

Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

December 2001

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

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The Pyramid Effect

- Aida in Paris

Nights at the Circus

- The new Stratford Circus Arts Venue

Sweet Sounds

- UB40 and The Pretenders

Bond Girls

- A classic night out with Bond

Tried & Tested

- The most useful products of 2001

LDI 2001

- Full report from Florida





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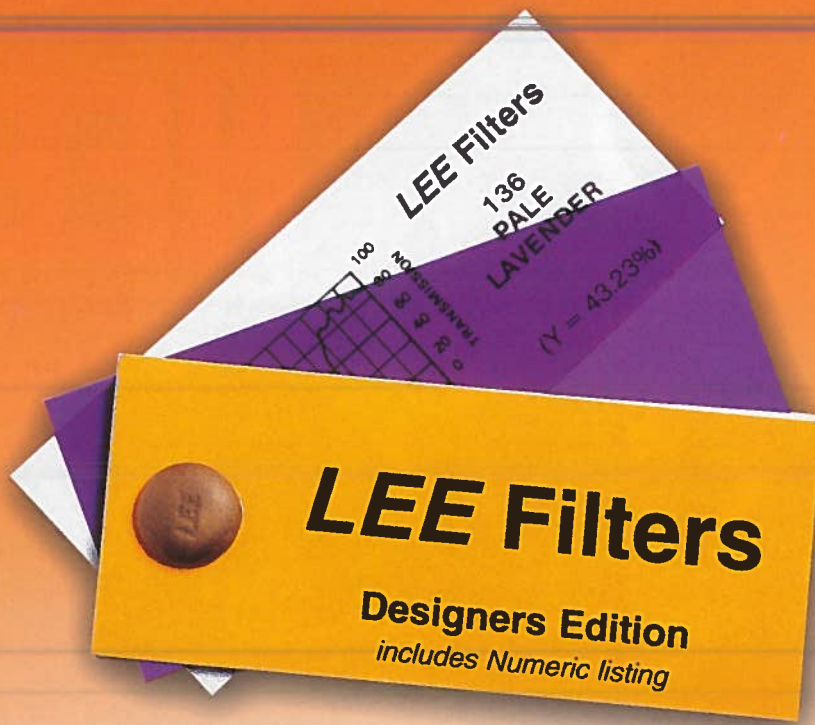
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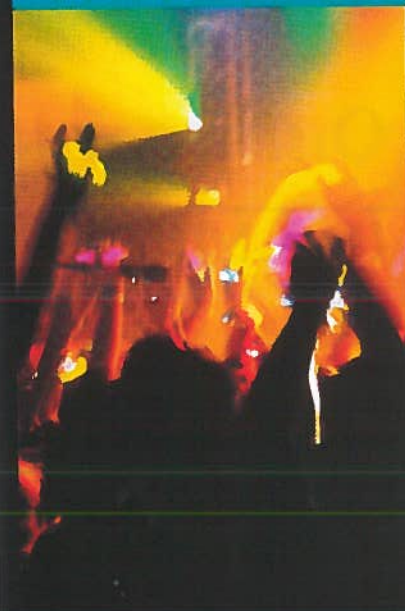
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Out Board Electronics in Liquidation

Out Board Electronics, the manufacturer of sound and power control products, has gone into creditors voluntary liquidation.

Robin Whittaker, who founded the Cambridge-based company 15 years ago, explained to L&SI that the company had been left with little choice when a number of major projects it had been pitching for literally disappeared overnight in the wake of the events of September 11. "The stark choice facing the directors was to either carry on trading and risk losing large sums of money or pull out of the market," he commented.

Ironically, the company had spent the last 12 months building up its corporate events side - key projects such as the North American Motor Show and Chrysler's launch of its new Jeep had come its way - only to see it suffer, first at the hands of foot and mouth, and then subsequently from the US terrorist attacks. The push into the events market had been an attempt to broaden the company's client base and help it develop a profile outside its traditional theatre market, which itself was showing signs of slowing down.

Although Out Board has always performed well in the theatre market - its award-winning TiMax matrix system is a well-established fixture - the trend away from long-running shows to short-run productions, particularly in the West End, contributed to there being less money available generally.

The early closure of high profile shows such as *The Beautiful Game* and *Napoleon* only added to the situation. As Robin Whittaker pointed out, "It simply meant that equipment from those shows went back into circulation, making the next sale that much harder."

"To place Out Board in voluntary liquidation was a tough decision to make," he continued. "We've been overwhelmed by the countless messages of support and remain committed to the pro audio industry."

A creditors meeting was held on Friday 30 November where a resolution to wind up the company voluntarily was agreed and a liquidator was appointed. Whittaker, together with fellow directors John Drake and David Haydon, who joined Out Board from BSS in July, intends to present a bid to purchase the assets and goodwill of the company.

New Technical Focus for 2002

You'll see a number of changes to L&SI over the coming months.

Central to our plans for 2002 is the introduction of a regular technical section - **Technical Focus** - which will feature hands-on reviews of products, discuss technical issues, assess the latest standards and health & safety directives, review recent book releases and feature a readers' Q&A section.

First subject in the hot-seat is digital signal processing. We'll also be looking at the recent amendments to the Working Time Directive and BECTU's campaign to secure paid annual leave for freelancers, together with the debate rumbling away about chain hoist connectors.

To oversee its development we have appointed a new technical editor, James Eade. James is a qualified mechanical and electrical engineer who has an extensive knowledge of the entertainment technology industry.

If you have a question you'd like answered on any subject e-mail it to technical@plasa.org

Stop us being miserable this Christmas . . .

In the January issue of L&SI, we'll be sending out Reader Registration forms to all our readers worldwide. Please take five minutes to fill yours in and return it to us, either through the post (we now have a Freepost address) or via the fax. Full details will appear on the forms.

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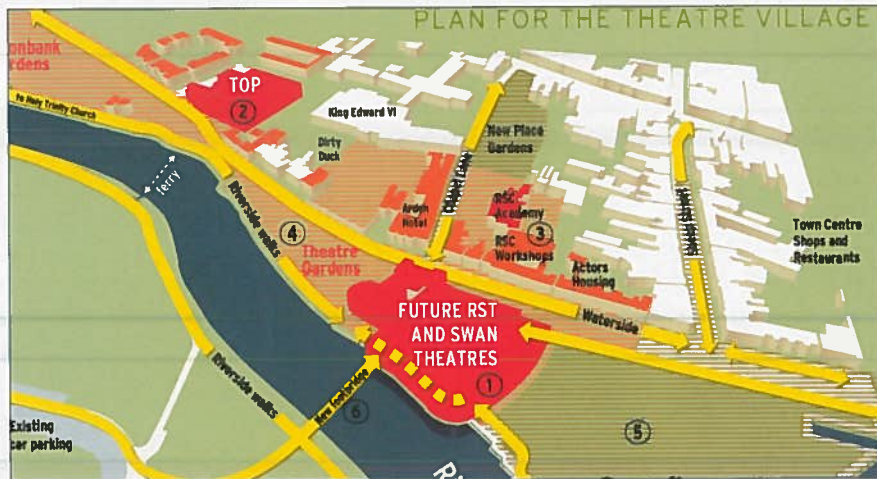


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News Round-Up



RSC Outlines Plans



The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) is set to create a new waterfront theatre village, redeveloping its historic home in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Arts Council has already earmarked a total of £50million for the project with a matching £50million being raised by the RSC: the proposal includes plans to rebuild a landmark modern Shakespeare playhouse on the riverside site of the current Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

The rebuilt flagship theatre will be the most significant new theatre building of the new century. Dutch architect Erick van Egeraat and theatre consultant Iain Mackintosh will play a key role in moving these proposals through to the design stage. It is anticipated that initial design ideas will be completed by early summer, 2002. The 1,050-seat theatre will feature an adaptable auditorium, allowing large-scale thrust and proscenium stage performance. Also key to the proposals is the construction of a new and highly adaptable auditorium as an extension to the existing 'The Other Place' theatre on its current site. This

space will provide the RSC's permanent new third auditorium, capable of accommodating varying forms of theatre staging and experimental work, as well as film and video recording.

Since it was built in 1932, the existing Royal Shakespeare Theatre has been regarded as fundamentally flawed; it is a two-room theatre (rather than the one-room space for which Shakespeare wrote) that owes more to the cinema design of the period than other theatre buildings. The current proscenium stage and auditorium have been much altered in an attempt to bring the audience and actors closer together.

Maintaining RSC performances in Stratford throughout the redevelopment is a key element of the plans. The project is likely to be completed by 2008, but the RSC will continue performing in at least two theatres in Stratford throughout the redevelopment. It is anticipated that The Other Place theatre will be the first to be redeveloped, providing a home for Shakespearean and other main stage productions, while the new principal playhouse is under construction.

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If you've been following the Daily Telegraph's recent In the Know quiz (not us, we haven't had the time) you'll already know that this is the plant used by landscape gardeners to soundproof the Almeida Theatre's temporary home in King's Cross.

"Did you say Larking Around magazine?"

The confused receptionist at a company (which shall remain nameless) who had misheard Lighting&Sound's advertising manager Barry Howse. How perceptive, how perceptive.

"Tired & Tested"

We're obviously in the thick of it this month since this is how one PR person rechristened (unwittingly to be fair) our Tried & Tested feature. No more coverage then for the companies this individual represents.

New PA for Newbury Racecourse

Newbury Racecourse has had a sophisticated new public address system, involving 6km of cable, installed into its new Tattersalls Grandstand by Racecourse Technical Services Ltd (RaceTech). The company is responsible for upgrading and maintaining the public address systems throughout all of the UK's racecourses. They also supply the five-camera television unit roaming the course, providing pictures to the race stewards and producing the on-course television programme.

On the 28 race days that take place each year at Newbury, signals are sent to TVs dispersed around the course, while a RaceTech PA engineer feeds commentary and information announcements from a broadcast PA office in the Weighing Room.

Newbury's three-storey Grandstand - built at a cost of £9 million - is divided into a five-zone audio configuration - one for each floor (including the betting hall, viewing galleries, 600-seat restaurant and conference areas), as well as a general circulation



area. The fifth is designated for outside, where maximum speech intelligibility has to be delivered for a balcony audience of 700, and a further 2,500 on the stand steps. But when budget cutbacks forced audio systems engineer Robin Dibble to dispense with the auxiliary under-balcony enclosures, he turned to Community R2s and R0.5s, mounted high on the new grandstand. "This is a very exposed stand which catches all the wind and rain," he said, "so it was vital we opted for both a dependable and weather-resistant system."

His design was based around a combination of 60° x 60° dispersion Community R0.5 for the near field, whilst for the 75m long throw, he selected the asymmetrical dispersion characteristics of the R2-474. Three enclosures - located at left, centre and right of the grandstand - point forward in a cluster, with rear-facing R0.5s. Two further R0.5s infill to create an even coverage.

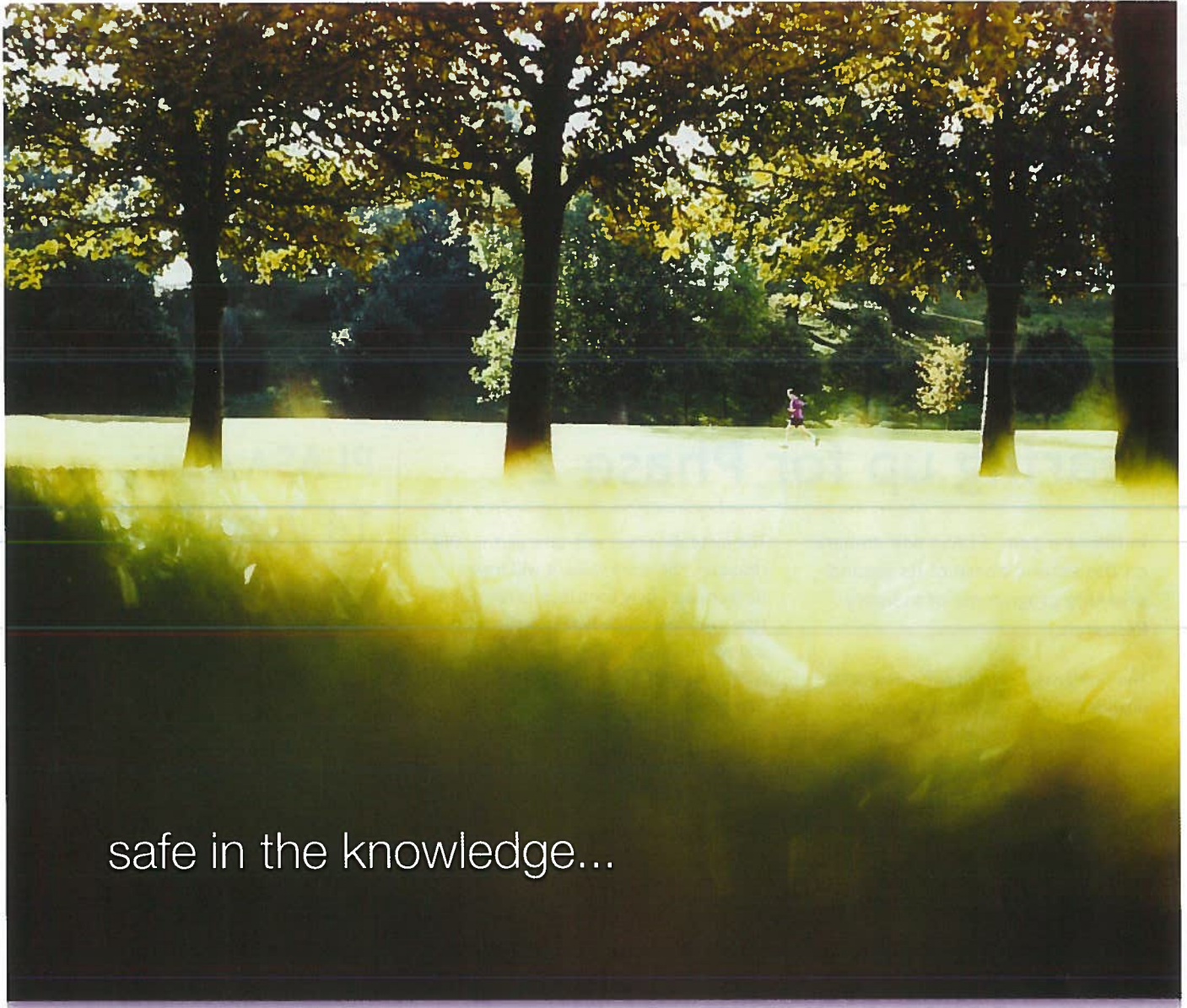
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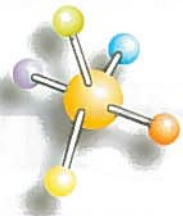
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Association NEWS

PLASA Market Research: Gearing up for Phase 2

In the new year, PLASA will embark on the second phase of its groundbreaking programme of Industry Research.

The first phase, carried out during 2000, provided the first accurate estimate of the global value of the entertainment technology industry, at around £11 billion.

The PLASA Industry Research project continues in 2002 and will offer more key facts about the entertainment technology sector. It will also be possible to undertake significant analysis of industry trends, which will greatly increase the value of the research. All members will be contacted, either by telephone, e-mail or post and asked to complete a questionnaire about their company early next year.

The more members who take part in the research, the more value it will have; furthermore, only contributors receive a free overview of the research results. If you would like to receive a copy of the current overview and did not contribute to the research, it is not too late. All you have to do is complete a questionnaire and return it to PLASA and you will then be mailed a copy.

There are four further product sector reports covering lighting, pro-audio, staging and AV, all priced at £125 and a market sector report for £250. A useful global report is offered free with any purchase.

Contact the PLASA office for further details: tel +44 (0)1323 410335

E-mail: research@plasa.org

www.plasa.org launches its first online discussion forum

PLASA has gone live with its first web-based discussion forum - a technical discussion on the use of Chain Hoists, particularly the connectors used for their control circuits.



The forum can be accessed by following the 'Forums' link in the Standards section of the PLASA Website, and registering online. This first application of the forum is being overseen by PLASA's Technical Standards Officer Tim Cox, and further forums, both for the use of Standards groups and for the industry in general, will be introduced to the site over the coming months.

PLASA AGM: 14 June 2002



Last year's AGM, at Coombe Abbey near Coventry, proved an invaluable opportunity for feedback on important issues.

PLASA has announced that the date for the 2002 Annual General Meeting is confirmed as Friday 14 June 2002. The venue will be chosen early in the New Year.

The format of the day will build on the success of last year, when the 'break-out' sessions proved lively and valuable opportunities for members to discuss important issues with representatives of the PLASA executive committee and head office staff.

PLASA's managing director Matthew Griffiths comments: "The 'break-out' meetings we introduced last year proved very successful. They were extremely well received, and produced a great deal of valuable feedback. For our 2002 AGM, we are keen to build on this and increase the opportunity for this kind of exchange."

PLASA would like to encourage *all* members to put the date down in their diaries and make every effort to attend. If you're in any doubt, feel free to speak to a member who made it last year and find out what you're missing!

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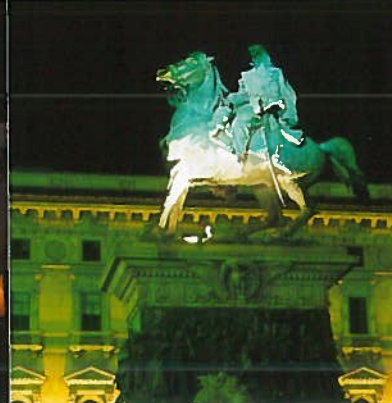
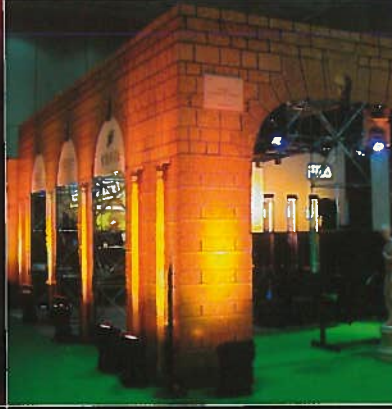
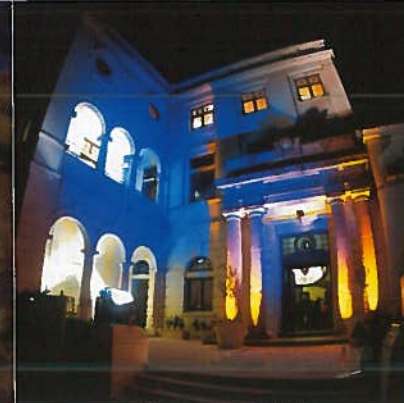
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Theatre Attendance Remains Strong

The West End braced itself in the aftermath of the WTC/Pentagon attacks, fearing that with people less willing to travel, audience figures would simply dwindle away, and that some shows would be forced to close ahead of schedule.

However, if the recent results released by the Ambassador Theatre Group are a barometer for the rest of the West End, then the anticipated downsizing ain't coming. Attendance figures for ATG venues across the UK show a 3% increase in the West End and a 12% increase in the regions. ATG's managing director Howard Panter told

L&S: "People are not staying away from the theatre - attendance figures are up and some shows are playing to record houses." Executive director Rosemary Squire added: "Far from closing shows, we are opening even more shows. We are bringing a major musical - *My One and Only* - to the West End in the New Year, and at the beginning of next month we'll be opening *Noises Off* on Broadway. Pantomime sales are galloping ahead of target, and our regional box offices are at all-time highs. There are tremendously loyal domestic audiences out there."

The figures were measured in the six weeks following September 11.

Precision Devices' Management Buy-Out

L&S has learned of further important changes from within the Harman Pro Audio camp. **John McFarland and Mike Sowden of Precision Devices** have negotiated a management buy-out, acquiring in the process both the company's premises and brands.

McFarland and Sowden, who have spent the past three-and-a-half years managing the company's operations in Redruth and Rotherham on behalf of Harman International Industries (HII), agreed the deal for the purchase of the Redruth site and brands in mid-October. The new company will be called Precision Audio Products Limited.

John McFarland told L&S: "I believe that this move is the first step in an extremely positive future for the business, for our employees and our customers, and that our new-found independence will enable us to better develop the different arms of the business." McFarland will be taking the role of managing director and Mike Sowden will become financial director.

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MAD in the USA

Award-winning British company Mad Manufacturing is now fully operational in the USA, having recently opened a technical sales and support office in Round Rock, Texas.

Intended to service the wider American market, the 2,500sq.ft facility is already stocked with the full product line-up, which will soon include the all-new EVL Pro Lighting range, first seen at the recent LDI Show. Former High End Systems man Ryan Krebs will head Mad's US team as vice-president of operations. He has wide experience in the industry and will offer advice and guidance to the Mad dealer network.

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Total Production Awards 2002

The Total Production Awards are scheduled for January 30, 2002, at the Hilton Metropole Hotel in London. The Awards will acknowledge the achievements of those in the fields of live sound, lighting, video, staging and rigging and will feature a Lifetime Contribution Award, Best Live Event of All-Time Award and The Editor's Award.

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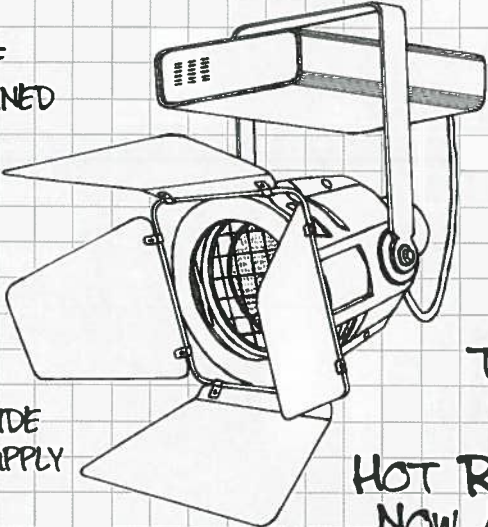
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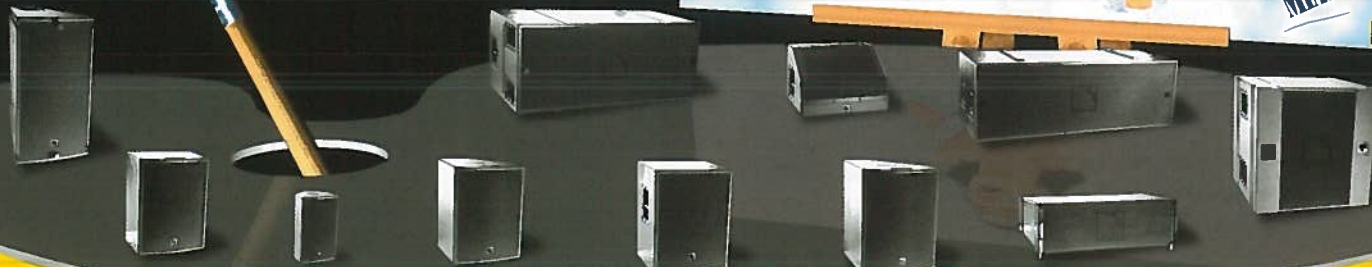
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Stardraw Links to Italy

Industry software provider Stardraw has appointed Link srl as a Premier Partner in Italy. The agreement, which was struck at the IBTS 2001 show in Milan, will see Link promote the software to the Italian market.



The company is well placed to do this: as a leading supplier of cable, connectors and connection solutions, it has a reputation for driving the development of equipment used for system interconnection. The company is currently implementing a new, long-term strategy to bring software tools to its clients, a role that will be backed by training and front line support.

David Morrison, sales manager for Stardraw, told L&S: "We were particularly happy to build a relationship with Link because their profile

and positioning is ideal for the current range of Stardraw products. They have all the right contacts in audio, AV and lighting. Everybody in systems integration needs the 'glue' that Link supplies, and everybody in systems integration needs Stardraw. It's a perfect fit."

Link's managing director Assunta Fratocchi added:

"Historically, the acceptance of software in the Italian market has been slower than we might have hoped, but we have watched this software grow in popularity internationally and the time is now right for a concerted push into our domestic market."

Stardraw applications are already available in English, French, German and Portuguese and one of the first tasks for both companies will be to produce an Italian version.

Adam Hall Opens Spanish Office

Adam Hall has opened a new Spanish sales office. The company has been targeting the Spanish market for a couple of years now, and through this new facility hopes to establish relationships with clients in Spain and Portugal, whilst also assisting Adam Hall's UK base of customers.

Based in Barcelona, the office is headed by Gabriel Medrano Bultel (known as 'G' to friends and colleagues), who has worked for the company for the past two years. Prior to that he organized group visits for Spanish companies to trade shows such as PLASA, Frankfurt, Pro Light & Sound and NAMM. The new operation will operate principally as a sales office and won't carry stock, orders being shipped direct to customers from the UK warehouse.

▶ Adam Hall (Spain) - tel: +34 93 213 3644

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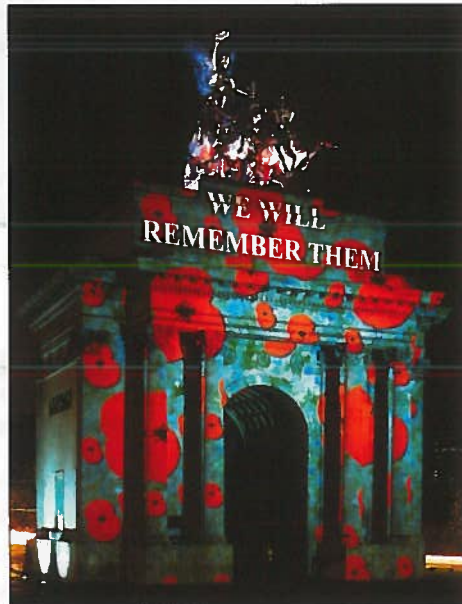


E\T\C in Bloom for the Poppy Appeal

E\T\C UK illuminated London's famous Wellington Arch in spectacular fashion for the 80th Poppy Appeal. For the first time in its 176-year history, the landmark carried a powerful moving image of blood red poppies with the words 'We Will Remember Them' emblazoned across its top.

Project director for the event was Mick Worwood of Ace Consultants, who had been commissioned by Rear Admiral Burns, head of the Kensington & Chelsea branch of the British Legion. Burns initially had the concept of projecting onto a suitable building to make a stirring impact, with the intention of boosting the two days of street collections that are an integral part of the annual Poppy Appeal.

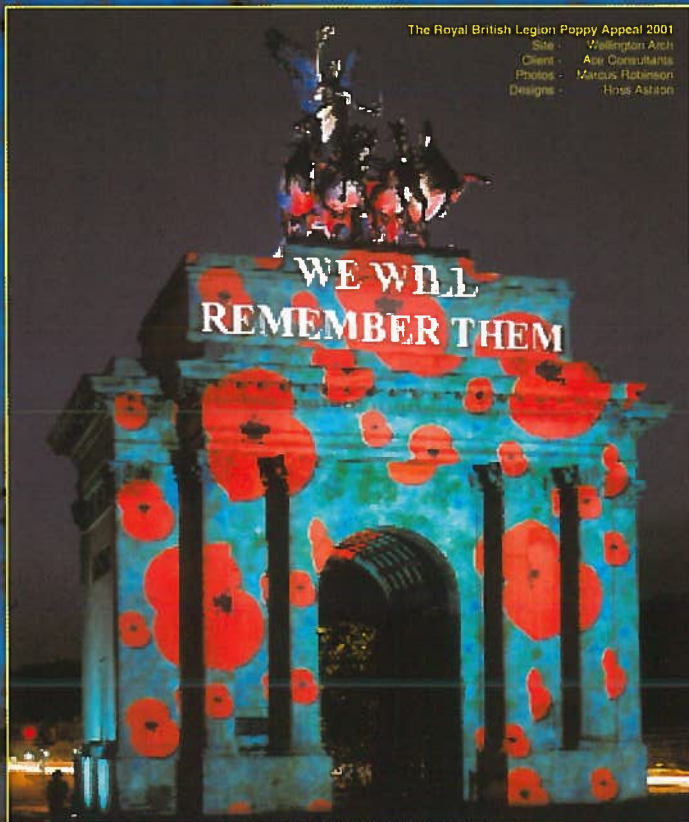
E\T\C's brief was to produce something that was immediately recognizable to the passing



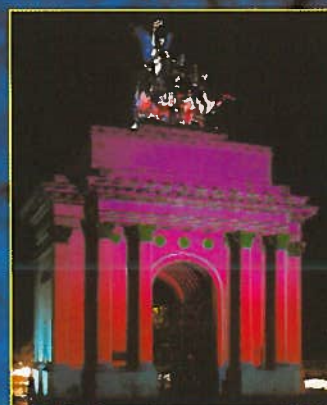
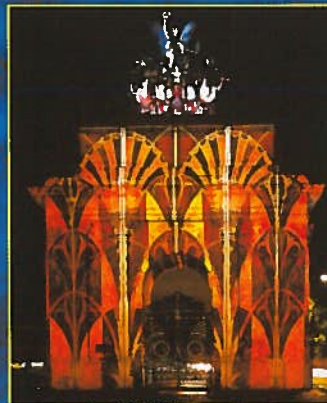
motorists coming up Constitution Hill - artwork which could be read and understood instantly. Ross Ashton explains that the company photographed the Arch and applied 'architectural masks' to ensure that the large format artwork fitted exactly the shape of the Arch. Four 6kW PIGI large format projectors were drafted in for the event itself - two for each side of the arch. The police and local authorities were initially concerned that the projector's lightsource might blind or distract motorists. However, this potential problem was solved by careful integration of the architectural photographic masking within the slide artwork, which eliminated all light spillage.

E\T\C gelled up the normally white architectural night lights that beam up the underside of the Arch. These were matched to the cyan background colour of the scrolling projection. This aspect was undertaken by Rose Bruford College lighting design student Sven Ortell who is currently spending time with E\T\C in the field whilst writing his dissertation on projection.

Monumental Images



The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2001
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 Designs - Ross Astabon



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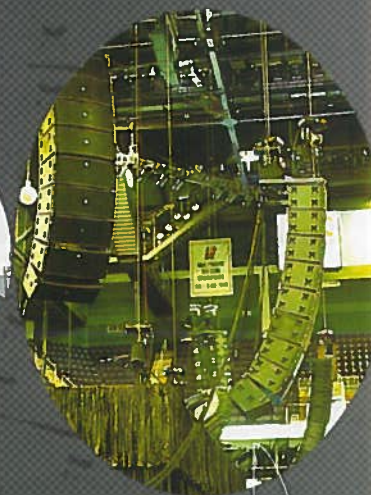
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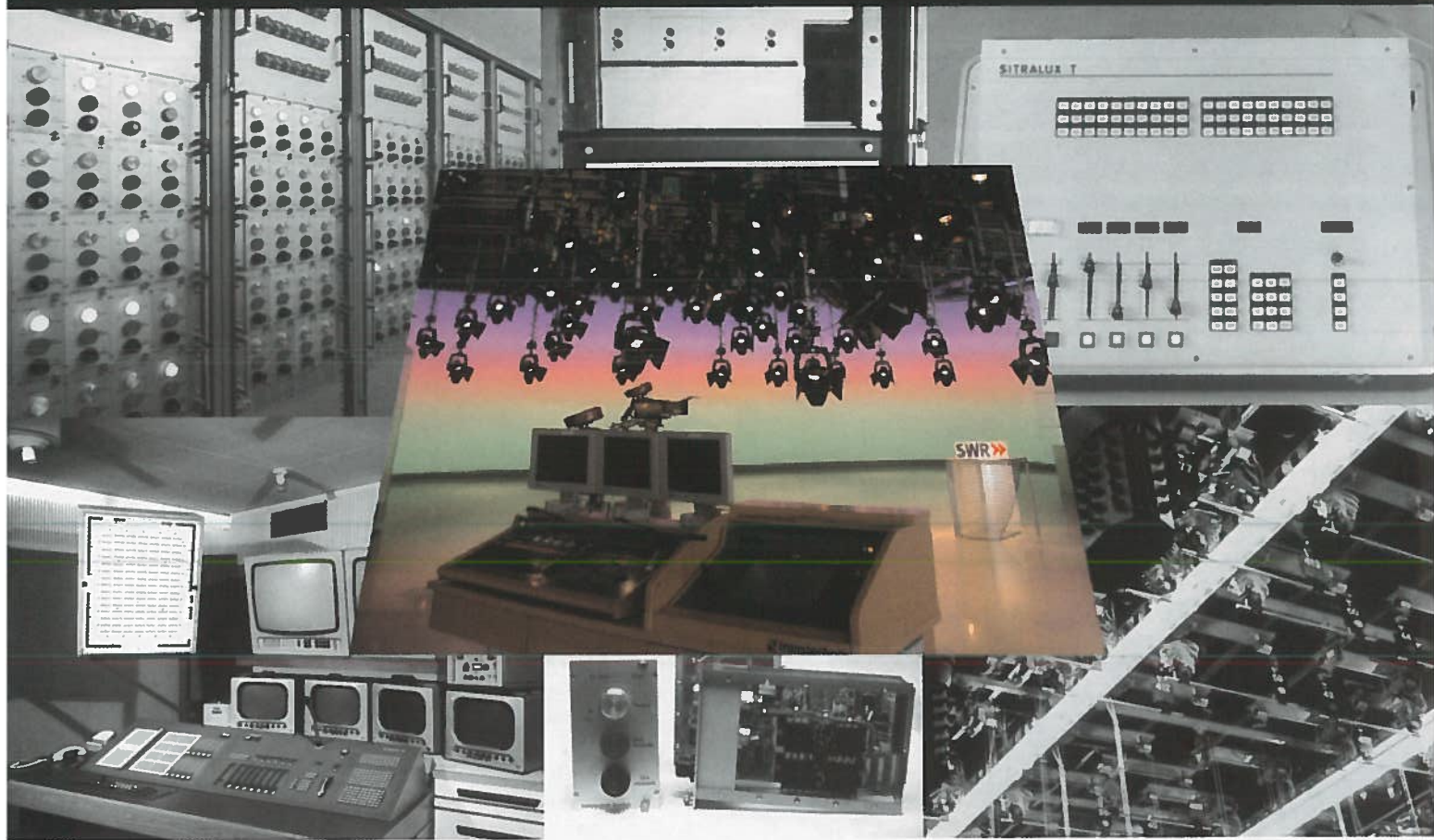
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- Hoists with controllers and remote control
- Programmable, processor-controlled lighting control systems with realtime operating system

The 80's:

- First multi-processor-controlled lighting control systems with realtime operating system
- First lightboard Ethernet network

The 90's:

- The T90, Prisma, Focus and Iris series
- First networkable dimmer systems
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Martin Invests in Manufacturing



The green light has now been given for the construction of Martin Professional's new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility for the production of automated lighting.

Work on the new 12,000sq.m facility will begin over the coming weeks and is expected to be complete by the end of summer 2002. The new build project represents a significant investment for the company and by the time its gets its official opening, there won't be much change out of US\$20 million.

The new facility, to be located in the city of Frederikshavn in northern Denmark, will be geared toward the production of Martin's most high-tech products. The move will effectively double the company's production capacity for the manufacture of automated lighting and will draw on the latest production techniques, including a fully-automated warehouse for raw materials and semi-manufactured goods. Martin's current production facility, also located in Frederikshavn, will continue operation.

Mackie Launches Online Trade Show

Mackie Designs has launched a fully interactive, online tradeshow exhibit that will highlight new products from Mackie, Mackie Industrial and Eastern Acoustic Works (EAW).

The 'e-Show' will offer educational and entertaining features, including streaming and downloadable video demonstrations, new product announcements, downloadable software demos, instant access to product datasheets and a series of topic specific discussions hosted by representatives from all three companies. Visitors will be able to order literature and can even buy real trade show 'swag' say Mackie.

"We acknowledge that there is no substitute for the personal interaction of a live tradeshow," said Karen Anderson, director of marketing communications at EAW. "But, in the absence of actually being there, we feel the 'e-Show' is a great way to provide many of the informational, educational and fun elements of a Mackie/EAW tradeshow experience - minus the hangover." EAW launched its online exhibit on 2 November to coincide with the LDI Show in Orlando; Mackie will launch theirs on 28 November, just in time for the rescheduled AES Show.

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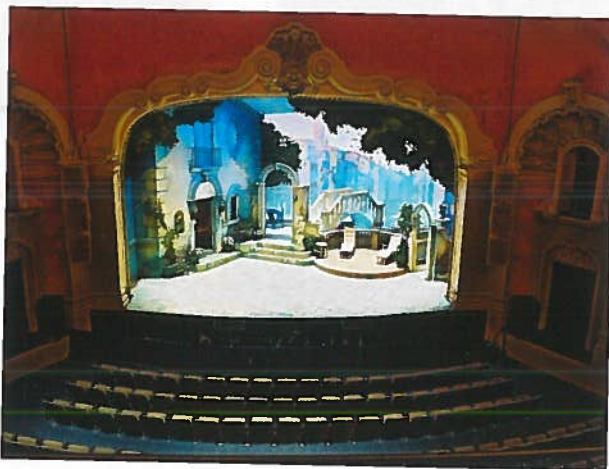


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Pasadena Relunched



Known for decades as 'Hollywood's talent factory,' the legendary Pasadena Playhouse in California launched the careers of dozens of notable actors, writers and directors. But in recent years, the Playhouse's ageing audio system had fallen far short of the venue's tradition of excellence. "We had an antiquated system that was cobbled together back around 1988," admits Tom Ware, producing director for the Playhouse, "and we had been looking around for quite a while. We needed a system that was flexible, since we do everything from small, intimate plays to large scale musicals."

To design a new system on rather short notice, Tom Ware, producing director for the Playhouse, called on independent sound designer and audio engineer Rick Boot. Working closely with Lori Burke at Delicate Productions in Camarillo, Boot created a system design based around Martin Audio Wavefront loudspeakers. The main left and right systems each comprise two Martin Wavefront W8C full-range three-way cabinets augmented by a single W8CS bass cabinet. A removable centre cluster utilizes two Martin Wavefront Theatre WT3 three-way systems, whilst sub-bass comes from a pair of discreetly-placed Martin S218 subwoofers.

Following Boot's specifications, Delicate Productions supplied a complete new system for the Playhouse, including a Midas Heritage 2000 console, 15 Crest amplifiers, and BSS Omnidrive and Varicurve units for system control and equalization. Dynamics control and effects units come from Lexicon, tc electronic, Drawmer and Yamaha, while source playback units were supplied by Akai and Tascam. Other Delicate-supplied equipment included 10 Shure microphones, a Telex intercom and a video monitoring system based largely on Panasonic products.

The Martin Wavefront system was not part of the theatre's original plan for technical renovations. Another firm had been contracted many months before to supply a different system, but when they demurred at meeting the installation deadline, Tom Ware called on Rick Boot to see if he could do better on a much tighter schedule. "The other company had already been working on it for six months," says Boot, "but we had less than two and a half months to get everything designed, supplied and installed. Lori at Delicate did a great job of co-ordinating with suppliers, and Martin Audio was particularly helpful in getting the custom-painted cabinets to us very quickly."

The first show in the revamped Pasadena, a vintage Sondheim-Rogers musical, entitled *Do I Hear A Waltz*, was enthusiastically received by audiences and critics alike.

Scalable

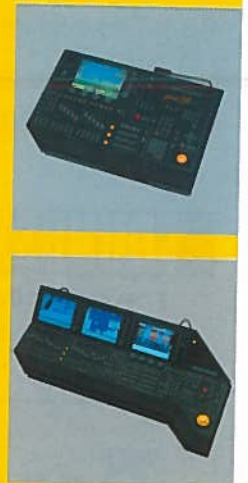
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grandMA light Lighting Control Console

The grandMA light loses none of the functionality and power of the larger model, but offers a more compact solution for touring and small control spaces. It is completely compatible with the other consoles in the grandMA family and will accept and run shows programmed on any model.

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- 2048 DMX channels (expandable to 4096)
- total connectivity via multiple inputs, outputs and Ethernet
- hard-disk and UPS (15 minutes)
- integrated networking with all grandMA products



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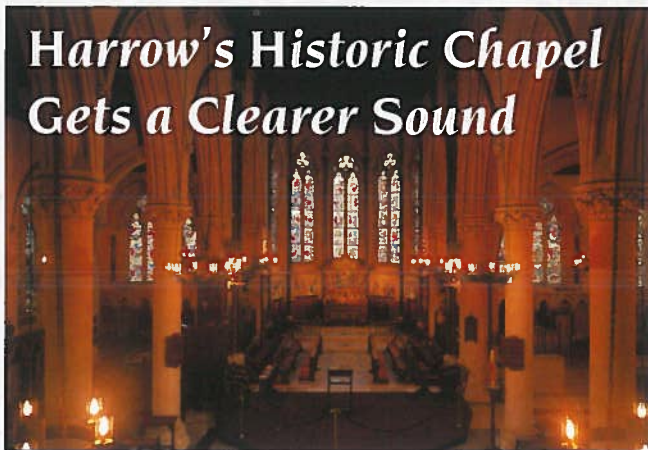
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Harrow's Historic Chapel Gets a Clearer Sound



An all-new sound reinforcement system has recently been installed in the historic chapel at Harrow School by installation specialists Scan Audio. The Grade 2 listed building was designed by Gilbert Scott - famous for landmarks such as the Albert Memorial and St. Pancras station, so the installation had to be carried out with great sensitivity.

"A key area to address was the problem of hearing the choir properly at back of the chapel over the large pipe organ," notes Dee Couchman of Scan Audio. Improved sound reinforcement for speech was also required throughout the chapel. "It was the opposite to the usual problem of long reverberation times in that type of building," comments Paul Malpas of consultants Arup Acoustics. "We needed to lift the choir and subtly balance their level with the organ."

The solution was to completely strip out the old column speaker-based system and to use a brand new 100v line installation. The opportunity was also taken to improve the visual aesthetics of the chapel by re-routing the new cabling underfloor or otherwise concealing it. Couchman specified mainly Renkus-Heinz loudspeakers, including six RFX81s - one of each in the north and south transept, a pair in the chancel position and another pair in the nave. Three TRC32s were also positioned at the rear of the chapel for choir reinforcement. A pair of TOA F160s were also placed in the organ gallery, under which three Martin Audio C516T ceiling speakers were installed. The whole system is controlled via a BSS 9088 Soundweb, controlled by a 9010 Jellyfish remote, which can be plugged in either near the pulpit or at the back of the chapel.

"All the fundamental balancing, EQ and delays are locked into Soundweb," says Couchman. "It's not a complicated design, although it does use the matrix mixer for balance between the speech mics and choir mics on a zone-by-zone basis." Key parameters that Arup Acoustics thought were necessary for operating the system were programmed into the Jellyfish, although Scan deliberately concealed most of the more sophisticated controls. "We also stored all the basic system settings into a preset button on the Jellyfish, so if anyone goes twiddling mad and gets a bit lost, they can just hit the reset button," Couchman adds.

The microphones for the new system include two TOA 64-channel UHF radio mics and two Audio Technica 900 series goosenecks for the pulpit and reading lectern. An Audio Technica 8891R serves the movable nave altar, while a pair of Audio Technica 8835B shotgun mics are employed specifically for picking up the choir, mounted above the choir screen. Amplifiers are two Cloud CXA6s, while other elements of the system include a Tascam CDA500 combined CD/cassette player, plus an induction loop system, powered by an Ampetronic ILD9.

An unusual element for a system like this is switchable artificial reverb, specifically dedicated to the choir microphones, which is achieved by adding a small amount of wet signal through the main loudspeaker system. "They're not aiming at trying to make it sound like a different chapel, it's just designed to provide a bit more body to the choir sound," says Couchman.

Value



Initial cost is always an issue, however the on-going cost of ownership and a knowledge that your investment is safe in the long term are also key. The grandMA lighting control system scores on both counts and offers outstanding value. The hardware design supports all current and proposed lighting control standards and the advanced networking architecture offers almost limitless upgrade potential.

grandMA ultra-light Lighting Control Console

The grandMA ultra-light is the most compact member of the grandMA family yet still retains full compatibility with show-files from all consoles in the range. It offers all of the functionality of the powerful grandMA software but at a price that suits even the tightest budget.

- 30 playbacks (10 with faders)
- extended command line control
- 1 built-in TFT colour touch screen, 1 external SVGA monitor (optional)
- 1024 DMX channels
- total connectivity via multiple inputs, outputs and Ethernet
- hard-disk
- integrated networking with all grandMA products



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J2s Newcastle

Julies nightclub is a well-known Newcastle landmark. Like most clubs, it's had its fair share of small upgrades over the years, but owner Keith Gibbon, of Lazi Leisure, felt the time had come for a major renovation - hence Julies 2.

To effect the refurbishment, the venue was closed at the end of January to allow for major structural alterations to increase its size. Keith Gibbon came up with the design concept and called in the team at Lighting Technology Projects - Craig Grieveson, Dave Philips and Ray Scott - to undertake the installation. The effects lighting rig centres around Martin Professional's MAC 250s, MiniMACs, Mx4s and CX2 colour changers, with Abstract Moonrays, Pulsar Demon Strobe units and shed loads of neon providing further punctuation. Controlling all this, and the Jem ZR12 Smoke machine, is a Pulsar Masterpiece 216. A Sony-led, four-screen video system is also installed in the venue.

For the audio elements, Ray Scott contacted Steve Coxon of Mackie/RCF to discuss the new system. The brief was for a rig that was capable of producing an articulate sound at background levels, but one which could also reproduce full-on levels when required. Following a site visit, Mackie Industrial ART 300s were spec'd, in conjunction with Monitor 8s and Vision 180s for subs. DJ monitoring was supplied by a single Mackie Industrial Art 300a.

Steve Coxon told L&SI: "The venue was a building site when we did our visit, but it was obvious even at that stage that this was an unique and exciting venture. It was easy to tell that Keith Gibbon was very passionate about the project and the sound had to be of a standard that reflected the high quality surroundings. We originally planned to use the Mackie Industrial Vision 151s as the main peripheral speakers, but as the venue had a low ceiling height, the Mackie Industrial Art 300s flown in landscape position were of a low enough profile to incorporate the significant lighting scheme whilst not sacrificing any sound quality."

A Cloud Z4 mixer/zoner runs the audio end, linked to Chevin A1500 and A700 amplifiers; fine tuned by an XTA DP226 speaker management system. The DJ corner also has a host of Denon equipment, together with the club-standard Technics/Stanton combination.

Dragons' New AV System

TSC Music recently completed an extensive audio-visual installation for Dragons Health Clubs Plc at its newly opened Milton Keynes venue. The company installed its latest state-of-the-art Hard Disc music management system to run 'Dragons FM' bespoke simulated radio service, incorporating a maximum of up to 10,000 purposely selected tracks, as well as audio commercials and messages. In addition, TSC also installed an eight-hour CDI music system and audio-visual system in the gymnasium, together with an audio communication system in the aerobics studio.

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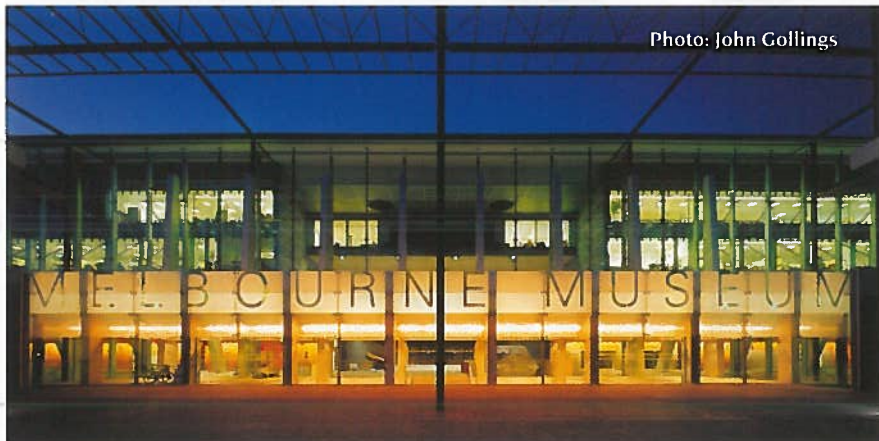


Photo: John Collings

Melbourne Gets a New Museum

Melbourne's exciting new AS\$290m (£105m) museum in the Carlton Gardens is as thoroughly a 21st century museum as its predecessor had been a thoroughly Victorian natural history museum.

The wooden-framed glass cases of mineral samples, stuffed animals and neatly-pinned insects, have been replaced by interactive exhibits that recount the history of Australia, its peoples and its region, using the entire panoply of contemporary display and production technologies. Museum operations manager Craig Gamble (who started life in technical production for the performing arts), considers the museum spaces to be of three types. There are the circulation and orientation spaces, which include the foyers that house permanent displays of iconic objects such as a whale skeleton and a tram. There are permanent exhibitions (5-10 year lifespans), and finally, there are temporary exhibition spaces. Each type of space has been provided with display infrastructure appropriate to the level of flexibility required.

All 12 general display areas are configured with the same basic infrastructure. Overhead is a grid of standard steel scaffold (48.4mm) tube at 3.5m centres. The load limit on the grid is 250kg per linear metre, a figure that has proved more than adequate during the first year of operations. A second grid of paired 50mm ducts, spanning the length and width of the space at 3.5m centres, lies beneath the floor. Services running through the duct grid include mains power, lighting, audio, data, video, water, gas and satellite downlink.

Lighting for the museum was originally conceived as being a three-tier system consisting of separate base building lighting, permanent display lighting and temporary display lighting. However, during the tendering process for the various stages of construction and fit-out, a change occurred.

Local systems integrator Lightmoves succeeded with a series of bids based around a Dyalite integrated control system for the entire building. The system core is a central desktop computer running Dyalite's Control Soft software. In addition to interfacing with the building automation system, it supervises

the Dynet network backbone, which has bridges connecting to the spur networks that run each area. Base building lighting is controlled by 400 channels of Dyalite Dimtek dimmers and 200 channels of Dimtek contactors, while permanent display installations are controlled by a further 1,000 Dimtek dimmers. Temporary galleries have LSC iPRO production dimmers, which can be controlled by either a local console, their internal EEPROM store, or a DMX output from the Dynet network.

There are no audio or video replay systems in any of the galleries, as all media is sourced from a centrally-managed Media and Venue Management System (MVMS) from PIVoD Technologies. This provides over 750 Mb/s of concurrent streamed video, audio and multimedia, distributed to over 35 clients, providing more than 80 streams of MPEG2 at bit rates of 5-15 Mb/s. The MVMS is based around two racks, each containing a Quad 500MHz Zeon CPU server, fitted with 4 Gb/s Network Interface Cards. These connect to a Sun A5200 22-disc Fibre Channel array, with the potential for outputting around 1 Gb/s.

In a museum situation, where a different design and curatorial team may prepare each exhibit, the potential exists for an unmanageable proliferation of equipment types and display systems. The approach at the Melbourne Museum has been to define the Lateral Display System (LDS), a menu of approved equipment and suppliers. LDS specifications have been produced for lighting, signage, multimedia, audio-visual and showcases. This has enabled in-depth stocking of spare parts and consumables, ensuring that all displays can be maintained at their original design specification for their duration.

The distance between museums, musicals, corporate displays, shopping centres and theme parks continues to grow narrower by the day.

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Potter Scales the Heights

Harry Potter & The Philosopher's Stone has already received great critical and popular acclaim and is expected to become the biggest grossing film ever for Time Warner. Vertigo Rigging, Spirit Design and Fourth Phase were amongst those who helped supply the magic for the recent World Première at London's famous Odeon Cinema, Leicester Square.



The next four days were spent installing the truss and attaching the set to it. The trussing statistics were equally impressive - with a total of 190m of 52cm Thomas Supertruss and 200m of Thomas Superlite used. The 52cm formed the main framework, while the Superlite was used to brace the set against the wind loading - of up to 12 tonnes horizontal force.

Once superstructure and trussing structures were erected, the set flats

Vertigo, working for production company West Design, show producer Lucy Smail and production manager Andy Cheesman, transformed the front of the building into Hogwarts School of Wizardry & Witchcraft for the evening of 4 November.

With a seven-day get in, the event required over 22 tonnes of equipment, 12 tonnes of which was hung off the side of the building - representing a huge logistical and practical challenge for Vertigo. Work began on 29 October, when project manager Paddy Burnside and his team of riggers supervised a 60 tonne crane to lift over 10 tonnes of pre-built RMD (prefabricated Rapid Metal Decking) superstructure onto the roof of the Odeon.

The superstructure's purpose was to support two sections of truss framework - the lower main roof - measuring 22m wide by 8.5m deep, and the tower section - 8m wide by 31 metres high. The tower section of superstructure was anchored to its own two top floors using six M20 studding rods, drilled through the floors for maximum stability.

were attached to the trussing. Built by Alternative Element, the steel framed flats had ply faces and were clamped to the trussing with aluminium half couplers. They were craned into position and fixed by Vertigo riggers. Vertigo also rigged the Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone world première sign and two 7m pennants each side of the Odeon's balcony to represent the four Houses of Hogwarts.

West Design commissioned Visual Elements and Spirit Design to light the facade of the cinema and, in turn, Fourth Phase were approached to supply the lighting equipment. As the cinema's fascia decorations had been painted with UV paint, Fourth Phase provided 30 MAC 600s, together with eight each of Studio Due's City Colors and City Beams, used alongside a substantial quantity of conventional lighting to create a striking backdrop for the film's première. The event was a resounding success and attracted the world's media and a celebrity audience.

Surplus Equipment from AC Lighting

Four months after revealing its new 37,000sq.ft corporate headquarters in High Wycombe, AC Lighting is disposing of some stock items. The items on offer include luminaires, Par cans, moving lights, followspots, control equipment, smoke machines, trussing, stands, rack cabinets, flightcases, general lighting equipment and associated accessories. These items are ex-demonstration, ex-showroom, ex-rental equipment, as well as a wide range of new equipment. A full list of the items on offer can be obtained by contacting Jonathan Walters (Leeds office) on 0113 255 7666 or Peter Searles (High Wycombe office) on 01494 838307 or by visiting the company's website at www.aclighting.co.uk

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Luminar Go for Growth

Luminar plc, the name behind numerous bars, restaurants and nightclubs across the UK, has recently released details of its interim financial results for 2001.

The figures make impressive reading and indicate that there is still much to be positive about in the night sector. Company turnover is up 116% from £77.2million last year to £166.4m this year. The company's pre-tax profit has more than doubled to £29.5m.

Underpinning the financial success has been an aggressive growth strategy, which has seen Luminar acquire 10 venues from Scottish and Newcastle plc (making it the largest operator of late night venues in Scotland) and also the Life Limited brand from Whitbread. It has also continued to roll out its own brands, including Chicago Rock Cafe, Jumpin' Jaks and Liquid, together with the development of ukclubculture - a relatively recent initiative which is aimed at 14-17 year olds.

The interim results have set the agenda for the next 18 months, and the company has announced a major acquisitions and openings programme which will see 44 new venues added to the Luminar portfolio across 2002/2003.

The company has also reorganised its management structure - divisional directors John Aust, Alistair Burford and Brendan McLoughlin will now become functional heads and report directly to chief executive Stephen Thomas.

Commenting on the results, Thomas told L&S: "We continue to be totally focused on developing our concepts for differing lifestyle brands. Roll out and organic expansion will be funded through internally generated cash, and we will continue to seek efficiencies and economies of scale across the group to drive margins and returns. We are now entering the important Christmas/New Year period for which early bookings are encouraging and we are confident that the future looks good."



New Ocean

Visitors to the Serpentine Gallery might have wondered what was going on when LA-based artist Doug Aitken brought his New Ocean exhibition to Kensington Gardens, London. Crowning the mixed media installation, which included 20 video projectors supplied by DVS, and audio throughout the building supplied by Total Audio, were two Coef Show 250 scanners (programmed on a Compulite Spark console) - supplied by i-Vision in conjunction with Fentura Productions.

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New Light for The Tonight Show

Although a variety of daytime and late night talk shows have debuted since the mid-1980s, after nearly 50 years of TV broadcasting, *The Tonight Show* remains the gauge by which contemporary televised culture is measured.

Taped from Studio 3 at NBC Studios in Burbank, California, a newly installed Martin lighting system, supplied by Production Lighting Systems (Fourth Phase), is adding even more colour to America's classic late night show. NBC lighting designer Gary Thorns is using Martin MAC 2000, 300, 250 and MiniMAC automated lights on several aspects of the Studio 3 stage.

Placed behind host Jay Leno's desk and guest seating area, a row of MAC 300 wash lights bathe a line of wooden columns in various shades and provide colour washes for the ceiling and beams above the set. Above the band area where Kevin Eubanks directs *The Tonight Show* band, MAC 300 wash lights add colour, while MAC 250 profile spots lay gobo



patterns onto the floor. Meanwhile, MiniMAC wash lights are used as truss warmers to uplight the truss pillars behind the band. In the 'live' area, MAC 2000s are placed on the floor projecting hard edged, mid-air, beam effects upwards. MAC 250s are located in the rig above the stage with MiniMAC wash lights uplighting truss pillars surrounding the stage.

Next February, *The Tonight Show* will be shooting for three weeks from the Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. The rig will consist of 40 MAC 2000s, 30 MAC 500s, 40 MAC 600s and a Case console, programmed by Mark Pranzini.

Unusual & Outback Win EC&O Contracts

Following a competitive tendering process, Earls Court & Olympia (EC&O) has appointed Unusual Rigging as the exclusive supplier of rigging services for Earls Court, whilst at the same time awarding the Olympia contract to Outback Rigging. The contracts will be three-year rolling appointments, which will be reviewed annually.

As a new supplier to EC&O, Mark Surtees, managing director of Outback, was pleased with the appointment: "Olympia is an impressive venue and this contract is one we're proud to have won. We'll be working hard with EC&O to ensure that we deliver on the ground with their clients, as well as in the air with their rigging." Alan Jacobi, managing director of Unusual Rigging, added: "Earls Court is London's premier exhibition space and we're delighted to be reappointed, enabling us to focus on providing the very best service and support throughout the year."

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Careful With That Axe, Bruce

As tribute bands go, the Australian Pink Floyd are a touch different: for a start they imitate a band that, on stage at least, have virtually no physical presence, so they are relieved the task of attempting to look like them.

Lead guitarist Steve McElroy - the David Gilmour of the band - does make some small gestures towards his ciphers, the mic stand arrangement is identical, with the tuner strapped just so off a separate stalk. He even manages those strange

facial gestures during the guitar solos that I remember so well from my time working with Gilmour in the early eighties. But essentially this is all about the music, and they don't make a bad fist of it - indeed *The Times* is quoted on the band's flyer as saying: "Probably the greatest tribute band in the world," which, in the wider scheme of things, places them on a par with Carlsberg Lager, entirely appropriate for an Aussie band.

The show opens in the Floyd tradition, with Shine on you Crazy Diamond, but thereafter plots its own course, and in so doing visits some of the more neglected corners of the Floyd pantheon. I must confess a nostalgic tear when I heard Dogs for what must be the first time in 20 years, and yes, sad git that I am, I have now dragged *Animals* out of my album collection. But as far as the audience is concerned, that's entirely the point of the show, to evoke lost youth, and revisit the thrills of adolescence. That and the undisputed pleasure of hearing Comfortably Numb at volumes far outside the reaches of home hi-fi - it's a lad thing you see, something to do with egos and willies, though I've never quite worked out what.

Audio

Six rows back from the front edge of stage is not the ideal position for Kevin Charney to mix, but it keeps him fit during sound check as he shuttles back and forth up the tiered seats. A combination sports hall and concert hall (with a nice little stage it must be said), Grimsby Auditorium lacks a fixed mix position; the demountable tier system is too lively to balance desks and racks, and the few rows of static seats at the rear are so high as to be almost on a level with the top of the proscenium. It's not a perfect



world and Grimsby is lucky to have such a nice venue, stuck as it is, out on a limb.

Charney has mixed the band for six tours, this his first using Villa Audio, who've supplied an

eclectic mix of EAW, 852 mid/high and 853EF1 low/mids (three each per side) with 4 SB 1000s on the floor. "They produce a more spread sound than the standard 850," said Charney, not that this was such an issue in this relatively narrow venue.

Mixing from a Soundcraft K3 (though looking enviously at monitor man Mark Buckley's Heritage 1000) Charney had, to my surprise, precious little to do in the way of effects. "Everything is played - I just have an effects CD for things like the helicopter noise. I do use a little PCM70 on McElroy's voice, but truth is, Steve has painstakingly worked to emulate exactly the studio sound of Gilmour's voice." In a measure of how intimate and friendly this tour is, Charney went on to say: "There's a battle between the band and crew over what's best - a studio sound or a live sound. Personally, I prefer the studio sound - especially on the older material."

Charney certainly captured the sometimes-violent dynamics of the original Floyd material, once or twice exposing a lack of concentration on the part of the musicians, especially the drummer. All in all, a worthy effort for the armchair Floyd fans, and even though some of the sub energy was lost to the huge void

beneath the temporary seating, there was enough low end from the 853s (presumably) to compensate. At the very top of the tier high-end fell away acutely, but with an 80% house there was no excuse for anyone to be sat there.

Buckley had his Heritage thanks to McElroy using Trantec in-ears: "The previous desk was just too noisy minus 10dB, and he'd start to hear things. Now it's plus 5, so he's more than happy. He takes a full mix of the band and all vocals, and runs it through his own Behringer Dyno' processor; it's a busy mix, but once it's set in sound check I rarely have to touch it."

The errant drummer takes the most work: "He's my busiest customer, has no drums in his wedges, but lots of bass and extensive guitars which he uses to keep on cue" - those eight-

minute guitar solos proving a bit of a problem.

"Stage levels are generally low, below 100dBA so no real problems." Lucky, as McElroy's slavish devotion to recreating the Gilmour vocal sound leads to some awkward compromises. "Steve uses a Neumann 105 for that Gilmour sound, it's also great for his ear monitors as it takes a bit of spill. That was initially a problem - it was virtually my drum mic, but he's quickly learned where to stand to block that, even so he's still slap bang in the middle of the hi-hat and cymbals." Not that he seemed uncomfortable.

Lights & Video

Did you catch that - 'Video'? This show sports a brand new Simm II (formerly Seleco) HT200, a DLP projector, reputedly the seventh to enter the UK according to LD Steve Ellerington. "I think it's only 800 lumen output, but it's more than bright enough on this stage." That's not to say Ellerington's rig is dim, just well targeted, and he's found a neat hideout for the projector. "I've bought a Martin Audio LE400 wedge box and tucked it in there," which places it about four metres from the small circular screen centre stage.

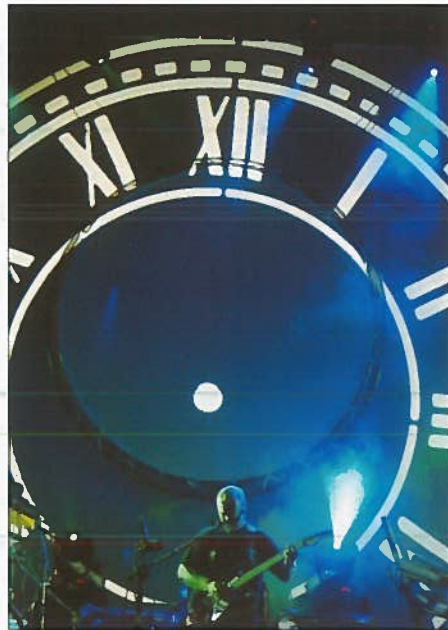
The rest of Ellerington's rig, supplied by Tusk Show Hire, comprises six High End Cyberlights, 12 MAC 250s and six MAC 600s from Martin Pro,



along with a pair of K2 projectors and a Solar 575 from Opti for effects. Doesn't sound a whole lot does it? But Ellerington is a master of understatement (in lighting at least - contrary to his actual persona, which is garrulous). 'Why use three lights when one will do' is his maxim, and it works exceedingly well, especially as true to the band, he rarely needs to light the musicians, the emphasis being the stage.

"I bought the Cybers for this tour and it's the first time I've had the budget to justify it," says Ellerington who, like Charney, has been with the band for many years, and some quite lean ones at that. "They are my foundation for the show, but I really rate the 250s as well. They might not have all the bells and whistles of the bigger MAC 500, but for the size of stage we play they read just as bright."

Ellerington produces some delightful retro looks for old favourites like Astronomy Domine: a huge dotty matrix effect from the Solar, positioned at the desk front of house so it can bathe the entire stage, was particularly striking. So too some of the liquid wheel effects from the K2s in Careful with that Axe Eugene. I was smitten by how strong these looks could be and wonder why, for the



price, these potent little units don't appear more often? A confirmed Avo' man, Ellerington carries an Azure desk, which he says is "just perfect for this system and doesn't kill too many seats out

Previous page: looks familiar? Lighting designer Steve Ellerington uses a combination of Martin MACs and OPTI projectors

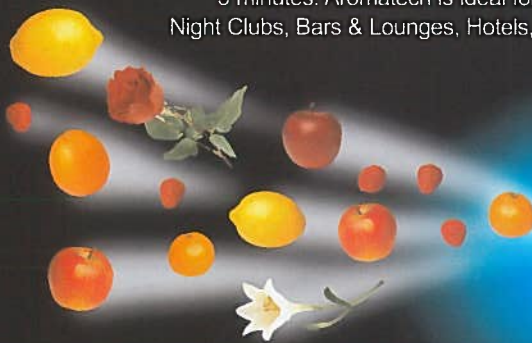
This page: doing Time? Steve McElroy, the Australian Pink Floyd's David Gilmour, in action

front." And he was at pains to point out the support he's received from Avolites over the years. In fact Lite Structures (builders of the circular truss for the screen), AC Lighting and Martin Professional also came in for praise, Ellerington emphasizing how these companies had helped in times of smaller budgets.

This is not Pink Floyd, but it looks and sounds like them. In the same way that a visit to Madame Tussauds is no poor experience, the Australian Pink Floyd is well worth the candle. Besides, judging by what I heard from Gilmour on the radio the other day, I think we're unlikely to see the real thing again.

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People on the Move

The iLight Group has announced a key reshuffle of management intended to create a single management team to lead the ongoing development of both iLight Ltd and Zero88.



Graham Eales

Heading the team is **Graham Eales**, already highly experienced and responsible for driving forward the Zero 88 name in tandem with the launch in the last year of the 'Frog' range of entertainment lighting controls. Zero88 and iLight's distribution chains will be unaffected by the move.

Frank Gordon has returned to High End to resume his role as CEO of the company. Gordon originally joined High End Systems in March 1998 and under his leadership as CEO, it experienced two of its most profitable years ever. High End report that with the slowdown in the lighting industry and the worldwide economy as well, the management team felt it was time for Gordon to come back and "work his magic".

Soundcraft and BSS Audio have created a new centralised communications strategy, under the direction of **Dave Neal**. He assumes the new position of marketing and communications manager at the two companies' Hertfordshire HQ, and heads a team which sees **Elizabeth Gates** and **Paul Bass** respectively focusing on the Soundcraft and BSS Audio brands. In a separate move, Soundcraft has also promoted **Ian Staddon** to the newly-created role of product development director, responsible for strategic product development, including market research, new product definition and specification, project management and new product introductions.

Aviva Ozin has launched Faith Communications, a consultancy offering PR and marketing services. After a long association with the Autograph group of companies, working for both the sales and the sound design and rental divisions, she has an in-depth understanding of the industry. In her new role, Ozin continues her association with the Autograph group, which has become one of Faith Communications' first clients. Faith will also offer guidance on business-to-business publishing, exhibition design and build, IT database management and marketing and business development plans.

Adrian Bottomley is the new general manager of lighting sales at ARRI (GB). He's highly experienced in industrial sales and marketing, having latterly worked for a division of IMI as

UK marketing manager, and prior to that in a similar capacity with ADT Fire & Security.

Specialist AV company Blitz Communications has appointed **Martin Green** and **Martin Clowes** as branch manager and operations manager respectively. As branch manager, Martin Green will look after Blitz's clientele in the Midlands, whilst operations manager Martin Clowes will be supporting him in his efforts by maintaining smooth client relations.

Stardraw.com has appointed **David Morrison** as international sales manager. Morrison joins the well-known software provider with 20 years' experience of senior sales roles with major manufacturing companies in the PC and networking industry, including Compaq and Research Machines.

Stagetec has taken on several new staff to cope with increased workload. Joining the lighting and audio sales and installation team are **Gillian Brades**, **Jason Walsh** and **Jonathan Coles**. Brades is a qualified accountant, and joins Stagetec as financial controller; Walsh, an experienced sound and lighting technician, joins the sales office. **Jonathan 'Speedy' Coles** is now working alongside Stagetec's Mick Cocker, promoting the high profile Compulite and LSC product ranges. Coles previously worked in Israel with Compulite distributor Danor Theatre Systems.

Bytcraft's long-serving international marketing manager, **John Drummond Montgomery**, has left the company after more than nine years, following his appointment as Australian Consul-General/Senior Trade Commissioner to Japan, based in Osaka. Montgomery was the company's most successful marketing manager ever, having opened up new markets for Bytcraft's stage automation business in Holland, Korea, China and Japan, as well as ameliorating the Bytcraft name internationally.

Angelo Russo has joined giant screen manufacturer Lighthouse, as product marketing manager at its UK office. Angelo had worked for nearly three years as marketing manager for Clipsal Vision, Australasia's largest supplier of Lighthouse screens, where he was involved in a host of major projects, including the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

JBL Professional has appointed industry veteran **Peter Chaikin** as director of marketing, recording and broadcast. Chaikin will take over responsibility for the company's studio monitors, including the LSR line of powered monitors, as well as developing new products in the line. Chaikin has previously held high-level product marketing and marketing management positions at Alesis and Yamaha.

Mad Manufacturing (formerly Mad Lighting) has expanded its sales operation with the appointment of UK sales manager **Ralph Stockley**, who will maintain and develop the company's growing client base in the retail and architectural sectors.

OpTex Ltd has appointed **Tony Covell** as senior business manager of its Rental Division. Covell, who founded VFG and has spent his entire career in television and film, has an in-depth knowledge of the rental business, both in the UK and overseas.

Peter West has joined UK distributor HW International as area sales manager. He will be responsible for the Midlands area and will represent the Shure, Phonic, QSC and PreSonus professional audio products. West previously worked with Raper & Wayman and LTP.

Marquee Audio has appointed **Glen Smith** to help forge closer links with the concert touring industry. A founder of ISE - a company specializing in the supply of second-user equipment to the UK's rental production companies - Smith takes up his directorship at the Shepperton Studios-based company with a mandate to deliver the same service.



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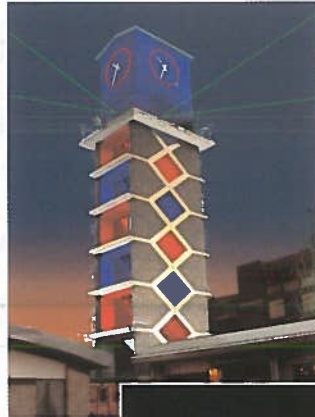
Let There be Light

'Let There be Light' was conceived to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Lansbury Estate - a key 'Living Architecture' project of the 1951 Festival of Britain.

Situated in the Tower Hamlets docklands area of the old East End of London, the estate with its balconies, roof gardens, courtyards and traffic-free areas combined with new shops, schools, churches, community halls and a central market, was welcomed in this socially deprived area of London.

In September this year, an architectural conference was held at the Lansbury Estate to discuss the continuing need for urban regeneration. Jonathan Park and Max Maxwell from Studio Park were called in to light the estate and to end the Conference with a surprise event - 'Let There be Light' to show the 1951 architecture, faded by time and declining social conditions, in a 'new light'.

As it was intended to be a 'surprise' and had only a limited budget, the lighting had to be supplied and installed (by Lighting Technology Projects) quickly and inexpensively. Studio Park took the colours and shapes of the famous Red, Blue and White flag and helmet logo of the 1951 exhibition as an overall concept, and set out to create new architectural lighting for some of the important buildings, to create a focal point and



to 'animate' the entire estate with some dramatic and memorable lighting effects - with a total budget of just £25,000!

The lighting concentrated on the Market Square and St Mary & St Joseph's Catholic Church - standing at the opposite ends of the estate. The

three-storey housing façades were lit with 200W domestic 'yard floodlights' attached to the existing 1951 shop signs with the bay windows and shopping colonnade highlighted with blue ropelight.

Across the market,

the access balconies of the newer four-storey block were lit with red domestic 'bulkhead' lights and red ropelight.

The façade of the Catholic church was lit with a red spire over the blue and white of the building below and a mirror ball placed just below the cross to catch the laser beam. The lighting consisted of 14 400W and two 1.2kW discharge floodlights, drawing only 9kW, and powered directly from the church's own fuseboard.

Main picture, Studio Park's rendering of the clocktower lighting scheme, and inset, a view of the 'Tower of Power' in action

The main feature of the 1951 Market Square was its Clocktower, now long disused. Its stairway, a complex internal double helix, was lit in red and blue on alternate landings, again with 400W self-coloured discharge lamps reinforced with 70W lighting in the diamonds. The exterior was similarly illuminated with 400W floodlights on outriggers above head height for safety. Studio Park turned the Clocktower into a 'Tower of Power' by circling the clock faces with red ropelight and accentuating the hands with white UV paint and, as a pièce de résistance, placing a powerful 50W YAG laser and mirror ball at the top to send light beams to all corners of the Lansbury Estate.

The green YAG laser, supplied by Laser Grafix, reinforced by four SkyArt searchlights from Vari-Lite London, in a ring next to the covered market, animated the night sky from the moment the compère declared 'Let there be Light'. The laser constantly changed from mapping out the area with 500m beams to the mirrorballs in the spires of the three important churches of the area, to illuminating the market square with thousands of shards of light from the Clocktower mirrorball, to outlining the shapes of the façade of St Mary & St Joseph's church. The SkyArts swept the sky in choreographed, coloured sequences to proclaim the festival for miles around.

Project manager for the event was Julie Flavell, and all rigging services were supplied by Nippy Industries.

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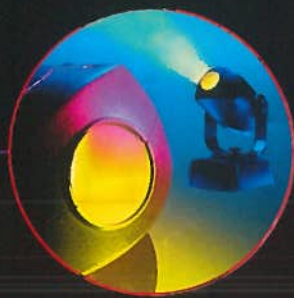


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Yamaha's DM2000 Sets a New Benchmark

Yamaha's new DM2000 - the first true 24-bit 96kHz production console. Inset, Marquee Audio's Andy Huffer and Spencer Brooks, with Yamaha's Terry Holton at the Lyric launch which followed the private SBES preview.

Yamaha's eagerly-anticipated new DM2000 digital mixing console was launched last month at an uncommonly extravagant presentation in Birmingham.

The city was chosen for the corporate facilities of the ICC, the hospitality of the city centre's main restaurant strip and the proximity of the following morning's Sound Broadcast Equipment Show (SBES) at the NEC - for which Yamaha's event provided a significant curtain-raiser.

In another world-launch coup for the Japanese company's UK operation, Yamaha-Kemble UK's sales and marketing director Ricci Hodgson hosted a dramatic unveiling of the DM2000 amid dry ice and thunderous sound effects. This was followed by a detailed description of the DM2000's specifications by Terry Holton, head of the R&D team in London, for which the new console represents a major evolutionary step from the hugely successful 02R.

Holton emphasized the desk's high-resolution audio quality - 24-bit/96kHz digital audio on all 96 channels - made possible by a new-generation chip developed at Yamaha's own plant in Japan. Other breakthroughs include new mic preamps; full support for LCRS and 5.1 surround formats as well as stereo; copious expansion card slots; and dedicated software interfaces for digital audio workstations such as ProTools and Nuendo.

After revealing an SRP of \$14,500 and a target shipping date of next March, Hodgson rounded off proceedings by introducing a live



demo of the console. Engineer Simon Honeywell mixed a disco-driven performance of Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik by string quartet Pearl - not unique in being all-female, but distinguished by a Vanessa-Mae-times-four approach to image.

Versatility was clearly established as the DM2000's key characteristic, forged in an era of converging markets for budget-conscious enterprises. The demonstration of the desk's FOH credentials made its point, but the on-board DAW interfaces and surround features rang similar bells for its suitability for music and post production.

Among those present was David Anthony Otanez of distribution and integration company Total Audio Solutions, in no doubt about the DM2000's potential in broadcast applications. "Our first thought was to put it into one of our OB trucks - it's perfect for it. You need more and more channels, and space is the main consideration. The high resolution on each channel is always a bonus, but where I

see the real benefit is just the sheer number of channels available for its size.

"We looked at the PM1D for one of our trucks previously, but size and cost ruled it out. The DM2000 is totally feasible for the OB market. The other area, obviously, is post. As far as features go for the price, there is no

comparison with this console on the market now."

Confirming the effectiveness of a high number of channels in a small footprint, a week after the launch, Marquee Audio's sales director Andy Huffer pointed to the DM2000's appeal to theatre sound engineers. "We held

our own demonstration of the console at The Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith three days later," he said, "and there was a good spread of theatre sound designers, educational facilities and touring sound companies. They were all blown away by it . . .

"The number of simultaneous mix channels, at 96k, in a small space is obviously good news for any live venue. Audio-wise, the DM2000 is leaps and bounds on from the 02R, which was picked up a lot in sound reinforcement even though it was essentially a studio console. Where the PM1D would not fit, there was the 02R - now the alternative is the DM2000," continued Huffer. "There is other competition too, of course. Over the years we've sold digital desks from Sony, Mackie and Spirit into theatre and live applications. But the DM2000 is the new benchmark."

Phil Ward



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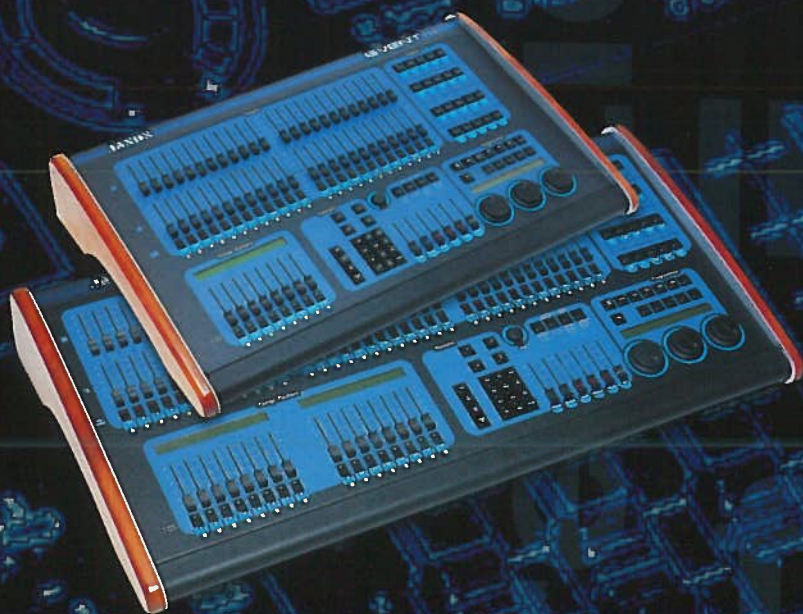
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Wireless Ethernet Solution Provides the Link

A flamboyant interior and exterior lighting scheme has marked the recent opening of Marks & Spencer's store in Fenchurch Street - a project requiring DMX signals to be sent to both sides of a busy road in the heart of the City of London.



The project was produced for Marks & Spencer by consultancy Hotcakes and designed by Darren Parker of DPL Production Lighting, who worked closely with High Wycombe-based AC Lighting and Avolites to achieve the desired effect.

The external scheme included six Studio Due CityColor architectural luminaires. These dramatically illuminated the neo-deco façade of the M&S building - itself a particularly striking piece of modern architecture surrounded by office buildings on all sides - and provided contrasting and complementing colours to those utilized inside.

With weight restrictions preventing any lights being located on the actual M&S building, and with busy streets below, these fully weatherised units had to be mounted on the roof of an office building on the opposite side of the road and controlled from a lighting console located within the main building.

The solution - devised by AC Lighting - required signals which could be transmitted reliably across the required distance within a given budget, using Artistic Licence, Net-Link I/P and Net-Link O/P Ethernet-to-DMX512 converters that were interfaced to ELSA LANCOM L-II Wireless Ethernet Adapters. The Net-Link I/P took in DMX data from the lighting console and

converted it into Ethernet using the Art-Net protocol. The Ethernet data was then transmitted across the road using a pair of ELSA 2 LANCOM L-II Wireless Ethernet transceivers operating at 2.4GHz. A Net-Link O/P unit then converted the data back into DMX data, distributed to the different floors via Avolites splitters, using cable in the traditional manner. The solution has the ability to transmit the signals up to 400 metres in line-of-sight applications.

Parker took advantage of the reflective white interiors of five of the building's unoccupied floors by using them for the location of further fixtures. The ensuing mirror effect resulted in shafts of richly saturated colours shooting across vast areas and out of the windows, changing colour every few seconds and focused to avoid blinding the surrounding offices with light.

The third, fourth and seventh floors featured seven CityColors per floor, plus six Martin MAC 500s, the latter used for snowflake gobo patterns, break-ups and texturing. The fifth and sixth floors each housed a single CityColor, focused out of the front of the building. Parker selected an Avolites Pearl 2000 console for the core lighting control: situated on the third floor, this enabled the nightly early evening lightshow to run like a live show, overseen in turn by crew members Chris Doy and Andy Higgins from both interior and exterior locations.

"The project has been a great success," explained Darren Parker, "and I am particularly pleased with the wireless Ethernet link carrying the DMX data. It's so stable, it really is hard to believe that it's not running through a cable. It beats the hell out of digging up the road!"

Artistic Licence: Art-Net Ethernet Protocol

Art-Net is an Ethernet communications protocol developed by London-based company Artistic Licence. The protocol has been placed in the public domain on a royalty-free basis and is being supported by many leading manufacturers. Art-Net is a TCP/IP based protocol. This means that standard IT industry products such as Hubs, Routers and Switches can be used for distribution. It also provides an economic method of jumping physical barriers by using wireless Ethernet links.

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DeSisti Equips New TV Studio

Home Shopping Europe Ltd went live to air at 1.00pm on Wednesday 7th October from its UK home at Park Street Studios, Frogmore. Managing director Christian Unterseer hosted the launch, a mere nine months after the company had acquired the site.



control board, integrated with a Unison architectural scene review system. This allows, via the control board, the set up of numerous plots for each of the five sets, which are then loaded to the architectural unit. In addition to timed, or recall at will options,

this allows the luminaires assigned to that plot to be controlled either as a group or individually, whilst allowing override back to the control board.

DeSisti Lighting played a major role in fully equipping the studio and supplying the lighting control system. The 316sq.m studio is fitted with a matrix grid which allows for the luminaires to be positioned anywhere as required. Hanging from the grid on adjustable-length drop arms are 1kW and 2kW Leonardo spotlights, 2.5kW and 5kW Botticelli softlights and Giotto cyclorama top lights, all from DeSisti and all pole-operated.

The lighting control is a sophisticated system from ETC, combining an Express 250 memory

The studio is equipped with a mix of dimmed and direct outlets with DMX. Digital dimming (ETC Sensor) looks after the 16A and 32A supplies and the dimmers are located with the DMX splitters. All of this was installed by DeSisti in just one-month, working closely with Sassoon Cohen, director of TV Production and IT, John Constable, head of camera and lighting and Andy Pettigrew, operations manager for Fyvie to achieve the on-air launch date.

Lightfactor in Training

Lightfactor Sales has completed 10 days of training sessions and seminars - the first in a series - covering its most popular product ranges. The courses, which have embraced both beginners and advanced users, included the Qcommander console and the Paradime dimmer range from LightProcessor. Demand was also high for courses on High End fixtures, including Technobeam, the 250 and 575 series of Studio Spots and Colors and the Cyberlight.

The company also ran courses on the LDR range of theatrical lanterns and SGM moving lights from Italy. On the sound front, courses on Zeck Audio products from Germany and Apogee Sound Inc products from the USA aroused considerable interest. Lightfactor's MD Paul de Ville told L&S: "These courses are highly accessible and are designed so people can get the most out of their products. The more familiar they are with the technology, the more possibilities will be realized."

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TRIED & TESTED

It was late night and we were tired and emotional when we came up with the idea of inviting readers to nominate the products that had made a real difference to them over the past year. As it turned out, it didn't prove to be such a bad idea and over the last few weeks we've sifted through many e-mails and waded through a lot, and we mean a lot, of your favourite products.

As a result, we can now announce the winning products in our 'Tried & Tested' competition.

We asked readers to nominate their favourite products in the four categories of lighting, sound, AV and effects - nothing more specific than that. This was a gut reaction straw poll to see what products impressed you, what attributes were important to you in a product, and how amusing you could be at a push.

And did we get some novel answers! It was heartening to see that some manufacturers really took to the spirit of the competition and spoke to all their customers and asked them to vote for their products. We thank them for their support, and if the responses



Compulite's Spark 4D

we received say nothing else worthwhile, they are a good indicator of customer loyalty - some of you out there should be very proud of that at least. Other companies were plain cheeky and voted for their own products (though this was only to be expected), usually because they offer the 'best performance/price ratio'. With so many different ratios the customers are spoiled for choice!

Aside from the corporate plugs, there were many genuine responses from those at the sharp edge of entertainment technology, and a fair few of those made us smile. In the category of lighting, the High End Systems Studio Spot 575 deserves special mention for its resetability via the "homming command". We're sure there are less involved ways of resetting lights, perhaps HES would be able to help? Avolites also come in for some praise for their service back-up, or as LD Simon Swift puts it, "putting the spare paddle in that little canoe on Shit Creek."

In the rigging section, a vote went in for the virtues of Steeldeck. True, it doesn't perform like a trampoline as some stages do, but many would beg to differ with the assertion that it is easily transported, unless your profession is a weightlifter. Also in the rigging section was that perennial favourite - gaffer tape. Certainly gaffer has performed most rigging tasks at some point in its history and is

worthy of special mention for getting many a technician out of the mire at the last minute.

In the audio category, even Rolf Harris' wobble board made an appearance. And bless the little cotton socks of the individual who nominated Lighting&Sound International for being the best product in the industry. (Thanks mum).

And so on to the winning products (not that any of them will actually win anything). The following products have emerged as making a difference to your lives or making a big impression on you.

LIGHTING

The highlight of your life is the Compulite Spark 4D for being versatile, easy to busk on and apparently cheap (to buy, that is!). But it was not alone in bringing in the votes, and ADB Memorack 30 dimmers were highly praised by quite a number of you, as were products by Artistic Licence in general, including the Microscope, Common Sense and Downlink. Loads of you voted for Martin MACs of various flavours, and Vari-Lite's 2000 Series fixtures also deserve a mention,



ADB Memorack Dimmers

as do their controllers. Surprisingly, no-one outside of a loft in London W13 voted for the Wholehog II - is it because all Hog owners are too busy working to vote?

SOUND

Coming through the background noise was undoubtedly the Portable MiniDisc player/recorder (Sony was mentioned most) for its sheer usefulness - not only for listening to on the tour bus, but also for those last-minute attempts at putting together show



tc electronics' System 6000

tracks. Special mention goes to the System 6000 multi-channel audio processor from tc electronic for its excellent features and great sound.

AV

No single product came to the fore here, so a joint award was necessary. For versatility and ease of use, first equal place goes to the Sony Digital SX Betacam. On the impression stakes and for ease of setting up, Barco's high-power ELM projector attracted the other main share of votes.

RIGGING

Lifting itself above all the competition, the Ibex programmable hoist controller beat the very motors that it is designed to control. Introduced earlier in the year, the Ibex has proved itself on tour with Roxy Music and Robbie Williams, and was without doubt the clearest winner of any category in Tried & Tested! Special mentions? Well, how about the CM Lodestar hoist for being "the best bit of kit ever" or the A-Type truss for being "big and great to build things out of"? This is fundamental stuff, no?

EFFECTS

Now to the Effects category, where the gut response of quite a number of you was to say "Le Maitre's Neutron Hazer", which won the day for being just plain old 'reliable and effective'! Hazers from other makers including MDG and Smoke Design also gained votes, as did Skyhigh's pyro systems.

A special mention of a general nature: as Colin Freeman of Penn Fabrications has quite correctly pointed out, one essential range of products which could appear equally in all, or indeed none, of the above categories is, of course, flightcase components, which provide such a vital service for the entire industry. I don't suppose you know where we can get some, Colin?

So, what have we learned from all of this? Well the message is clear to manufacturers of large, heavy, expensive, noisy and unreliable equipment - stop it! You like things to be lightweight, unless they need to be utterly solid, in which case you don't mind if they're bloody heavy. You like things to be compact, for a number of reasons. You like things to be cheap (or to have a good 'price/performance ratio'), you like things to be flexible, effective, and quiet. You don't always want (or need) the latest product. Several people cited kit that has been in circulation for several years. But above and beyond everything else, you like things to be reliable. No surprises there.

L&SI is pleased to award Rob Loxley of the ADC Theatre, Cambridge, £100 worth of technical book vouchers to spend at the PLASA book store for being the first entrant drawn out of the hat at random. We also promised something for anyone who stood out from the rest of the bunch, and indeed one entrant was chosen for a combination of his lateral thinking abilities, suggesting as he did "Virgin Atlantic courtesy earplugs" as a



Le Maitre's Neutron Hazer



The Ibex hoist controller

favourite sound product, and also for having more front than Blackpool in plugging a product in which he had a very clear vested interest - the Wholehog II "because it's blue". Brian Tucker of Flying Pig Systems, something is on its way to you.

A big thanks to all those who took part in the survey, and those who didn't, well you'll have to wait till next year for your chance to win some goodies . . .

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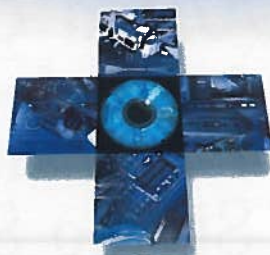


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The Pyramid Effect

This autumn saw one of the biggest outdoor opera productions of the year: a cast of hundreds - amongst them armies, horses, camels and even an eagle - came together for the 'mega-opera' spectacular 'Aida' staged for a sell-out crowd of 78,000 at the Stade de France in Paris. Mike Mann checks out the audio . . .

The huge circular football stadium, home to the last World Cup, is an unusual setting for Verdi's monumental opera, but Dutch production company Companions Opera took full advantage of the 75m x 120m pitch, presenting a 130-piece choir, the 90-piece Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra, and more than 550 extras.

The event called for a complex and sophisticated sound reinforcement system. The biggest problem faced by Canadian sound designer Guy Desrochers was capturing the enormous number of vocal sources on the 'stage' - which stretched the entire length and width of the stadium's huge football pitch. "I have to keep the design as simple as possible," explained Desrochers, "some people might try to make it more complicated, but there is so much happening in the show itself that you have to keep the sound under tight control."

Desrochers' solution to the problem of mixing a 120-piece orchestra and a cast of over 450 was to split the tasks. Orchestral premixing was handed over to studio engineer Stan Taal who used a Midas Heritage 3000 to create sectional feeds for the main XL4 console; the chorus, however, was mixed on a French-built Innova Son Sensory Live digital console by Sylvain Archambeaut. One of the primary reasons for this,

explained Archambeaut, was the need to run so many mic feeds from the pitch up to the mix position in the press tribune. "We can use the Innova Son not just as a mixer, but also as a transmission system - all we need to do is to run co-ax cable to remote pre-amp/converter racks and the job is done!" On arrival at the Innova Son, the sources were patched digitally to present themselves logically on the faders and are individually delayed to give a uniform image - the channel order and timing correction, explained Archambeaut, change with each scene as the chorus re-arranges itself around the enormous stage. Once equalised (though not processed - compression in this application does not work, according to Desrochers) using the Sensory Live's on-board DSP, the channels were mixed into sections within each half of the chorus, to be sent to Desrochers as a series of mono mixes.

The gents and ladies choruses were miked up using DPA 4061s (36 in total). The microphone technique called for some clever planning: a DPA 4061 miniature mic was mounted on the shoulder of every fourth choir member, for his or her own voice and that of three other singers, so they had to stay in formation in groups of four throughout the performance. As a result, only 32 channels were required to pick up three times that number of vocalists. "We have to be very careful not to offend people by calling them human mic stands!" laughed Archambeaut.

The 32 chorus mics and 16 soloist capsules (two per singer) were transmitted by Sennheiser SK50 beltpacks - with antennae run outside costumes to improve reception stability. Soloists were equipped with antennae on their front and back - RF chief Bernard Scyeur explained that this was a belt-and-braces approach that he prefers to take. "Our own people have to check the position of the transmitters on each singer before they go on stage. The effects of body shadowing are quite dramatic - which is why we use the



Radio Ham

The on-site preparation for Bernard Scyeur and the team from RF Transmission started days before the main build with a 'scanning day'. "The first thing I do at a new venue is to scan the RF spectrum to see what's transmitting in the area," he explained. "Near the Stade de France there are several TV companies transmitting, which means that as well as their main UHF masts there will be all sorts of communications, data and audio flying around." Static sources are not Scyeur's only problem, though. "For this show, 15 ENG crews turned up during rehearsals - all with radio mics. I had to ask two of them to leave because they were interfering with our signals."

Knowing the likely problem areas, Scyeur generates an initial frequency plan based on avoiding obvious intermodulation and harmonic interference between transmitters. Having tuned each receiver via a PC link and Sennheiser's own software, the next step is to check antenna positioning. "With a rough location, high-gain antennae and no transmitters running, I can sweep the spectrum and see what else the receivers will be seeing," he added, "and only then can I turn on all the transmitters - in this case 48 channels. Sometimes there will be a need to retune one or two of them; for this show, we had to move 16 channels."

The whole process can take up to two full days. "People don't understand how I can spend two days with a computer and scanner, but the stability of the system is so critical. With 16 channels, it's fairly easy to get it right, but bigger systems can become very difficult to manage - which is why we set ourselves up as a specialist company." Scyeur, who holds the unofficial world record for radio mics (104 channels for last year's 14th July celebrations) is also keen to use RF technology for data transmission, and offers lighting control, remote audio control, timecode and communications solutions - and can even program his radio receivers via RF. "That really is a good use of radio!" he exclaims.



lower end of the frequency range for these important sources. Having a transmitter on both sides of a person's body - as well as correctly positioned diversity antennae for the receivers - makes a big difference. Even the material that is used for the costumes has an effect - I had to ask the designer to change some elements for this show, where certain characters have to wear metallic clothes." Scyeur and his team also take care to use frequencies for each pair of transmitters that have no mathematical relationship, to avoid the possibility of them both being affected by the same interference signals. "Aida, for example, has packs operating at 518.050 and 534.025MHz - it would be very unusual for them both to be knocked out by the same problem."

Desrochers' loudspeaker system of choice was again French - and what more appropriate venue for a V-Dosc system than the Stade de France. The designer notionally split the main seated area into four huge zones according to their distance from the orchestra tent, which occupied a 'corner' of the oval field. The audience in the front few rows of seats was fed by two further zones, separating those who could hear the orchestra acoustically at an appropriate level and those who could not.

Desrochers deployed 16 flown arrays of eight V-Dosc cabinets, each with local XTA processing and amplification, as well as a total of 120 dV-Dosc enclosures in ground-stacked arrays. Dutch PA company Stagepro supplied the system and installed the huge infrastructure, which included a line-level multicore feeding the entire 700m circumference of the stadium roof catwalk, from where the flown arrays were powered. The system was designed with technical support from V-Dosc manufacturer L-Acoustics in France - though Desrochers says that the final process is a human one: "I EQ the system using pop CDs - not opera, as there is already enough reverb on the recordings. After all the calculations, the final reference is always my own hearing."



RF chief Bernard Scyeur (top left) with his RF racks (right); above, sound designer Guy Desrochers

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NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS

Stratford Circus is only the third purpose-built arts venue to be built in London. Louise Stickland thinks it will have no trouble following in the footsteps of the South Bank Centre and the Barbican

The seemingly irrepressible social and cultural zing eastward from the metropolis continues with this landmark venue. Hot on the heels of the gleaming Stratford tube station, E15 is fast becoming an off-West End hub for entertainment, design and architecture. March saw the opening of the acclaimed Ocean Music Centre in Hackney, aimed at bringing live music to the forefront of E8.

The five-space Stratford Circus is yet another reason for performance-loving Londoners to venture past Holborn on the Central Line. The lottery-funded venue reflects the diverse cultures of the local neighbourhood, whilst simultaneously filling a niche in the London arts scene. Like Ocean, community involvement, educational schemes and activities have been central to the creative programming. The foresight suggests that if you can inspire young people to be interested and stimulated by theatre early on - they will stick with it as a worthwhile activity.

Stratford Circus's schedules are therefore designed to be as inclusive and versatile as possible. It might be Bollywood, a tea dance, DJ workshops, experimental performance, talks and personal appearances, video making, films, break dancing, steel bands or rock bands - Stratford Circus offers something for everyone wanting to be involved in the creative process - at very affordable prices.

One of director Jon Harris's visions is that Stratford Circus and its lively agenda of events should reach people who've not necessarily set foot in an arts centre before. "I believe the only way we can create new audiences for work in London is to inspire a new sense of ownership and involvement in the arts."

Once the building ball started rolling, for technical manager Phillip Dexter - who came onboard in September 2000 - the Stratford Circus technical fit-out soon evolved into a very ambitious project.

The quietly-spoken New Zealander's previous experience includes stints at The Royal Opera House Covent Garden, The Royal College of Music and the Hampstead Theatre.

Chief technician Charlotte Walker was appointed in April this year, and she and Dexter were responsible for the intense fit-out period. The original plan allotted five weeks for the technical infrastructure to be put in place from scratch - but the reality whittled down to just eight days! (The tight in-house technical team was recently completed with the addition of assistant technician Gareth Connelly.)

In that time, the team had to install three quarters of a million pounds worth of gear, as well as having to mask all areas and fit the seating units - all the bars were being built, kitchens kitted out, etc, at the same time and "It was completely manic!" states Walker, now able to grin at the memory. The result is impressive and today you might think you are walking into a Conran restaurant! The building, designed by architects Levitt Bernstein, features an open, welcoming foyer space and is clad with plenty of wood, metal and large expanses of glass, beckoning an abundance of natural light.

I meet with Phillip Dexter and Charlotte Walker in the modern café area - a tastefully decorated space with lots of plants which is soon full of people and chattering. The venue's largest space is Circus 1, a multi-purpose theatre accommodating up to 314 seated and 400 standing in a variety of formats - traditional proscenium arch/end on, traverse, an in-the-round space or a flat floor space. There's also provision for 15 wheelchairs - as with all new venues, disabled access is considered at the outset!

Circus 2 is a fully flexible studio space with 120 seated or 200 standing. Metrodeck rostra from Maltbury are available to provide



either raked seating or a raised stage. Circus 3 is a large dance space (approx 168sq.m) on the third floor of the building and hosts a wide selection of dance performance and workshops - from contemporary to ballet. All three spaces have sprung oak floors covered in Harlequin Cascade dance floor vinyl.

Circus 4 is a workshop room for about 20 people on level 2, intended for educational applications, presentations, poetry readings, etc. Circus 5 is a multi-media suite, full of Apple G4s, loaded with Final Cut Pro and other DV editing software. Cameras and recording gear are also available, and the facilities are open to companies, visiting shows, schools and colleges or anyone who has reason to make and edit videos.

Stratford Circus will host over 2,000 productions a year - from visiting slots by top international artists and theatre companies to their own productions and co-productions with other venues. The co-production axis can dramatically increase the cost-effectiveness of setting up a show. Naturally, maximum flexibility was top of the agenda for technical facilities. Once on the team, Dexter's immediate task was to start filling all the spaces with gear.



Theatre Projects Consultants produced the original sound, lighting and stage engineering specifications back in '96, when the Lottery bid was processed. TPC were pragmatic in outlook, taking into consideration that the available equipment would have changed by the time the fit-out was a reality.

They produced two specs. One was tendered and won by the time Dexter was in place. The other was tendered but not finalized, specifically to allow additional spontaneous leeway for the 'head of technical' to make

the final decisions, and to be in a position to purchase the equipment available now, as opposed to four years ago.

The biggest challenge, explains Dexter, was making the budget stretch! Despite working to 1996 figures, suppliers like Northern Light - who delivered the lighting (and later the audio) - came in with excellent deals - and also supplied and installed the dimming and hard wiring. Dexter also had to figure out how the different spaces within the venue would function technically, both as individual entities and as integrated elements of the whole.

Circus 1 has the most scope for staging numerous options. The dynamic flying facilities, orchestra pit lift, drapes and curtains were all supplied and installed by Telegest. The grid is 10 metres high and the flying consists of 43 sets of single purchase counterweighted bars with a weight loading of 400kgs, spaced approximately 200mm apart. This gives plenty of options for scenery, projection screens and over-stage lighting positions. The wall-to-wall stage dimensions are 15.27 metres wide by 11.91 deep, and the proscenium arch is also adjustable in both width and height.

Dexter picked lanterns to address a broad range of theatrical options. Many are from the Strand range, including SL profiles of varying degrees - some with cold mirror reflectors, Cantata and Alto PCs, 3-way Iris 3 cyc lights and Coda ground rows. There's also a bunch of Thomas Par 64 cans for Stratford Circus's many 'more rock 'n' roll' moments.

Venue-wide lighting control is provided by Strand. There's a 520i console in Circus 1 and a 300 Series in Circus 2, plus a roving MX24. All locations within the venue are fully Ethernetted, the idea being that boards can be linked together and shows backed up and moved between them as desired. Dexter was keen to choose a console with reliable, solid networking protocol, and that's what swayed him towards Strand. The fact that many people are also familiar with Strand desks was also important.

The dimmers are Strand LD 90s. "They're cheap, cheerful and do the job," comments Dexter. The eight presets available on these means they can also run the house lighting

and basic states from strategically-located push-button outstations.

The dimmers are a mixture of 2K and 5K modules. The carcasses were fitted into the dimmer room early on in the build process, with the modules following later - a great advantage in terms of enabling the wiring to proceed unabated. The carcasses were initially fitted before the roof of the building was



Left, chief technician Charlotte Walker and technical manager Phillip Dexter; above and below, lighting grid shots from Circus 1

watertight, so the whole was frequently soaked. "It looked like the Poseidon Adventure some days!" says Dexter. Circus 1 also has a tension wire grid supplied by Slingco.

The sound specification was also initially drawn up by TPC - and encountered several setbacks, including the suppliers going into administration before completing the contract. At the time of my visit, the team at Stratford were using portable sound trolleys for shows with audio requirements. These trolleys each contained an eight-channel Soundcraft powered mixer, CD player and cassette deck. They also had a multipoint connector that taps into the building-wide sound patch system, allowing mixer inputs to access mic, tie lines and numerous speaker outputs in the different areas. For the larger shows or those needing more of a rock 'n' roll reinforcement scenario, they called on Richard Nowell Sound.

However, temporary has now given way to permanent, and Northern Light, having taken on the sound contract, have recently returned to the venue to install Tannoy I-12s and P-40 subs in Circus 1, and Tannoy I-8s across the rest of the building. Amplification is provided by a combination of Inter-M 500 and 700s - an amplifier commonly used in paging systems - whilst the mixing is handled by a pair of Allen & Heath GL2000s (offering 12 and 16 channels). A system link has been installed so the two can be run together when required. Circus 1 has a host of Yamaha processing kit including graphic EQs, an SPX 990 and Pro R3 reverb, together with Denon CD players and a Sony Mini disc, with Drawmer compressors being used across the system.



Stratford Circus was always designed for easy OB connectivity - and lots of it - and also for their own in-house video facilities and IT networking. With the cabling all in place, it's already proving a popular location for film and TV company shoots.

Jon Harris wanted a flexible in-house video system capable of switching between events happening in the past or present - to produce a time-based collage of activity - and messaging and information services. He suggested the positions for internal monitors and Dexter came up with a basic spec - and a

budget - which then had to be halved! Looking at what was available for the money, the building-wide AV system centres on a Crestron control system and is administered using touch screen controllers.

It was vital that this was easy to use. Dexter saw Northern Light's installation at Norden Farm Arts Centre in Maidenhead, and from there, he and Northern Light's Stewart Archibald devised the Stratford Circus system, which functions exactly as envisioned. Inputs into the system consist of camera feeds from Circus 1 and 2, plus satellite TV, video, DVD

In 1996 a proposal for the refurbishment of the Theatre Royal, Stratford East was submitted. It was accepted in the summer of that year. Construction work for what would come to be known as Stratford Circus finally commenced in April 1999. By this stage, it was an ambitious timescale for a ground up project of this complexity.

and an information PC running Power Point for simple presentations and messaging. These all feed into the Crestron, and, via a series of touch screens around the building, staff can type in their code and have access to selected inputs and outputs. The monitors are grouped into zones and the sources are assigned to the zones by the touch panels.

Harris applied for additional funding and sourced an impressive LED screen (supplied by Gearhouse) for the exterior of the building. It looks fabulous, is a great local talking point and is used to advertise events or to hook into the house AV as required.

It's early days yet for the new venue, but the signs are already very positive that it will boost the regeneration of the area. The first three months of operation at Stratford Circus have been highly successful, setting an energetic pace for the venue's development into a social hub for locals and visitors alike.

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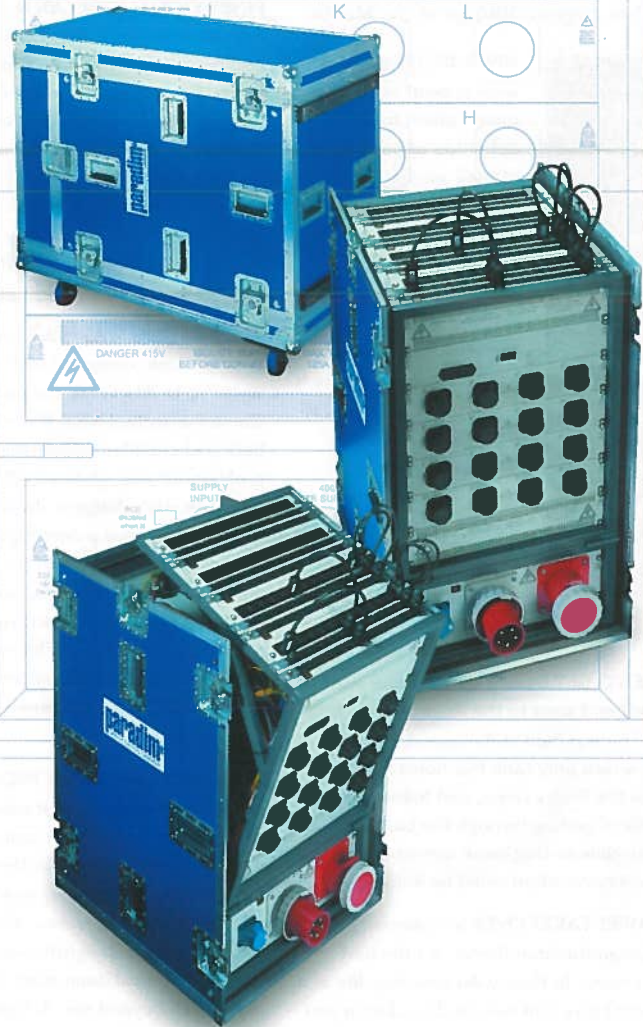
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John Watt

Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

Well I've had a bit of an ear-bashing this month, so even allowing for the fact that it's the lunatic fringe that call phone-in programmes or comment on the meanderings of magazine writers, I had better take some notice. One suggests that this column be re-titled 'Moan of the Month' while another suggests 'Whinge of the Month'.

"If you want something doing, ask a busy bloke! He'll cope - he probably has the WYSIWYG programme for chairmen which does all the paper work for you and shows 3D pictures of future meetings."

SINCE BOTH gentlemen were present at the same time, I asked for a definition of both words as they amount to the same thing in this illiterate writer's book. Happily, no real definitions were forthcoming, so I feel off the hook to some extent. However, there is a grain of truth there, so if this turns out to be particularly dull, it's because I've resolved to be nice for a change, particularly as it will be the festive season when you find L&SI sticking out of your stocking.

DESPERATE TO GET IN to a studio under some pretext or other, I went to the AGM of the STLD last Friday. This was held at Pinewood, of which more anon, which only took five hours from Grantham in the Friday chaos, and followed the usual pattern of getting through the business as quickly as possible so that some serious eating, drinking and conversation could be indulged.

BERNIE DAVIES TAKES OVER as chairman from Ian Dow. Congratulations Bernie, it's the best unpaid job I know. In theory, his new busy life as a freelance won't give him time to do it, but as you know, if you want something doing, ask a busy bloke! He'll cope - he probably has the WYSIWYG

programme for chairmen which does all the paper work for you and shows 3D pictures of future meetings. As ever, this society provides the best forum I know for all things lighting - the overheard conversations would form the basis of any masterclass on the subject - thus providing a boost for your creative batteries as well as getting you into the warm on a nippy November evening.

PINEWOOD HAS DECIDED to take digital television seriously: two 9,000sq.ft studios are equipped with monopole grids and proper TV floors. Camera gear is Sony 570 Digi Betacam and lighting controls are Strand Galaxy and Compulite. The control rooms felt a little austere for my taste, though no doubt all the technical bits work (not a bit like WDR in Cologne). The lighting tracks felt a long way apart with no transfers, but that's an old hobby horse of mine and I guess the young Turks don't mind.

THE MEETING WAS HELD on the set of The Weakest Link, complete with one of the lighting states up to illuminate the proceedings. Later, Will Charles described what it was all about in a laid back and confident style which belied the problems of a tough brief. All good stuff - someone else's design is always fascinating and I, for one, now have a dozen questions I didn't ask on the night. Much of the ensuing debate revolved round the 'smoke' which even now remains a bit of a black art, yet so fundamental to this style of lighting. The noise from the moving lights seemed pretty dominant to me - it's an area which the manufacturers haven't really cracked yet.

WATCHED PARKY LAST NIGHT. I usually turn off before the credits as it only upsets me to see Mark Kenyon's name yet again. He seems to light nearly everything that fills the gaps between news bulletins. However, in my new truthful guise, I've decided that being jealous of this job is a bit daft. The chat part is straightforward enough, but the so-called musical items must involve a degree of acting well beyond me. As lighting designer, do you have to pretend that you like and/or understand the racket masquerading as music?

SO I WONDER WHAT our friends have found for our Christmas presents down at Lights R Us? All the best toys seem to have a chip in them somewhere, so no doubt there's an ex-ITV lighting director doll with a chip on its shoulder, it doesn't speak but moans continuously. The ex-BBC one, the Evesham Warbler, cleverly modelled just through the door of its cage, jigs up and down singing 'cheep cheep, big pension, cheep'.

HOW ABOUT THE VARI-LITE cardboard cut out kit? This comprises a box of large black cards from which you can cut out full-size silhouette shapes of Vari-Lites. These are then hung on bits of thread, mobile style, and can be hung in any rig to make it look twice as impressive. They move about aimlessly in the breeze from the air conditioning, just like the real thing. Please note the avoidance of all other jokes around the 'hanging by a thread' theme.

HOW ABOUT THE board game 'Redundancy'? This can be played by as many players as the technical colleges can turn out and the object of the game is to climb up through the jungle until you get a job lighting a game show for Channel 5. If you land on a snake (any resemblance between the snakes' faces and senior TV executives is no coincidence), you must return to college at the bottom. If you know one of these executives, there's no need to play the game at all, just go straight to the top.

I'D QUITE LIKE A John Bull PAT testing label kit. This is the complete antidote to safety officers who demand the appropriate labels on all gear - just print your own! After all, most accidents are caused by problems not covered by the reg's. This is why you never see a label on those ramps that are put over cables in studios. It's a well-known fact that all crews have a sixth sense that enables them to step over cables, even in pitch darkness, while nearly everyone trips over cable ramps which are about a foot high and bright orange. This exactly matches the preferred colour of all lighting directors under 40, thus rendering them invisible (the ramp, not the LD).

I HAD THOUGHT THAT my favourite present would be a lighting by numbers kit. This gives a selection of set designs for game shows and awards ceremonies with a little reference number on each element. By referring to the accompanying chart you can tell what colour and lamp to use for each part, i.e. 135 deep golden amber for all faces, 132 medium blue for all back lights. There's a dice to choose the background colours, so that you can put your own personal stamp on the look. Unfortunately, there's been a bit of a run on these lately as they have proved inexplicably popular. Even the junior version which assumes the use of fluorescent lamps (all the numbers are the same) have run out.

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Sounds Sweet

Steve Moles shares an atmospheric evening with UB40 and The Pretenders

David Blunkett's new-found tolerance to the dreaded weed endured its first real test this night. Granted, with UB40 headlining and The Pretenders as the support act, it's a given that there'll be plenty of herbals in the audience, but it was *when* the smoke alarms were triggered that was odd. Instead of the usual melée out in the tribunes and galleries with its 90 minutes of compressed smoking and drinking before the show, most of the audience were actually sat in their seats enjoying the opening act. When the house lights rose, so too did about 10,000 people, many of whom had a quick spillage on their minds. It was about 15 minutes before the sensors could take no more and triggered the release of the exit doors and sent out the coded security announcement.

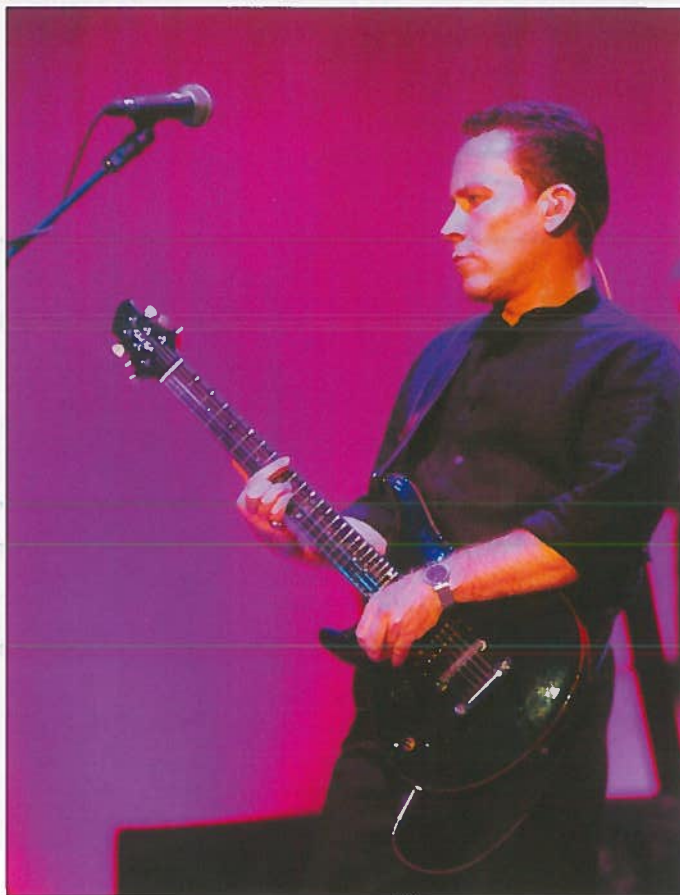
It's a measure of the Pretenders' enduring popularity that this was the case; even if they haven't penned a new hit for what seems like two decades they are still a class act. For the audience it's a double treat, and more power to UB40 for being the facilitators. But this was a good value show in other ways: firstly, for the best sound I've heard at the MEN in ages, and equally for the appearance of a new talent at the lighting desk.

SOUND

It has been a debate for the past 30 years: what is the appeal of a reggae band of Brummies to white, middle England? Reggae lite is part of it. The band has found the perfect blend of the West Indies and Anglo Saxon pop melodies. More importantly, the band is a well-balanced 11 piece, and has the potential for some of the sweetest vocal harmonies around; make no mistake, they are the Beach Boys of reggae.

It was this sweet vocal sound that I was hoping for this evening, not just Ali Campbell, but all the other voices around him which give that singular ring. It was already clear the definition was possible, having heard Andy May mix the Pretenders, but could that be sustained with the bigger band content and still leave room for the voices?

Steve 'Gonzo' Smith and Gerry Parchment mixed front-of-house by committee, an arrangement potentially fraught with conflicts that in this instance works rather well. Gonzo has worked for the band for just over 20 years, during which time he's passed through monitors to FOH; Parchment has been their studio engineer since 1989. "Gonzo is the live engineer," said Parchment generously, "But he takes care of the sound,"



added Gonzo. The two men also deferred to Steve Dando from SSE, the systems engineer responsible for arraying and applying the house EQ to this Nexo Alpha PA system.

"The whole idea is the mix of talents," continued Gonzo. "Gerry spends long periods away from the road, so he's not as up-to-date on the gear and techniques developing out here, but he's that much closer to the band and knows exactly where their sound is going, especially with the new stuff." Gonzo, it should be noted, keeps his hands and ears in tune with other acts, not least the recent major outing by Iron Maiden - a more dissimilar musical demand you could not wish for.

As for the PA: "The band has a long-term relationship with SSE, even from the company's roots in Tech Serve. The Alpha system suits because what we need is clarity - there's a lot of stuff going on out there and you need to hear it all."

This was early days in the tour and Gonzo did confess that Dando had had his work cut out of late, changing things to their satisfaction, "but we think we're there now," a sentiment shared by May on the Pretenders who declared it . . . "the best I've heard at the MEN." And May is no slouch.

Out in the house our two engineers use a Midas XL4 with an XL3 Stretch to cope with all the inputs, but surprisingly, when you look around, there's little else. The system rack contains the ubiquitous BSS Soundweb, which apart from the main PA, deals with a row of Nexo PS8s across the front of stage, and a pair of Alpha E cabinets flown as centre down-fills from the front truss. In the pit, levels were markedly lower, a concession apparently to their inability to handle the more powerful low-end, but the fidelity was everything we've come to expect from these neat little boxes.

Beyond some Klark Teknik graphic EQ and a bunch of playback machines, there was little else, and the adjacent effects rack was even less populated. "Well, we do have a





Title page, Robin Campbell - who shares vocals with brother Ali pictured below. Left, the entire UB40 line-up, a.k.a the Beach Boys of reggae

His talents appear two-fold, as a programmer and cue writer his powers are well developed despite his youth: "I've not seen anyone as competent and fast on their number crunching with the Hog II," said the Pretenders' LD Alan Parker, "and I've no doubt his cueing is spot on." Praise indeed from a man of Parker's experience. But the key, and in essence the more important talent, is his artistry.

"That's what I like about this job, it enables me to match my technical abilities with the creative. When I was a student (Hardiman is an engineer) I spent time DJ'ing and playing guitar - I needed that outlet." His introduction to the band was through Terry Lee, one of the founding directors at LSD. "He recommended me to Paul Hunter who invited me to meet the band. I told them my general philosophy, they told me what they wanted, and I went away to work on some ideas." His conceptual muse is bounteous, and rooted firmly in strong self-belief; if he can conceive of a thing then it

can be so. I found it refreshing to encounter a young designer so devoid of guile or cynicism, and so irrepresible.

Hardiman's philosophy is possibly not wholly developed as yet. Having listened to him expound ideas and concepts non-stop for 30 minutes, it's hard to believe there isn't a lot more to come, but what he has already is propounded with passion, and he takes the knocks on the chin and moves right along.

"I originally wanted to put huge lit Aztec masks out in the audience: my idea was for simple units that could be hung anywhere, but there wasn't the budget." Which hasn't stopped him putting a strong party emphasis on the stage whilst still finding ways to allude to that slightly mythical, tropical atmosphere.

"The Easter Island heads? No, there's no direct connection with the music. I don't believe in tying things or looks to songs. I just like the physical aspect of having something to light, something I can hit from a number of different angles, silhouette, up light, whatever, and change the look of the stage."

Built by Dave Perry, the heads (which sadly you can't see photos of due to the fact that they only appeared in song five after we'd been shifted from the pit; thereafter a seven foot giant stood in front of the mix riser all night ruining the long shot) are beautiful. Although ostensibly 2D, they have a slight relief of about three inches, having been built from a sandwich of MDF, it's enough to make them as real as their stone predecessors, if not quite as heavy.

"Also, I'm not a fan of video," continued Hardiman, "I think it's a bit of a cop-out." He's not too keen on conventional lighting either: "What's the point in having people stuck up a truss all afternoon, when



UB40 - FACTOIDS

Dan Hardiman won Young LD of the Year at the Live Awards in '98. Talking of awards, he also has a First in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Reading.

Alan Parker operated the lights for the Pretenders. Parker, who readers of this magazine will know for his work with Genesis and Mike & the Mechanics, has been absent from these shores for two years now, having married an Austrian lady and moved to Vienna.

Gerry Parchment has a brother in the industry. Curiously Peter 'Fats' Parchment works as a lighting crew chief (for LSD/Fourth Phase) and is a part-time LD, having most recently designed for Fish.

Hardiman's work with Moby saw him take the artist from the Kings Cross Scala, through the Astoria and Forum, to end up in Wembley Arena. No small progression in just 18 months.

rack full of Behringer expander/gates," said Smith. "With so many in the band it's easier to handle than having 10 racks full of separate compressors and gates. The main tools are an old Dimension D, a chorus machine made by Roland which we use a touch of on the vocals, and a lot on the bass for that classic sound." Big on vintage effects, or rather the cherishing of them, there is also a Bel Electronics BD 80 delay: "We use it to recreate the sound of the old tape loops, it's the closest thing we've found to that old reggae sound."

Parchment drew special attention to those vocals, "although Ali is the lead singer there are five other voices up there so you don't want to pin it all down to one. You want it as good as you can get, but it still needs to be a different sound, and to have a slightly raw edge. I think the audience expects it, but these days that can be hard.

Thanks to the appearance of Graham 'Blakey' Blake on monitors, Parchment's aspiration to control a raw edge, rather than have it there by default, has become more achievable on this tour. "For the first time ever they are all on in-ear systems. Admittedly, they used to play with all the back-line gear off stage, but the build up in level from wedges for 11 people was intense. It's a learning curve for the band at the moment; they are having to deal with that slight detachment, but it's one they've got to learn," he says, the emphasis at the end there indicating just how much Parchment is a part of the Band family, and just how democratic that family is.

LIGHTING

As indicated in the introduction, lighting designer Dan Hardiman is a new face on the Arena circuit. Readers may know him from his work with Moby in the past year and a half, or indeed from a short stint with Hawkwind when he left university, but his appearance here is emphatic; this is a very different look for the UB's than we have seen before.

there's a good alternative?" he asks quite properly. "And besides, things can change on tour." Two shows previously he had made a redesign, cutting some risers all together, moving others further upstage to allow more 'party room' on the stage apron. "Changes like that are easy to make and deal with using moving lights."

In addition to the heads, it's the simple devices of the risers and 40 gallon oil drums littered about the stage, that set its prevailing tone. The oil drums are just that, rusty old buckets punctured by Perry for the 'brazier' look, and fitted with one of those natty little silk, fan and light flame effects. The risers, some three feet high, have a jungle motif appliquéd to a gauze wrap, "and then I've added a light white cloth behind the gauze to diffuse the Super Cycs I'm pointing through from behind," says Hardiman. Behind the risers hang the heads with a black gauze in front, a white behind, and more of the jungle appliqué adding to the atmosphere. The whole effect is *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, slightly comic book and slightly surreal - either way it's very atmospheric.

Hardiman doesn't allow this strong imagery to overwhelm the band: the heads disappear behind gauze to be replaced by a variety of projected gobos mainly centred around



different renderings of cannabis leaves which are spread across all areas of the back cloth. One realisation of this image was especially striking, an interplay between small and intensely bright leaf shapes in yellow, and wider, more diffuse versions of the same in white, with an intermediate step that was too fast for the eye to grasp. Subliminal is the word; the intermediate image was undoubtedly another leaf form, but it's rapid transition made for a curious animation effect, whereby the small intense image actually appeared to leap forward, downstage. (And

The legendary Chrissie Hynde

no, I hadn't joined the hoards of pot smokers during the intermission.)

He has one other trick with the leaf gobo: "It's something I'd worked on before this tour, using mirror balls fitted with large mirror pieces so you could project complete images off each facet." Production manager Jimmy Innes sourced some 20" balls with 2" square mirrors for the effect, and Hardiman clustered Martin Professional MAC 2000s around them. "I needed the MACs for the intensity, and because the focus is inside the light, not at a point outside the snout. Also, I'm using a lot of High End X.spots in the rig and I wanted the MACs specifically to cut through the general level. In fact they're powerful enough that even the reflected image out into the audience is noticeably stronger."

There's one final, and for me at least, slightly out of idiom aspect to the UB40 show. "The band are quite smart," said Hardiman. "They all wear Prada on stage, and the tour's sponsored by Aston Martin." But I guess that underlines just how far UB40 has come from their unemployed roots on a poor Black-country estate. "So I didn't want it to look too Disneyland."

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Phil Ward.

... Audio File

If you want a sign of the times, look no further than the fact that Captain Birdseye is abandoning cod for a less-endangered basis for the fish finger. Birdseye bosses have acknowledged a cod crisis, so ending several generations of 'mehearties' raised on the breadcrumb-packaged product of a commodity close behind oil for inciting bitter dynastic conflict.

WHAT IT MEANS is that something else will take cod's place, of course. Will anyone notice? Does it matter that a product does not subsist of its assumed natural materials, as long as it's convincing enough? Birdseye's switch - commendably planet-conscious - is a kind of metaphor for many such changes in pro audio product ingredients.

YOU DON'T HAVE to use Marshall stacks or Vox AC-30s any more. You can run the signal through Amp Farm - a convincing but, more importantly, convenient ProTools plug-in. You don't have to use rare and expensive compressors and limiters. They too have plug-in equivalents, or digital clones conjured up by Sintefex's Replicator. You don't (luckily) need Wembley Stadium any more. You can use Sony's DRE-S777 Sampling Reverb.

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into Michael Jackson on Helium. Or the other way around.

NONE OF THESE innovations has been inspired by world shortages, unless you count the world shortage of anyone capable of salvaging Wembley. But they do reveal that we are living in an age when copies are as good as the original, for all practical purposes other than curating. This is bad news for owners of originals, for all practical purposes other than car boot sales. Not unique originals, like either Van Gogh's Sunflowers or his pen-knife, but originals with a built-in shelf life. Original brands.

IT'S NOT JUST that cheaper alternatives tempt some customers to buy them. That in itself does not do a great deal of damage to professional brands of products that have to compete on performance as well as price, like microphones. It's that, when the professionals are satisfied with the performance of the cheaper brand, the price of the more expensive one has to be defended very creatively. It was John Nady, founder of wireless microphone manufacturer Nady Systems and one of the key figures in modern entertainment technology, who said recently that: "The cost of a cellular went from \$1,800 to free with a subscription, while somehow pro audio has remained insulated from the reality of consumer electronics." Allowing for the fact that professional consumer electronics is a slightly different beast, he has a point.

AS SOMEONE WHO KNOWS, firstly, the anatomy of a microphone as intimately as Captain Birdseye knows cod and, secondly, most of the factories where microphones are made, Nady was explaining his company's policy of keeping prices at a realistic level while maintaining ever higher quality. In the process, he hopes to offer professional musicians and engineers a wider choice by drawing them into product ranges that are equally attainable by semi-pros and amateurs.

IT'S UNUSUAL to find a pioneer, a founder - one of the originals, indeed - setting out a business strategy you might otherwise associate with those who traditionally follow pioneers, as in gold rushes. Pioneers are more likely to be seen encircling their products with upturned wagons and firing back. Often this is a necessary act of self-defence, with intended spin-off benefits for the industry as a whole. Both AKG and Shure have fought and won significant battles against piracy in recent years, with AKG even establishing a technical design as a defensible copyright for the first time, astonishingly.

BUT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE between firing off the odd broadside at pirates and trying to maintain an empire with an ageing fleet. Pro audio could be about to become engaged in a similar test to the one facing designer goods, as supermarkets attempt to make them available to their customers at greatly reduced prices. The European Court of Justice recently upheld Levi Strauss's defence of its brands against an incursion by Tesco to unleash non-EU distribution chains - and therefore fill its shelves with genuine 501s. But that battle was not the end of the war.

ASDA AND OTHER BULK outlets also have access to non-EU supply lines, and are part of a mounting pressure group to prevent 'quality' brands like Levi and Nike from restricting distribution to approved, themed, up-market and high mark-up stores. As Asda business director David Miles puts it: "These are the same goods, but they are sold at vastly different prices just because of the location of the place they are sold from."

THE PARALLELS IN PRO AUDIO ARE CLEAR.

The erosion of the value-added reseller and distributor layer is already underway, with some manufacturers preferring to use the internet and other devices to get closer to customers. At the same time, as it becomes easier to get professional results out of products, prices attached to esoteric brands are harder to sustain, placing even further pressure on distributor margins. Eventually, Nady's "reality of consumer electronics" will catch up.

THIS, ALAS, IS IN SPITE of the fact that the role of the professional reseller and distributor is of mutual benefit to the manufacturer and the user. They help the user get the best out of their equipment and their enterprises, and they educate the market in the value of the right brands. But that task gets more difficult as the brands become less distinct and more interchangeable. In the end, the users will decide how much importance to place on brand distinction, on the relative usefulness of an original and its software-based alternative, on cod and its substitute.

"The parallels in pro audio are clear. The erosion of the value-added reseller and distributor layer is underway, with some manufacturers preferring to use the internet and other devices to get closer to customers."

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BOND GIRLS

One of this autumn's more unusual tours features a controversial band who have been thrown out of the charts, reprimanded by their record company for appearing nude on an album cover, and censured by the music press for wearing jeans on stage. We couldn't have stopped Mike Mann finding out more if we'd wanted to.



Perplexingly, the rebels in question are nothing more sinister than a string quartet called Bond: described as 'The Classical Spice Girls' they are currently on a debut tour, promoting their album *Born*. Their appeal is diverse to say the least, according to manager Mel Bush: "The audiences we have seen in the UK have ranged from six to 60."

Lighting designer Liz Berry (who, technically speaking, also designed the 'set') worked to a minimal scheme to provide a rig with a rock 'n'roll feel that could be hung in theatres, conference halls and smaller European venues. "We may still have trouble finding even four flying points in some venues!" stated lighting director Ewan McRob. Supplied by Vari-Lite Europe, the two-truss system incorporates a mixture of VL5s and VL5Bs for washes. "It's nice to be able to use the two side-by-side," commented McRob. "The more pastelly colours of the 5B are great for the classical acoustic sections, but we need more intensity for the pop numbers."

Bond, despite their classical training from the age of five, are rock wannabes. "The girls do a cover of *Kashmir* by Led Zeppelin," he revealed, "and given half a chance they'd have had a stage full of Molefays! The brief is to rock things up a bit, but actually the show's fairly laid-back."

McRob's task is to keep the factions of the audience happy - enough still light to pacify

the classical fans, but sufficient movement to give the kids their money's worth. 10 VL6Cs and three 6-way Par can bars are used to keep the action lively, and Lycian Starklites are used front-of-house in a very non-classical manner. "Again, we're anticipating problems in some of the smaller venues in Europe," explained McRob. "Some of them don't have four permanent followspot positions - and using two spots on four artists won't be much fun!"

Upstage, a Fourth Phase starcloth is used - complemented by a VL6 moon projection - for some slower numbers, and a custom logo is flown slightly further downstage, just behind the main gauze. This, added to the various looks created by Berry with VL6s on the gauze itself, provides McRob with a framework from which to develop the show. "There have been no major design changes, but it has evolved since rehearsals. We're carrying everything into Europe."

Jostling for space on the downstage truss is a pair of Turbosound Q-Light TQ-440SP self-powered cabinets. "We could really do with flying some more," complained front-of-house engineer Mike 'Bunny' Warren, "but we're already close to the limit on some of the points in places we've been to." Warren's main system - also made up of the diminutive Q-Light cabinets - has caused some consternation - local crews assuming that they are merely sidefills, for example.

Even Warren confesses to being unimpressed when he first saw them. "Is this all there is?" I said when they turned up," he laughed, "but I do think that it's an amazing little PA - it's very natural, which is ideal for this type of show."

12 boxes on the ground and two in the air was all that was required to fill the largest venue on the tour in Bournemouth - though the team did use Robbie Williams' somewhat larger V-Dosc rig at Bond's London show. "To be honest, we all agreed that it didn't sound any better with the much bigger system at the Albert Hall," Warren commented. The Turbo system was supplied by Britannia Row, and director Bryan Grant explained his choice of loudspeaker: "I realized that Bond's audiences were likely to be put off by seeing a huge PA system, and when Turbosound first demo'd them to me I was blown away by what these little speakers could do. Their coverage and throw is excellent."

Warren pointed out that he does not subscribe to the idea that having amplifiers in the air is a bad move: "Of course, there's always the risk that an amp will die - and we'd lose one speaker. It's no different from a conventional system - there's not normally any time to change an amp during the show anyway - and if we lost a whole amp rack on a normal system - which does happen - we'd be without one side of the PAI. From a practical point of view, with only two of us on the crew, it's rather nice not to have to carry amp racks about."

Subs, too, are self-powered - six TQ-425SPs were arrayed on the deck, three per side. "We're using a couple of front-fills, too - but they're only needed to add a tickle of strings because of the acoustical level of the drums and backline," Warren explained. Bond are touring with a full five-piece pop backing band - who are not, apparently, under instructions to tone things down.

With no vocal mics on stage, instrument miking takes on a slightly higher profile for this production. Many of the sources (keyboards, samplers and the electric stringed instruments) are DI'd into the Yamaha PM4000 console via a rack of BSS active DI boxes, but as an Audio-Technica fan, Warren was keen to get his favourite mics in place. "I'm using 4041s on high hats, 4050s on the guitars and an ATM35 as a



Lighting director Ewan McRob at the Avolites Pearl desk (left) and FOH engineer Mike 'Bunny' Warren

clip-on." For the strings, Warren has deployed Accusound miniature goosenecks, which are wired; electric violins, viola and cello all use Shure radio packs.

Processing is limited to basic gating (Drawmer 201s) on the drum kit, and compression on the more lively sources - which include sampler, bass, acoustic guitar, electric viola and cello - all of which are processed by BSS DPR-402s. The Electric violins, which require rather more finessing to keep them under control, are routed through a Smart Research C2 - Alan Smart's famed 'SSL compressor'. The only effects are provided by a Lexicon 480L, split into dual stereo mode to provide two complete reverb programs.

Warren divides the show between listening to the mix and PFL-ing critical channels - with 48 on-stage sources there is potential for very audible disasters. He does, however, keep a weather eye on the audience. "I try to judge what type of people we have in each night," he explained. "A lot of them are very classically-minded - so when their ears start bleeding you know you've gone too far!" Warren's humour belies the sensitivity of the mix that he creates - blending instruments that were never intended to appear on the same stage, and achieving a dynamic that is every bit as wide as a true 'classical' performance.

Mixing monitors on stage at Bournemouth, Joe Campbell (who is more accustomed to the likes of the Manic Street Preachers and Prodigy) was feeling a little exposed. "It's my own fault," he confessed. "I didn't get up early enough today and the local crew put the monitor desk where it normally goes." Which is to say behind a solid wall of FOH speaker cabinets. With the minuscule PA system built, the Midas Heritage 3000 - and its operator - are still very visible from the auditorium. "I'm getting used to it," he said, "I always wear black anyway, and I'd rather be in close eye-contact with the girls."

Bond, apparently, are taking to their Shure in-ear system like the proverbial water-borne ducks. The four instrumentalists, who have no backline for their electric strings, are totally dependent on Campbell and the PSM 700 system. "I listen at the desk on a pair of moulds that are the same as most of them are using," explained Campbell. "I do have a listening IEM pack, but it only comes out if I need to check a problem. I'm not processing the mixes after the desk, so what I hear should be exactly what they're getting."

Amazingly, Campbell uses no dynamics processing, in an application where many would resort to racks of compression and gating. "I don't even use output EQ," he stated proudly. "For reverb I'm using two M2000s (from TC Electronics) - this gives me four reverbs in total. Haylie (lead violinist) likes a bit of verb, but the others don't - the rest are for our guitarist, drummer and percussionist."

Bond have been given a rough ride so far by the classical purists, following as they do in the steps of controversial soloists Nigel Kennedy and Vanessa Mae. But they're not about to give up without a fight. "We are all classical musicians," says Haylie Ecker. "In a modern world, it is disappointing that the classical elite cannot embrace change." It's just as well, for their sake, that Joe Public can.

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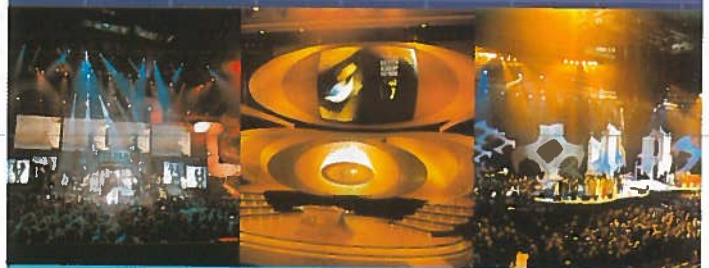
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Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

It's Linbury Prize time again, and a dozen young designers, initially selected from 130 students at 13 UK design schools, have been working on projects with the Royal Court, the Young Vic, English Touring Theatre and the Welsh National Opera. Their results were on display this month at the National Theatre

in the winners' exhibition.

IT WOULD BE wrong to think of the Linbury as a purely British competition. This year's overall winner, who picks up £4,500 plus a commission from English Touring Theatre, is Moritz Junge, from Germany. Among the 12 finalists were two each from France and Greece, and one each from Australia, Spain and Sweden. Only one Briton featured in the final list of winners -

Max Jones from the Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff.

THE LINBURY BIENNIAL PRIZE for Stage Design, to give it its full name, has become an institution of much more than financial value. In the years since it was first awarded the judges have come up with some very good choices. Tim

Hatley and Neil Warrington were the runners up (to Kenny MacLellan) for the first prize, in 1989, and the winners since then include Angela Davies in 1991 and Es Devlin in 1995. All of these have become regular suppliers of superlative design for the West End stage and beyond. Perhaps it's just as well that so many of this year's contestants come from abroad, because the British stage design scene is already overcrowded with talent, and the competition for work means that producers can pick and choose from the best without having to pay them bank-breaking fees. In spite of Equity minimum rates, few set or costume designers earn much more than a living wage from theatre work, and even the best of them can be seen at regular intervals on the Fringe or in the regions accepting the insult of a low fee on top of the injury of a ludicrously low budget.

NEVERTHELESS, there's no denying the quality of the training in British design courses that has attracted so many students from abroad. In these circumstances, it's pretty astonishing to hear that London University's Slade School of Fine Art, which supplied no fewer than four of this year's Linbury 12, has just announced that it is to stop teaching theatre design.

COINCIDING WITH the Linbury announcement was the publication of a new book by Pamela Howard, one of our finest and best-loved teachers of stage design. It's called *What Is Scenography?* and represents a distillation of her many years of teaching and practical experience. And it's definitely not a how-to treatise.

ALL RIGHT, I hear you cry, what is scenography? At the beginning of the book, Pamela gives answers to that question from leading designers from all over the world, all personal friends, but

her own succinct answer is 'the creation of the stage space'. By giving her work this description, she is trying to escape the notion of stage design as mere scene painting, although she would not want to leave that aspect out of the full range of activity demanded of the designer for theatre, or - as she would have it - the scenographer. In a series of lively chapters, she looks at seven elements of the craft, defining them as space, text, research, colour and composition, direction, performers, and spectators. Her aim is to portray the scenographer as someone central to a production, working as an equal contributor with the director and the actors. And the best of our designers have been doing just that for quite a while - surely longer than Pamela suggests when she talks of Jocelyn Herbert, a personal hero, as 'the first British scenographer'.

THE BOOK is a typically modest production which boasts no swanky colour photographs - or for that matter monochrome - preferring to make its points with sketches and drawings, many of them no more than marginal notes. Its real joy is the picture it gives, in its frequent true-life examples, of a highly perceptive, truly committed theatre person, deeply involved in the production process. You learn about scenography by watching Pamela practise it, often alongside great theatre practitioners. (It's hard to imagine she was old enough to work backstage with the Berliner Ensemble on their historic 1965 visit to London, but by then she had been a designer for five years).

HER FINAL CHAPTER, which includes a strong call for proper recognition for the craft, explains how "If theatre mirrors life, then the strict demarcations between theatre disciplines, architecture, light, direction and writing, are also merging into a different kind of creation in which the scenographer is now a major player."

TO BE HONEST, I don't see the need for all this worry over definition. Good design will always come from a close involvement in the theatre team, and (as Pamela hints here), the scenographer is by no means alone: lighting and sound designers have ever more important roles to play. But we don't have to call a committed lighting designer a lumographer, surely? But this is a minor worry. Read this book for its warm insights into the creative process, and for its summary of a well-spent life in the theatre.

What Is Scenography is published by Routledge at £15.99 for the paperback edition.

"In spite of Equity minimum rates, few set or costume designers earn much more than a living wage from theatre work, and even the best of them can be seen at regular intervals on the Fringe or in the regions accepting the insult of a low fee on top of the injury of a ludicrously low budget."

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I was determined to start this month's column with something optimistic, so I am grateful to Martin Professional for providing the glad tidings. Martin has announced, despite the present economic climate, that it is proceeding with an investment of US\$20 million in a new production facility that will double its present capacity.

"While I am sure that this bullish statement from Martin will put the fear of Thor up its competitors, for Martin already has the largest, most automated and state-of-the-art factory that I have seen in the industry - instead it should give us all a focus - that there is going to be an end to the downturn."

IN THE WAKE of the 9-11 disaster and its impact on the US market and elsewhere, this announcement is a remarkable indication of the company's confidence in the future and, in particular, its belief in the future expansion of the market for entertainment lighting products. While I am sure that this bullish statement from Martin will put the fear of Thor up its competitors, for Martin already has the largest, most automated and state-of-the-art factory that I have seen in the industry - instead it should give us all a focus - that there is going to be an end to the downturn.

IN THE MEANTIME, Martin is also showing serious intent towards the architectural lighting market with the appointment of Gorm Teichert as its international sales director dedicated to that market segment. Teichert was previously managing director of Erco UK, and his

appointment is an indication that Martin accepts that a separate strategy is required to reach this market sector. Pio Nahum continues in the same role in relation to entertainment lighting products.

TO THE STRAINS of: "I'm back in the saddle again", Frank Gordon is once again hitching his white stallion to the rail outside 2217 West Braker Lane, the home of High End Systems. After the stress of the previous several months, under a CEO who was charged with selling the business come hell or high bonus, and the subsequent collapse of the talks with ETC, it must have been a huge relief to the entire staff to return to some sense of normality and, indeed, continuity. It was only a few months previously that Gordon had been unseated by Generation Partners, the majority shareholder in High End, in an unexpected attempt to shake out the business and sell its stake. Nothing could have been more unsettling to the staff and customers alike. Frank was, and is, highly regarded both inside and outside the company and had developed a reputation as a shrewd negotiator. He had achieved universal respect and become recognised as a High End man through and through, rather than simply a nominee of the Suits.

AT THE TIME, I said in this column that I hoped that Generation would act in the best interests of the business, though that might not necessarily be commensurate with its own need to make a turn. It seems that the partners finally came to their senses and performed a complete about turn, thus converting Frank's banishment into a sabbatical. However, not before a lot of collateral damage had occurred, including the permanent loss of Nils Thorjussen.

NEVER WAS A STEADY HAND on the reins more necessary at High End than now, what with the current state of the market in the US

and everything else that has gone before. While Frank Gordon may not be in the image of the typical swashbuckling western hero, despite the cheesy country music accompaniment to his return, he no doubt has the cool hand needed for a gunslinger of more wily intent.

ONE STORY WHICH SLIPPED this column due the events of 9-11 that disturbed the PLASA Show, was the announcement of the bans of marriage between Coemar, the Italian manufacturer of automated luminaires, and Tracoman, its US distributor. Both parties were enthusiastically propagating the story at the time, but for some reason we had difficulty obtaining the confirmatory press release and, on eventual arrival, it referred only to 'an agreement in principle'. Then, it appeared that there would be a staged takeover of Coemar by the Tracoman parent company, the Stanton Group, but on 15 November, Stanton announced that Coemar had that very day joined the Group.

WHILE TO OUTSIDERS Bruno Dedoro of Coemar and Gerard Cohen of Stanton/Tracoman may seem like curious bedfellows, both parties have a strong vested interest in making the thing work. After all, Tracoman had originally, and very successfully, created the market for Martin in the US and must hope that it can do the same again with Coemar products. Indeed, it has already made inroads, and with a say in product development, it must hope for greater things. Cohen also has considerable experience of dealing with, shall we say, 'strong' personalities. After all, he had to deal with Peter Johansen for many years, indeed from the earliest beginnings of Martin Professional, eventually selling the rights to the US distribution back to the company as they went public. Johansen was no pushover.

WHILE GIVING UP CONTROL with some reluctance I am sure, Dedoro has had compelling reasons to face reality: his wife is in poor health and needs to spend long periods abroad, while his daughters are not inclined to be involved in the business. This deal will enable him to maintain the innovative product role that he cherishes so much, while financial worries are shouldered by others. So, it does make sense all round.

IT IS THAT TIME of year again when I wish all readers of this column a happy holiday season and, most especially, a prosperous New Year. I can think of no time since I started penning this column that this plea for prosperity has more resonance. Good luck one and all with your aspirations for the coming 12 months.

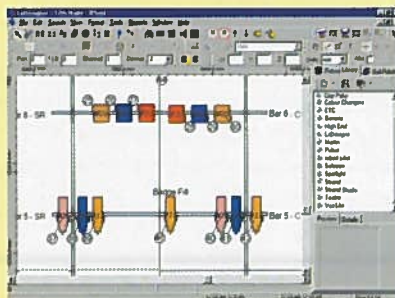
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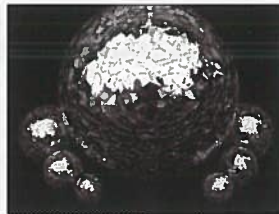
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LDI 2001



Despite some understandable concerns, LDI went ahead as planned. L&SI reports from Florida.

Naturally, there were doubts about this year's LDI show following the events of 11 September. These ranged from concerns about whether people would travel to the visit the show - both internally in the US and from overseas - to whether the show would take place at all. With the assistance of ESTA and other supporters, the rallying cry went out through September and October, and the show went on.

Admittedly, some exhibitors dropped out, making a floorplan reshuffle necessary, and the general consensus was that the visitor numbers seemed markedly down. However, at the end of the day, business was done in Orlando: by the close of the show many exhibitors said they had done well - a few even said they had done better than last year. The prevailing attitude was well illustrated by TMB Associates, who gave us little stickers to wear on our badges, bearing the Stars and Stripes and the words 'I traveled overseas to come to LDI 2001. Capitalism Rules!'

ADB's stand focused on its high end lighting control systems and communication networks. The flagship Phoenix 10 was on stand, linked to a WYSIWYG laptop to demonstrate the operational facilities of the company's recently launched ISIS software. ADB's UK arm - Lighting Systems International - has been busy of late, having recently completed a major studio project for Channel Four (more on this in a future issue).

Altman had three new products on stand. The UV-250 blacklight is a lower wattage, more compact version of the company's established 400W fixture, and is designed to provide a wash of high intensity illumination of fluorescent materials at distances of up to 40 feet. The multi-lamp MR-16 Jazz strip is a trimmed down version of its predecessors, whilst the Econocyc has been designed to provide an even wash of light on cys and backdrops, but can also equally fulfil the role of multi-purpose flood/fill light.

LDI time again, and **Artistic Licence** received another lawyer's letter. Not from a competitor

High End: Top, the Catalyst crew, l-r: High End's Catalyst product manager Bobby Hale, Tony Gottelier and Peter Wynne Willson of WWG and High End's VP of engineering, Mike Wood

Barbizon: the team launched the company's Show Control Division

City Theatrical: Gary Falls of CT with Broadway lighting designer Ken Billington



this year, but from one Joseph Saddler, a.k.a Hip-Hop artist Grandmaster Flash, who has taken issue with Artistic's use of the name 'Grand-Master Flash' for its PC-based lighting control software. Wayne Howell, understandably, thinks it unlikely that a piece of software could be mistaken for a man... Legal matters aside, Artistic was making proper news with the announcement of more supporters of the Art-Net Alliance, the company's public domain, royalty-free protocol initially conceived as a 'stop-gap' in the wait for ESTA's Advanced Control Network (ACN). The Art-Net Alliance now includes Artistic Licence, ADB, MA Lighting, Doug Fleenor Design, Goddard Design, Electronics Diversified, Zero 88/i-Light, Medalion, Media Motion and Enttec.

Avolites was staging the US launch of the Diamond 4, debuted so successfully at the PLASA Show which we covered in our October issue. Also making its first appearance in the USA was the ART 2000 US dimmer, specifically designed to suit the needs of the American market.



Alas, not a whiff of Guinness to be found on the **Bandit Lites** stand, or rather stands, but a chance to chat to members of a company which is enjoying a year of major growth. Thanks to both a growing workforce and client list, Bandit is now one of the largest lighting hire companies in the world.

Lighting specialist **Barbizon** was promoting its new Show Control division, which provides custom solutions to users' show control needs - bringing technical systems such as lighting, audio, video, teleconferencing and security under the control of a simple user interface. The service will be available from Barbizon's 11 offices across the US.

City Theatrical was showing the AutoYoke for the Strand SL ellipsoidal (profile) and the Strand Bambino 2kW Fresnel, as well as its EFX Idea Book, featuring dozens of effects for the EFX Plus² projector.

Clay Paky, **Group One** and **Pulsar** joined forces again to display their latest products. For Clay Paky, it was a chance to build on the feedback from PLASA for its recently launched silent versions of the Stage Profile, Stage Zoom and Stage Color systems, whilst for Pulsar, LDI was an opportunity to throw its hat into the LED ring with the US launch of the ChromaRange.

If we were looking for some immediate results from the recent merger of **Coemar** and **Tracoman**, we didn't have to wait long. The massive split stand had a tranche of both new and rejuvenated products. The Panorama range gets two new signings - the 250 and 250C and the CF7X comes on in place of the CF7, where a redesign of the reflector, improved lens coatings and new colour selections have resulted in a dramatic increase in light output. The much anticipated iSPOT is a compact and versatile light, loaded with features, key amongst them internal programming, gobo indexing and remote focus. According to Coemar, it's also considerably brighter, so expect it to pack a punch when you get the chance to try it.

One of the simplest, yet most effective, products at LDI was **Color Kinetics'** prototype Color Dial. Looking remarkably like an ordinary dimmer lightswitch, this is a push button control system intended for architectural lighting applications - turn the dial to select any colour you like and then push it to select from a range of different modes - chasing, strobing, wash, random - so it goes.

DeSisti was promoting its new Delux fluorescent. Completely redesigned, a new reflector system and lamp angle have removed the need for an external intensifier. Additionally, the photometrics have been optimized and are consequently more efficient than earlier versions. The company has also now produced a vertical yoke.

One of the quirkiest stands was that of **Doug Fleenor Design**, a strangely disorientating Bacofoil-style Hall of Mirrors. For those brave souls who ventured in, there was a rare treat tucked away in the rear - the Apathy console. Designed with tongue firmly in cheek, as an antidote to ETC's Obsession console, this is a single channel console that sends all 512 outputs to the same level. Useful for testing, set-and-forget applications and focusing, it's also very affordable.

Speaking of **ETC**, LDI delivered the next logical step in the company's alliance with **CAST Group** in the shape of Emphasis - a major software upgrade for ETC's Express and Expression consoles which brings on board all the features of the latest WYSIWYG visualization software (see below) and WYSILink graphic package. Processed by an outboard PC connected to the console and the ethernet network, lighting cues, fixture attributes, problems etc, can all be visualized. The boring repetitive elements have also been removed, thanks to a high level of integration which means that information only has to be entered once and the system will automatically update everything related to it. The good news for the 15,000 of you out there who use Expression or Express consoles (ZX or better) is that upgrading to the new system is only a phonecall away. And so to the latest version of WYSIWYG from CAST - first seen in prototype form at PLASA and subsequently refined. Part of its extended appeal will lie in a new user interface which adopts a much more task-orientated approach, especially during the CAD process.

George & Goldberg Design were joined on stand by Ted Fregon from **Bytecraft** in Australia, to promote the announcement that the company has just taken on representation of Bytecraft products in the USA. G&G is responsible for a large amount of design and production work for the touring and corporate markets, and have many high profile clients.

High End Systems picked up the Lighting Product of the Year Award for the Catalyst to add to the one it collected at the PLASA Show. The other major attraction on stand was the Wholehog III console, glimpsed at PLASA but working for the first time at LDI. This stylish electric blue unit from the **Flying Pig** camp offers some very intelligent time-saving features. Using Fast Ethernet networking, the Wholehog III system is highly flexible, ACN-ready, has on-board CD writer and Zip drive, and can offer control of unlimited DMX universes via Ethernet-linked DMX processor satellite units.

It's not often that a company seemingly comes from nowhere straight into the intelligent lighting market, but that is effectively what **Hubbell Entertainment** has done, though it does have the comfort zone of a 105-year old parent company behind it - Hubbell Lighting Inc. Well stocked with industry guys - Harvey Hazelwood and Teddy Van Bommel to name but two - and having invested a huge sum in tooling, the company has used its expertise in the electronics sector as a springboard to expansion into the entertainment market. The move seems well advised if the pre-production models of the Helux line of intelligent lighting fixtures, which are available as

High End: Frank Gordon was back in the saddle and having a friendly chat with Strand's Phil O'Donnell

Le Maitre: Rick Wilson, Adrian Segeren and Jim Juniper demonstrate a "Fog Solution"

Hubbell: Teddy van Bommel, Harvey Hazelwood and Woody Smith with the Helux range

Lee Filters: John Fuller with the Quick Roll system

wash and profile units in 150, 250 and 400W, are anything to go by. Price looks good too.

Having recently moved to a 60,000sq.ft purpose-built manufacturing facility in Knoxville, **James Thomas Engineering** has been focusing its attention on lanterns this year, and in particular, the recently launched IP-65 rated Par16 Outdoor lantern first seen at PLASA. However, it couldn't outshine the smile on Michael Garl's face having received the Eva Swann award at the ESTA Dinner in recognition of his tireless work for the Association.

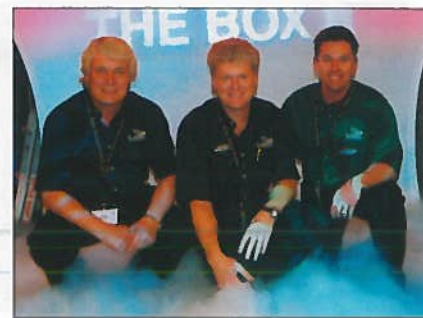
Rick Wilson was on the **Le Maitre** stand with Adrian Segeren, president of Le Maitre Special Effects Inc and Jim Juniper, who recently took on the role of sales and marketing manager in order to allow Segeren to concentrate on the company's new ProStage Pyrotechnic division. Wilson demonstrated the company's range of 'Fog Solutions' - a series of stage devices for the delivery of atmospheric effects developed by Le Maitre's Special Projects Team. The Floor Pocket (a stage trap effect) and the Fog Blade (a slit-vent stage opening) are both designed to work with the company's LSG Low Smoke Generator, as was the 'Fog Curtain' effect.

Proving again that the simplest ideas are often the best, **Lee Filters** introduced Quick Rolls - nothing to do with hay, but rolls of popular Lee colours pre-cut to common widths for theatrical luminaires. Two awards followed - one from ESTA and one from LDI. A prototype dispenser was also on stand and should be available soon.

LED screen manufacturer **Lighthouse** showed its latest development high above the stand of Olympic Cases. The 'Quarter Bin' version of the LVP10, its successful 10mm pixel pitch screen. 'Quarter Bin' refers to the stringent testing procedures that the company has introduced to the LED selection process, which ensures that variation in colour and output in individual LEDs is now reduced to one quarter of that formerly attained - meaning greater uniformity than was previously available.

Lycian had a new followspot - the M2 Modular. As the name suggests, the idea is that you choose from two different lamp houses (1200 or 2500W), a regular or deluxe gate module and a short, medium or long throw lens. By perming any of these combinations, you can effectively create the followspot you need without having to buy a completely new unit every time.

Showing on the stand of AC Lighting Inc, **MA Lighting's** grandMA lighting control system and its related family of products appear to be on the ascendant after several years of effort and development. New additions to the grandMA platform included the new grandMA 3D visualization software for PC. This allows a wizard-guided set-up of stages and scenic elements, along with multiple viewpoints, custom textures, etc. In 3D rendering mode, the software becomes a powerful visual tool with real-time rendering, and the use of polarising glasses in the real 3D mode offers an even more vivid design view.



Mad Manufacturing is now fully operational in the USA, with ex-High End man Ryan Krebs heading up the Texas-based Mad US office. Krebs reports that things were going well for Mad in the US market, and he hoped to boost the profile further with his presence at LDI. Included in the display were the stylish EVI range of fixtures, previewed at PLASA.

God knows what they feed those guys in Denmark, but it's a full time job keeping track of **Martin Professional's** new products. World Launches included the TracMAC mini automated followspot (an out of the box infra-red followspot, which took home the most promising prototype award); the FiberSource CMY 150 (intended for permanent installations); the T-Rex (a club effects fixture and companion to Martin's other famous predator, the Raptor); LightCorder (a small and handy DMX recorder that allows the recording and playback of any DMX512 output) and finally, i-fog fluid from JEM (designed specifically for intelligent lighting fixtures). LDI also provided the platform for Martin to announce the sale of the 100,000th MAC.



AC Lighting/MA: Mike Falconer and Michael Althaus with MA Lighting's 3D visualization software

Just visiting: Lighting designers Paul Gregory and Jonathan Speirs bump into L&S's camera

Stage Technologies: Nikki Scott of ST talks to Preston Bircher of Carnival Cruise Lines

OPTI: the team of Sean Billings, Brenda Lambert, Jeff McGrath, Andrew Silver and Neil Rice



Morpheus Lighting had some new additions to their well-established ColorFader range of scrolling CYM colour-changers. It's a clever system which has been around for a while, but Morpheus' latest development introduces an eight-light version for the first time - the 8-Fader. There is also an exterior/submersible version available, called the WetFader.

PCM's John Jones was on duty showing the latest developments from PCM which bring the CM Lodestar hoists in line with German safety standards VBG70/BGV C1. Features such as double brakes, four-position limit switch, 24V electrical components, under/overload protection and heightened safety factors allow these hoists to be used within Europe when moving loads over people without the need for additional load requirements or supporting steels. Control systems also available.

Returning to the LDI fold was **OPTI**, this time with its range of effects projectors, including the GoBoPro, GoBoShow and Solar Range, and its Trilite trussing. The company has recently expanded its US operation with a move to larger premises in Virginia from which it will stock both the UK-manufactured lighting

products and the Canadian-built Trilite. Work has been going on in the background on a number of new products which you can expect to see in the coming months.

Following the introduction of its Pathport System last year, **Pathway Connectivity** returned to LDI having added yet more functionality to the system. Essentially Pathport is a lighting control and communication device which routes the DMX protocol over the ethernet network. A number of events features and applications have now been added, including a graphical user interface software - Pathport Manager - which displays all connected Pathport nodes, as well as those specifically in use for a selected production.

With Hurricane Michelle threatening the coast of Florida during our visit, **Reel FX** had the appropriate counterpoint on stand with the Tornado - an effect which is finding work in the photographic, themed and film industries. Though it looks simple, it's actually very complex since its vortex dynamics and appearance are controlled by the same aerodynamics as a real tornado. The company is currently experimenting with the technology towards building an even bigger tornado simulator (100-300 feet high).

Rosco picked up the 'Scenic Product of the Year' award for Image Pro, a rather neat drop-in holder which fits into most luminaires (including the Altman Shakespeare, ETC Source Four, Selecon Pacific and Strand SL), and projects an image created by a plastic iPro slide. The slides themselves, protected by a cooling fan combined with layered, reflective filters, can be made from any image and are printed on high temperature film. Expect to see Image Pro in Europe early next year.

Selecon's mechanical dowser for its Pacific MSR range was attracting a lot of attention, as was its new HiPort projector. Developed by Selecon's architectural lighting division Ardiis, in response to demand for a high output projector that is flush mounted, this is an ideal tool for pattern projection or where accurate beam control is required for either long throws or higher ambient light conditions.

Having shown prototypes at PLASA of its Giotto Wash 400, **SGM** had the first production models on stand at LDI. This is a compact, moving head washlight with a 400W hot re-strike MSR. Its main features include electronic zoom, CYM and CTO colour generation and a built-in beam shaper.

Following the company's recent problems and its integration into the Outback Holdings group of companies, **Slick** was on a mission to let the world know that the company is still going strong, and also that it has a repair, service and support centre based at Ocala, Florida.

It's been a while since we've seen Italian manufacturer **Spotlight** at LDI, but the hook this year is an expanding architectural range. The mini range includes a Fresnel, PC, Profile and Profile Zoom with

variations on each theme so you can spec the light you need. The line also includes a full range of accessories.

The imposing pyramid stand of **Space Cannon** dwarfed the show and collected the best stand award. The company had a number of new products, chief amongst them the CAT 150 (Colour Advanced Technology) - a professional exterior and interior wash/spot luminaire designed for architectural lighting professionals. It has an innovative full colour mixing system, capable of producing over 1 million colours, the essence of which is a patented tubular quartz dichroic system capable of providing smooth and saturated cross fades throughout the entire colour spectrum. Lots of ways to control it, 10 different versions available.

British stage automation specialist **Stage Technologies** made an announcement in conjunction with JR Clancy, a specialist provider of staging and rigging services to a wide range of entertainment venues on land and sea. After a number of years of working closely on a number of installations, the two companies signed a formal agreement at the Show under which JR Clancy will support Stage Technologies automation systems for all its North American land-based installations.

Stardraw took to LDI to launch its latest lighting software - Stardraw Lighting 2D. The Windows application has a library of over 8,000 symbols of fixtures and truss, regular monthly updates of new symbols and program features, advanced reporting and an interface that, according to MD David Snipp, is "so easy, even a salesman can use it". A boast too far perhaps? In addition to the new features, the company has also implemented a subscription-based system, in line with Stardraw Audio and Stardraw AV, where new features such as fault reporting or schedule generators, can be added easily.

Strand Lighting was pretty much reiterating the new products it showed earlier at PLASA, viz the powerful new SLD range of dimmer racks, and the new software (version 2.5) for both the 300 and 500 series consoles. This latter has been well received, not least because it came about following consultation with operators and designers worldwide, and therefore makes programming faster and easier for all users.

Strong extended its Nocturne range with the 2k Britelight with UV lens - arrived at by taking a standard product and adding a UV lens. We'll see these lights on the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

Starbucks could learn a thing or two from **TMB's** burgeoning café bar business - not least, free beer. Carrots aside, this is still the place to go if only to learn about the latest products added to the TMB distribution list, including additions to the PowerPAR range and new connection options for the ProPlex ethernet cable.

Two years ago **Tomcat** launched its Intelligent Truss system - a truss 'flightcase' which houses fixtures much like conventional pre-rig. The SwingWing is Tomcat's follow-up product (and comes on the back of design work they did for Hubbell) and like all good progenies in the trussing world, has taken steps forward in ease of build and cost. Also new, and at the time of the show without a name, was a prototype quick release truss connection system that doesn't need pins or tools for its assembly, but relies on a ball-bearing weighted connectal system. More on this in a future issue.

Last year **Total Structures** introduced **Omni** - a prototype truss connection system that allows three degrees of movement. In the 12 months since, it's become the company's fastest selling new product ever and with good reason. The rental brigade love it because it adds more capability to existing inventory. Riggers like it because it provides substantial structural gains, and designers are smitten because it offers an almost limitless range of possibilities. All of which makes the beancounters very happy. **Omni** also took home the LDI Rigging award.

Vari-Lite seems empowered of late and the new VL1000 ellipsoidal reflector spotlight can only continue the trend. Four years in development, it doesn't have the special effects capability of other fixtures in the **Vari-Lite** range, but at a competitive price point, that's not going to be the issue. Essentially **Vari-Lite** has taken one of the most popular conventional lighting tools ever used, the ellipsoidal reflector spotlight, and automated it. Its features include a tungsten source that produces an output in excess of 10,000 lumens, a unique colour mixing system, a zoom lens with an imaging range of 19 to 36 degrees and a super zoom which takes it right up to a 70 degree field. The VL1000 is proof (if proof were needed) of **Vari-Lite's** determination to concentrate on the luminaire market, a move underlined by the recent news that the company is to discontinue sales of its **Virtuoso DX** control system.

Wybron deservedly collected an award for the recently launched **Eclipse 2** iris-style dower - almost 50 years after its designer **George Eisenhauer** first committed his ideas to paper. The prototype design lay collecting dust until **Keny Whitright** discovered it last summer and immediately recognized its potential. The unit goes into full production soon. Never a man to stand still, **Whitright** has also invested in **Dunlavy Audio Labs**, a manufacturer of speakers aimed at the top end of the home market.

Nature will not be able to deliver enough **Frogs** for **Zero88** to continue naming its lighting control desk range after them. First there was **Frog**, then **Fat Frog** and at this year's **PLASA Bull Frog** - now comes **Mambo Frog**. First discussed at **PLASA**, and evolved into a prototype for **LDI**, this latest **Frog**, rather than being a hybrid console like **Fat** and **Bull** before it, is a

moving light only console. With a maximum of 96 fixtures, 512 DMX channels, 24 submasters for individual memories or chases and 48 group/palette buttons, it's aimed at venues where large numbers of smaller fixtures are the order of the day.

There was a rather depleted audio presence this year, with a number of companies apparently having dropped out, and one notable manufacturer opting for an unmanned display for some reason. This is generally understandable, as doubts about exhibiting in the current climate would naturally weigh heavier with those seeking an audio-orientated audience at this predominantly lighting-orientated show. However, those we spoke to seemed pleased with the level of trade they had seen by close of play.

Centre of attention for the **Klark Teknik Group's** stand at **LDI** was the **Legend** mixing console from **Midas**, billed as the world's first 'tri-purpose' console, suited to both front-of-house and monitor mixing environments - or, indeed, both at once. **Legend** proved also to be the star of all things audio at **LDI** this year, picking up the Show's Audio Product of the Year Award. Also on show was the new theatre control software for the highly-successful **Heritage** range of mixers, initially for the compact **Heritage 1000**. This allows for advances such as global on-line editing of scene set-ups via PC and off-line programming from home or elsewhere if desired.

Martin Audio seem to be riding high at the moment - despite the current market conditions. Some high profile installations over the past months (**Fabric**, **Ministry of Sound**) appear to have boosted the company's profile in the UK's top level club market, much to the chagrin of certain competitors, and the company has done some of their best business ever during 2001.

Dutch manufacturer of sound systems, **Stage Accompany** (see **L&S** November 2001) were also present to promote their highly respected range of sound products, including loudspeakers, the unique 'ribbon' compression drivers and amplifiers.

A longer report, together with a list of award winners, can be found at www.plasa.org/media. Next year's show will be held at the Las Vegas Convention Center on October 18-20, 2002.



Vari-Lite: Rusty Brutsché with the company's new VL1000

Wybron: Keny Whitright and the award-winning Eclipse 2 iris-style dower

Midas: Dave Webster (right) with the Midas Legend pictured with US sales manager Matt Larson

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World-leading manufacturer of studio recording and processing products is seeking an experienced and aggressive UK sales professional. Sound understanding of digital audio technology and studio practice required. Contact Richard - job ref AS199

Audio Systems Technical Sales - London Salary £20-30K subject to experience

Established audio systems supplier, specialising in sound reinforcement, installation and AV systems, is seeking to recruit a new member of an already strong and diversely skilled sales team. Contact Richard - job ref ATS160

Export Sales Manager - Bucks Salary £35-45K+

Leading British manufacturer of broadcast electronics seeks a technically well-grounded sales manager to manage and develop its business in the Asia region. Extensive travel, together with substantial autonomy offered for the right candidate. Contact Richard - job ref BES1815

UK Field Sales - AV Products Salary £25-30K+

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This company seeks an experienced technical service manager with hands-on experience to establish, maintain and monitor a national network of out-sourced service operators. Contact Richard - job ref AT1859

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Office-based Account Management - London Salary £21-26K+

Established British manufacturer and distributor of pro-audio systems is seeking a bright and articulate individual to join an existing sales team. The role involves establishing and developing relationships with customer accounts located throughout the UK. Contact Richard - job ref ASA1800

Technical Author (Pro Audio Products) - Oxford Salary £25-28K+

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R&D Engineer (Pro-Audio Products) - Oxford Salary £18-22K+

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Award-winning company which manufactures and sells unique audio and video distribution systems, as well as handling full projects from small conference venues to stadiums, is looking for a sales manager to source and develop new business. Contact Ian - job ref TP-AVS165

Hire Manager - Yorkshire Salary: £18-30K+

Established audio company is seeking a professional and experienced individual, preferably with hire management experience, to develop its hire division. Contact Ian - job ref HM262/1

Lighting Programmer/Technician - Egypt Salary Equivalent to: £25K+

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Established installation company is seeking an experienced contracts manager to oversee all aspects of the company's lighting contracts. Contact Ian - job ref TPCM262/2

Project Manager - London Salary £30K+

Established rigging company seeks an experienced contracts manager to oversee all aspects of the company's London contracts. The successful applicant should be experienced in contract work, H&S etc. Contact Ian - job ref CM280

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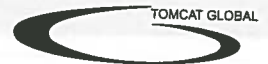
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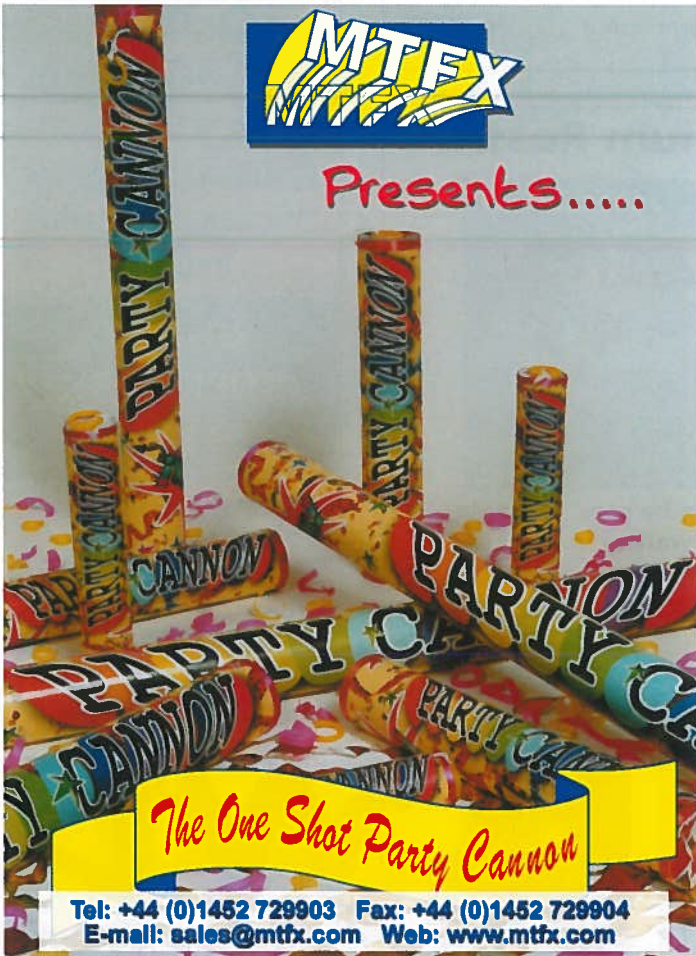
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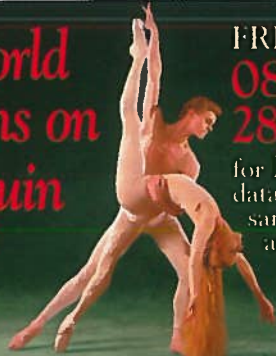
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In Profile... L&S Talks to the Industry Trend-setters

It's not often that you discover an Oscar and Emmy nominee living quietly in your local area, but East Sussex resident Michael Stringer has an enviable CV that details his career as a production designer in Hollywood and Britain from the 1950s through to the late 1980s.

Born in Singapore to British parents and raised in East London, Stringer first discovered the lure of the movies at the age of eight: 70 years later his passion hasn't waned for an art form that provided him with an illustrious career spanning 45 years and 52 feature films.

Despite retiring from film-making five years ago at the tender age of 73 to concentrate on his work as an artist and illustrator, Stringer retains the zest for film-making that he first demonstrated as a junior draftsman in Norman Arnold's art department at Nettlefolds Studio in the late 1940s.

Fresh out of the RAF, the young pilot used his talents as an artist to pave his way into the exciting world of 1940s film-making. "I'd always wanted to work in film and my mother was very encouraging and gave me a book on film when I was nine years old. It was an amazing book on scenic design."

That book was Stringer's introduction to production design and enabled him to start an impressive visual reference library that lines the walls of his spacious studio. In an ironic twist, Stringer was turned down for the RAF film unit and spent his service days creating caricatures of his fellow serviceman and superiors. His RAF days also enabled him to travel to New York as a



Michael Stringer is pictured at his home in East Sussex, surrounded by the mementoes of a lifetime's design work, including his Oscar and Emmy nomination certificates.

20 year old, where he was entranced by the images he saw at the Museum of Modern Art whilst on leave in 1944.

His first job after demobilisation was as a junior draftsman in the British film industry and from here he worked his way up to the coveted role of production designer: "It was such a revelation to me, as a fresh-faced, unknown 23 year old, to suddenly be art director on films of the calibre of Genevieve for Rank Organisation. The film budget was about £135,000 and the art department budget was £5,000. Genevieve started out as a black and white film, but then the decision was taken to produce it in colour, which caused all kinds of complications for us, but they were exciting times."

The American film industry beckoned Stringer and he went on to work with Paramount Pictures, MGM, Warner Brothers and Columbia Pictures. He collaborated with some of the leading film directors of the time on films such as The Sundowners, Casino Royale, A Shot in the Dark and Fiddler on the Roof, for which Stringer received an Oscar nomination for Best Production Design in 1971. "We knew we weren't going to win the Oscar; it was fabulous to be nominated but we just knew the Oscar was out of our league and it went to Nicholas and Alexandra, a stunning looking picture."

One of Stringer's most enjoyable and fruitful collaborations was with Walt Disney whom he designed nine films for, including Greyfriars Bobby and The Prince and the Pauper. "Walt Disney was a true visionary and a very friendly person to work with. The studio was a great place to be and I remember that you could just take whatever art materials you needed out of the well-stocked art room and you didn't have to sign for them." Stringer laughs as he recalls thinking what a luxury this was and how much more money the Americans poured into their film industry.

Stringer also enjoyed working with Blake Edwards and Peter Sellers and described both of them as a "joy" to be around. Stringer's work never lacked variety and he was fortunate enough to shoot in great locations such as the Philippines for Return from the River Kwai and Egypt for 633 Squadron. His ideal job was to work on light-hearted adventure films, which he made many of, including Superman in 1976 and Robin and Marian with Audrey Hepburn and Sean Connery, shot in Spain.

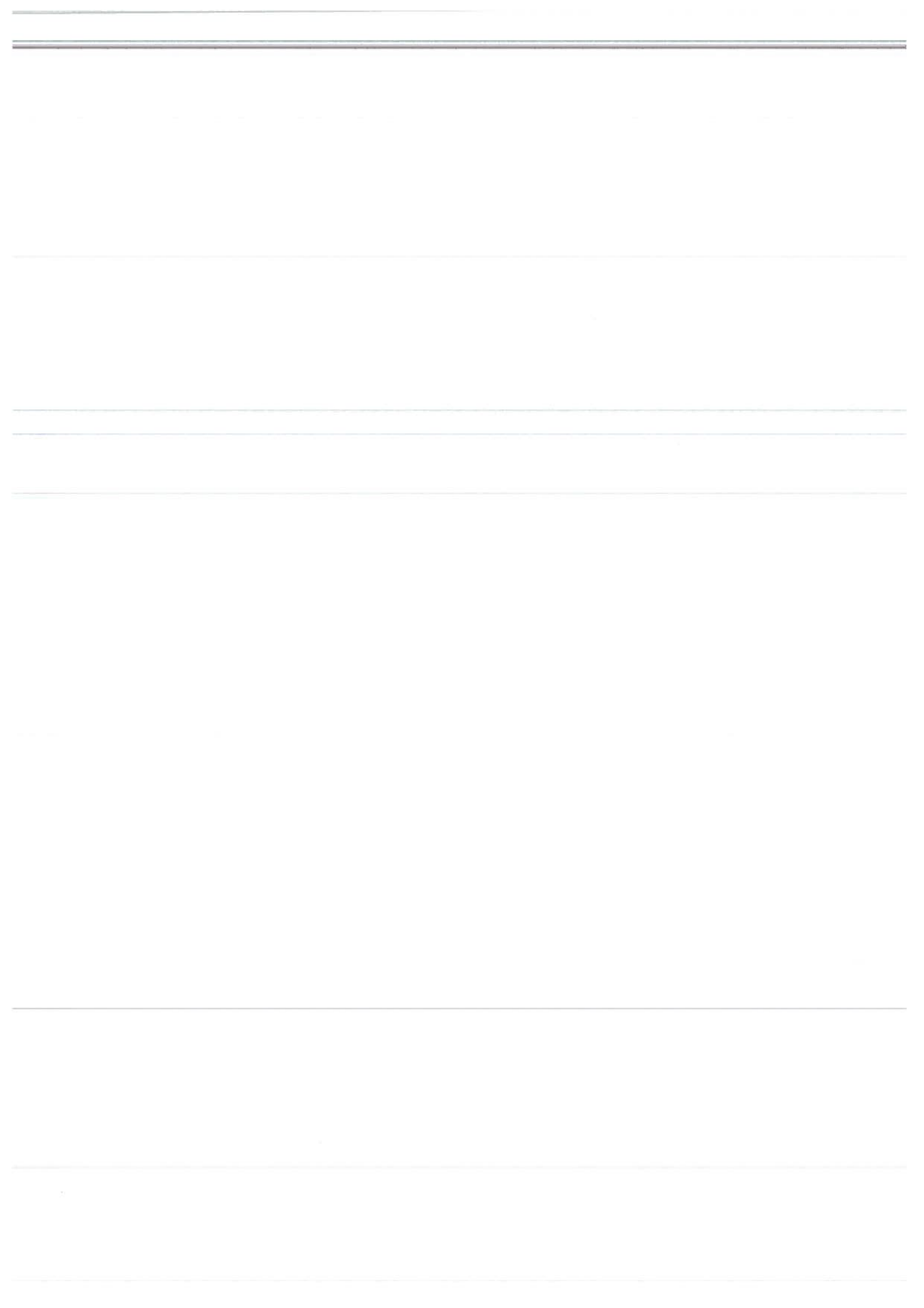
It was partially the extensive location travelling that led Stringer to retire from filmmaking in 1989 with his last two films taking him to Vancouver and Corfu respectively. These days he lives with his wife Laine, who is also retired from film-making, in a lovely home by the sea with a large studio that reflects all aspects of Stringer's professional life.

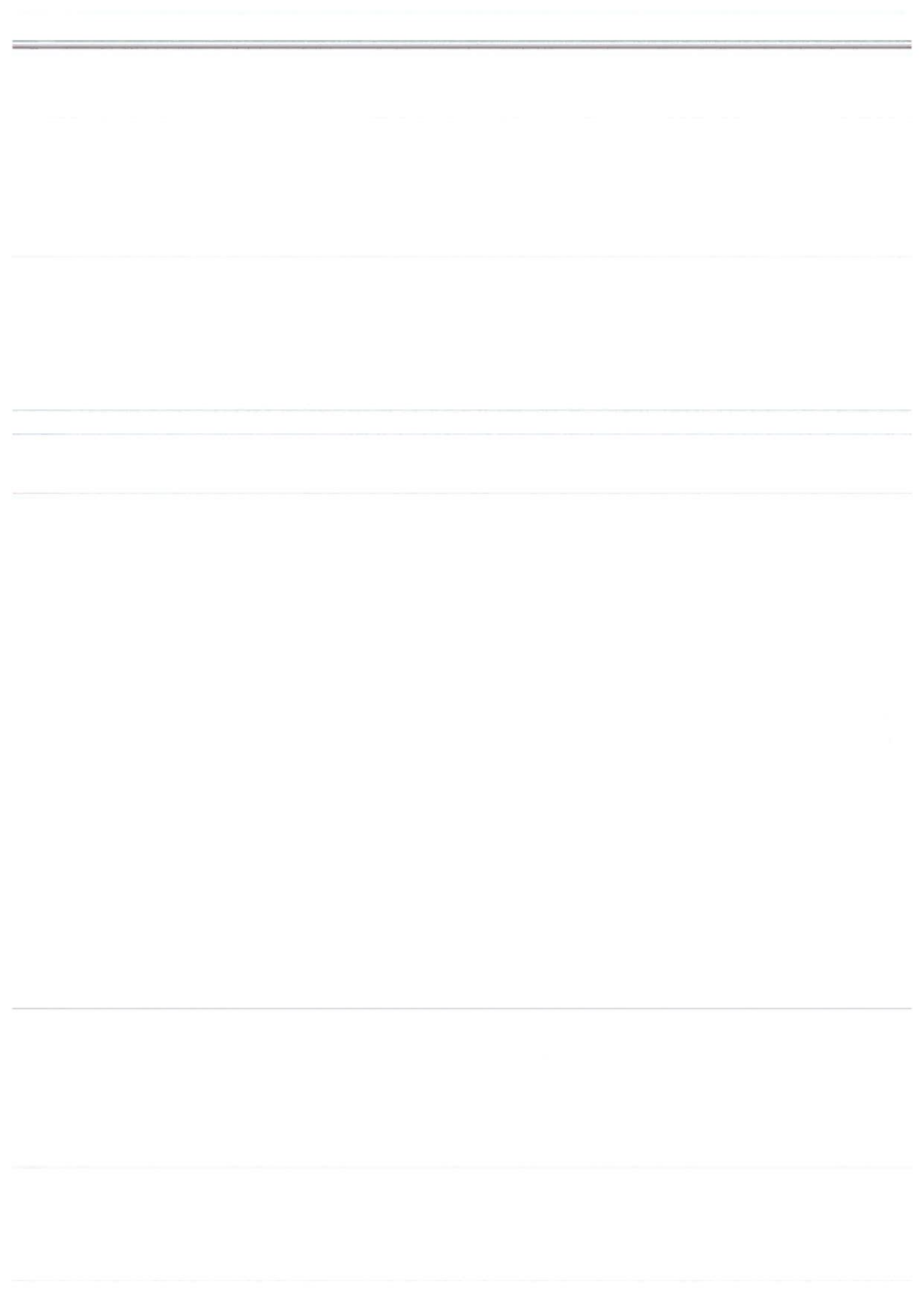
He still maintains a busy schedule and has had two children's books published, exhibited as a solo artist in New York, Tokyo and LA, designed the safety curtain at the Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne (hence our initial contact with him) not to mention a long involvement with Bernard Miles and the famous Mermaid Theatre. Retirement is not the kind of word you associate with Michael Stringer who possesses a zest for life and creative longevity that ensures he is always busy. ■

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