear monitoring and the founder of Garwood, arguably need never work again, yet he's here giving his time and knowledge - why? "It's important. Where else can people go to get this type of information?"



Now you don't come out of this course with a qualification, there's no testing, but does that make it invalid? For those of you battling with building training programmes for the entertainment industry, try this statement for size. "Nobody in the audio industry puts any value on formal training. I've done a fairly intense Studio course at the School of Audio Engineering in Glasgow and it means nothing. They want experience, you've got to do the time." Colin Ramponi is a young Scot who despite being presently unemployed had managed to pay his way onto the course. "I learned more in four days working for SSE at T in the Park, than on the whole Studio course."

Ramponi's sentiment was echoed time and again by attendees with whom I spoke, not that any of them found little value in courses that produce qualifications, far from it, but there was no mistaking the sense that all these people felt the industry itself, the companies who might give them the job, don't value formal training as

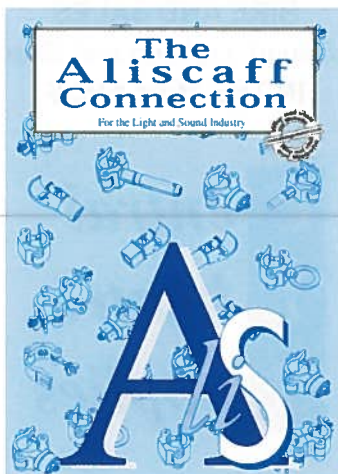
an employment qualification. That raises a big question; is the industry just paying lip service to qualifications in order to satisfy the needs of legislation and insurance, or are they genuinely seeking more able personnel?

Day one is for beginners; hosted by AdLib at their warehouse in Speke, it's for people who think a crossover is a man in lady's clothing. The morning of Day Two and the course proper at the Arts Centre starts with a lengthy and formal presentation of PA systems from microphone through to speaker and all points between. Then begin the break-outs, where the 100 attendees are split into four groups, each circulating through various sessions with the four respective 'tutors', sessions that cover all aspects of live sound mixing from VCAs to Voicing PAs.

It was these breakout sessions, and the Q&A sessions with the engineers, where most benefit was to be gained. Not only did we all receive an authoritative view on many complex subjects, we were also freely given the cumulative years of experience all these men had to offer. That experience was key to demystifying the subject - it made every topic look simple, and the informal atmosphere emboldened those attending to ask even the most obvious questions.

All in all, a balanced and informative three days. I leave Tony Mason, a freelance sound and lighting man, to sum up. "I got lots of ideas: it was great to have techniques shared by professionals and to discover alternative solutions... A good foundation course for beginners, a great refresher for others."

Steve Moles



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## RCF RX-3000 in Rome

**RCF/Mackie has been responsible for the design and supply of a sound system for the new Terminal A at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci airport at Fiumicino, based around the company's RX-3000 programmable matrix system.**



The new Terminal, built at a cost of ITL 125 billion, is 170m long, 80-100m wide and 20m high, with a covered surface area of 55,000sq.m. It replaces the temporary building constructed in 1997, with the aim of comfortably accommodating more than 12 million passengers a year who use Fiumicino for domestic flights and who, according to recent estimates, are due to grow to 17 million by 2005.

RCF's association with Rome's airports stretches back around 25 years, to when the company first started supplying sound equipment to both of Rome's airports - Fiumicino and Ciampino. One figure that the audio team from Reggio Emilia (home of RCF and now Mackie Designs Italy) is proud of is that, over the years, RCF has supplied more than 10,000 loudspeakers to Rome's airports.

The building's designers, CEA (Consorzio Engineering Aeroportuale), appointed ELCA - a long-established Rome-based installer and

Mackie/RCF's agents in the area - to produce the sound system for the new terminal. As with all large contracts of this type, the local

agent worked closely with the technical team back at RCF, which was headed up by Antonio Ferrari. Together they produced the project specifications to provide solutions to the inevitable environmental problems. In the case of Terminal A, the main problem was the variation in ceiling height throughout the building, which precluded the use of traditional ceiling speakers in many of the public areas.

The project was initially handled by the internal audio consultants at the ELCA agency, who undertook the measurements of the ambient acoustic parameters of the new terminal

building. This was the start of a design and installation process that would last for a whole year.

The solution that emerged was to use the Mackie Vision Series of loudspeakers; ELCA installed 12 specially-prepared PA151s - 11 positioned high along the length of the terminal building above the main entrances (main picture), with another covering the escalator (inset) - to cover the main terminal concourse. In this way, the system provides an overall sound that is clear and concise for public announcements.



The PA system is managed by an RCF RX-3000 programmable matrix system, designed by RCF to address the need for sophisticated audio management systems in modern commercial, industrial and civil complexes of just this type. The RX-3000 is a completely programmable matrix, expandable up to 32 inputs and 138 outputs; each input can be routed to one or more outputs, according to the configuration and defined priority levels. Modular in structure, the system can easily be expanded subsequent to installation in order to cater for changing or increasing demands. The system at Terminal A is divided into six zones, each of which uses 8kW of power. For this installation, the majority of ceiling speakers installed were RCF PL80/81s, placed at 4m intervals.

Other installations successfully using the RX-3000 system include Rome's Grand Hotel, the Stazione Termini (the city's main railway station) and the headquarters of Telecom Italia.

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# PLASA Show 2001- London

*Never in the history of the magazine have we received so much information generated in relation to one signal event. Well, all right - maybe the press information generated by those involved in Millennium projects might have outstripped PLASA 2001, but that doesn't count since it only happens once every thousand years and who could compete with that?*

So here we sit, awash with all the latest news on all the things that all the PLASA exhibitors are planning. If you haven't yet made your mind up about visiting PLASA, now is the time. Maybe the following pages will persuade you. Let's start with the event itself . . .

PLASA wouldn't be PLASA without the exhibitors and the Show is where you get to find out what over 400 of the industry's leading players have been doing in the past few months. It's got to be better than leafing through hundreds of product brochures or trawling the internet for information.

Anybody's who's been to PLASA before will understand that this is one of the busiest shows in the calendar. The event hits the ground running the moment the doors open at 10am on Sunday 9 September, and doesn't ease up till late Wednesday afternoon.

PLASA is the place to catch up with all the latest industry developments, providing you with a vital injection of news from the wider world. And even though it's not easy to keep a handle on everything that's happening at the show, we do some of the work for you, translating everything we track down on the show floor into online news (if anybody would like to buy us a beer whilst we're doing this, they'd be very welcome).

Aside from the exhibition, there are plenty of things to catch the eye, including the DJ

## Fast Facts

Dates:

9-12 September 2001

Venue:

Earls Court Exhibition Centre, London.

Opening Times:

Sunday 9 - Tuesday 11 10am - 6pm  
Wednesday 12 September 10am - 5pm

Visitor Hotline:

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Other Enquiries:

Tel: +44 (0)20 7370 8226

Online Information

Website - [www.plasa.org](http://www.plasa.org)

Competition on the Sunday, the newly-introduced IDJ Talk Zone offering advice to DJs, the PLASA Awards for Product Excellence, the various Feature Areas, and the many events, press launches and on-stand receptions organised by exhibitors.

If you're keen to learn more about how others are using technology or how they pulled together highly complex, high profile projects, then you can book yourself a place on one of the seminars or masterclasses. If you're on the audio side of the industry, then you may be interested in the run of seminars that appear under the broad theme of audio installation and integration. Taking place on the Monday, these look at areas such as networking, audio control and the increasing convergence of technologies. Tuesday concentrates on the theme and leisure sector and takes as its starting point the way in which the leisure industry exploits special effects, lighting and audio technology to create the highly sophisticated attractions and experiences that we've come to expect.

On Wednesday, the sessions move to consider the wider issues of the integration of audio and

lighting into building design and the regulations that now attend such work, the basics of video conferencing and the increasing profile of new media such as LED technology.

For the first time you can also attend a series of focused courses and workshops. The ISCE is running three sessions covering the issues associated with audio system design, whilst Loughborough College and the AETTI are jointly promoting a series of courses which offer those interested in theatre a chance to work towards BTEC certification. There's never been a better opportunity to build on your existing knowledge.

If you plan to attend, it's preferable to book in advance by calling +44 (0)1784 482860, although you can still sign up at the Show - just go to the Information Point at the front of the Hall.

If you've got a couple of days to spare after the Show, you should also sign up for Theatrical London - an event that gives you the chance to go backstage at some of London's most high profile venues. This year, the organisers have arranged visits to the Royal Albert Hall, the Apollo Theatre, Tussaud's Group Studios, the Donmar Warehouse and the Globe Theatre. These tours are complemented by performances of *Divas at the Donmar* and *A Night at The Proms*.

To register to attend Theatrical London, simply call +44 (0)1323 418400.

In recent issues, we've looked at the events surrounding PLASA; now it's time to focus on the technology and the best starting point for that is the nominations for the PLASA Product Awards. This year we have had more nominations than ever before, as you'll see on the following pages. The winners will be announced on Wednesday 12 September at 9.30am in the L&SI-sponsored New Technology Gallery.



## PLASA Awards for Product Excellence

Five products have been nominated in the audio-visual category.

Color Kinetics (EP32) have nominated the **Surround Light Entertainment System** - a complete design/playback system for creating immersive environments, which includes ColorPlay 1.5 authoring software, the iPlayer playback device, Chromacore-based lights and the ckAmp MP3 music visualization plug-in.

High End Systems' (E64) **Catalyst** is an orbital movement system - like a periscope - that mounts to the front of a video projector and allows static images of moving video to be projected anywhere within a 360° by 180° hemisphere of movement. Catalyst can mix colour, select gobos, iris down, and insert shutters all directly from a DMX lighting console.

Terminating installed video cables to the standard 15-pin high-density 'D' connector has long been problematic, even with 3mm diameter cable - and virtually impossible with PSF 1/3 br similar cable. M+D's (AV5) **Floor Box Adapter** seeks to address these issues; it converts the 'D' connector into five electrically-isolated 75 ohm BNC sockets spaced to allow fitting of conventional crimp BNC plugs without additional specialist tooling.

Navigator Systems' (B16) **RentalDesk** is a rental management software system which breaks new ground, not just for its cost, but for its capacity for redesigning all screen layouts and printouts, thereby allowing the user to adapt the software to their needs.

The final entrant in the AV category is OptiMusic's (J38) **OM-Interactive Light Control System**. This PC-based system is activated simply by moving a hand or any part of the body through light beams to activate a variety of multimedia events in real-time. Each beam can activate up-to 99 events which could be any lighting, sound or audio-visual cue, movement or other effect.

Lighting attracted the most nominations with 21 companies putting forward new product.

5 Star's (B38/B41) **Cradle Support Trunk** is designed to house the ever-growing range of moving head luminaires. The system is based around a 'Top Hat' style trunk giving a low base section, to which is fixed a CNC-machined plywood support cradle.

The **S<sup>2</sup>MS - Stage & Studio Management System** from ADB LSI (G16) is a digital control system which permits easy integration of existing

control systems such as DMX 512, house-technology and media control, offering a uniform control and monitoring level with local configuration features (locking and release functions).

Artistic Licence (UK) Ltd (G24) have nominated two products: **Down-Link** is a wall-mount Ethernet-to-DMX 512 converter. It is presented in a two-gang panel that mounts to a standard 'MK' style wall box and converts Art-Net to two universes of DMX512(A).

**Water-Pipe** is a linear luminaire based on coloured LEDs. The product uses additive mixing of red, green and blue primaries to produce in excess of 16 million colour combinations.

Avolites (C4) has also nominated two products: the **Art2000-TV 32A** dimmer has been developed for the film and TV Industry. Unique features include the high channel density and portability of the dimmer, plus its guaranteed duty cycle and a power rating of 7.3kW@230 volts. The new Avolites **Art2000-US 20 Amp** digital dimmer is specifically designed for the US market. Any of its bays can be instantly changed between dimming and clean mains, all integrated through the hot patch. The neat 'cat flap' cable compartment is a clever solution to a standard dimming problem. The Full Mains Patching, virtually silent operation and 100% duty cycle 20 Amp channels are designed to satisfy America's growing demand for portable, high density touring dimming systems.

Clay Paky (G46) have nominated three new products. The **CP Color** is a line of colour changers designed for the professional and architectural markets. There are four models in the range and with four channels, each model adopts a CMY system and has a uniform mechanical dimmer from 0 to 100%. The **Golden Spot 1200** is a powerful moving body effects projector (with HMI 1200W lamp) that features rotating wheels, a fixed gobo wheel, electronic focusing with an additional lens for beam reduction, and a range of filters and effects. **Stage Profile 1200 SV** combines the quality of a professional beam-shaper with the versatility of a silent moving body, and is ideal for theatre, TV and live show applications.

Coe Tech Ltd (F40) too have entered three products. The **CF7HE-X** features enhanced optics, including a newly-designed reflector and a selection of lenses, giving 30% more light output. New software allows even more precise movement. The Coemar **Panorama Cyc Power CYM** cyc floodlight is designed for exterior or interior use and uses Coemar's unique TLT twin lamp technology. The **Super Cyc 2.4** is the first ever cyc light offering 425° pan and 212° tilt movement. Using Coemar's patented Twin Lamp Technology (TLT), the Supercyc 2.4 utilizes two powerful 1.2k MSR light sources, giving an incredible 110,000 lumens output and a colour temperature of 5,900°K.

Color Kinetics' (EP32) **C-Splash** brings coloured light and colour-changing effects to any underwater location, thanks to its digital LED-based Chromacore technology. Encased in a fully-enclosed brass housing, switch-free C-Splash is easily programmed through Color Kinetics' external Zapi controller.

The **YoYo+** from DHA Lighting Ltd (F14) houses etched effects plates and accurately positions them in the gate of theatre lanterns, moving them to any specific point using a microprocessor-controlled motor unit. Linear movement facilitates any effect that requires vertical or horizontal motion, whilst a 'continuous' option adds a repeat feature.

Enliten's (F4) **BP75 Low Voltage Gobo Projector** is a compact fixture primarily designed for projecting high resolution patterns and logos. It marries the ability to project any combination of two metal and/or glass patterns with a unique self-locking zoom lens system that produces a smooth change of beam size in sharp or soft focus.

The latest innovation to use ETC's (H8) sophisticated ETCNet2 Ethernet system is the **Obsession Wireless Remote Focus Unit**, which turns a hand-held PDA into an extension of ETC's Obsession II console. Multiple PDAs can be used on one system and if security or cross talk are potential problems, the system can be configured to accept only commands from specific hand-held devices. Also nominated by ETC is the **WYSILink** problem finder. WYSILink will operate with any level of WYSIWYG software (WYSIPaper, WYSICAD or WYSIWYG) showing luminaire and dimmer failures graphically.

BURST-2X from Geni Electronics (I41) is the first patented 360-degree full-barrel scan in the world. With double axles attached to the 360-degree barrel, **BURST-2X** is free to revolve in



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## Reference

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Finlandia Hall, Helsinki  
Rental Company, Tokyo  
Akademietheater, Vienna  
Schauspielhaus Kiel, Kiel  
Galleria Nightclub, Cairo  
Divadlo v Dlouhe, Prague  
Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna  
Etcetera Theatre, Moscow  
Kasino Burgtheater, Vienna  
Theater der Jugend, Vienna  
Wiener Konzerthaus, Vienna  
Theater an der Wien, Vienna  
Technical Supply Japan, Tokyo  
Auersperg 15 Theater, Vienna  
Shopping Center Nord, Vienna  
Tiroler Landestheater, Innsbruck  
Landestheater Salzburg, Salzburg  
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all directions, has a 14-colour gobo system and allows both DMX and sound-activated control.

**Handshake** is High End Systems' new portable lighting controller, designed to run on the Palm R III and Palm R VII organizers. It can be used to program any DMX compatible lighting fixture. Also from High End/Flying Pig is **Hog PC** which transfers many of the Wholehog II lighting console's functions to a PC. Born out of the company's existing Hog Edit software, Hog PC runs on any Windows 98, 98ME or Win 2000 computer and includes a

hardware device to output DMX. The final product is **x.Spot** - the industry's only network-enabled profile luminaire with 4:1 continuous zoom, superior colour correction, and two brand new features - LithoMotion moving media and precision framing shutters. An amazing 11° - 45° continuous zoom range allows seamless transitions without a lens change.

MA Lighting Technology GmbH's (I12) **grandMA ultra-light** is a compact lighting console offering 1,024 control channels (two DMX lines) and almost any of the user-friendly software and programming features of the grandMA light.

Multiform (C30) has nominated the Meteor-designed **Puppeteer** - a solution to the problem of focusing theatrical lanterns from a remote position. Housed in a compact extruded aluminium casing, weighing only 6lbs, the mains powered Puppeteer uses two DMX channels to control the position of the luminaire with 8-bit positional accuracy.

Pulsar's (G46) innovative **ChromaRange** is a new family of LED technology lighting fixtures. Each fixture houses 80 powerful, high-efficiency LEDs comprising a mixture of red, green and blue types to allow endless RGB colour mixing - offering 16.7 million colours.

R&G Theatre Services' (R24) **Nova System 3** is a new lighting bar system which contains both mains and DMX cables for intelligent lights and peripheral equipment. Formed from a 48mm diameter extrusion set, Nova System 3 incorporates mains and data cables screened and isolated from each other.

Italian manufacturer SGM Elettronica srl (J37) has put forward the **Glotto Spot 400**. High levels of performance are achieved thanks to its combination of a Philips MSR 400HR discharge lamp and a dichroic reflector. Features include a linear zoom (9°-24°), fast linear iris diaphragm and gobo and effects features.



Denon's DN-X800

**ShowLED** by Amelia nv (J39) is a starcloth system that solves the problems presented by pea bulbs and fibre optics. The system is lightweight, durable and reusable and features adhesive coloured velcro washers which hold the sockets at right angles to the fabric and allow at-a-glance colour coding.

The **Virtuoso DX** and the **VL2402** have been nominated by Vari-Lite Inc (F28). The DX provides fast and powerful tools for programming and control of automated and conventional lights and Vari\*Lite luminaires. In addition to the Virtuoso communications protocol, the console includes eight integrated

DMX universes and supports up to 26 DMX universes with additional equipment. The VL2402 wash luminaire features an upper enclosure that houses the control electronics, as well as a power factor corrected arc power supply for the Philips MSR700SA arc lamp.

White Light (F4) have nominated the **Marius** from Robert Juliat - a 1200W discharge followspot designed for use with either the G22 MSR or MSD lamps. The Marius features a high performance removable double condenser optical system, an autoblocking G22 lamp socket and a smooth mechanical dimmer which aids in the protection of the lenses.

Zero 88 Lighting (F2) has nominated its **Fat Frog**, offering 48 generic channels, 999 memories, 108 submasters and the ability to control 12 moving lights. With an inbuilt fixture library, palettes, effects engine and the unique FROG function all as standard, the Fat Frog has been designed to bring flexibility to smaller venues and tours.

**In the audio category, 14 new products line up for the awards.**

The Allen & Heath Ltd (H30) **XONE:32** has three dual stereo channels, and a host of features such as the Voltage Controlled Filter, Low Frequency Oscillator with a tap-tempo input, and Digital Recall System, allowing instant recall of filter settings at the touch of a button.

The **Intelliplate** from Audace Ltd (P28) is a digital remote control system for fixed audio installations. Up to 32 Intelliplate panels can be connected with a single Cat 5 cable and easily programmed for volume control, source selection, muting, paging, room combining and other applications.

Autograph Sales (B4) have nominated the **DTB-2001** from Digital Talkback. The first products available are a belt-pack and base-station system with no frequency management or set-up. The product offers 120 channels on any one site and high audio quality.

Denon's (S1) **DN-X800** DJ mixer is the first DJ mixer to feature four digital inputs and two digital outputs - one of the many possibilities offered here is the easy conversion of vinyl into a digital media like DAT, CD or minidisk. A host of new creative operations are available to DJs with the X-effect - by moving the X-fader.

The new **PM-100** modular production mixer from Formula Sound (E26) has a single universal input module which can be configured to accept virtually any type of input source. The mixer also features VCA-controlled crossfade with punch, contour control and inserts at either end of the fader for connecting external signal processing equipment.

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*Philip Butterworth – Hounslow Community Initiative Partnership*

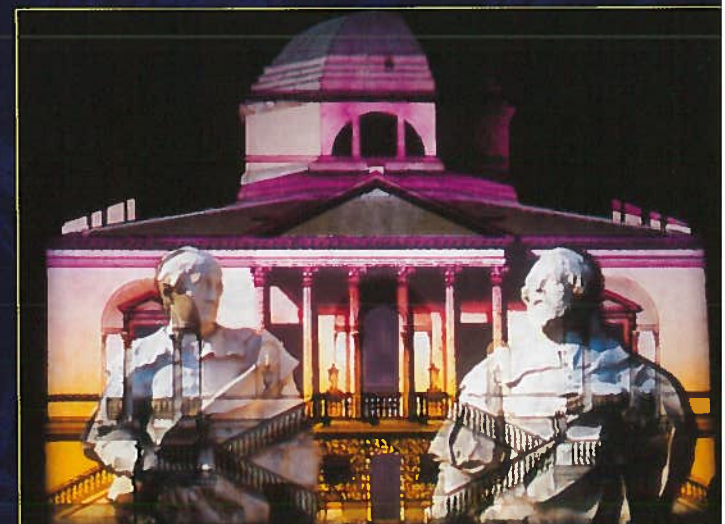
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*Marion Docherty – Hospitality Manager Chiswick House*

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Funktion-One (T18)'s **Resolution 5 Touring** is a very high efficiency, three-way, narrow-dispersion, long-throw, low-mid/high loudspeaker enclosure. It utilizes new holistic waveguide and driver design and is of minimal size and weight. With its ingenious integrated flying system, two people can fly an arena system in 20 minutes.

Garwood Communications (N4), the inventor of in-ear monitoring, has nominated **System 24** - a high-quality wireless in-ear monitoring system, which presents advanced UHF technology in a fully-featured rack-mounting package, complete with local monitoring facility.



Garwood's System 24

LA Audio (T36)'s **ZX 135**

'PubMix' digital zone mixing system brings the power and security of software-based audio distribution into the budget of smaller venues. The system comprises a master unit with one microphone and three stereo line sources, which can be routed to up to 23 zones via Expander units.

The **Optocore LX4** has been nominated by Marquee Audio (T30). Based on the original Optocore modular system, the fixed format LX4 comprises an input stagebox with high quality mic preamps and phantom power, output FOH box and a length of lightweight fibre optic cable.

Outline SNC's (H44) **Kanguro** has the ability to carry its satellite mid/high cabinet inside its sub bass, which means a fully-powered 1.5kW @ 8 ohm stereo rig can be carried in an

average estate car. The configuration comprises two satellite cabs consisting of a single 12" woofer and a 1" compression driver in each satellite cabinet, with each subwoofer carrying a 15" long excursion cone driver.

Pioneer's (D40) **CDJ-1000** is based on the award-winning CDJ footprint. Key features include the world's largest sensitive jog dial with integral wave data display, true vinyl emulation for scratch, cue, brake and release, a choice of vinyl/CD mode, internal/removable memory to store cue, loop wave and CD

information, instant reverse, seamless loop in/loop out adjust and an instant cue point memory feature.

Sennheiser UK Ltd (F26) have nominated the **Compact One** from

DAS Audio. The system is in keeping with the trend towards self-powered loudspeakers and incorporates 1000W of class D amplifier technology. It is configured with 15" and 6" speakers and a 1" compression driver.

**SIDD** (Seriously Intelligent Digital Dynamics) is the latest processor from XTA (T32) to bring new options to FOH, monitors, recording, broadcast or mastering. A powerful, dual/stereo-channel processor for complete dynamics control, SIDD puts a versatile array of processing into one, easy-to use unit.

Yamaha-Kemble Music (R2) has nominated two products. The **AW4416** is a 44-channel, 16-track hard disk recording system complete with full editing, sampling and mastering facilities. It boasts true 24-bit, 48kHz resolution with no compression of any type. The **PMID**, designed

specifically for live and installed sound applications, is a totally digital system.

Finally, the **Stage Engineering** category.

Ultralight (T28) has nominated its **Staging System v2**. The 2001 version 2 system is stronger, more user friendly, significantly quicker to stack and tier, far easier to maintain and now durable for outdoor use.

Verlinde (J8) is introducing the first real intelligent hoist, **Stagemaker F**. The result of close co-operation with a lighting specialist, this innovative hoist features smooth and accurate variable speed control, variable acceleration and deceleration and a mechanical brake. The hoists, each with their own ID, are designed and configured to work as stand-alone or in an Ethernet network.

**Visual Act's** (R62)

eponymously-named system of remote-controlled wagons for creating movement on and off the stage use modular and reusable components, such as drive units, control systems and sealed battery packs.

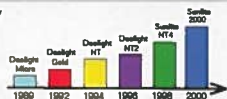
We have been asked to keep a number of nominations under wraps for the time being. You can see these, and all the products featured here, in the L&S-sponsored New Technology Gallery on the Top Deck.



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## New Launches

In addition to all the products being nominated for awards, there will be literally hundreds of other new innovations being introduced to the world for the first time at PLASA.

Here's just a taster of what you can expect . . .

**Apogee Sound**, on the Lightfactor stand (E7), is showing its recently-released range of powered loudspeakers - the APL Series. Modelled on the highly successful AE and F Series cabinets, Apogee's powered versions emulate the performance, clarity and quality of the conventional loudspeakers, with processing and amplification both contained within the enclosure.

**Audio-Technica** (H16) is unveiling a number of new products. Taking centre stage will be the second generation of the popular Engineered Sound series of microphones, which has been expanded to include boundary, gooseneck, suspension, lavalier and handheld models. Also on show is the AT3031 (cardioid) and the AT3032 (omni-directional) microphones added to the 30 Series range for home and project studios.

**Baldwin Boxall** (S2) is showing a number of new products, including the VIGIL Communicare, a system developed in response to BS5588, enabling fire officers to remain in contact with disabled persons in the safety refuge area of a building.

**beyerdynamic** (H42) is concentrating on conference products and sound contracting audio systems. The range of new and existing

products on display includes wireless and cabled conference and voting systems, simultaneous translation systems from beyerdynamic, including the MCS 1038 Chairman's conference station.

**BSS Audio** (S30) will be showing the Soundweb 9088ii. Its DSP engine builds on the highly successful Soundweb platform; the latest generation 24-bit converters are used to give a dynamic range of better than 107dB, plus a new AES/EBU digital input card extends the applications and source options for the Soundweb system

**Canford** (H18) is launching its Multipower - a means of replacing up to 14 PSUs in a single 1U device. Also the EZ-PC pro-interface will get its UK launch at the show. The MIDI distribution amplifier and the MIDI mains switcher will be seen in their full production form for the first time after their recent launches.

**Carlsbro Electronics** (J50) makes its PLASA debut this year and to mark the occasion has some innovative products on demo, including the NlightN sound panels, featuring NXT technology.

**Celestion** (G34) is introducing the white Celestion CXi 521, ideal for modern architectural spaces, and the new CXi 822 horn-loaded mid/high loudspeaker.

New mixer products from **Citronic** (D32) include the CS3 mixer; the CDM10:4 DSP - the famous 10:4 with effects; a new silver panel version of the PRO 8; the latest addition to the company's Mix Station range, the MSX-4; the SM450 Mk3 DJ install mixer and the VT3:2.

**Electro-Voice** has a big presence on the Shuttlesound stand (B10), starting with EViD, a new range of speakers designed for the installation market. Increasing in both size and power and suitable for both live and installation work is the successful new Rx Series, whilst the concert market has recently witnessed the debut of EV's new line-array system, X-Line.

**Eminence Speaker Europe** (E24) is introducing its new sub-bass and bass driver range, Eminence Magnum. The Magnum is available in 15" and 18" sizes and uses a 'bullet-shaped' aluminium phaser at its centre to act as an acoustic device that minimises destructive phase conditions.

**Fuzion** (F32) is displaying a number of newcomers to its product portfolio. These include a range of loudspeakers and signal processors from WORK, a new range of amplifiers from Crown, a radio mic system from Sabine and an audio matrix from Symetrix.

**Hacousto** (B24) will demo the new ACE2.200. This new 200W amplifier features two powerful and efficient Class-T independent audio amplifiers and is housed in a compact and lightweight 2U 19" rack-mountable



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## Midas Legend



unit. Suitable for 50, 70 or 100 volt line distribution systems, the ACE2.200 amplifier offers two individual channels with a 200W RMS output capability.

In addition to showcasing new mixer and limited edition cartridges from Stanton, **Lamba (F54)** will also be showing the full range of newly-launched Nady microphone and processing products. Lamba will also introduce its newly-acquired high-end amplification range from PSS in France, as well as a new range of purpose-designed plastic enclosures from Cerwin-Vega!

**Logic System Pro Audio (I20)** will be showing additions to its IS Series of installation products. The IS23 is a 1 x 12", 300W low profile sub bass unit designed to fit neatly under bars and seating areas. Also on show are the new LS7 and LS12 - aimed at theatre and AV applications.

**Mach (E56)** is introducing four new products. The M20.06 digital loudspeaker management system, the Ballista subwoofer for demanding long-throw touring applications, a new line of nearly invisible Mach ceiling speakers for the architectural segment and a complete range of white products for versatile installation purposes.

**Martin Audio (F64)** is launching additional Blackline cabinets - the F8, F10 and S12 - as well as a new line of lower cost professional power amplifiers, the MA900, MA1400 and MA4200.

**Midas (B10)** is presenting Legend, the world's first truly tri-purpose console for live music production. Thanks to the inclusion of two lots

of EQ and two faders for level control on each channel, Legend offers a unique solution for complete, no-compromise control over both FOH and monitor mixes. The inclusion of XL4 preamps and XL3 EQ guarantees the traditional Midas sound expected of all Midas consoles.

**Miltec (UK) Ltd (B40)** will be showing audio products from both Ecler and Artcoustic. From Ecler will be additions to the PAM range of amplifiers, together with a new Enviro 100v line system and EPC 7000W sound system. Also on show for the first time are the Concept 2 and SCLAT ranges of mixers. Artcoustic, meanwhile, will have its full range of speakers for bars, restaurants and conference rooms on show.

**Sony Professional Audio (R1)** is making some world product debuts, including the SRP-X700P - a digital AV switcher/mixer that includes a 5.1 channel surround sound digital audio mixer and digital EQ. Also new is the PVS-R102 Multi-Media matrix switcher - a compact and integrated 10 into 2 AV matrix switcher.

Product launches on the **Sound Dept** stand (S15) include the new ST Series amplifiers and X-Rack Series mixers from Crest Audio, and new additions to the CPL Installation Series from Community.

**Soundcraft (G22)** is showing no less than 12 new models, starting with the top-of-the-range touring consoles, the Series Five and SM20 monitor desk. With smaller footprints, but equally high specifications, the VCA-equipped Series Four and Series Two are equally at home on tour or in fixed installations. Soundcraft's digital programme is represented by the 324 Live, and high-quality compact consoles include the new M Series.

**Tannoy (D30)** is launching the multi-application, transportable T8 Dual Concentric and slimline i7 Contour reinforcement loudspeakers. A new range of high quality installation microphones and TA series amplifiers will also be on show.

**Trantec (D14)** is showing the latest updates to the S5000 backpack. Features include: power via single AA battery, giving approximately eight hours of use; programming capabilities for gain, frequency and user name via Infra Red sources such as Palm Pilot and compatibility with existing S5000 receivers.

**As ever, there's a host of new lighting and associated products.**

**Compulite's (C3) RAVE** is a compact lighting control desk for the Club/DJ market and small venues looking for low cost, versatile moving light control. It offers simple and quick set-up and operation, plus either manual or fully automated playback. The

CompuDIM Wallmount installation version of the CompuDIM range of digital dimmers is also available, coming in two versions (24 x 3kW or 12 x 5kW) incorporating MCB protection as standard with the option of integral RCD protection. Compulite is sharing a stand with Stagetec.

**Constella (L5)** is adding three new products to its DMX512 lighting range. Following the success of the Chameleon 5 last year, the company has made the unit intelligent, and now presents the Chameleon 5 DMX. Other additions include the Astra Moon Scan and Astra Moon Star effects, combining the crystal sharp images and responsive movement of the Chameleon 4 with a choice of two light delivery systems - the scan head or the rotating barrel.

**FAL**, on the Miltec (UK) stand (B40) is introducing the Three Sixty 2 and Three Sixty 4 moving heads, alongside the Roulette Scan - a 1200W fixture and a 1500W strobe system. Artcoustic, meanwhile, will have its full range of speakers for bars, restaurants and conference rooms on show.



Making its UK debut at PLASA is **Griven's (G42)** new exterior gobo projector, the Goboclip. Sister product to the Kolorclip exterior colour changer and sharing Kolorclip's compact IP55-rated main housing and 9000 hour 150W metal halide lamp, Goboclip has selectable 19 or 30 degree projection angles and uses 'D' size gobos with static image or three rotation speeds.

**IES (F16)** is launching new models in its range of low-noise IGBT installed and distributed dimming systems. The range includes iTEC reverse-phase IGBT dimmers and second generation iSINE Sine Wave silent dimmers - technologies which have been supplied throughout Europe in the past year.

**Lightfactor (E7)** will be displaying the latest products from LDR, LightProcessor, SGM and High End Systems. LDR's range of theatre lanterns will be expanded with the launch of three new products, all re-engineered and re-designed versions of the company's popular range of professional fresnel and PC luminaires.

New from **LSC** (on the StageteC stand - C3) is the maXim - a powerful, easy-to-use range of control desks. Five models are available ranging from 24 to 120 channel faders - to suit all applications.





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**Pani (R30)** is introducing the BP 2.5 ECO - a new development on the PANI 'T' (Turbo) generation platform, specially designed for short and medium distances. Another innovation from Pani, the Economic Slide

System (ESS), gives users the opportunity to produce their own slides from a PC or Mac. The ESS is a one-stop solution consisting of a state-of-the-art inkjet photocopier, printer software with template for the output medium, 50 Pani special foils and 15 aluminium slide frames.

**Martin Professional (E54-E56)** is introducing the MAC 2000 Forma - a new version of the successful 1200W MAC 2000 profile spot which features an internal framing device for precise stage lighting and new sub-gobo rotation wheel, useful for theatrical fire and water effects. Also new is MAC 600 NT - a new version of the popular MAC 600 featuring improved colour mixing, a CTC system and noiseless operation, perfect for noise-sensitive markets such as theatre and TV. From Jem comes the new Heavy Fog, a more compact, easier to operate, less power-intensive, more affordable solution to creating fog effects.

**In addition to audio and lighting, there's a host of other new technology on the show floor . . .**

**Blackout Triple E (F20)** is launching a modular curtain track control system with DMX protocol. The 19" rack-based system will control the entire range of Blackout Triple E systems and will feature DMX interface as standard to enable track systems to be integrated into a lighting and movement package. Also on display on the Blackout Triple

E stand will be a variety of track, drapes, starcloths and automation equipment, as well as acoustic blind systems.

**Doughty (D10)** is showing a range of new products for the first time, including a series of two and three adjustable spring pantographs, designed to be lightweight and compact, with strength, safety and ease of use being the major design criteria. Also new is the Quick Trigger Clamp.

**James Thomas (F44)** is launching its new Exterior MR16 fixture, along with the new Image Plus focusing device for the MR16 lantern. Also new is the latest evolution for the Par 16 lantern - the Image Plus 3. This is a simple and cost-effective focusing device that attaches to the lantern's colour frame runners, and takes a standard size 'E' Gobo.

**PCM/Pfaff-silberblau (F18)** will launch two important new winch products - the Tau Winch, specifically designed for flying people and aerial performance, and the Delta Winch - for the fast, efficient accurate scenery moving. The Tau electric winch is the first winch to be designed and manufactured specifically for flying performers. The Delta, meanwhile, is a quiet, safe, accurate and durable device for flying scenery and set pieces.

**Prolyte (D10)** is introducing a brand new delay tower system, available in 550kg, 1100kg, 1600kg and 2100kg versions. The large version is displayed on the Lightfactor stand, while the smaller version can be seen on the stand of another Prolyte distributor in the UK, Unusual Rigging. Also new is a completely restyled and updated version of the MPT tower system, to bring the product in line with future demands and regulations.

**The Smoke Company (D33)** has recently agreed a joint venture with Wings and is now the sole European distributor for its range of quality special effects lighting systems. Other new products planned for PLASA include Apollo silk flame lights, the UV Planet range of UV effects and the Powercan smoke machine.



Image Plus from James Thomas

New from **TMB Associates (EP36)** is the Cam-Lok E2000 series power connectors, a hot restrike version of the PowerPAR daylight fixture range, as well as a remote ballast unit for an even lighter-weight and lower profile; an HID150 unit, using a high-output 10,000 hour lamp for architectural use, and multiple colours for company identification and corporate shows.

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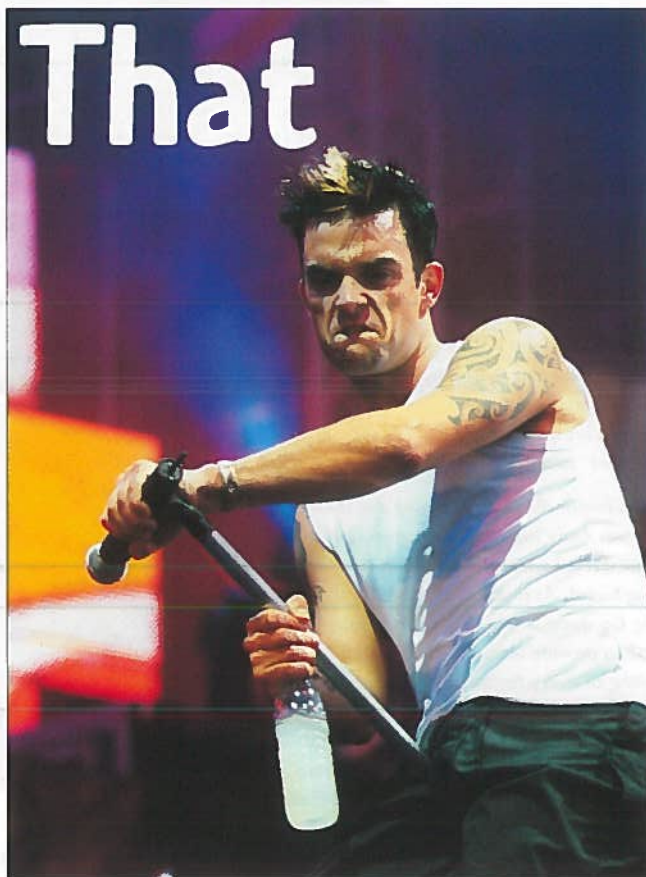
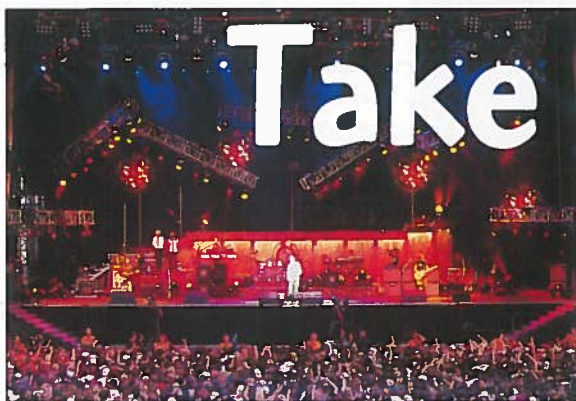
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*Mike Mann joins fans for one of the highlights of this summer's outdoor circuit – Robbie Williams' Weddings, Bar Mitzvahs and Stadiums tour*

As befits such a larger-than-life entertainer, Williams' live appearances are suitably over-the-top. While production manager Wob Roberts' claim that this tour was carrying 8000 miles of assorted cable was, he admits, a complete fabrication for a daily newspaper, tour statistics are still impressive. Nearly 1 megawatt of power (provided by GE Energy Rentals), 23 trucks (from London-based Stage Truck and Stage Co of Belgium) and a 103-strong permanent crew were needed for the production described by one reviewer as 'Kiss meets Queen meets Take That'.

Playing 13 nights at some of the UK's largest open-air venues, Roberts and his team provided an unforgettable experience for some 800,000 people. "This is one of those times when you can't still be working on improving the show five nights into the run," he pointed out, "everything has to work from day one." One of Roberts' major potential headaches was the strict limit enforced by local authorities on sound levels at each site. However, the sound department's near-obsessive attention to detail gave the tour an unexpected bonus. "At Milton Keynes (National Bowl) the level is normally set at 97dB at the desk on a 15 minute LEQ," Roberts explained. "When they measured the spill outside the bowl from our system, they raised the limit to 102dB - which makes a massive difference to the audience!"

The creative team is largely the same as for last years' Sermon on the Mount tour. Creative director Liz Berry, despite having spent many months integrating set, video and lighting designs, can still be found at the

controls of her Vari\*Lite Virtuoso console, from which she drives the show. "On a show like this, you can't divorce the visual elements. When I originally designed it, I knew that we would have bright natural light for the first half of every night - which is why I opted for a big reveal of the set during the first number. When you're outdoors, it's impossible to get the Wow factor using lights at the start of the show." Although Berry's biggest challenge was the construction of a vast, three-dimensional rear wall (conceived by Hattie Spice and containing back projection screens, LED panels, live dancers and lighting), her most impressive effect was rather less solid.

Having taken the unprecedented step of creating a large pyro display at the start of Williams' previous live production, this time around Berry surprised everyone with a mid-show adrenalin injection. Or, to be more precise, a propane injection. Fire specialists SWPF Ltd were commissioned by Berry to provide "an effect much bigger than had ever been seen on a rock'n'roll set before." The company supplied five line rockets, which were strung between the front-of-house tower and the roof of the stage. On Williams' vocal cue ("Liz, unleash hell!!!!") the rockets sped over the heads of the audience; as they reached the stage a second cue was triggered, igniting no less than 10 propane-powered fireball generators and five flame troughs along the front of the stage canopy. The 40-second effect not only provided audiences with a spectacular visual treat, but is also, according to SWPF's Sam Woodward, very cost effective. "Apart from the unique visual image, part of the attraction of these effects

for the production team was the low cost of fire effects, the only consumable part being the propane gas, which is very inexpensive," he confirmed. "This compares favourably with conventional pyrotechnics, where each cue can cost hundreds of pounds." Needless to say, stringent safety requirements were placed upon SWPF, who provided the tour with full risk assessment documentation to the satisfaction of bemused UK fire officers.

A big stage requires a lot of lighting. VLPS supplied Berry and her team with an extensive inventory of moving and conventional lights, including a total of 50 2400 series units. Adding to the complement of 148 VL5s, VL6Cs and VL2Cs, the new lamps have become a firm favourite of crew chief Mark England. "The 2416 is like a big VL5 washlight - it's great for stadium stuff," he said.

Conventional lighting abounds: to provide suitably impressive audience lighting, Berry uses eight banks of five 8-way Molefays, in addition to a further 81 4-cell units, 30 6-way PAR 64 bars and numerous battens and bulkheads. 12 truss spots pick out the on-stage action (eight Starklites and four 1200W Parneys), with a further two FOH Gladiators to cover the stage wings. "It's a big projection show, so shadows and stray front lights would not be helpful," commented England.

For the show's finale, it is not only lights that move. Five short trusses, each fitted with a pair of ½-tonne Lodestar motors, perform an intricate dance under the control of an Out Board Electronics Ibox embedded-software control system. "There's a lot of truss movement,



Right, Andy Jupp's CAD rendering of the stage set. Tomcat manufactured the actual set, the most tricky element of which was the need to provide a quick opening deck on the highest level from which a hydraulic dragon would emerge. Inset, LD Liz Berry - finger on the button



and the system's been really good. It's really small and extremely neat - and knowing that it's not all being driven by Bill Gates' software gives everyone a lot more confidence!" said England.

The man responsible for managing the Ibox system was Andy Jupp, whose connection with the tour started while it was still on the drawing board. As founder of the Virtual Rigging Co, Jupp was brought in by Wob Roberts to provide accurate CAD-based modelling of every technical aspect of the show - but most importantly, of the vast rear wall. "Andy put in days and days of work to make sure that all the elements - which were being supplied by different companies - fitted in," explained Liz Berry. Jupp was able to present the creative team with a rendered 'model' that could be walked through and which formed the basis for accurate constructional drawings; the level of advance planning has meant that the structure (which would freak out most West End setbuilders) requires just a four-hour steel build time at each venue. Before starting VRC in 1997, Jupp had already been a production rigger for 10 years: "This background enables VRC to create detailed rigging plots and working drawings that are technically correct, prior to the build," he said. "This creative process is extremely cost effective - in that it allows management and all departments to iron out pre-production problems and to see the finished product before it's built." Mark England praised the pre-production process. "Letting everyone see what's happening well

in advance is a relatively new idea in rock'n'roll - but it must have saved the tour tens of thousands of pounds in correcting faults."

Enjoying the comparative calm of the front of house mix position, engineer Dave Bracey explained that the rigidly enforced environmental restrictions had not hampered his ability to give the crowd what they wanted. "Thanks to Sherif (El Barbari) we have been able to adjust the L-Acoustics V-dosc system for every venue. Because of this we have achieved enough differential between the levels inside and outside the stadium." In Manchester, the city centre Old Trafford cricket ground provided a unique set of problems, including deep overhanging grandstands and an especially low noise limit. "This is the smallest front stack of the tour," agreed El Barbari, "we still need good coverage, but we have to be able to keep the top boxes from spilling over the back and sides." The main Old Trafford system employed 12 cabinets per side, with outer hangs of nine cabinets each. The larger Milton Keynes venue, by comparison, required arrays

of 16 and 12 respectively. An L-shaped cluster of Aura subs was configured to improve the directivity of the system's low end, and a further linear array of six subwoofers was secreted under the stage to increase the uniformity of coverage. Delay towers (also equipped with V-dosc boxes) were sited radially as required.

"This is a very different show from the arena tour. The brass section are back with us - it's always good to have them on board," reported Bracey, who was less impressed by the addition of a steel guitar player. "He's the only extra musician, but I still had trouble finding a channel for him. The Midas XL4 is completely full - in fact, there are so many inputs that I am doubling up several vocal channels, using every group, and even with eight stereo modules there is just no more room." In addition to his overpopulated XL4, Bracey also uses the Midas XL3 stretch, though all eyes were on a rather more unusual visitor to the FOH tower. Andrew Thornton, mixing for support band Toploader, was test



driving a Sony DMX-R100 digital console, and commented on the comprehensive feature set of the Japanese design. "To put together our full equipment spec in a support band role would have been a real squeeze, but having a console with so many facilities has made life really easy. We've even been able to go off and do other gigs in between Robbie's dates."

Video has always played a major part in Liz Berry's work, and for a production of this size, the decision was made to split the responsibility for front of house and on-stage production. Justine Catterall's explosive graphics were run from a rack of six Doremi hard drives controlled via Dataton software under the eagle eye of Tom Mudd. These, along with the output of a Mac-based MDF graphics package, are distributed to four Barco G10 projectors and 23 Optiscreen LED panels. The LED screens are arranged in a variety of formats, each being fed with a small section of the main video image. For much of the show, the Dataton software is triggered by MIDI commands from the keyboard of Guy Chambers, Williams' musical director. However, Williams' 'virtual duet' with Kylie Minogue and the finale We are the Champions are cued manually from a clip track.

Like most of the on-stage system, FOH video was supplied by XL Video. Berry had elected to use a pair of portrait LED screens, which were fed independently from a Grass Valley GVG4000 mixer. Video director Phil Woodhead called in Catterall following his work on the last Texas tour. "It's great to work so closely with someone like Liz - she has the vision to see video and lighting as a complete package."

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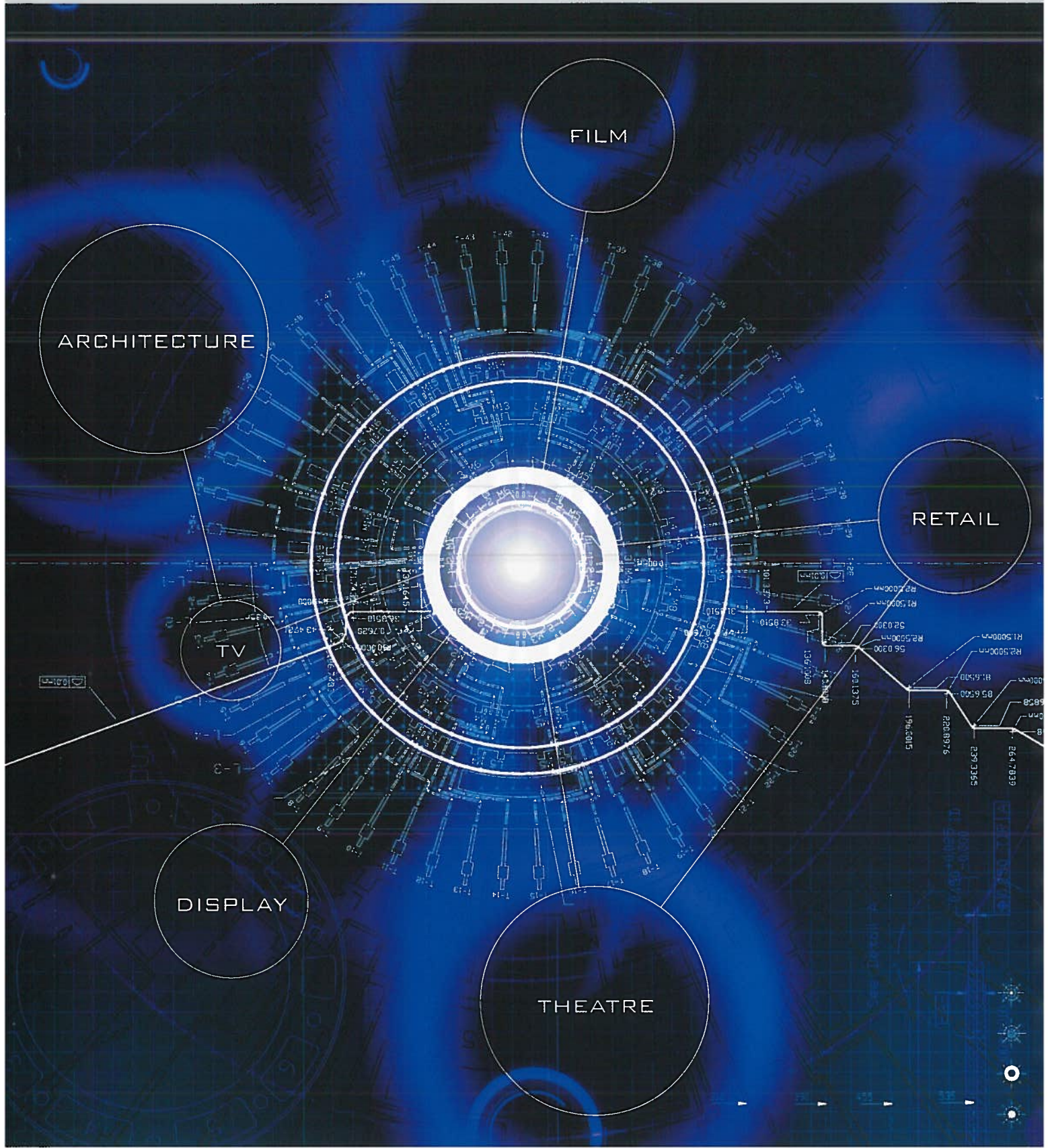
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## Rob Halliday follows *My Fair Lady* from the National to Drury Lane



Only history will show whether it turns out to be true, but the statement, espoused in a number of recent newspaper interviews, is this: that Cameron Mackintosh, the world's leading producer of musicals, will not be producing any more new shows. Too much trouble - something to leave to the next generation. Instead, Mackintosh's company will concentrate on spreading its back catalogue to parts of the world as-yet unconquered, and on reviving classic musicals in stellar new productions.

Hence, perhaps, *My Fair Lady*. Technically this is a National Theatre production, but Mackintosh's touch is obvious, particularly in the creative team: Trevor Nunn directing, Matthew Bourne choreographing, Anthony Ward designing, David Hersey as lighting designer and Paul Groothuis as sound designer - a team who, in various combinations, have contributed to *Cats*, *Les Mis*, *Miss Saigon*, *Carousel*, *Oklahoma!*, *Oliver!* and *Swan Lake*, which Mackintosh produced on Broadway. Casting, too, has a Mackintosh-ish feel, with Jonathan Pryce (who opened both *Miss Saigon* and *Oliver!*) as Henry Higgins and ex-EastEnders Martine McCutcheon as Eliza Doolittle. The National, for their part, counter criticism of yet another musical filling one of their stages by saying, in effect, why not? - that it is as much of a classic as Shakespeare. A sold-out three month run and West End transfer no doubt also helped . . .

### Design

The first problem in creating a new production of a show with this much successful history is in laying the ghosts. For Pryce and McCutcheon this means overcoming memories of Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews. For designer Anthony Ward, the legacy is Cecil Beaton's acclaimed sets and, particularly, costumes for the 1964 film

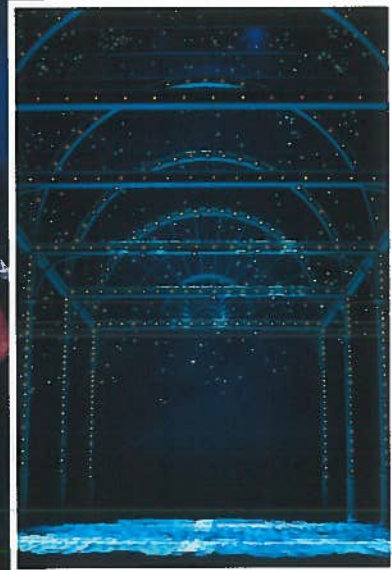
(the original stage production featured Beaton's costumes with sets by Oliver Smith).



Of course, this isn't a new challenge to Ward, whose designs replaced Sean Kenny's original *Oliver!* set for the 1994 London Palladium production. Besides, Ward has a particular style all of his own, bypassing comparison with Beaton's legendary Ascot costumes with one particularly bold step: discovering that the year the show is set in was also the year of the 'black Ascot', with racegoers wearing black to commemorate the recent death of King Edward VII - that is how he clothed the scene.

The set contains many of the designer's familiar trademarks: a double-layered painted gauze cyclorama backing a permanent standing set of a framework of arched pillars that shrink progressively upstage with a sharply-forced perspective, immediately setting the location as London's Covent Garden. Other elements transform this framework into different locations, the biggest change being for Higgins' study. Bookcases fly in to fill the sides of the framework, a huge upstage truck slides in to create the upstage wall and upper level, a wall flies in upstage of that to create an entrance hall, and other props and furniture track on down- and mid-stage on three 'travelator' conveyer belts - a combination of automation and 'person-mation' enforced by budget constraints at the National.

The destination for a transfer wasn't actually known as Ward finalised the National set: Drury Lane was a fortuitous choice, not only for its history (it hosted the show's original London production in 1958) and huge stage, but also because it has adequate wing space. It added its own complications, though: the Lyttelton is a modern theatre, with an evenly-spaced and suitably-rated flying system. The



**During the production period, Groothuis prowled the theatre with a Fujitsu tablet PC linked by radio-ethernet to DME32s and XTA processing, allowing him to make adjustments and temporarily isolate sections of the system on the fly while listening from any seat in the house.**

Lane's 120 flying bars are unevenly spaced and have a 150kg load limit; consider that three of the show's scenic pieces weigh in excess of one tonne, with a total scenic weight of 16 tonnes, and the scale of the task entrusted to Unusual Rigging becomes clear. Teams led by production rigger Simon Stone installed new steel spreader beams into the roof to support new drop pulleys and divertors before flying all of the scenery - achieving all of this in a schedule far removed from that of recent mega-musicals, since the show re-opened just three weeks after its last performance at the National and no pre-rigging was possible. This tight schedule was managed by National Theatre production manager Mark Dakin and Cameron Mackintosh's Jerry Donaldson.

Automation was handled by CML regulars Stage Technologies, with everything run from an Acrobat console in the capable hands of Alex Hitchcock, who last year operated the flying for *Witches of Eastwick* in the same theatre, and his team of Pete Wakeman and Ian Hunter. The company supplied seven BigTow counterweight assist motors for the flying pieces and one lighting ladder that has to fly to clear scenery, with the winches mounted to a rail to allow them to be moved

between linesets, if required, without drilling repeatedly into the wall. Variations on BigTows, with different gearing, drive the three travelers, which were built by Weldfab Engineering. For those familiar with the formative years of automation, it was remarkable to note how 'systemised' it now is: when an extra winch was added quite late on to handle a tricky piece of scenery (a new set of chandeliers added for the transfer), that winch was installed, working and programmed in just a few short days.

Of course, as you may have read, the show's gala opening night went up an hour late due to an automation problem. True enough, but things do break - in this case, the problem was a fault in one traveler that caused electrical damage to other parts of the system; what the national press didn't mention was that the problem occurred at 5.30pm, was half overcome by the time the show went up and almost completely overcome by the interval. Stage Technologies are still waiting to hear whether Cameron is going to pass on the bar bill for the complimentary drinks, though . . .

#### **Lighting**

It was two-and-a-half years and 38,000 miles of fresh sea air between spells at the production desk for lighting designer David Hersey - completing work on the UK tour of *Oliver!* in 1998 then sailing around the world to see in the new Millennium before finally returning to the UK in time for last year's PLASA show. *My Fair Lady* offered him the opportunity to get back to work with regular collaborators - but also posed a wealth of challenges, the sheer quantity of flying pieces leaving little room for any overhead lighting!

Automated lighting seemed to offer the solution, but the lack of space meant that the choice of lighting instruments was quite

limited. In the end the rig above the standing set is formed entirely from DHA Digital Light Curtains and Vari\*Lite VL6Cs. At

the National, Hersey used the VL6B, its zoom optics allowing gobos to be scaled from upstage to downstage to follow the perspective of the set; the Lyttelton's existing VL6s were converted to 6Bs by Vari-Lite, but Lyttelton chief electrician Paul McLeish and his crew experienced problems with brightness and colour consistency across the rig. For the transfer, Vari-Lite offered the updated VL6C: its new 700W lamp is not only brighter, but also seems to have a flatter field and more consistent colour temperature.

In position and function, the rest of the Drury Lane rig is similar to that at the National, though the lanterns used are quite different and achieving positions comparable to the Lyttelton's comprehensive front-of-house lighting bridges required the installation of two new walk-on lighting trusses by Unusual Rigging, one tucked neatly up in the mid-auditorium roof in the location first established last year by the performer flying truss in *Witches of Eastwick*. These and the theatre's circle-front and upper circle slip positions were populated almost entirely with ETC Source Fours, all with 750W bulbs because of the considerable throws involved.

Production electrician Alistair Grant somehow also managed to squeeze a 2.5kg tungsten Pani projector into one of the circle front bins, this being used to project a period image of people in Covent Garden onto the show's front gauze.

On either side of the standing set, Unusual hung side trusses and White Light's new rated, adjustable LOLER ladders to give a comprehensive range of sidelighting positions, these filled with a mixture of Source Fours and Par cans. At the National, these sidelight Pars had scrollers fitted, but Hersey and his associate Jenny Kagan had perceived an unfulfilled need to be able to take a colour

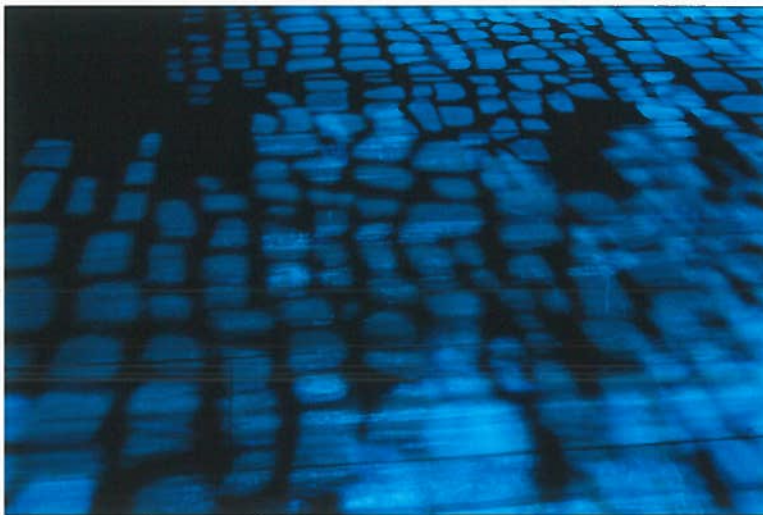


but then just lighten or darken it slightly during certain cues. They therefore opted to replace these scrolls with Wybron's CXI colour-mixing units. Where CXIs weren't required, Wybron Colorams were used - except on the two 5k fresnels, two R&V 1k beamlight followspots (in the side boxes, complemented by two Juliat Aramis in the rear auditorium box) and five Alto Fresnels backlighting the upstage gauze where Rainbow scrollers were used since White Light had them available in suitable sizes. Further treatment for the upstage twin cloud gauzes came from L&E M16 battens, Orion groundrows, two further lines of Digital Light Curtains and four White Light VAFX cloud projectors.

The rig contains a few other tricks and effects, some created especially for the show. There are four VL7s, for example, doing rain - a projected effect that is notoriously hard to achieve. David Hersey replaced the 7's gobo wheel with a new wheel created at DHA that consisted of a continuous blobby breakup that could be spun continuously to create a linear movement; overlay a linear gobo in the indexing wheel (and add a cunning chase that fades the lamp out just before the 'clear' frame of the gobo wheel passes) and you have an effective imitation of falling rain. Elsewhere, an AutoYoke with DHA animation wheel and indexing gobo rotator on the circle front allows a train window to follow a group of passengers as they are travelated across stage.

Hersey's favourite effect is the opening curtains in the study. This involved the creation of a new DHA product - the YoYo+, an indexing gobo yoyo, which allows a custom 'flag', in this case a curved curtain swag, to be moved over a static gobo, here a glass window. Fit the YoYos sideways into the lights, run to open in a carefully-timed cue and, lo, opening curtains! At the National, Source Fours were used, but something brighter was needed to cut through the 750W Source Fours at Drury Lane; investigation led to the 80V 1200W version of the Selecon Pacific, which is bright - but also offers a cool gate to protect the glass gobo and YoYo. Once the crew had overcome their instinct to rig them back-end up, à la Patt 264, they worked very well, and were also fitted with Wybron scrollers to allow the window's colour to be varied during the show. The Pacifics, like the rest of the conventional rig, came from White Light, with the DLCs from The Moving Light Company.

Control for the entire rig came from one Strand 530i at Drury Lane, following on from the use of the Lyttelton's house 500-series consoles. For the transfer, Strand was able to supply its new GeniusPro 2.5 software: the new features this offered, particularly the 'magic update' command that figures out which preset group lights were in before their positions were corrected and updates them



Set designer Anthony Ward has laid to rest the ghost of Cecil Beaton. Above, gobos wash the stage. Photos: Hugo Glendinning/Wyatt Enever

automatically, made refocusing for the transfer very slick. At Drury Lane, the 530i and backup 510i - now housed in one of the side auditorium boxes, since every other seat in the theatre has been sold - talk to the dimmer room via Strand's ShowNet ethernet system; from there four universes of DMX are distributed around the theatre to the house Strand STM dimmers (via a D54 converter), temporary Bytecraft dimmers feeding the front-of-house truss, Howard Eaton radio dimming running on-stage practicals and various moving lights on conventional DMX cable. Having been installed by a team including Chris Dunford, Pryd Baskerville, Kelvin Murray, Simon Target, Steve Reeve and Greg Hamlyn, the lighting is now looked after by the Drury Lane house crew led by chief electrician Steve McAndrew.

#### Sound

One person clearly much happier post-transfer is sound designer Paul Groothuis. In the Lyttelton he had a major challenge posed by the decision not to use the theatre's orchestra pit, but instead to locate the band upstage of the set. As he notes, that has been done before - quite successfully in the case of *Oklahoma!* where the orchestra lived behind the cyc. But on *My Fair Lady* things were complicated by the discovery that only one of the Lyttelton's two scene-dock doors was allowed to be open at a time - and since the side door had to be up to allow scenery on and off, the upstage door had to be closed - effectively sealing the band off in a world of their own.

Groothuis pronounced himself 'satisfied' rather than 'pleased' with the band sound obtained there, given the lack of time and money available to acoustically treat the band area. At Drury Lane, the orchestra and conductor Nick Davies are back in the pit and the show sounds like - well, like a big, full-blooded musical again!

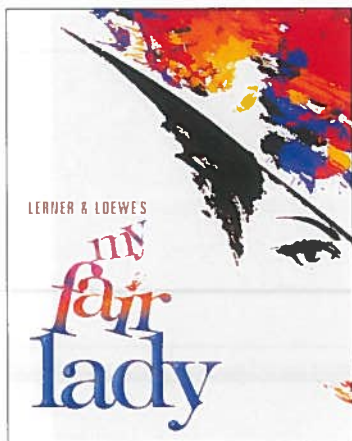
This change - and the much larger theatre (Drury Lane seats 2,400 on four levels

compared with the Lyttelton's 900 on two levels) - necessitated a considerable re-working of the rig by Groothuis, his associate Richard Brooker and production sound engineer John Owens from Aura, but the heart of it remains the same: a Cadac J-type console. At the National, the new J-type intended to replace the 15-year-old D-type in the Olivier theatre was diverted to the Lyttelton for the run of the show; the J-type was chosen after a considerable amount of research by the National's sound team - its closest competitor, Yamaha's new digital PM1D console, finally rejected because it wasn't clear whether it would be available when needed.

At the National, a Yamaha 02R sat alongside the Cadac handling the orchestra submix with the consoles run by Colin Pink; for the transfer, Groothuis specified 40 motorised faders in the J-type for the same task, though in practice he came to find that with the band in the pit, fewer changes in individual band level were required.

As well as the band, the Cadac collects inputs from 32 Sennheiser SK50 radio microphones worn by the cast and two Akai 56000 samplers used for sound effects replay, then feeds them out through Yamaha and Amcron amplification to a complex loudspeaker system. Groothuis has two principal loudspeaker systems, one for vocals consisting largely of dBb loudspeakers (12 902s, three 602s and 54 E3s) and one for the band formed from Meyer loudspeakers; Meyers are also used for sound effect output, giving a total of six USW1s, two 650s, 12 UPA-1s, eight MSL-2s, two UM-1s and 44 UPM1s.

The delay system also includes tiny Bose Acoustimass units, just delivering a treble 'sweetener' to the boxes at the rear of the first circle; their compact dimensions allowed the sound team to follow Groothuis' plan to keep the speakers as visually unobtrusive as possible. There is also a surround system, split into two sections in the stalls where speakers



### How Things Change

*For those who think modern-day musicals take far too long to rehearse, consider this take on My Fair Lady at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane: "The rehearsals went on for nearly a month, but proved fascinating as we had the talented understudies as stand-ins and they sung and went through the routines and lines with enthusiasm whenever necessary." Of course, the quote is from Sixty Years of Light Work by Fred Bentham - and is describing the 1958 London production of My Fair Lady! The new version had just a week of technical rehearsals!*

hung from the circle front provide a surround to those sitting in the front of the theatre. These are used for sound effects, but also a gentle band reverb - a familiar Groothuis trademark.

With the band hidden away at the National, foldback requirements for the cast were quite complex; at Drury Lane they have become only fractionally less so, since while foldback speakers in the wings work for the open stage scenes, they become useless when the study set is in place - yet those inside this set still need foldback! Two independent foldback systems remain in use at Drury Lane, with EAW JF80s used for the open scenes and d&b E3s carefully concealed around the set used in the study scenes. Control for the foldback is via Yamaha's DME32 digital matrix, which allows individual loudspeakers to be shut down when not required, both to keep the on-stage sound levels to a minimum but, as a bonus, ensuring the upstage foldback units are muted during scene changes so that the crew aren't having to shout over them!

During the production period, Groothuis prowled the theatre with a Fujitsu tablet PC linked by radio-ethernet to DME32s and XTA processing, allowing him to make adjustments and temporarily isolate sections of the system on the fly while listening from any seat in the house. Though claiming to try to distance

himself from the technology ("the operator is my tool to achieve good sound; the desk is their tool," - in this case operator Tom Marshall had just a few days to learn the show), Groothuis was clearly very enamoured with this device, since it allowed him to make adjustments very quickly and so produce a high quality sound throughout the theatre, despite having just a few days to achieve the results that a new production might give you three weeks of techs and previews to achieve.

The tablet, like the rest of the rig, was supplied by Autograph and installed by a team including Jeffrey Yue, Scott George, Jon Clarence, Jim Douglas, Keith Hutchinson, Andy Jackson, Paul Johnson, Stephen Owen, Tim Stevens, John Shouls, Jo Wredde and Autograph's Tony Gayle; Tom Marshall's showcrew consists of Clive Bryan and Zoe James.

Despite the late start on the first night, the show was greeted with the same acclaim it had received at the National: it is remarkable the noise that 2,400 clapping, cheering people can make. The original London production occupied Drury Lane for five years and 2,281 performances. That total wasn't beaten for 30 years until Miss Saigon eventually clocked up 4,263 performances.

My Fair Lady looks keen to regain her record. It's just possible that she might!



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*Tony Gottelier*

# No Comment...

**T**his is a strange old business indeed. Following my piece on the 'rumour' that ETC was actively pursuing the possibility of acquiring High End Systems, it is now 'rumoured' that ETC have walked away from the deal, or were eventually rebuffed by HES shareholders because an agreed price could not be achieved between all the parties - whatever?

**NATURALLY**, neither side will wish to comment officially on the outcome of alleged negotiations, so all the information I have is by LSN (Leaky-Sieve-Network) and ISP (I-Spin-Propaganda), on the basis of: "I never told you that guv, and if you say I did, I shall deny it!"

**THE FACT IS** that there was a clear logic to welding the two businesses together. If ETC wants to grow, and there seems to be a commercial imperative that says that a business must do that or die (though where is the evidence?), then acquiring a moving light company makes good sense. Assuming that they want a US-based business,

only HES and Vari-Lite are realistic possibilities, but V-L is still basically a rental company, an entirely different mode of operation from ETC's existing operational and market base.

**EQUALLY**, from the point of view of the management of HES, it must be very unsettling to have a major and restless shareholder, in the

shape of the venture capitalists (who arrived courtesy of the patent farrago), but whose interests lie in buying and selling businesses and not necessarily in growing them. This is the second time in as many years that the VCs have put the Austin moving light company on the block and come away empty handed.

**AND I AM SURE** that it's not because HES is less than a successful operation at present, as some tittle-tattlers would have you believe (as confirmed by the alleged price being asked, which was not insubstantial, so I hear). It is simply that the money guys are fidgety to put their money into something else now that the business has traded out of the hole in which it found itself following the protracted and hugely expensive argument over patents with V-L. Apparently, VCs like to recycle their cash every three years or so.

**FOR THESE REASONS**, if none other, the movers at HES must hope that any new owner is an industry insider. ETC would have filled that role to a tee. So what now? Well, your guess is as good as mine, but I just hope that in the meantime they are left alone to run the business without any further unavoidable disruption.

And now for another of my occasional tales for business travellers which, I guess, is just about everyone in the entech biz.

**I HAVE ALREADY** related my protracted experience in a drab Prague police station following a bag snatch in that beautiful city. So, now the postscript: when it came to making the insurance claim for lost cash and personal possessions, we have been turned down flat by loss adjusters because the essential Czech police report does not list the items that we're missing. How we were supposed to know that, not being speakers of the language, is not made clear, nor is it explained how it is that the police might

take our word for what was stolen, when loss adjusters will not.

**SO, IN EFFECT**, this was a travel insurance policy which will not pay-out unless you are mugged with a police witness in attendance. Nor is this the first time we have had similar problems with these insurers. So, next time you get a tempting offer from Amex for business travel insurance, think twice, this could be no-protection insurance. What is the use of that?

Following my note last month reporting a conversation with dear Ken Ackerman at Showlight, I have received the following correction from his reverence: "Please thank Tony Gottelier for his kindly reference to me, but point out that his anecdote would have been more effective if he had correctly quoted my comment on the arrival of Video tape equipment at £50,000".

**I ENTIRELY AGREE**, what was I thinking of?

The following news release arrived from ESTA this month: 'BSR E1.20, remote device management over USITT DMX512 - The project is intended to develop a method of bi-directional communication over a USITT DMX512/1990 data link between an entertainment lighting controller and a remotely-controlled dimmer, moving light or other device. The protocol for this communication is also intended to work with the BSR E1.11 lighting control protocol being developed by the same working group'.

**NOW, IN MY IGNORANCE**, I thought that was all part and parcel of what the group had been working on from the beginning. Silly me! So, in consequence, about time too.

Yes, it's PLASA time again, and it is going to be interesting to see if this year's show reflects the difficult time the industry in general has been having of late: rental rates remain far too low and, of course, this fuels a general malaise.

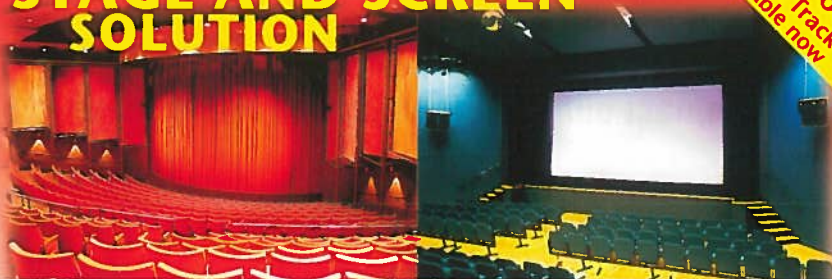
**IT ALWAYS AMAZES ME** how much money is spent on the marketing of entertainment technology, reflected in the size and number of stands at the show every year. Can this be sustained, and will the 'mine's bigger than yours' syndrome continue to apply or will companies begin to take a less egotistical approach to the whole affair? We shall see.

**SEE YOU ALL THERE**, or be square.

PLASA runs from 9-12 September at Earls Court 1 in London. Further details on pages 97-106.

"Neither side will wish to comment officially on the outcome of alleged negotiations, so all the information I have is by LSN (Leaky-Sieve-Network) and ISP (I-Spin-Propaganda), on the basis of: "I never told you that guv, and if you say I did, I shall deny it!"

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Steve Moles reviews Alejandro Sanz at the Palau Sant Jordi, Barcelona

**"Life in the Vaseline, will surely make you lose your mind." I quote this line from the Eagles hit for two reasons: despite what I said about them last month I am a fan of their music, if not their performance; secondly, to underline the fact that often I can barely understand the words that are being sung - but it's never interfered with my appreciation of the music. Thus, apart from our Spanish readers, few of you will have heard of Alejandro Sanz, fewer still will be familiar with his music. That should not stop you cocking your ear if you ever get the chance; after all, look at all those dudes in Black Tie who pay a fortune to watch some fat geezer sing songs in Italian. It's all valuable business.**

Sanz is a huge star in the Spanish-speaking nations, according to production manager Gus Gomez: "The tour has been out since the beginning of the year, we've played all of South America," (except Brazil), "generally playing Stadiums, plus the United States." That's before returning to Spain for a two-month tour where he consistently out-sold Madonna. The States tour was enlightening: it's easy to predict Sanz playing Miami, New York, San Diego, LA and some of the heavily Mexican-populated cities of Texas, but Boston and Chicago? Well OK, the latter was the Agora Ballrooms - not the most deluxe venue in Chicago - but it does point to a star who may be able to transcend the confines of his linguistic constituency. But he's not Julio Iglesias yet, and maybe he never will be.

Stylistically, Sanz sits in the Pop star firmament somewhere between a young George Michael and Craig David, in that he has the sex appeal, poise and personality of a Michael, coupled to the song-writing and musical skills of a David. And there are other indications of the stature of Sanz: none other than Mark Fisher designed the set - a sizable construct of ascending ramps reaching up 16m to the apex of the 'A' monogram that described the stage. Gomez crated up most of this set and carted it to the far side of the Atlantic along with a complete monitor set-up, FOH effects and dynamics racks, as well as back-line. It's productions of this calibre that have tempted EML of Belgium to open a dedicated office in Madrid; just one

more example of the growing trans-national nature of the Euro-music business.



I spoke about this Euro' dimension with Wim Despiegelaere at EML in Brussels. "The Madrid office is a test, but this is now our second year and already we've decided to place two full concert systems, sound and light, and two smaller rigs in Spain come the winter." Previously it was just an office, equipment being shipped directly out of Belgium. "We opened in Madrid in response to our clients. One of their criticisms was that we came in and serviced the big tours, which was great for them, and they appreciated the service, but when it came to the one-offs, the special events, we couldn't justify the expense of shipping stuff down. This meant the client had to go to a Spanish supplier who then - and with every right - stiffed them on the price."

Besides Sanz, EML service Miguel Bose and Joachim Cortes tours on a regular basis, so their move is well made, but it's important to understand this is not just a pirate raid from an enclave within Madrid. "We are already well into a programme of taking up Spanish crew people, bringing them to Belgium for training, and putting them out on tours in Europe, not just Spain." EML also benefit from their very Belgian-ness. "Flemish is an impossible language for most foreigners, as such as a society we've always had to adapt to others. It's no different in Spain, where our crews are sensitive to the social manners of their Spanish colleagues, and the clients."

What I saw in Barcelona was Belgian crew talking to their Spanish crewmates in Spanish, if not fluently, then at least well enough to work effectively. Failing that, they used the European lingua franca, English, but with a notable absence of the 'F' word. I spent five months touring in Spain with Miguel Rios in the early eighties - a big tour like this one, three roofs leap-frogging between stadia, and with a mixed UK and Spanish crew - and it was a long time before I learned the nature of Spanish self-respect. They may not have been able to understand English, but





Who could blame him if it sells 60,000 tickets in Barcelona alone - but couldn't he inject the same passion for his Pop as his other fancies?

"I have switched Alejandro to a Shure Beta 58, he was on an 87 last tour, but it is too sensitive," continued Diaz. "Even so, I have him through an Avalon [Vt 737] wide open. He's really a studio singer, I have to remind him to sing." Otherwise, Diaz does precious little in terms of dynamics - or effects for that matter. Besides his XL4 sit just two small racks: "I have a TLA for the guitars, three M3000 and a double engine M5000, one half of which I use direct into the Midas for Alejandro's voice. The rest is all controlled from a Yamaha 01V, and then sent to the main desk. But I do very little, all the musicians are professionals, there's a whole bunch of little Mackie mixers up there, and largely they mix themselves in terms of level and effects. If the input is sounding good, then I just mix."

## LIGHTING

The lighting design is a story in itself: here it is partly dictated by Fisher's set, and partly the legacy of Billy Bigliardi, a name readers may recognize as LD to Eros Ramazzotti. "But Alejandro wasn't comfortable with Billy so EML brought me in." 'Me' being Geert Van Hout, a man who's featured in these pages before as lighting master of ceremonies for the ever more successful 'Night of the Proms' staged in Antwerp each year. "The job came in a bit quick," he said, "but it was my own fault. I was taking a well-earned holiday on a remote island in Thailand after 'Proms'. One day I went over to the mainland for some shopping and turned on my mobile, and there was a message."

"The big 'A' and the catwalk ramps Fisher had drawn were already there, and although the lighting elements had more or less been predetermined by Billy, I pretty much had a clean sheet as to what to do with them."

The major tools of Van Hout's lighting are nine single 3m pipes, with four VL6Cs on each, hung from a pair of half-ton CM hoists linked to an old Skjonberg hoist controller. Altogether, Van Hout has 46 VL6Cs, 33 VL2Cs, and 31 VL5Arcs, all of which he manages to conceal quite well. "Alejandro wanted it to look industrial and with Mark's set already being very 'Present', I determined to make the lights as un-noticeable as possible."

Not that you can hide the beam once it's on, but by careful positioning, and by the choice of making the moving elements pipes, rather than trusses, the source instruments and their mountings are generally invisible. His masterstroke at achieving this is his choice of material for a backdrop. "I'm using a lightweight spun material; the Lee Filter Spun you see used on big TV lights all the time." He's just taken whole rolls of the material and hung it in vertical strips all around the back edge of the main grid. Unlike a full black backdrop, the Spun seems to absorb the local

they all knew the F word, and when used indiscriminately - even if only for emphasis - it's not long before national sensitivities lead them to the conclusion that at least a percentage of the 'F's are directed at them. Despiegelaere is right to draw attention to social factors.

## SOUND

Frederic Pignatelli was audio crew chief for EML, and my host for much of the day (despite the Italianate name, Pignatelli hails from Belgium). Besides being an enthusiast for their JBL HLA system, Pignatelli is a fluent English speaker, can communicate well in Spanish, and was an indulgent host. In fact, the entire Sanz production team were extremely generous. Thanks guys.

"We have a seven by six hang each side," said Pignatelli. "Just over 11 tons in total. The HLA's have been modified by us so the tilt mechanism can be adjusted to 3.5, 7.5, 11 and 15 degrees." A factor that has led to EML assigning a separate BSS 388 Omnidrive to each row, both sides. "The variations in the angles - the top rows are inverted with the horns tilted up, for example - means all the speakers end up out of time alignment, which we correct with the BSS."

Despite the Sant Jordi, an arena built for the '92 Olympics, being more than 70m long from stage front to rear seats, there are no delays. "We do put three towers out for stadiums, six stacks each of Martin F2, because we use all EML's stock of HLA for the main PA." To be honest they could have done with a central cluster of F2s at around 55 metres - there was a noticeable fall-off, something Pignatelli admitted: "Yes the high end does get lost." But with some highly reflective surfaces between tribune seating and upper balcony at the back of the hall, there was perhaps justification for this decision.

Also, the Jordi has an oval domed space-frame roof, and has a lively long reverb, not the sort of room for excesses of high-end energy. Just

to make matters worse, Sanz has an ego thrust 15m out into the audience, which forces an already-challenged Fernando Diaz (FOH sound) to do some appalling things to the vocal EQ. "He doesn't have a strong voice", said a remarkably frank but jovial Diaz, "and he sings off mic a lot, so I have to do some terrible things sometimes just to get some level to his voice."

Near-fill across the front of stage is covered by a small box EML developed themselves, the so-called EMT, which sticks to the JBL regime. "It's a 90 by 60° box with a 2" 2450 and a 15" - a 2245, I think," said Pignatelli. "Everything is driven by Crest amplifiers."

I felt some sympathy for Diaz, this is his first year with Sanz and he has much to contend with. A Sanz audience is rather like a Steps one, only a couple of years older, with proper lumps on their chests and commensurately louder screams. "I've recorded the screaming at 114dB peak," Diaz chuckled. "So I EQ a different way, and I roll off the bottom row of the PA." This latter decision is solely to keep the PA out of the mic when Sanz ventures out on the thrust. "I try to make a black hole in the PA, and fill it by really pushing out the front-fills. And the EQ? I hit all the conflicting frequencies hard, 5k, 4k, 200, and 2.5 and 1.6k. I also have Herman [Cools, on monitors] turn down the in-ear system [the whole band are on Shure IEMs] when he's out front, to make him sing harder."

The irony for Diaz, I observed, is that much of this compromise is unnecessary, Sanz can, in fact, sing exceedingly well when he wants to, as he ably demonstrated mid-way through the show with a powerful solo rendition in the Flamenco style. He also broke into some fairly intense contemporary jazz, à la Weather Report, during a lengthy musical band introduction, again beautifully rendered and well sung. As the 20,000 young girls stood bemused by jazz, I pondered whether this able musician is just cynically exploiting the market.



ambient light and turn it drab, thus the stage is permanently shrouded by a fuzzy haze of light - that cold blue-white half-light so characteristic of a deserted industrial estate at midnight. The beams stand out against this, but it still seems the life is sucked out of them - even the potent 6C. Frankly, this dingy soul-less look seems entirely inappropriate for a Pop idol, so too Fisher's vertiginous ramps, the upper reaches of which are used just once in three hours, but that's the Star's decision and the customer is king.

Having said all that, Van Houts' use of the nine constantly-repositioned pipes does create strong contrasts in the look of the stage, and breaks the predominance of the ramps very well. "This is a long show, over two-and-a-half hours, and nearly all ballads, at least 75%, so I needed something for variety." Van Hout runs the show off an Avolites Sapphire, with Glen Mollemans operating the Vari\*Lites from a Virtuoso, the two men between them finding enough detail in the music, and the use of repositioned lights, to differentiate most songs, if not the 'industrial' caste of the show.

Conventional light includes hundreds of MR16 strips facing toward the audience, that line the 'A's (there are other, smaller A's dotted about the rig's upper reaches), two dozen Molefays with Wybron scrollers on the Spun top and bottom, plus a similar number



of Par 64s also with Wybrons as toners for the set pieces. Van Hout also has over 300 egg strobes strung all over the place, including across the front of the PA cliff face, a job made so easy by the truss-like nature of the HLA enclosure - though God knows what those little hard plastic bodies do to the sound waves they block, and so close to source too.

There is video on stage, supplied by CutVideo, a small-ish LED screen, but seeing as the video director had been sacked just two days before my arrival, it's hardly fair to comment on the efforts of the new incumbent. It is possible, however, to

comment on elements of the video; Van Hout had key light on every musician, a 12V P36 (transformed down, single-channel) tucked in where possible, and rather elegant single MR16s on long floor-standing goosenecks that just peeped overhead of each player.

The light was essential for the cameramen, considering the murky nature of the general lighting look. And the LED screen's output had been turned down to 'One': this is a claim often made by other video directors, but I never saw screen output this low level before. Which leads to two possibilities: either this screen's output is poor (unlikely, seeing as most of those shows open in daylight at football stadia) or a Spanish 'One' is different from a UK 'One'. Either way, what matters is the level was such that it perfectly matched the industrial look of the lighting, an important point in a setting where strong output would have ruined the look.

The Sanz concert is a lengthy affair and performing in 90% humidity is taxing, but not it seems for the young women of Barcelona who demonstrated the innocent abandon of fans immersed in the music, rather than the pretensions of what they were wearing and how they looked. Sanz, for his trouble, never left the stage, despite wearing a black suit and being sweat-drenched in seconds. A worthy Pop icon - shame he doesn't sing to his full potential.

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# Phil Ward.

# ... Audio File

**Y**ou make these things up, and then reality tries to join in. A couple of months ago I facetiously described a conversation between the sound engineers for the Big Bang. Working in outer space, I suggested, had its challenges and anyway

there was a literary precedent in Douglas Adams' Hitch Hikers' Guide To The Galaxy.

**IT NOW** turns out there is a real band, with a real manager, that figures so prominently in a real marketing campaign that they are earmarked to become the first act to perform in space. Really.

**THE BAND IS CALLED** Natural, and first caught NASA's eye performing at the launch of space shuttle Endeavour a

few months ago. The space agency has even commissioned a song - Down To Earth - to promote awareness of space (look - it's up there!) and that NASA is 'hip'. It's also part of a serious campaign to counter criticism that the agency spends too much money on esoteric projects and does nothing to encourage people into the industry. A trip in a space shuttle for the band - teen boys in the New Kids On The Block mould - is the promised apex of the campaign.

**APPARENTLY**, Russian space administrators have already stepped in to offer the band a quick orbit before NASA is ready. So far, the band's

manager Lou Pearlman has resisted these overtures. He counts 'NSync and The Backstreet Boys among his previous triumphs, by the way.

**PERHAPS THE RUSSIANS** should launch their own band in order to resurrect the Cold War and get everyone thinking about space again their way. And yes, they should be called News Kids On The Bloc - what else? But which song should they release? Resurrection Shuttle? Sputnik On The Ritz?

Investment company 3i is at it again. After funding both Turbosound and Allen & Heath in their bids to leave Harman, as well as rubber-stamping Philip Hart's migration to Turbosound as non-executive chairman, the venture capitalist firm has sunk around £24 million into the Ministry Of Sound.

**THE FAMED MINISTRY**, which began as a warehouse club near the Elephant & Castle 10 years ago with a £25,000 renovation, is a media phenomenon. With its finger consistently on the dance culture pulse, it has established a record label, a magazine empire and a roster of annual festival-style events that turnover £100 million annually. It's hard to think where the organisation can go next with the expansion. Apparently there is a desire to treble turnover in the next three years, and a target profit margin of £20 million per annum. That's a lot of DJ Pied Piper hits. A lot of Knebworth festivals. And, given that the club itself represents just 3% of annual revenues, a very big queue along Southwark Bridge Road.

**WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?** It's not a good time for internet start-ups, but a TV channel, perhaps? How about an airline (James Palumbo: the new Richard Branson)? Or will it be a string of acquisitions to bring other clubs and magazines into the fold? I have an acquaintance on Ministry magazine who says that everybody works very strict hours and very long days, with no long lunches. So that's it!

Both Sony and Yamaha have marketed sampling reverb devices with significant ramifications for acoustic consultants. They use the process of 'convolution', which memorises the dispersal pattern of acoustic waves around given interiors - even open-air 'interiors', like Wembley Stadium.

**WEMBLEY**, in fact, was recently captured for posterity in this way by Frank Oglethorpe of FX Rentals and a team from Sony, using the Sony DRE-S777. The pitch was specially re-turfed for the occasion - although in fairness the ambience was commissioned for a film-shoot that was taking place at the same time. Applications for the process are being revealed almost daily. Composers can compose for specific venues, by applying the ambience in real time to work-in-progress WAV files. Venues can offer concert-goers the opportunity to rehearse individual seats, whose acoustic characteristics have been sampled separately, before buying their tickets.

**ILLEGAL MUSIC** portals can peddle audio files of bootlegged songs alongside illicit takes of legendary venues. Enjoy Stravinsky's Rite Of Spring in The Ministry Of Sound. Bop away to Do You Really Like It? at Covent Garden. Listen to Elvis, who never performed in Britain, at The Royal Albert Hall. Film studios and games simulation programmers can incorporate real or imagined acoustic environments into any scene. It doesn't have to be 'true' - we're happy that the sound of a chopped limb in a Hammer horror flick is actually a cabbage.

**ARCHITECTS CAN PREDICT** the acoustic properties of their designs, too, because the same wave analysis can be applied to virtual sounds in buildings that don't exist yet. Future generations of theatres, concert halls and cinemas should be able to eliminate acoustic weaknesses, provided that conflicting interests ('so you mean the giant yellow 'M' in the middle creates an echo?") do not hold sway. And if architects decide to sample the great acoustic spaces of all time, they will become the DJs of space - dropping famous ambiances into the odd mezzanine with deft touches. Which is what I mean by ramifications for consultants: will one architect sue another for stealing his atrium? Will there be protracted legal issues to get sampling clearance before a building is opened? Will Andy Munro, renowned studio acoustician, release a Greatest Hits sample CD? (Track One: De Lane Lea, lights dimmed, no ashtrays.)

**AS WITH ALL THINGS VIRTUAL**, reality struggles to keep up. It's never the other way round. We forget so easily that computers are trying to model the physical world to our advantage. Instead, systems are designed and there follows a flurry of claims in which an imagined future is radically altered. So be it. I want to hear Little Jimmy Osmond in Strangeways.

"Future generations of theatres, concert halls and cinemas should be able to eliminate acoustic weaknesses, provided that conflicting interests do not hold sway."

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# Bohème



MORE THAN 100 YEARS AFTER ITS PREMIERE, LA BOHÈME REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR OPERAS IN THE WORLD. THIS IS THE TENTH TIME THAT THE BREGENZ FESTIVAL HAS STAGED THE OPERA - AND IT HAS BEEN A RUN-AWAY SUCCESS, WITH 150,000 VISITORS HAVING SO FAR SEEN PUCCINI'S TALE OF YOUNG ARTISTS IN PARIS. MIKE CLARK TALKS WITH THE TECHNICAL CREW RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS AMBITIOUS PRODUCTION

Even the most imaginative musicologist would be hard put to find a common denominator between Gary 'US' Bonds' 'Quarter to Three', 'Yellow Moon' by the Neville Brothers and 'Che Gelida Manina' from Puccini's *La Bohème*, but that isn't really surprising, as probably the only link between the songs is that each featured in three of the most memorable live events I have ever attended.

Bonds was part of a package tour that visited my home town of Glasgow longer ago than I care to remember (but ages before Springsteen rediscovered him) and was my very first pop concert. The New Orleans funk legends gave me an unforgettable night under the starry summer skies of Perugia (Italy) during a recent edition of Umbria Jazz and the *Bohème* in question was the merited reward for an apparently endless train journey to this year's summer festival in Bregenz, on the Austrian shores of Lake Constance.

Repeating the success of the spectacular rendition of Verdi's *Masked Ball* performed on the Festival's 'floating stage' in 1999 and 2000 was going to be a hard task, so the organizers commissioned the same London-based team of Antony McDonald and Richard Jones to direct and design the 2001/2002 event.

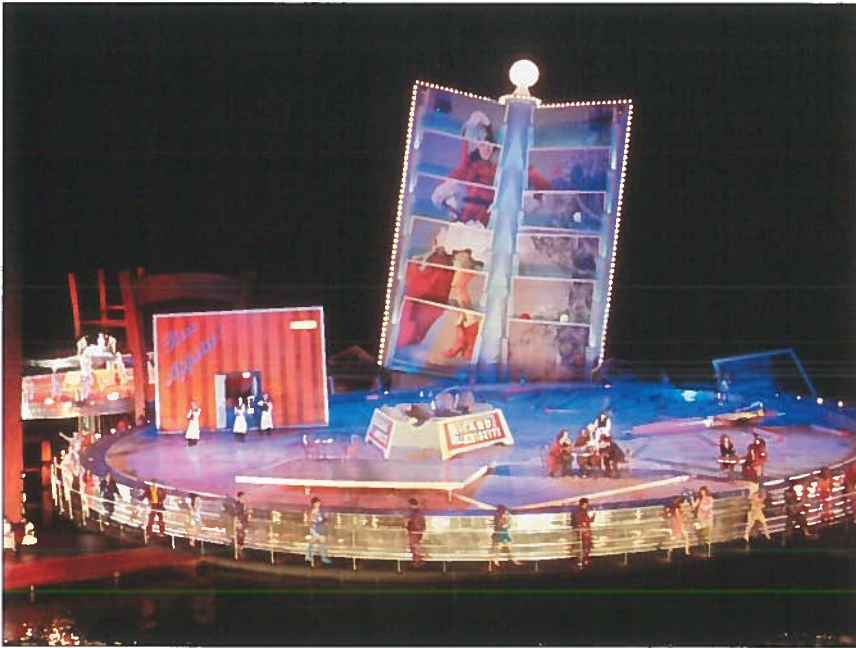
Apart from the unique nature of each year's set, mounted on piles sunk in the lake bed, this event has also made a name for itself, and inevitably drawn criticism from purists, for the custom sound reinforcement system used to ensure the show can be easily followed by the 7,000-strong summer crowds. Although the first event, in 1946, was staged on two barges, the large dimensions of the present 'floating' stage, and its distance from the audience, have always been the main stumbling block when trying to design a sound system able to get as close as possible to what would be heard in a perfect acoustic setting.

Attempts were made in the seventies to reinforce the singers' voices using speakers close to their singing position, which inevitably meant that sections of the audience were penalised. When both set and seating were extended, the need arose for directional sound areas to help audiences localize the singers acoustically. This called for computer-aided mixing and the installation of a complex delta-stereophony system, using delayed versions of signals from microphones to enhance the signal level for the audience. The desired result was that these would always be in time with the artist's on-stage voice and correctly imaged to where the performers were located on stage.

For the 1985 performance of *The Magic Flute*, a prototype 12x12 sound-direction mixing console was built to the management's specs using an MS-DOS-based system, where every movement by the singers during the performance was entered take by take. This gave the possibility of muting the 12 input signals or routing them to one of the 12 sound directions areas, created using 12 AKG TDU 7000 delay units and a 80 x 16 analogue speaker matrix to obtain variable combinations of loudspeaker systems.

Productions got larger and more complex (*Porgy & Bess*, for example, required 88 wireless microphones), so the decision was taken to link the Direction mixing console to the main TOA ix 9000 digital desk, a computer-controlled 224x56 analogue loudspeaker matrix and units such as the AKAI 1000 optical disk editor (used for effects) to minimize mistakes and enable engineers to concentrate on mixing. A new Direction mixing console was built in 1992 by small Austrian company Microanalog, later renamed Maxxom, who unfortunately went into liquidation in 2000. With the current system, the audience can locate the soloists acoustically and sound is cross-faded from one location to another, enabling listeners to follow the opera more easily.





Above, the stunning floating stage at Bregenz. Below, pole-mounted speakers behind the audience seating; right, one of the two lighting and audio towers. Facing page, one of the audio team at the TOA console



This system has been constantly upgraded during the last 20 years and the Direction Mixing Console used today consists of an 8x16 matrix, a PC (WIN98 and MS Access) storing all the show's takes and a work surface, enabling engineers not only to start the next take, but also to jump to another or correct a stored cross-fade. The computer can also be over-ruled, using Channel Hold to keep a singer's sound in one area, while continuing to run through the following pre-stored takes: since there are often several casts for each opera, and since individuals will be individuals, sound engineers can thus cross-fade manually using the desk's endless 'caterpillar' fader.

To understand the problems involved when staging such a complex event, I spoke first to Antony McDonald, who, in addition to having worked with Richard Jones for about 10 years (on projects including a recent *Pelléas and Mélisande* for Opera North) directs and designs and is currently working on Michael Tippett's *King Priam* in Holland. "The design for *La Bohème* took over a year to put together - one of the main problems with such a site is obviously focus. I'd seen quite a number of the previous productions and



formed my own opinion as to what worked and what didn't. One of the problems with *Bohème* was creating a sense of intimacy - in fact, we moved the playing area as far forward as we dared for the sightlines."

"A huge amount of the lighting was actually built into the set. I think the lighting designer, Wolfgang Goebbel, is pretty much a genius and together we worked out where he needed lighting positions - for example, making the top bars of the chairs, the tallest of which is 45ft high, slightly deeper in order to get a member of the lighting crew in there controlling lighting. As far as audio was concerned, the only allowance we had to make was the inclusion of a large champagne cork on the ashtray on the main table - there purely to hide an audio monitor and a video monitor for the singers."

The set features three gigantic Parisian café tables/chairs and a postcard stand which, along with the cards lying on the main table, formed the 'scenery', as it rotated to form different backdrops.

My guide on-site was Peter Geiger, a long-standing member of the Bregenz audio team. "Sound designer Professor Wolfgang Fritz has been head of Bregenz Festival acoustics for over 30 years and is the senior sound engineer of the Vienna State Opera." When a new TOA ix 9000 digital mixing console was brought in eight years ago, Professor Fritz had the idea of not only linking it to the direction mixing console, the result being that the Direction mixer controlled the console's faders, but also using it to control the loudspeaker matrix.

Geiger continues. "Direction mixing has been my job for the last 15 years - I began without technical experience, but can play several instruments and read music, so for the first year, I was Professor Fritz's co-pilot in the control room, looking after the sound effects. The team now has some very experienced crew - for example, the second engineer on the main desk has a recording studio. It's a very demanding job - there are seven singers on stage at a time in this opera, so you've got to try and watch them all and remedy any unexpected mistakes they make, overruling the desk's computer, but remembering to press Channel Hold to let the desk know it's only a temporary change and that afterwards it has to go to the next pre-stored sequence."

One of the key problems that needs resolving is the placement of the directional loudspeakers used on-stage. This year, around 70 enclosures are built into various parts of the set - the chairs' vertical and horizontal spars and seats, round the edge of the main table, in the big ashtray and behind a postcard. Another problem is that since the pit hosting the Vienna Symphony Orchestra is below the set, singers can only see the conductor on TV monitors installed along the bank of the lake and in the crowd. A camera-girl shoots close-ups of the singers for the conductor's monitors.

This year, the chorus proved a problem, largely because in Act Two, there are three different choruses on stage, changing position - men, women and children. The actual singers are in rooms below the set, but the sound has to follow the artists on stage. Geiger takes up the story: "Other specific problems this year included the scene in which Parpignol, the toy dealer, appears singing in a paper ship which sails around the set: since the ship moved, we needed wireless speakers on the ship; then it was decided that he'd start singing stage left, which meant he couldn't hear his colleagues to take his cue, so we had to put small monitors on the ship too! Our locational hearing sound requires the first sound to come from the singers, who have very good voices, but as soon as a singer turns his or her back on the audience, we no longer have the original first sound, so I need approximately three speakers for each sound area, covering the left middle and right part of the audience, and they should be close to where the singer is. Then we add in the other speakers - about 10, placed all over the set -

to achieve the necessary sound power. The core rig consists of JBL Array speakers - an audio mainstay for the last five or six years and we've gradually added other brands such as Meyer, dB and Kling & Freitag, all tested bearing in mind that they'd be exposed to all kinds of weather."

Sweat is an even bigger problem than rain and can interfere with the performers' mics. To offset this problem, headsets are used with two mics, even if it means they are seen by the audience. As the enormous elements of the set must hold out if besieged by wind, so must the audio system, and understandably, the worst possible condition the audio team can face is gusty wind - even rain is preferable - and in extreme cases, the show has moved indoors, though thankfully this has only happened to on average two shows per season over the last 20 years.

Lighting, of course, is not without its challenges. Special effects and lighting operator Helmut Mueller explains: "Apart from the very open set, distance is a problem - if we put fixtures at the front, the lighting is too flat, whilst from the sides we can't reach everything because the chairs are in the way. In the end, we had to position the lighting fixtures both in and on the chairs and the postcard stand in quite limited spaces. Space is always an issue and there's not enough room for fixtures of any size, but Wolfgang likes using a lot of big HMI sources, such as 4k, 6k and 12k ARRI Sunbars, so we have scrollers and the big challenge is to position them where there's room to move. As a result, we had crew members up on the chairs and in the postcard stand manually opening the flaps for cues. We also had all the problems associated with working outdoors and naturally had to protect the luminaires since the show goes on, rain or no rain."

Lighting engineer Markus Holdermann added: "We've customized Amptown Posispot moving

lights, on which we changed the lamps and the motor control card for use with our DMX control boards and a rather unusual application for Space Cannon Black Devils searchlights, used for accent lighting in a few cues.

Helmut Mueller continued: "The special effects for the performance include a series of huge matches used to write words on the top of the main table and in Act 3. Some of these were stood vertically on the table top and lit to represent gas streetlamps." Holderman continued. "These have a pyro effect for the initial burst of sulphur when the match is lit, then continue burning thanks to a gas supply terminating in the connectors. These also carry the signal used to trigger them from the Compulite Spark board for effects. An ADB S28 desk was used for conventional lighting and a Compulite Ovation for the moving lights."

In the climactic finale of Act 2, 17 high-pressure air cannons fire a huge load of streamers into the air from behind one of the postcards. Gas fires also feature around the perimeter of table three, on which the cooks prepare crêpe suzettes. A large bubble machine floods a nearby table with foam overflowing from a huge tub where the restaurant's dishwashers are apparently at work

At the close of my behind-the-scenes tour, Peter Geiger showed me an impressive wall full of audio processors and controllers in the audio control room. These included a rack with delay units with 56 speaker combinations



and 210 delay times. "The first buys were AKG TDU 7000s, then 37 BSS TCS 803 mono triple-tap digital delay units, ideal for delaying wide range audio signals for multiple speaker set-ups such as ours. For instance, if speaker 4 plays in direction four with a delay of 25ms and I cross fade it to direction 5, which has a delay of 35ms, then with an analogue system I'd experience phasing trouble, whereas a digital matrix recalculates the sound of the time delay unit, changes it accordingly and minimizes problems."

There's also an EQ for each speaker, set according to what material the speaker's covered with, to ensure uniform sound and make crossfades as smooth and unnoticeable as possible. The two PC-controlled matrices are an analogue 224x56 unit by Maxxom and a Yamaha DME32 16x56 digital mixing engine.

Geiger sums it all up: "Because of the high costs involved in these ambitious projects, the Festival emphasizes the visual element in these opera productions, allowing the works to be understood emotionally and making them easier to understand, even by people who rarely go to the opera."

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Liverpool's Mosquito Club and, inset, Adlib's AA81 enclosure

# BITTEN BY THE BUG

**An unusual type of bar has just opened in Liverpool - with an equally unusual name behind the sound system. Could it start a trend? Mike Mann seems to think so . . .**

The Mosquito Club is owned by Living Ventures, an independent company formed by Tim Bacon and Jeremy Roberts, following the sale of their successful Life Café brand to a major brewery group. "The people here have all worked together for a number of years in various guises," explained Steve Walter, head of music. "The company also owns the Living Room (located directly above Mosquito), as well as a Living Room in Manchester. It's actually Living Room that is our core concept, but the layout of the buildings we use means that as we expand, several of them will be designed with a Mosquito bar, a Vampire Suite or a Study bar as part of the site."

Walter's role is a unique one in clubland - not only is he responsible for looking after DJs and bands appearing at the venue, but also for the quality of music reproduction. This meant, he explained, having a hands-on approach to the installation of the new sound system, which was carried out by Liverpool-based Adlib Audio. "The design brief from Mosquito was to provide guests with a very stylish environment and a great sound, but for the system to be discreet and versatile enough to allow people to have a conversation in one zone and to dance in another," Walter said. The specification was further complicated by the inclusion of up to three nights' live music every week. "We have our own resident band, which is made up of some really great session musicians: on Tuesday nights we play what I call 'Ally McBeal' jazzy

blues, and Sunday is reserved for a real blues party - this has caught on really well and there is always a bunch of local musicians wanting to get up on stage."

At the opposite end of the musical scale, Mosquito is equipped with a two-zone Rolec automated playback system, which is run continuously except when DJs or live musicians are playing. A dual-output system was specified to service the main Mosquito bar and the Vampire Suite, a private members' bar situated beneath the main room.

Mosquito's music policy is a catholic one, described as "the best of rock, pop, soul, funk, disco, swing, trip-hop and dance". Walter says that his choice of music (from a list of over 1,500 tracks originally provided by Rolec) has more to do with quality than with genre. "I wanted us to be playing 'classics' - not just the oldies, but new stuff as well. You're likely to hear Bruce Springsteen alongside Chaka Khan and Toploader leading into T-Rex! We can theme a night, of course - the Rolec system is very good at matching style, tempo and era - but we're not a nightclub in the conventional sense of the word - we just want to give everyone a party."

"I also encourage all our DJs to play all genres of dance music," he added. "As performers, DJs can get lazy. They have all the club classics and a handful of older stuff, but then they stop buying records. There's so much good music that's been released over the last 40 years, and our guests are not all young." DJs are largely music enthusiasts rather than big names. "We have occasionally brought in a big-name DJ - but in general we don't pay anything like superstar DJ wages!"

The age range of Mosquito's punters is extreme; depending on the day of the week, couples and parties in their fifties and sixties can be seen sampling cocktails or chilling out to a live session. The majority, though, are between their late twenties and early forties - a much-misunderstood market, according to 33-year-old Walter. "I never thought 10 years ago that I'd still be comfortable in a club at this age!" he said, "But there is a real lack of places for the 'post-club' generation to go." These people, he claims, have a large disposable income, but are very style (rather than fashion) conscious and expect higher standards than most meat-markets can deliver. "As far as clubs are concerned, our target market has been there, done that - these people are buying Macy Gray CDs these days. They have considerably more money than they had when they left school and want to enjoy spending it. They need to hear music they can relate to, in places where their wives won't be upset about the state of the toilets!"

Interestingly, over 60% of those enjoying Mosquito's facilities are female - and the steady stream of high-priced cocktails and champagne being ordered at the bars is testament to the fact that, as well as having two of the UK's poorest postcodes, Liverpool also encompasses two of the very richest.



Above, Mosquito's A&H-equipped DJ Booth. Top right, head of music Steve Walter

Mosquito, it seems, could hardly be accused of being cutting-edge. "No, but we are breaking boundaries in a different way," maintains Walter. It's very rare for a club to try to provide a high quality in everything it does, the décor, the music, the staff and of course our sound system. It costs a fortune to do things this way, but on a small scale it works."

Walter's relationship with Adlib Audio dates back to his time spent at Life Café in Liverpool. The venue regularly presented live music, but due to the limitations of the installed sound system, Adlib's hire department was contracted to provide PA services - which eventually grew to include everything from acoustic sets to a three-day festival promoted by the venue. "When I was given the task of overseeing the sound system at Mosquito, I asked Andy Dockerty if he would consider designing the installation. Even though Adlib

hasn't done many installations of this type, they have a great name in the industry in Liverpool and it was clear from the start that our company cultures were very similar. They're a very professional bunch of people and great to work with. Andy and the guys had to spend a lot of time on this installation, as the design was so fluid."

While Adlib Audio has become well known as a large-scale rental outfit handling acts like Del Amitri and more recently Texas, the company has also been designing and building its own loudspeaker systems for over a decade, under the leadership of R&D boss Dave Fletcher. While Fletcher's designs include a variety of large and medium-sized touring boxes, the Mosquito project provided the impetus for a new, smaller system. "I knew Mosquito from its former existence as the She Club. It was Liverpool's premiere pick-up joint!" he recalled, "but in the seventies it was also the first proper club in the city. We went to look round the site last year, and after talking to Steve about Mosquito's concept, we knew that the design would need a large number of small but powerful loudspeakers." Adlib has used a variety of third-party commercial designs in its installations, but Fletcher considered the majority of compact enclosures inadequate for the job. "Most small commercial installation speakers are really nothing more than beefed-up hi-fi designs with loud, but uncontrolled, HF and mid-range components. We needed a high output speaker, but one that had some control over its dispersion - and because of the low ceiling height inside Mosquito, the cabinet would have to be very compact indeed."

Fletcher's solution - the Adlib AA81 - is a 175W trapezoidal ply box, loaded with a Precision Devices 8" low-mid driver and a 1" titanium compression unit, mounted on a 90° x 60° metal horn flare. The speaker incorporates a comprehensive passive crossover, which uses a combination of 2nd and 3rd order filters and impedance compensation to couple the two drivers seamlessly. A total of 23 AA81s are deployed around Mosquito and the smaller Vampire Suite; these are supplemented by three 2 x 15" subs and a handful of smaller Martin Audio cabinets for low-level zones.

Both rooms are laid out as a series of booths of varying sizes, with two open-plan 'loud zones.'



This allows guests to find the ideal environment for their night's entertainment - be it intimate, lively or full-on. Individual control over each zone was a primary requirement - though this, of course, has cost implications, as Fletcher pointed out: "In a simple installation, you'd expect to find multiple speakers paralleled together on the same cable run, and fed by the same amp. In this case, we have run four-core cable to each zone and on longer runs have doubled it back to keep its effect to a minimum. This means we can also provide left and right feeds to each part of the room. Most installers would try to hang the maximum number of boxes on the minimum number of amps - but we have gone the other way. We actually have more potential zones than we need, but this separation helps enormously when it comes to setting up the system."

Mosquito's sound system has been split in to nine zones, distributed centrally from the basement rack room, which benefits from its location next to the beer cellar chillers. Crown CE4000, CE2000 and CE1000 power amps are used to drive the subs, AA81s and Martin boxes respectively. "All the Crown amps have good 2-Ohm capability, but we only have a maximum of three cabinets per channel," Fletcher explained.

Having been involved with the project from its birth, the Adlib team was able to incorporate a future-proof infrastructure, which includes clean, single-phase mains supply to every technical area and spare cable ways between the rack room, DJ booths and stage. "This is such an easy thing to do before the decorating is done - I'm amazed it isn't done as standard," he commented. "Our mains and earth is starved out from the rack room - it's the only certain way to avoid hum loops and noise. Also, the cost of a few extra bits of cable between the areas is nothing - but it will always be impossible to go back in a year's time and add anything. We didn't want the club to have its potential limited by something as simple as cable." To handle the needs of Mosquito's live artists, Adlib has supplied a portable system based around the company's AA122 12" + 2" cabaret system. A self-contained mix control position (in the form of a wheeled flightcase) comprises an Allen & Heath MixWizard console, Alesis equalizer and Samson power amps, and is designed to be operated by the bands themselves. This is also wired to feed a low-level mono signal into the main house system.

The meeting of minds between Mosquito's owners and Adlib has clearly been fruitful. As a lover of music, it would be difficult to criticise the manner in which it is presented - the installation works equally well as a full-range

background system and an in-your-face dance PA. Ironically, the only rough edge is caused by a property of the Roolec playback system, which uses extensive normalisation of audio levels. Because of the widely differing spectral content of music that spans four decades, perceived levels seem to jump around between tracks. Even this, though, is not a permanent issue: Fletcher reports that Roolec has offered to adapt the normalisation process to suit Mosquito's wide range of programme material.

The decision to use an almost unknown speaker brand was a brave one for Steve Walter, but one that he feels has paid dividends: "The proof is in the listening," he asserted. "I trusted Andy, Dave and their team to use their judgement – and look what they came up with! Punters don't give a flying fuck what the brand name is on the box – as long as they can dance to it and not get their heads torn off if they sit too close."

Lighting at Mosquito is extremely understated, featuring dimmable halogen dichroic architectural fittings, which are gelled red and warm yellow to create a very strong look. "Lighting is not something we've ever really got into," explained Walter. "We've talked about opening a big club and adding all the things we have to leave out here – but in the end, the company is made up of people with experience in running bars and restaurants – not superclubs. We know what we're good at and what our guests want and flashing lights are not top of the list."

Plans for Mosquito, Living Room and Living Ventures' other brands are expansive; up to 20 new venues are scheduled over the next four years, including openings in London and several major cities outside their native northwest. With an assurance from Steve Walter that Adlib and their speakers will be a part of this plan, it's clearly not just the punters who have been well and truly bitten.

## SCOUSE NOUSE

DAVE FLETCHER'S FIRST LOUSPEAKER DESIGN IN 1967 WAS COMPLETED ON SUCH A LIMITED BUDGET THAT HE HAD TO WALLPAPER THE CABINETS INSTEAD OF COVERING THEM IN CLOTH. "I WAS STILL AT SCHOOL!" HE EXPLAINED. "THEY WERE USED FOR ALL THE SCHOOL'S DISCOS, SO THE SLIGHTLY

PSYCHEDELIC LOOK WAS OK." HE ORIGINALLY TRAINED IN RF ELECTRONICS, WHICH HE CLAIMS HAS MANY PARALLELS WITH LOUSPEAKER DESIGN.

FLETCHER SPENT THE EIGHTIES WORKING ON INDUSTRIAL RADIO SYSTEMS (INCLUDING ONE PARTICULARLY UNUSUAL PROJECT WHICH, IT LATER TRANSPIRED, WAS A KEY ELEMENT IN A MILITARY AVIATION CONTROL SYSTEM USED TO DEVASTATING EFFECT BY IRAQ DURING THE GULF WAR). SHORTLY AFTER DISCOVERING THE UNPLEASANT TRUTH, HE LEFT THE RADIO INDUSTRY, HAVING BEEN HORRIFIED TO FIND HIMSELF TAKING PART IN PROJECTS OF SUCH DUBIOUS MORALITY.

IN 1990, WHILE WORKING IN THE R&D DEPARTMENT AT MCGREGOR AMPLIFIERS, HE STARTED PART-TIME WORK ON A TOURING SPEAKER

PROJECT FOR ANDY DOCKERTY. "THAT SYSTEM (CHRISTENED THE DF1) WENT OUT WITH DEL AMITRI AND DID A GOOD JOB," HE RECALLED PROUDLY. STRIVING FOR A HIGHER-EFFICIENCY DESIGN, THE DF2 WAS CONCEIVED – SHORTER BY 8" (200MM) THAN ITS PREDECESSOR, BUT FEATURING A NEODYMIUM HF UNIT, WITH A DUAL 15" TRAPEZOIDAL SUB. RAVE REVIEWS ON EARLY TEXAS TOURS FOLLOWED, AND A COUPLE OF WEDGE MONITOR DESIGNS WERE BROUGHT INTO BEING.

LIVERPOOL IS FAMED FOR THE HUGE NUMBER OF CABARET-STYLE ACTS TOURING LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY – AND ADLIB'S EMBRYONIC SALES DEPARTMENT WAS QUICK TO SEIZE AN OPPORTUNITY. "PEOPLE NEEDED A SMALLER SYSTEM TO GO IN AND OUT OF PUBS AND CLUBS – SOMETHING THAT WOULD FIT INTO A SMALL VAN ALONG WITH THE REST OF THEIR GEAR," EXPLAINED FLETCHER. "WE PRODUCED A 12" + 2" TOP BOX THAT SAT ON A POLE THAT WOULD SLOT INTO A SINGLE 15" SUB – NO COMPLICATED EXTERNAL PROCESSING; WE JUST GOT IT RIGHT INSIDE THE BOX. THE FIRST OF THESE [FD-1s] THAT WE MADE WERE BOUGHT BY MELANIE C'S MUM AND DAD, WHO ARE A TOURING ACT THEMSELVES!" IT WAS NOT ONLY THE PRODUCTS THAT CUSTOMERS WANTED, HOWEVER: "PROFESSIONAL ACTS HAD NOWHERE TO GO – MUSIC SHOPS HAD ALMOST NO KNOWLEDGE OF REAL PA AND THE BIG GUYS WOULDN'T TOUCH THEM. WE DEALT DIRECTLY WITH EVERYONE, AND BECAUSE WE HAD EXPERIENCE OF EVERY TYPE OF WORK FROM PUBS TO ARENAS, WE COULD OFFER THEM A LOT OF HELP."

THE ADDITION TO THE RANGE OF A TRIPLE-CHAMBER DUAL 15" SUBWOOFER MEANT THAT ADLIB'S RENTAL SIDE COULD (AND STILL DOES) USE THE FD-1 SYSTEM FOR TOURING, ALONGSIDE THE MARTIN AUDIO RIG THAT THE COMPANY HAS CARRIED FOR SEVERAL YEARS. A FLOURISHING LINE IN INSTALLATIONS HAS MEANT THAT FLETCHER'S ATTENTION HAS BEEN DRAWN TO SMALLER DESIGNS SUCH AS THE AAB1 USED IN MOSQUITO. "WORKING ON SUCH LITTLE BOXES HAS ITS ADVANTAGES," HE LAUGHED. "I CAN EVEN MAKE THE CABINETS OUT OF THE OFFCUTS FROM THE BIGGER ONES!" FREE SPEAKER, ANYONE?



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MAKING EFFICIENT COMPANIES WORK BETTER!

# Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

If you're at all interested in the future of theatre in Britain you'll want the glossy but seriously practical book which has been published as the report of the SOLT/TMA/ITC Conference Theatre 2001: future directions. If you're making the future, you were probably there and have a copy already.

**PUBLICATIONS LIKE THIS** can be dry as dust, as can the events themselves, but Theatre 2001 was staged with great panache and its proceedings

have been given a similar zing by editor and programme co-ordinator Rosie Runciman, with a little help from the trusty programme printers John Good Holbrook.

**ONE OR TWO** unnecessary moments - like Melvyn Bragg's meaningless introductory waffle - have been omitted, but otherwise all the speeches are there and all the panels are reported verbatim. There's Richard Eyre telling us that theatre

is sometimes 'head-burningly, ball-breakingly, bowel-churningly bad', as gleefully reported on many a front page. But you also get the full context: he was in fact very upbeat about the business, while making a passionate case for the need for openness to change.

**THERE'S JOHN TUSA**, in a less-reported but equally important speech, offering a great deal of wisdom about how he can produce adventurous (and successful) programming at the Barbican

while keeping up good relations with his City paymasters. There's a lot about creativity, about getting new audiences, and plenty of attention to the needs of minorities - plus the usual speeches from their (often self-appointed) representatives about how little attention their particular minority was getting. There's a rather gushing summary ('Saturday was my favourite day') from Dominic Shellard, who has drawn together some recommendations for future action. Better still, there is a list of some very concrete steps which have already been taken as a result of the conference.

**WHAT L&SI READERS** may find especially useful is a report by John Earl on the nature and state of the West End's theatre building stock, together with his recommendations on what we should be doing about it. He makes the essential point that you could never again build a new theatre of West End standards in central London - property is just too valuable. Our only available strategy is to use the Historic Buildings listing legislation to keep the stock we have.

**THAT VERY LEGISLATION** produces problems of its own: the theatres themselves are nearly all in need of serious renovation, but the law won't always allow theatre owners to make them as modern and comfortable as today's audience would wish. Many are still not fully air conditioned. Others have cramped foyer space, reflecting the old class divisions that existed when they were built. A working party under John Earl, including senior representatives of both the theatre-owning managements and the local councils for the West End, Westminster and Camden, has already been set up to address the problem.

**THE NATIONAL THEATRE** has its own space problems, though cramped foyers are not among them. In outlining his busy programme for the next year, Trevor Nunn announced some radical changes that we shall be seeing next summer in the NT's spaces. We've heard regular complaints

over the years about how difficult it is to work in the Olivier, a problem which has been at least partly solved by the reconfiguration carried out a couple of years back. What is less often recognised is how awful the Lyttelton is. It may have a West End shape to its stage and auditorium, which is good for transfers, but its ambience is deadly and nobody in their right mind would ever want to watch a Lyttelton show from its distant, sound-hostile circle. At last, the NT seems to be admitting this.

**THE REMEDY IS** to get two new spaces out of the Lyttelton. One, a 650-seater arena, would sit in the area now occupied by the stalls and the stage. The other would be a hundred-seater, fully flexible 'loft' studio in the now redundant Lyttelton circle foyer. Will Bowen, who has produced the plans for these exciting changes, has created two demountable structures which should come into use next May, for a five-month season of work from both the NT and visiting companies, led by some of our most innovative directors. The NT hopes to make up that dark time by having speedy change-overs between the five arena and 10 loft shows they intend to present. As an interesting footnote, Will expects the spaces to be usable outside the National, which opens up fascinating possibilities for future mobile touring in the RSC manner.

**TALKING OF THE RSC**, I recently looked in at the Westminster to see Michael Armstrong's production of *Miss Julie*. Armstrong's story is a classic one of the step too far: his show had a hugely successful tour of small-scale venues, on the strength of which a larger tour and the Westminster residency were booked. The big tour brought tiny houses in huge theatres, and the attendances at the Westminster are such that poor Mr Armstrong will probably lose his shirt, and be forced to abandon his dream of repertory production in the Westminster. He has, however, drawn attention to the fact that the Westminster, which the Theatres Trust (for reasons best known to themselves) have not only failed to get listed but are actively trying to pull down, is a very workable theatre. In fact, its 650-seat main house and 100-seat studio are exactly the sizes planned for the South Bank. More interestingly, they fit quite well with the sizes of the Swan and The Other Place. If we accept the RSC's crazy plan to give up the superb technical facilities of the Barbican and bid for West End houses alongside commercial managements, here is a ready-made, very accessible Central London base for them. No SOLT toes would be trodden on, while the RSC would get not only two ideally-sized auditoria but also some pretty useful office and workshop space. It sounds too good to be true - and probably is.

For more information about the Theatre 2001 report: [www.theatrenow.com](http://www.theatrenow.com)

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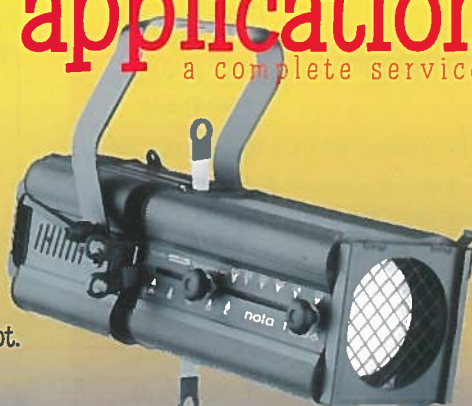
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# NOISE OF TIME

*Louise Stickland witnesses an unusual artistic collaboration*



photos: Joan Marcus/Louise Stickland

Imagine seeing noise, hearing time, feeling colour, tasting atmosphere and touching memories. This may take you some way to understanding a fusion of the Emerson String Quartet and Théâtre de Complicité.

The result - *Noise of Time* - is an inherently accessible performance which sees the two companies collaborating on what can only be described as a theatrical concert, which shifts from a representation of composer Shostakovich's life into a complete performance of his 15th Quartet. It's not necessary to be a classical buff or a Shostakovich fan to enjoy the intense paradoxes of the work. And anyone with conventional expectations about a decorous staging for Shostakovich's last creation - Quartet 15 in E flat Minor, Op 144 - is in for a few shocks!

Théâtre de Complicité's Simon McBurney is one of the UK's most incisive experimental directors, and conceiver of many ground-breaking works with the company. Always on the edge, McBurney and his productions are notoriously challenging - and hugely rewarding - projects with which to be involved.

*Noise of Time* was first staged at the John Jay Theatre at the Lincoln Centre in New York in March 2000, where it received rave reviews. It was revived as part of the Barbican's BITE Festival this summer, and looks forward to a healthy touring schedule in Europe, the US and further afield over the next two years.

The US originating Emerson String Quartet had wanted to stage Shostakovich's 15th Quartet for some time, but there was never a suitable opportunity. The seeds already existed for combining it with another element - maybe a reading of some of his letters. When the Emersons and McBurney met, the creative blue touch-paper immediately ignited, and so evolved the idea of staging Shostakovich's final work in a performance context as a collaboration with Complicité.

The work weaves together many sensory impressions of Shostakovich's work, times and ideas in a moving, living montage of

sound, image, animation and suggestion. By the time the Emersons start the actual performance of the piece itself, each viewer has an individual and personal concept of the man and his creative energies.

As with all Complicité work, information is communicated through mixed media. Here it's via four actors (to balance the 'quartet' theme), mime, choreography, dance, sound, lighting, moving and still projections - and live music from the Emersons - all rolled into a richly-layered, multi-textured, emotive work.

Sound was designed by Chris Shutt and Gareth Fry. The duo had just finished Complicité's *Mnemonic* run at Riverside Studios when rehearsals for the initial US run of *Noise of Time* started. The sound department had broken plenty of new audiological ground with *Mnemonic* and were set to continue.

*Mnemonic* mixed pre-recorded sound effects and voice-overs with live speech to great effect. For *Noise of Time*, Shutt and Fry took this modus operandi a step further - everything in the 40 minute soundscape is pre-recorded. With not a single word spoken onstage, audience imaginations work harder!

*Noise of Time's* tempo is gentler than *Mnemonic*: however, it still has plenty of contrasts, highs and lows, and many moments of extreme delicacy and frailty. It is Shostakovich's final work and one senses that he was more than aware of this.

The starting point for the sound department was the knowledge that the Emerson String Quartet would be performing this specific piece. From there, it was a blank canvas. McBurney quickly and characteristically dumped all the usual classical performance protocol in the garbage can. Out was the starched, stiff upper lips, dickie bows and rigid semi-circle format of musicians. In came rock 'n' roll' - well, not exactly - but there are elements in the staging that most definitely are! The intention was to draw a large and eclectic audience - appealing to those who'd not necessarily go to a classical show.





Sound men Gareth Fry (left) and Chris Shutt

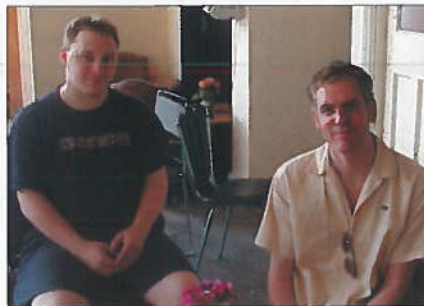
McBurney asked them to play without music - the first time they had done so. Then he asked if they could move and walk whilst playing - a little challenging for the cellist, but he found a way! McBurney then tried them in different configurations and formats - in each corner of the room, lined up at the rear and every which way, offering the quartet the complete freedom of the stage.

Sound started with the fixed entity of the quartet; from there they thought extensively about how to integrate their performance seamlessly with the theatrical context that preceded it. It was vital that the two should flow into one another with no perceivable break.

Once it was decided to follow the voice-over route, they went into the Something Else recording studio in East London and recorded over seven hours of material. The voice-overs were spoken by the actors and also various native Russian speakers - to capture the accents authentically. They read Shostakovitch's letters and related stories about his life, keeping a Soviet intonation whilst also giving a very contemporary feel.

Rock 'n' roll again returns to the frame - by using chaos, loud volumes, shock, video and an array of new technologies, Complicité lift classical music and transport it to somewhere relevant and interesting to a modern audience. "I definitely like to think that we've achieved the modernising aspect," says Shutt.

The hundreds of recorded sources and sound effects were compressed into a 40-minute soundscape. The complexity of this and the way it was developed in unison with the performance pushed the technical envelope to extremes. It's been a source of some frustration that neither the hardware nor software yet exists to give them the flexibility they require! G-type software is used to link time-based cues. Shutt and Fry agree this is ideal for running cues in a normal pre-set



theatrical environment. But because of the organic, multi-layered and changeable way in which all Complicité shows evolve (McBurney reserves the right to change his mind at any time, and does) they're trying to push G-Type beyond what it was designed to do.

The tool they seek is more like a musical instrument - whereby a sound scene can be easily cut and pasted to a totally different place in the show. "Much of what we're doing is finding ways of creatively abusing the technology," says Fry, grinning impishly.

Shutt comments that it's been like producing a radio programme in some ways - apart from the fact they're working in three dimensions. "The idea is to surround the audience with interesting audio while focusing their eyes on the stage."

The effects and voice-overs are stored on two Akai S6000 samplers (also being pushed beyond their design spec) with a capacity that's still "nowhere near big enough," according to Shutt. Like credit limits, the greater the capacity of the machine, the more of it that gets devoured in their shows. They're also using a minidisc for some of the music samples and some Lexicon reverbs. Logic Audio software runs on Fry's G4 notebook - and has also undergone its fair share of audio terrorism at the hands of Shutt and Fry. Designed for music sequencing, they're using it to create sound effects and to "do all sorts of strangeness".

The show is running through a 40-channel Amek Recall console - Fry's desk of choice -

hired for the Barbican run from Orbital Sound. A BSS Soundweb is utilized for the graphic EQs, delays and matrixing.

The Emersons are totally acoustic, except for a tiny bit of reverb on the violin at the start. The violinist is right upstage at the time and starts with a plaintive tune. "He's under a solo spotlight with a starry background at this point," elucidates Shutt, "and I thought a bit of reverb emphasized that he looks like he's floating in space."

The performance starts with an old radio plonked mid-stage by an actor which starts crackling like a crystal set. The audioquirk department immediately kicks in! The wireless 'reverse radio' effect is achieved using in-ear-monitor receiver inside the old radio, plugged into a car amplifier which then goes into the radio's original speaker.

Playing without music, in different formations, whilst on the move and minus the dreaded starched shirts weren't the only new production shocks encountered by the Emersons whilst working with Complicité. They'd also never played in the dark before - nor were they used to working with stage lights. A great story related by Complicité tells of discovering them in the dressing rooms one day, standing on top of chairs in the dark - practising for what McBurney might ask them to do next!

Lighting designer Paul Anderson is a great exponent of darkness and has perfected the art of using minimal numbers of very precisely-focused light sources. He reckons *Noise of Time* is one of his simplest lighting designs so far in terms of lantern-count. There's plenty of specials on the musicians - who learned with alacrity to deal with the challenge of finding their marks onstage!

One idea was to be able to 'follow' the musicians around with the light. At one stage, the platform on which they're standing tracks upstage to downstage very slowly - almost imperceptibly over a span of about 20 minutes. During this subtle glide, they're lit with the bare minimum of side light - primarily Pars with scrollers at one, two and three-and-a-half metre heights and then picked up with specials when they reach their final position. Ideally, Anderson would have liked to have utilized some moving lights for this - but there wasn't the budget.

As the music fluctuates from sombre and austere to light and airy, Anderson mimics the feel and mood with the lighting. The whole space is backlit with six 2ks with scrollers. Profiles are used with vari-speed gobos rotators, four of which at one point resemble a flickering cinema screen upstage. At another point, the other four lamps with rotators are used obliquely focused on the backdrop to emulate strangulated radio waves - the sort you might hear when trying to tune a radio.

The backdrop was conceived by projection designer Jan Hartley: it's a gauze with hundreds of thin fibreglass rectangles - about



A4 size, representative of sheet music - hooked on to the front of it. A projection surface was wanted with character and depth - one that didn't resemble a flat expanse which looked like it was waiting to be filled with a movie show! In addition to functioning as projection screen and backdrop, it also backlights extremely well - from both the floor and above.

Subtle clouds and other light-projected effects skim over the still slide images at various points, creating subliminal, almost invisible nuances and suggestions. Much of the show is lit by torches, hand-held and moved by the actors. Last year Anderson discovered a tiny palm-sized fluorescent torch made by Osram. The actors latched on to them at rehearsals and they became a part of the show. They're attached to the actor's fingers via pieces of string, with Lee 204 taped to the front for a sepia glow.

Anderson himself operated the Barbican shows using Complicité's own Strand 520 console. They utilized as much of the in-house rig as possible, with any additional hires sourced from Sparks and Theatre Projects.

Lighting, sound and video are all designed to integrate for *Noise of Time*. Complicité had started experimenting with video during *Mnemonic*, and McBurney decided this should expand for this production. Exceptionally wary



Lighting designer Paul Anderson

of the 'multi-media' label, McBurney asked projection design specialist Jan Hartley to produce still and moving images for the show.

Hartley and McBurney had not worked together before. "It was a blind date," says Hartley. Coincidentally, Shostakovitch is a favourite of hers. Hartley came to the UK for rehearsals before the show's initial New York run. It was during this time that the set - designed by Joanna Parker - evolved, as well as the idea of an off-beat projection surface.

Hartley also visited the Shostakovitch Institute in Paris, armed with her scanner and laptop, and furiously collected images and information.

Images are central to the abstract narrative scene-setting role of the soundscape. Production manager Nick Schwartz-Hall initially came onboard when Hartley asked him to assist her in sourcing the video equipment

for the New York show. He was then asked to production manage the show.

Slides are projected from three Kodak 35mm Ektachrome projectors on the front balcony rail. Some slides work individually and others are feathered together (by Hartley in PhotoShop) to produce one widescreen panoramic image. The video projector used at the Barbican was a Christie with playback via two DVD decks and digital tape. All video equipment was supplied by CT and initially operated at the Barbican by Ruppert Bohle. Three further Ektachrome projectors are mounted in the ceiling, projecting downwards onto the front of the stage, used for beaming onto the actors and their clothing - sometimes with texturing effects, others with specific images like faces. Hartley produced far more material than was actually used in the show, but even so, projected images - moving and still - run for approximately 70 minutes of a 90-minute show.

The show is very open to interpretation. Much of it is dark, all of it is emotional. It's theatre at its most potent and compelling! The *Noise of Time* leaves a lasting impression of Shostakovitch's 15th Quartet.

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# John Watt

## Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

It strikes me that there are similarities between knocking out an article and a lighting plot. I say, I say, I say, what are the similarities . . . etc. The piece of blank paper is just as frightening and sits malevolently glowering at you for however many minutes or hours it takes to begin to cover that virgin surface.

**A CONSOLATION WHEN** banging away at the PC is that it's pretty unlikely that anyone actually reads this stuff anyway, so it comes as a bit of a shock when the letters come in. This doesn't involve the arrival of post office vans down on their springs, you understand, but a knock from our cheery country postman at about eight in the morning, (it's light then). He always greets me with "What? On holiday again?" as he hands over a pathetic collection held together with a GPO rubber band. He wouldn't have knocked, but Wybron's catalogue won't go through my letter box and is obviously not intended for those of us who must keep all our life-support systems in a briefcase. The toolbag-sized Screwfix catalogue, on the other hand, lists 500W floods for a fiver and linear tungsten halogen lamps for 75p each!

**THE PLASA SHOW** is only days away: what wonders will be on display that we didn't even know we needed! It's such a social event, that it's all too easy to spend a day at Earls Court without looking at any equipment at all! A pity, as there's always something interesting or useful (occasionally both) - so drag yourself away from that tempting offer of another beer and see what's new. It can be taken as read that all the control systems will do more than you ever dreamed of and some will display the whole set-up in three dimensions and order the kit too. But how many button pushes does it take to raise circuit one to seven? And does it need to be a button?

"Anyway, Alan claims that the owner of the company, Jane Hewland, chats to the crew and knows their names. Seems a bit far-fetched to me, but he swears it's so."

**A LIGHT PLOT** should be easier, as on a good day you will have trawled up a few requirements from the director of the show and so can begin to piece some sort of scheme together, some of which may even appear in the final job. There are two kinds of directors, those who know what they want, but have no visual or spatial sense, and those who think they know what they want and have no visual or spatial sense either. Or have I been unlucky of late?

**LURKING AMONGST THIS FEAST** of goodies is a reader's letter. Oh crikey, who have I upset now? But no, it appears I've struck a chord with an old acquaintance, Alan Grint, with some remarks I made last month about Anglia. Actually I had been quite kind and fair about that outpost 'buoy' (as ever), which is pretty remarkable in itself given the way I had been nose-bounced down the A11 by an ungrateful manager there some years ago.

**I'M IN AND OUT** of Holland quite a bit recently (no, not a job). Very flat, Holland, lots and lots of big modern windmills (or should I call them turbines?) generating what must be sizeable amounts of 'juice'. I'm told 150kW per unit is likely at about force four on the Beaufort scale and since there are sometimes 30 such units in a row, it makes you think. Well it does me anyway. Force four is the point where sailors like myself decide to stay in port because our hats are likely to disappear over the side and flies get embedded in our teeth. Aah, memories of the Lenton Lane canteen again. Maybe all studios could have a few such turbines on the roof so that on windy days they could do energy-thirsty game shows, reserving gloomy soaps for quieter days when there's a break in the wind? I'm attracted to the notion of Newsnight being run entirely on hot air (nothing new there) though the thought of how many puffs it would take to run Pearson's light entertainment output is too hazardous a line of thought for me to contemplate. Daytime television could run on batteries, as usual, with suitably qualified commissioning editors being issued with jump leads to give any faltering shows a jump start (should give a lift to the sales of heavy duty cable, so it's not a completely duff idea).

**SO TODAY IT'S** the written word for me, and not even a note on the back of a Joe Allen's bill saying "no budget for scenery so this is your big opportunity". When I first embarked on this ego trip of pontificating monthly I was told I would soon get in to the habit of jotting down points of interest to my readers as they occurred. I think the intention was that these would largely be of a technical nature! The words 'dream' and 'on' come to mind. This month's Post-it includes "readers letters", "PLASA", "Rijksmuseum" and a note to make a better list next month (always assuming I get away with this one).

**ALAN SPENT 22 YEARS** at Anglia before being driven in to the freelance world. He tells a scarcely credible story, he and other ex-Anglia types are apparently in to the fifth series of Dreamteam for Hewland International based at Three Mills. (I went there once, it's bandit country, all swirling mists near the river. There are tales of dreadful deeds committed nearby: they say Big Brother was made hereabouts.) Anyway, Alan claims that the owner of the company, Jane Hewland, chats to the crew and knows their names. Seems a bit far-fetched to me, but he swears it's so - STLD diary held high in his right hand, no doubt. He says they have an ethic of making good pictures too, so I had better find someone with a dish so that I can have a look. Maybe they can start a trend . . .

**FOR SOME REASON** I found myself at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum recently. Upstairs there are more good pictures than you can shake a stick at. But you know that, and you will also know, being in the lighting business, that Mr Rembrandt knew more about lighting than almost anyone before or since. So why am I going on about it? Well, I just think it's worth standing back from time to time to remind ourselves what picture-making is all about. It's easy to spend an hour just looking at one picture, the same time span as the average television drama. If your taste is for something more 'off the wall', Van Gogh next door demonstrated how to produce weird granulated pictures without software.

I'll end with a song - you won't be able to hear it (this is a caring publication), but I'll hum a few bars if we meet at Earls Court.

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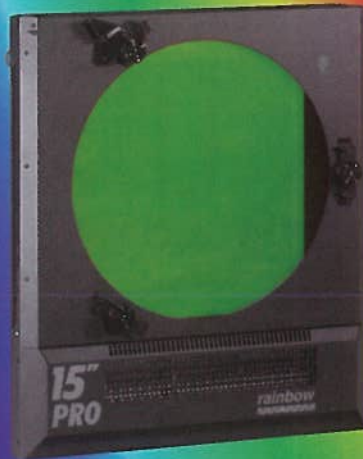
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# Fit for a King

*London's best-known Royal Park has been busy again, playing host to a varied summer season of live acts. L&S, of course, was in the front row.*

Like many open-air shows this year, Route of Kings was just one more date in artists' frenetic summer touring schedule. The Beach Boys crew get to see more than most, however. "We tour all the year round," explained the band's front-of-house engineer Jon Ostrin, "in fact, this month we'll be doing 27 shows in as many days." The band's philosophy of not carrying any production equipment means that it is not unheard-of for the Boys to appear twice in the same city on the same night. "We even pick up the band's backline gear locally - they just take their guitars on the plane with them. Obviously it's a compromise - I'd really like to fine-tune their sound every night, but that's just not possible," admitted Ostrin. "On the other hand, it only takes two hours to set up the whole thing - and with this band we get paid by the show!" Ostrin revealed that this year's schedule has already included back-to-back gigs in Japan and California; the European leg winds up in Monaco, after which the crew has a matter of hours to reach Toronto!

Michael Swift, mixing monitors for the Beach Boys, was happy to see a gaggle of blue wedges on stage - although, as well as using Turbosound's more established products, he also had the opportunity to try out the new TFM-450 design (finished in black, rather than 'Turboblué'). "I'm sending seven vocal mixes on to the stage," he explained, "everyone in the band sings and there are no 'big' mixes. I must see about 180 monitor systems every year - when it says Turbo on the list, that's cool. These new wedges are very nice - I don't know how they've done it, but the vocal jumps straight out of the box. The great thing about using a

lot of different gear is that I only need to bring the mic up in the wedge to know instantly if it's going to be an easy gig or a hard one!"

Britannia Row was the third major sound company to camp out in Hyde Park in as many weeks; the 'Party in the Park' and 'Picnic with Pavarotti' events were handled by London rivals Canegreen and Sound Hire respectively. To cope with the wide variety of visiting acts, Bryan Grant's team, under the leadership of John Gibbon, had installed an impressive system based around Turbosound's soon-to-be-released TFS-780H Flashlight II 'high-pack' cabinets: 18 of the new enclosures were flown per side as the main system, with a quartet of Floodlight underhang boxes. Stacked on each side of the stage were 24 TFS-780L subs, with a pair of Floodlights as infills. "We're also using a couple of original Flashlight boxes as outfills, to fill a little hole between the stage and the outer delay towers," explained Gibbon. "For the centre of the front rows we have provided a couple of subs with three underhang cabinets on their sides."

Two delay systems were deployed to cover the wide, shallow seated area - these were kitted out with four TFL-760 Floodlights and the same number of 780 subs, with a further mini-system of self-powered Q-Light TQ-440SPs to cover the area directly behind the mix position. "We keep these in reserve for when they are really needed - to keep the level of spill down, we deliberately mute them if the rear seats are not sold," Gibbon added.

The new blue boxes have clearly found favour with the Brit Row team: "So far, it's giving us a very nice, warm sound and the coverage appears to be very good," enthused Gibbon. "I'm very happy with it - although we haven't really wound it up yet!" However, praise from the Beach Boy's FOH engineer Jon Ostrin was more muted: "I'm used to hearing a particular characteristic of the



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# In Profile...

L&S Talks to the Industry Trend-setters

It's rare in the lighting industry that you are called upon to become a certified Advanced Scuba Diver just to conduct a focus session, but Jeanette Farmer hasn't exactly followed a run-of-the-mill career path.

Born and bred in Las Vegas, which she still calls home, a childhood family treat was to take a drive up the strip and look at the sparkle and glitz that makes the city visible from space. Farmer's parents moved to Vegas when her father took up a position at a local nuclear defence test site: she grew up in the city at a time when organized crime ruled, showgirls were glamorous and Elvis was still King.



Vegas since Caesar's Palace in the sixties. Up until this point, Farmer had not made a clear decision as to which direction her theatre career would take: she picked lighting and spent the next four years as the LX operator on the show.

Farmer describes herself as a 'Gear Head' and her fascination with technology has led her to spend 20 years installing, troubleshooting and repairing high-end theatre lighting systems. Her passion for lighting design is also strong and in her present position as lighting director on Cirque du Soleil's stunning production *O* at the extraordinary Bellagio Hotel, she is responsible for maintaining someone else's vision; a role she finds exhilarating. She recalls: "When the whispers first went around about Cirque du Soleil coming to town, I knew I wanted to be involved - in any capacity. I'd seen them on TV and the lighting was spectacular, video lighting was usually so timid but this was saturated and truly amazing."

Farmer's long relationship with Cirque du Soleil and their LD Luc Lafortune began with *Nouvelle Experience* at the Mirage in 1992 when she acted as lighting systems consultant on the big top show. "Doing the show in the tent was a test for the company and the rumours started about there being a new show coming up. This turned out to be *Mystère*, which opened at Treasure Island in 1993 and is still running today."

Again Farmer was lighting systems consultant, moving on to spend three years as lighting

director. A couple of years into her run with *Mystère*, Farmer started doing the groundwork for the technically challenging *O*. "Working with Cirque du Soleil is a shocking experience until you 'get it' - and if you don't 'get it' then you leave. It's as simple as that. Everything happens as you go along, it's always a work in progress, even now elements of *O* change. When I first became involved with *O* it was quite frightening - there was no point of reference for it and no one to call and say 'hey, how do you do this?'"

The lighting systems for *O* were tested and developed over a two-year period. The water element of the show (much of it is performed in and above a pool that is 100ft x 150ft at its widest point) was the biggest consideration for Farmer. "I thought to myself I really don't know enough to be doing this, so I thought I'd better learn and ended up consulting with the LX guys from Titanic and with the US Navy on submersible fixtures."

At this time, Farmer was also overseeing construction of the lighting elements of the Bellagio theatre where *O* was to be staged. The focus sessions for *O* sound like something out of an Esther Williams movie, with six of the lighting crew, including Farmer, having to learn to scuba dive to focus the underwater lights: "We had to devise hand signals for focusing underwater (the pool at its deepest is 25ft) which were rather odd and funny to begin with, but we soon got the hang of it."

These days Farmer is responsible for maintaining Lafortune's vision on the show: "I see myself as the caretaker of both the electrical infrastructure and the aesthetic elements," she comments. Farmer loves what she does with an intense passion and doesn't plan to be leaving Vegas anytime soon - why would she when she has a \$3million lighting system at her fingertips and a coveted place on one of the world's most extraordinary productions? ■

Jacqueline Molloy talks with lighting designer Jeanette Farmer about the many challenges she has faced in her career

Farmer's first encounter with lighting had a rather profound effect on her: it came during her family's other favourite Sunday drive out to the Hoover Dam. Farmer recalls that it was dusk and she felt compelled to reach out and touch one of the recessed lights built into the dam wall; as her fingers made contact the entire dam lit up! It was several years before she realised that the timer had kicked in - instead she was convinced that she had created this extraordinary lightscape.

With such unusual influences all around her it's easy to see why Farmer chose the path she did. Her CV reads like a history of Vegas showrooms and ever more lavish hotels and resorts. Apart from several brief sojourns elsewhere - such as a flirtation with rock 'n' roll that saw her spend a year on the road with a band called Notorious - her career and life have been rooted in Vegas.

A career turning point occurred for Farmer in 1988 when she became involved with the spectacular Siegfred & Roy show at the Mirage - the most decadent resort to have been built in

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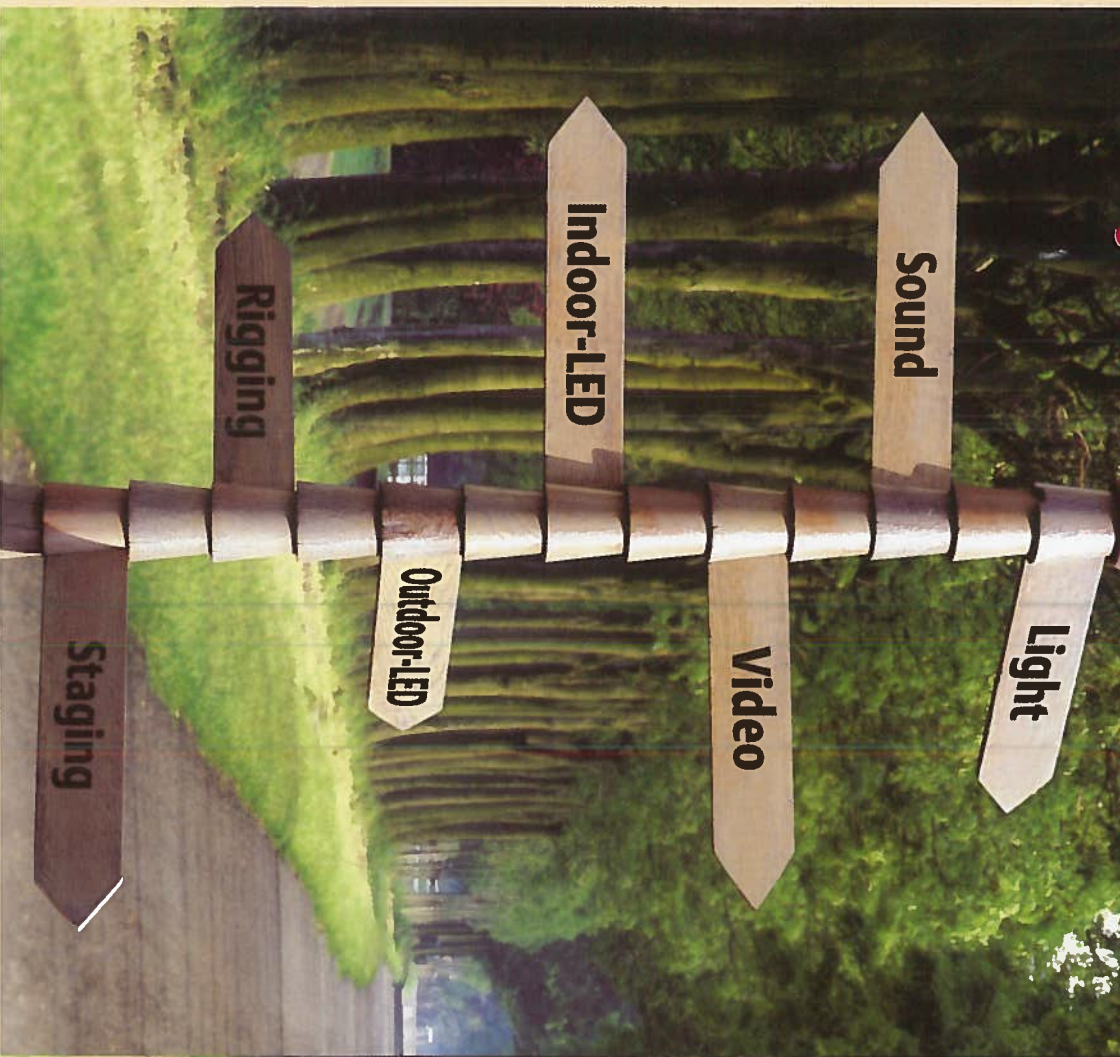
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- Becoming one of five key staff members managing the day to day equipment preparation, reporting to the Operations Manager
- Good all round knowledge in the servicing and maintenance of Automated Lighting fixtures backed by an electrical qualification or alternatively specialist knowledge of Vari-Lite equipment
- Supervisory experience within a maintenance environment and strong organisational skills as essential qualities
- The ability to co-ordinate each order sent from the rental desk to ensure that despatch times are met and equipment is prepared to the highest standards
- The ability to incorporate a maintenance schedule for the inventory within your department
- Experience of inventory control practices including computerised inventory control systems
- Understanding of safe working practices in a warehouse environment

### SUPPORT TECHNICIAN - Ref 2

The job will involve:

- Maintenance, preparation and repair of consoles, control equipment and effects, but is not restricted to these items and wider responsibilities are anticipated within the Technical Support Department

### Vari-Lite Europe Ltd has the following 3 positions available at their West London based office.

- Whilst full training will be given where possible, previous experience on service and repair of colour scrollers, digital light curtains and dimmers of various types is specifically required
- Applicants should ideally have recognised electronic and mechanical skill qualifications, but just as important is the ability to undertake tasks as part of a team and on initiative
- Good communication skills are needed in order to deal effectively with problems over the phone both during working hours and in on-call situations out of hours, as participation in 24-hour cover on a rota basis is required
- A passport without restrictions and a clean driving licence are required
- Salary, paid in the addition to on-call allowance and deals where appropriate, will be commensurate with experience

### TECHNICIAN - Ref 3

The job will involve:

- Working with a team of technicians servicing and maintaining a wide variety of lighting equipment, within the Followspots and Effects Department
- The candidate should be methodical and keen to learn within the warehouse environment and have some skills repairing and maintaining Electro-mechanical equipment

Applications, including a CV, in writing by **Friday 28th September 2001** to:

**Guy Forrester, Operations Manager**  
**Vari-Lite Europe Ltd, 20-22 Fairway Drive, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 8PW, England.**

clutch of Molefays. Despite having such a simple equipment list to work with, Barnes reported that visiting LDs had not felt their creativity limited: "Even though it looks sparse on a big stage, there is enough lighting up there to achieve what most people want programmed."

Video director Blue Leach was faced with a bewildering variety of requests from headline and supporting artists: "So far, we've had dance, classical and rock'n'roll, each of which demands a very different approach. Andrea

Bocelli was probably the hardest of the week, simply because everything has to be so much tighter. I love the diversity of this event, though: it's terrific seeing so many artists in such a short space of time - that's why I enjoy doing it so much." The seemingly omnipresent Blink TV provided advertising and intermission feeds for the entire event.

Not normally known as a demanding act, Status Quo still gave Leach an especially hard brief: "They don't like cameras pointing at them!" he said. "Luckily we have our 'Robo-Cam' (a Sony DXC-637 Hothead), which meant that we



Left, Pete Barnes babysitting the lighting rig. Above, Blue Leach - a new career move?

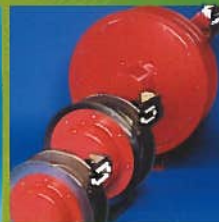
could just about survive." Leach used a Grass Valley GVG 110 mixer with an 8-input Snell & Wilcox Magic DaVE effects unit. Two half-inch CCD Pulnix mini cameras were positioned on stage, while Leach altered the location of the Sony Hothead for each show. "We put it in the roof for Lord of the Dance and Bocelli," he explained, "but for the rock'n'roll nights, I moved it stage left, attached to one of the truss legs. This is a great position for guitar shots and classic profiles."

The rest of the video hardware, which was all supplied by Screenco, comprised four Sony D30

cameras (two dollies on a focus track in the pit, an onstage handheld and a front-of-house position requiring a 55:1 lens), an analogue PPU and two 32sq.m 25mm LED screens. "These are fed separately via a matrix switcher so that we are not tied to having the same image on both screens," explained Screenco's product manager Giles Conté, who was not only in charge of video technology for Route of Kings, but had also taken up residence in Hyde Park for the Pavarotti and T in the Park concerts. "If I stay here any longer, I'll have to pay rent to the Queen!" he joked.

To the uninitiated, the idea of building a complete new temporary open-air venue within sight of the stage used for the previous week's shows seems utter madness. "In fact," explained production manager Nick Levitt, "the requirements for the two productions are so different that to use the same stage for both would be a nightmare. Added to which, the Pavarotti show had a capacity of 60,000, whereas we are dealing with an audience of 18,500. Even so, this is still the largest seated venue in the whole of the UK. It's just a pity that it's not permanent." But of course, if that were the case, they really would have to pay the Queen rent.

# LIGHTING & SOUND Industry



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Flashlight system - a sort of soft graininess at the top end that helps with vocal projection. With the new system the HF is almost too smooth. I like to have a bit of an edge - not so that it's painful, but it gives voices and effects another dimension."

As well as the new speaker system, Brit Row were also using another British-built product for the first time. Gloucestershire-based power amp manufacturer Chameleon Audio has supplied the company with two custom-built designs, which were used to feed the main system and subs. "These are actually based on two of our standard products, but have had a Class A front end added to them," explained Chameleon's MD Paul Houlden. "This gives the amps a very clean sound - even when they are accidentally overloaded. We have also fitted the units with an over-rated conventional linear power supply - thanks to our flat-wire transformer technology we can squeeze a larger unit into 85% of the space."

Keeping with the British theme, Brit Row had included a Cadac R-Type FOH console, which was acting as a master mixer, taking feeds from any visiting desks. "We needed something that wouldn't take up too much space, but which we could expand when we needed too," stated Gibbon. "Although we have it configured as a 40-channel board, which will happily deal with any act that arrives without its own control system, we can simply remove one of the 24-slot frames, which still leaves us with enough inputs to accept stereo mixes and playback feeds."



Above, the Cadac R-Type with the stage in the background. Above right, Brit Row crew chief John Gibbon

The R Type, which was designed as a 32-output console, was reconfigured at Britannia Row to provide just six stereo sub groups and an LCR master send. The LCR switching caused us some confusion at the start," Gibbon confessed, "the default routing is a discrete left-centre-right pan - with the pot in the central position, nothing is fed to either the left or the right output. We quickly learned that you have to select all three buses to produce what we would call an LCR mix."

Other unique Cadac features, such as having input EQ sections adjacent to channel faders, were welcomed by Snake Newton, who was responsible for babysitting the system. "This is a great way to try out a new product," he affirmed. "This way, we don't have to ask



visiting engineers to get to grips with something totally new, and it gives us the time to get accustomed to Cadac's way of doing things. The R Type is undoubtedly a great-sounding desk, although the fans fitted to the enormous power supplies are a bit noisy for classical work - which we found out on Andrea Bocelli. Of course, having a desk with such a big output section means that we can also provide broadcast and recording feeds if they are needed - and the surround-sound mixes for Lord of the Dance were no problem at all."

Lighting design for the week-long event came from Simon Sidi, with Pete Barnes at the helm of the LSD Icon console during the show dates. The same basic rig was used for Andrea Bocelli, the Beach Boys/Status Quo evening and Tom Jones, while Sting and Lord of the Dance brought in elements of their own production. Sidi employed three 56ft trusses, plus two up/down downstage trusses and a further four upstage. "It's very awkward running a show outdoors during the summer, as we are

enormously affected by daylight until the last hour or so," said Barnes, who was responsible for programming each set alongside the artists' own LDs. "It's ironic that while the audience benefits from good weather, we suffer from it!"

Barnes, a highly experienced LD in his own right, claimed to be enjoying the more down-to-earth role of programmer-cum-babysitter. "I've become part of the furniture!" he laughed, "and it's interesting how different LDs try to explain the whole story behind each look to me - I just want to know whether they want the front lights on or the back ones!" Sidi's design (supplied by LSD/Fourth Phase) contained 20 Icons, 30 High End Studio Colors, 24 six-way bars and a

## SPOTLIGHT ON FLASHLIGHT

In an industry seemingly dominated by the buzz surrounding line-array technology, Turbosound's Flashlight system is one of a handful of conventional horn-loaded point-source designs that still holds its own. Introduced in 1990, the ultra-high-Q (narrow dispersion) design promised the same benefits as today's new crop of line-array products; very long throw, seamless arrayability and exceptional efficiency. At the time, few other systems were able to offer true point source acoustics (the main exception being Meyer Sound's MSL-10). Simpler systems used multiple-coupled boxes to generate an increase in level, often at the expense of uniform coverage within the listening area.

Designed by Tony Andrews, now of Funktion One, Flashlight was the first loudspeaker design to utilize his patented 'axehead' waveguide, which was loaded onto a conventional 6.5" mid/high driver. The incorporation of paper-cone technology to handle the critical vocal frequencies (all the way up to 8kHz) was one of the design's main selling points - especially as competing systems using horn-loaded compression drivers had a reputation for harshness. A nominal coverage of 25° in both planes meant that system engineers could readily calculate vertical and horizontal inter-cabinet angles to obtain the coverage they needed; and the more recent addition of the TFS-780HF (nicknamed 'The Lemon' after FOH engineer Jon Lemon) added improved HF throw for larger events.

Flashlight Mk II sees a 'substantially' upgraded 6.5" driver and a completely new HF 1" compression unit, which are designed to boost and smooth out the original system's top-end response. Packaged as an upgrade 'kit' along with a modification to the passive HF driver protection circuit, the new drivers can be retrofitted into existing Flashlight enclosures by users. Turbosound state that their designers have even ensured that the cabinet's centre of gravity remains the same.

Turbo's head of engineering, Philippe Robineau, took a variety of alternative designs to a user panel which included Britannia Row directors Bryan Grant and Mike Lowe, Jerry Wing, leading sound engineers Jon Lemon and Jody Perpick - the latter from Jason Sound in Canada, and engineers from Zero dB in Japan. A unanimous verdict led to a season of road-tests with Britannia Row crews on various tours, culminating in the Hyde Park event.