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THE ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY MONTHLY



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- Goodbye Girl opens in London's West End
- Helsinki's Hartwall Arena - new name in the venue game
- Light Conversation at Showlight 97 in Belgium
- Adlib Audio Swell to the Mersey Beat
- Oscar Returns to Hollywood
- On Tour with Peter Andre and The Manic Street Preachers

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The views expressed in Lighting and Sound International are not necessarily those of the editor or the Professional Lighting and Sound Association

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Turbosound Collects Queen's Award for Export

PLASA member Turbosound, the West Sussex-based loudspeaker manufacturer, has won a Queen's Award for Export Achievement for the second time in their history. The awards, just 109 of which were presented this year, are given for outstanding effort and achievement in the export field. Turbosound won their first Queen's Award 10 years ago in 1987. The awards are valid for five years, and are only conferred by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister after extensive scrutiny and examination by an advisory committee comprising leading figures from industry, commerce, trade unions and government.

The company have cast their overseas net to include 50 international distributors, most



recently adding Latin America and the Middle East, and have shown an outstanding growth pattern of almost 250% in the export business over the past three years.

A key feature of their success has been the establishment of the Flashlight/Floodlight network, with large inventories of the speaker systems being held at key locations around the world, allowing rock tours to be undertaken trans-globally while minimising transport requirements.

As Britain's top export prize, the Queen's Award for Export Achievement is a highly coveted prize. Previous PLASA Members to have won the Award include Allen & Heath (1995) and Glantre Engineering (1984 and 1991).

Stefan Ettmayer

We were saddened to receive the news this month that Stefan Ettmayer, the project manager and head of Ludwig Pani's technical sales and administrative operations, passed away on Monday April 21st at the age of 36



after a long battle against illness. Rainer Staub of Pani told L+S: "Stefan has been an inspiration and earned our respect for his professionalism and integrity. His warm personality made him a favourite amongst staff and customers." He leaves a wife, Gabriele, and two young children.

Ivano Makes a Move

No sooner had we announced the departure of Daniele Canuti from FLY, than we received the news that Ivano Burato, the bullet-headed anglophile who has spearheaded Coemar's sales efforts over several years, is moving down the road to FAL.

Burato, who had become almost as synonymous with Coemar as its ursine padrone Bruno Dedoro, will be handing over his mantle to Sylvano Corrado, previously responsible for sales at Tas who, L+S understands, will now cover both product ranges, at least for the time being.

In joining FAL, Burato is following a well trodden path between the two companies who are near neighbours in Castel Goffredo. Once there he will find plenty of opportunity to try out his well known penchant for English idiom and obscure proverbs, for he will be joining a team which includes lighting designer in residence Paul Dodd.

A nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse!








BT's View of the Future

British Telecom have given us a sniff of what lies ahead in the future of technology, with the publication of their latest Technology Calendar - the assembled forecasts of leading futurologists. Here are just a few of the developments many of us may witness in our lifetimes.

By 2000, wall-hung high definition colour displays will be with us and by 2001, it should be possible to position a sound anywhere in space. Video walls with screens 2m across should be achievable by 2005 and by the time we usher in 2015, holographic displays will be common-place and 3D conference facilities a popular application.

Data will travel on optical fibre at the speed of one Terabyte per second by the year 2003, the same year as computing at molecular level should also be possible, and, more worryingly, computers could be writing most of their own software by 2005. Desktop fabrication units may be part of everyday life by 2010 - handy for knocking up prototypes. Intelligent materials, with sensors, storage and effectors could be with us by 2015, whilst the one Petabyte memory chip will probably be achieved by 2017. And if this rate of development is simply not enough to satisfy the technophiles amongst you, don't worry - enhancement of human intelligence by external means should be possible by 2030 and artificial brains a reality by 2035. That should hurry things along a bit.

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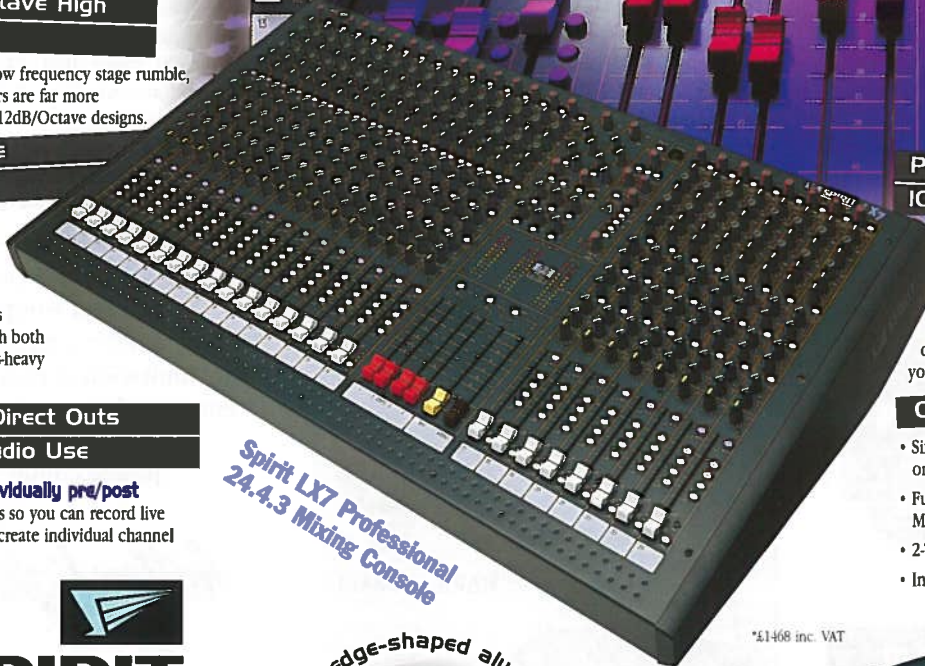
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- beam iris
- shutter blackout/strobe effect
- DMX512/12 channels
- weight 36 kg



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- colour mixing
- motorized focus
- beam angle 9°-36°
- dimmer 0-100 %



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PLASA Show Ready for London and China

Preparations for the 20th PLASA Light & Sound Show, which will take place at London's Earls Court from 7th to 10th September, are proceeding well, with 96% of available floorspace already booked. This year, PLASA will occupy two-levels, with the Top Deck offering a stage for seminars and workshops and a laser shoot-out gallery. Other new features for 1997 include a special 'Exhibitors' Hour' on the Monday morning and a 'Happy Hour' every evening from 6 - 7.30pm in the Elect Club.

In order to service its customers, show organiser P&O Events has also announced plans, in collaboration with PLASA, to launch an Entertainment Technology show in Shanghai from 14th to 16th April 1998 to service the premier trading centre for China. The event falls one week before Entech 98 and P&O are promising to ensure an easy transfer exhibitors at both events. To date, 56 PLASA UK members have expressed an interest, and 200sq.m of space has already been applied for. P&O's James Brooks-Ward commented: "Judging from feedback from PLASA 96, both PLASA 97 and Shanghai 98 look set to be great successes. Our aim in Shanghai is to provide an event organised to the high standards already established by the PLASA Show in London."

For further details, contact P&O Events in London on 0171-370 8231.

Stolen Equipment

The following equipment was stolen from Harrogate Conference Centre (Hall 3) on the night of 4th May, 1997: a Celco Gamma 36 ch Dimmer rack, 125a 1lp, socapex o/p, mains and control patch; a 125a three-phase male c-form to 3x125a single phase c-form splitter; a 37 pin socapex to Bleecon control spider and a Zero 88 XL lighting desk, with damaged master fader.

If you are offered any of these items for sale, or know of their whereabouts, then contact Chris Wroe at Playlight Manchester, telephone 0161-226 5858.

Stephen Joseph Theatre Funding Crisis



Alan Ayckbourn pictured at the launch of the Stephen Joseph Theatre in 1993.

The national papers have fallen over themselves to cover the outcry that erupted following complications over the funding of the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough. Though there was some speculation that the theatre (reviewed in L+SI, May 96) would have to close, a lifeline has now been thrown to the playwright Sir Alan Ayckbourn to save the £5.2 million theatre he opened just over a year ago.

In what must be a welcome move for this industry, North Yorkshire councillors voted recently to reverse a decision to cut all financial support for theatres in the county. However, the decision is likely to jeopardise other grants for the Stephen Joseph and may precipitate its closure when existing funds run out later this year.

Councillors agreed to give up to half of the £80,000 the county had promised. The change of heart should mean that £175,000 of lottery funding from the Arts Council should now also be released. North Yorkshire has told the theatre, however, that there will be no financial support next year and that this year's grant will be paid only on production of an acceptable business plan.



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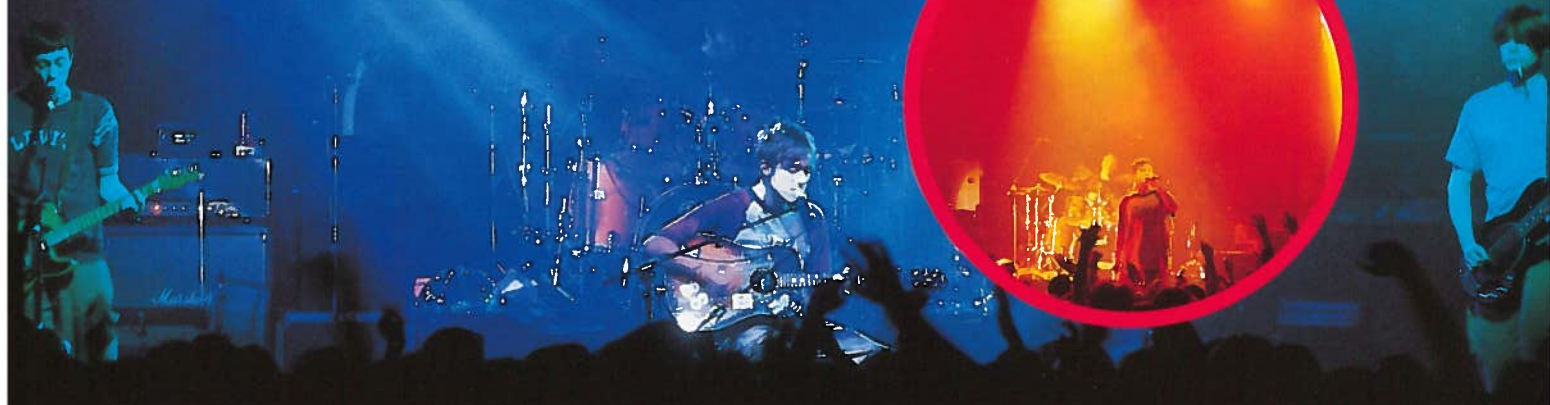
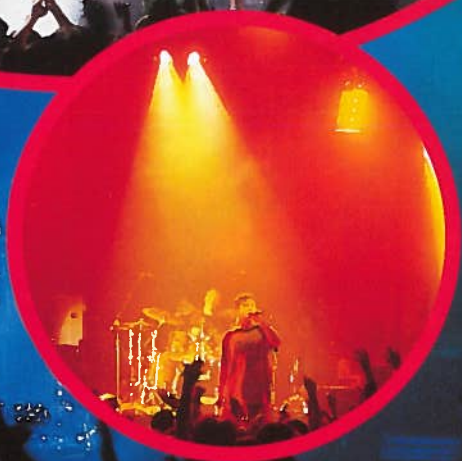
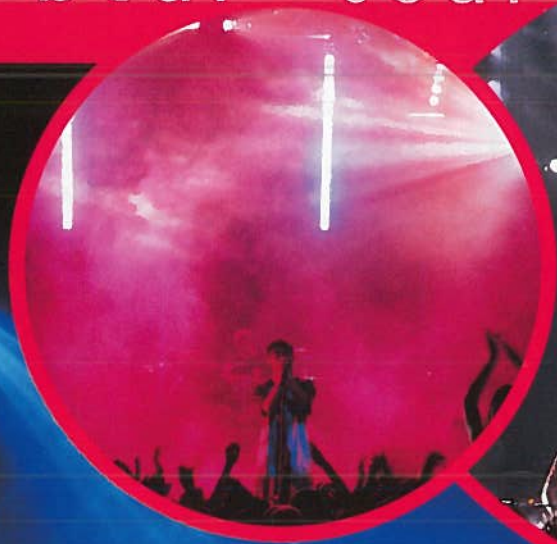
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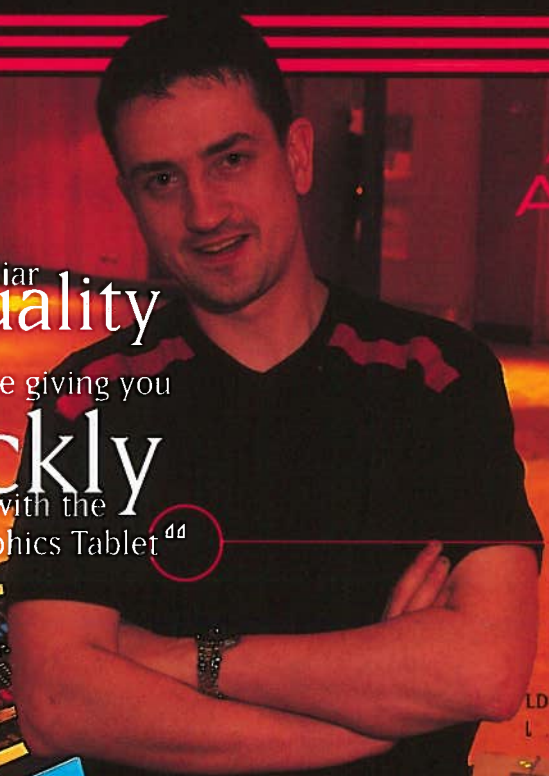
with sound/light chasing built in. Flexi-Flash and Rigi-Flash use strobe circuits enclosed in tubing to generate a synchronised sequence of flashes which can follow the edge of a ceiling rig or any other structure as it can be cut and bent as required. A range of fluorescent colours are available for extra effect under ultra violet light. The Flexi-Flash controller allows you to control up to fifty metres on each zone, and offers the unique facility of firing sequences forwards, backwards or both simultaneously and at different speeds.



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LTP on the Catwalk

LT Projects, part of the Lighting Technology Group, has completed a major new lighting installation for the Met Studio's 'Catwalk' project at the Museum of London. The Catwalk gets its name from Dick Whittington's cat, which appears in the Museum's logo, and is a fast-track pathway through the galleries which provides visitors with a lively, brief history of London.

The high-tech electronic trail has been lit with cold cathode tubing continuously along its entire 350m length by the LT Projects team under the direction of project manager Bruce Kirk. After extensive tests to perfect the continuous light source, the company finally selected a cold cathode system offered by Oldham Lighting. In addition, the existing Electrosonic control system was extended to allow the vivid green cold cathode tubing to be dimmed according to the requirements of each gallery and localised ambient lighting levels.

Futurist's First Light & Sound Fest

The very first Futurist Light & Sound Fest looks certain to be a success on Thursday May 22nd. To be held at the Alhambra Theatre, Bradford, the support of leading manufacturers and the number of visitors pre-registering has been overwhelming. Over 900 people have already registered from members of professional bodies to major educational establishments, top theatres across the country and amateur dramatics groups.

This response is perhaps not surprising given the line-up of the industry's top manufacturers. Confirmed exhibitors include Maltbury, CEEP, Teatro, M&M/ETC, Zero 88, Savilles, Buffalo, Doughty Engineering, Shuttlesound, Pulsar, Harkness Hall, RAT Music Stands, Lee Filters, Rosco, Treasure House, Le Maitre, Bose, DHA, EV, Total Fabrications, Lite Structures, the ABTT and the ALD.

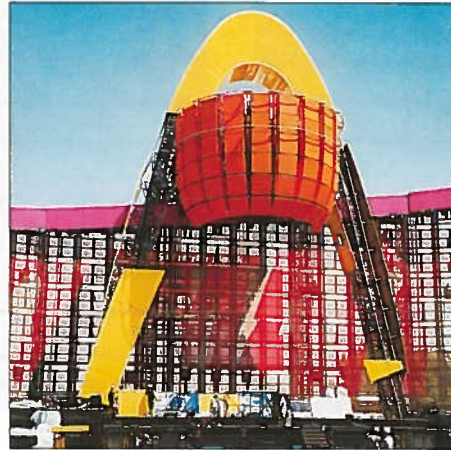
Throughout the day, top industry experts will be hosting specialised 'clinics', aimed at answering the many questions surrounding today's advanced technology. Confirmed speakers include David Wilmore, head of the technical division at Harrogate International Centre, Ric Green, technical director of Opera North, Ruth Jackson from LIPA, David Bryne of Yorkshire Arts Council and Anna Western of Rosco.

As part of their business expansion, Futurist will also be officially launching its new Projects and Productions arm - Storm Production and Event Technology. Storm will offer a complete turnkey service designed to cater for every scale of production from full product launches to simple weddings.

It is not too late to pre-register. Visitors to the show are travelling from all around the UK and for the first time in the industry Futurist, with the help of suppliers, will be offering free travel from major towns and cities throughout the UK.

For further information, contact Frank Fallows on (01924) 468183 or fax (01924) 458667.

The Building of U2's Popmart



Along with all the superlatives that have been used about U2's Popmart tour, with which almost everyone in the industry seems to have been involved, comes the realisation that this massive set is going to be rigged and de-rigged at over 120 venues - that's 40 builds for each of the three sets. That Golden Arch, for instance, comes 'flat packed'. Each leg, which measures 3m deep by 2m wide, is constructed of trussing faced with (comparatively) lightweight but extremely strong panels. And with 80 panels cladding each leg, architects Atelier One needed a fast and reliable method of dressing the arch at each venue, so they turned to Triple E.

The brief was short and to the point: come up with a system of cladding the legs which was easy to transport, easy to construct and easy to de-rig - in the dark and without using any tools whatsoever. As everything designed and made by Triple E is usually bolted together, and with only eight weeks between taking the brief and delivering the goods, this turned out to be one of the most intense design jobs the company has ever handled. Not a single stock item was used: the design engineers at Triple E had to reconfigure everything, from the brackets to the track itself.

The concept was to mount two sets of Unitrack on each face of the two legs, which have a 90m radius curve. The panels, which measure up to 1.5m x 3m and weight between 18 and 27kg, are fitted to custom built carriers and simply slide onto the track. The top panel is located on to a lifting frame and the remainder positioned accordingly. A chain hoist is used to pull the panels up the arch and the positioning of the bottom panel, which is mounted on a separate lifting frame, locks everything into place.

Triple E took the basic design of Unitrack, which as a stock item curves on its horizontal plane, and reconfigured it to curve on its vertical plane, to follow the line of the arch. Usually manufactured with a black finish, the track - and every other item supplied by the company - was finished in light grey, to give better visibility to the riggers, who will be working mainly in the dark.

In addition to more than 1km of track weighing three tonnes, Triple E also supplied 2.5 tonnes of scenery carriers, which are a reconfiguration of the company's heavy duty scenery carriers, and two tonnes of brackets, plus track mounts, panel mounts and countless hundreds of metres of wire rope assemblies, all designed and manufactured specifically for the tour.

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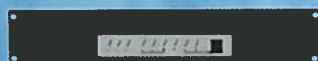
Venues such as the Sydney Opera House, Victorian and Queensland Performing Arts Centres and the Crown Casino have chosen the DNA system. Contact LSC to find out why the "Advantage" will work for you.



ISOPORTS - a system of isolated DMX512 wall mount inlet and outlet boxes providing up to a maximum of 1536 channels. Available in 3 models, the ISOPORT provide venues total integrity of their distributed DMX512 system.



ISONODE - an intelligent wall mount DMX512 inlet that can detect activity on its DMX512 input and automatically switch the downstream DMX512 to its input and isolate the upstream data.



ISOPOWER - a 19" rack mount power source for the ISOPORT and ISONODE network modules. Providing three isolated and buffered DMX512 inputs and outputs with a 24VDC output, the ISOPOWER is short circuit proof and can be linked to another ISOPOWER to provide full redundancy.



DMXchange

allows the crosspatching of a large number of DMX512 outputs to a smaller number of DMX512 inputs. Master unit has integral LCD and function buttons to setup crosspatch and electronically label each input and output. Additional slave units each providing an additional 6 inputs and 12 outputs can be connected to the Master providing up to a maximum of 24 inputs and 48 outputs.



DMIX

- a DMX512 merge unit providing 2 inputs to 1 output. Fully isolated and buffered, the DMIX allows the second inputs DMX start address to be offset against the first.



Multisplit

- a splitter/amplifier giving maximum isolation of a single DMX512 input to a choice of 5, 10, 15 or 20 DMX512 outputs.



Linklight

- a 19" rack mount bidirectional multiplexer converting DMX512 inputs or outputs to +10V or -10V analog signals.



Softlink

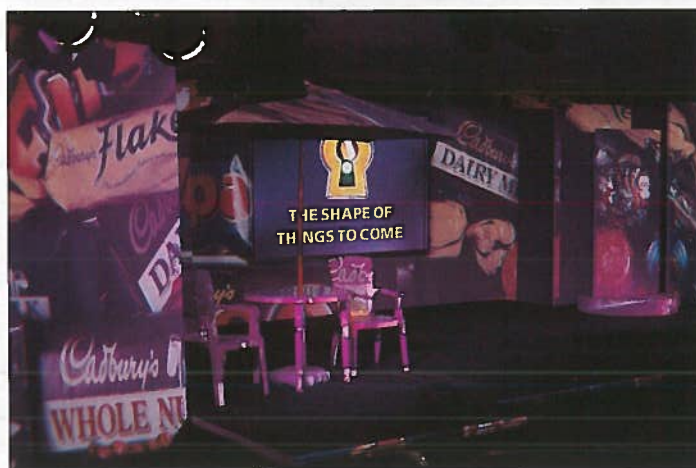
- a large system softpatch unit providing up to 3 DMX512 inputs fully proportionally patched to 3 DMX512 isolated and amplified outputs.

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Projecting the Right Image



E\T\C have been involved in a number of high profile projects recently, two of which have called on the PIGI system to provide the necessary panache to the events. When Cadbury's, the name behind many things chocolate, held its sales conference at the Warwick Hilton (pictured above), the brief was for a fast set change for each of the sales teams to work in front of, so E\T\C working alongside image design company, the Design Studio, provided a PIGI system which allowed for the rapid change-over of images.

When planning a new range of hair care products for Elidor, the Turkish production company Staras turned to E\T\C and again to the PIGI double scroller projector to produce projected set looks themed to each of the shampoos and conditioners.

Technical Answers

Uxbridge-based installation company Most Technical have carried out a racks and processing installation at the Brunel Rooms in Swindon. MT's Dave Parry told L+S that the club called in his company after experiencing problems with the existing set-up. His solution was to reassign some of the equipment to DJ monitor duties and specify eight Crest P series amplifiers. Parry also placed an order for the BSS Audio Omnidrive loudspeaker management system and a BSS Varicurve from Marquee Audio, who also supplied the Crest amplifiers.

The new system is driving the existing two stacks of Turbosound TMS-4/TSE-118, with a TSW-124, while TSE-111s are used for stage and rear fill use in the two-storey, 1,700 capacity club.

Trafalgar Moves

London-based hire and installation company, Trafalgar Lighting, have recently moved to larger premises. The move follows significant growth in recent months, alongside an increased number of projects outside of their usual area of business.

To keep up with current demand, hire stock has been increased with the purchase of Optikinetics bubble banks and additional CCT Freedom profiles, radio mics and shot gun microphones. The demand for hire of sound equipment has also led to a recent purchase of several Yamaha 10W powered monitors, equipped with both mic and line inputs.

Trafalgar's new address is 9/10 Northway, Claverings Industrial Estate, London N9 0AD. telephone 0181-887 0082.

Showpower Buys Templine

The power behind the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta and U2's latest world tour is to have a base in Britain. Showpower Inc, which provides power generation and electrical distribution for major events, has bought Bristol-based Templine in the latest move which adds Bristol to the Showpower worldwide network, which has offices in Los Angeles, Dallas, Mexico City, New York and Tokyo.

Templine has been in the event business for 10 years providing mobile electricity for rock acts such as Tina Turner, ZZ Top and Oasis. The company also provided extra power for stadiums during last year's Euro 96 tournament and were the power behind London's VE Day celebrations. Templine will continue to operate with its existing staff and management.

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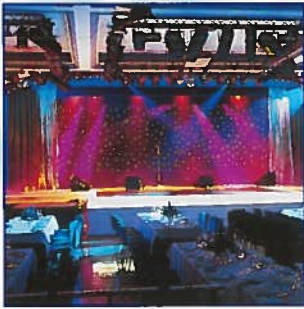
Metallica's Load

Catch LD John Broderick's "Design for Destruction" with 106 Studio Color on Metallica's 1997 "Load" tour.

"I kept trying to break the Studio Colors. We actually had one of the towers fall on one of the lights; pounded on a Studio Color—and it really nailed it—and the light still worked great!"

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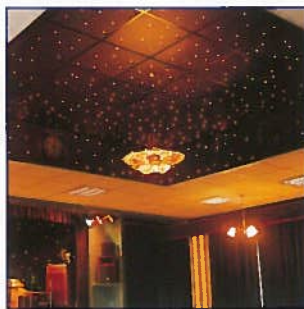
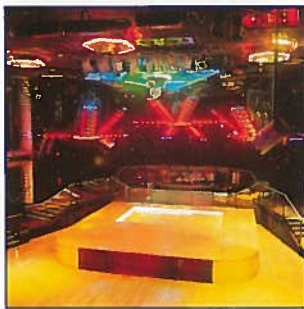
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Vanco Illuminate Space Centre



In brilliant flashes of ambient light, visitors to Orlando's newest tourist attraction are treated to space travel as never seen before. Vanco Lighting Services, a division of the Production Resource Group, helped BRC Imagination Arts and Yeager Lighting Design to illuminate the Apollo/Saturn V Centre, Kennedy Space Centre's new \$37M, 100,000sq.ft themed attraction.

Designed by BRC Imagination Arts of Burbank, California, the Apollo/Saturn V Centre features two fast-moving, multi-faceted shows, a gallery of hands-on computerised space displays and an enormous indoor area that houses a 363ft, £6.2m fully restored Saturn V rocket.

Yeager Lighting Design collaborated with Vanco to light the Firing Room theatre which houses a replica of the launch control centres for Apollo 8 and contains many of the consoles from the actual launch control. In addition, other pieces such as a notebook from the test supervisor's log and video monitors displaying footage of the actual launch, help authenticate the display.

By contrast, Yeager's lighting schemes in the Lunar Surface theatre illuminate a lunar landing. As the main theatre of the exhibit, it displays the preparations of the landing, with television news footage of the hours leading up to it, and photographs of people in a Paris cafe, London's Trafalgar Square and a small shop in Uruguay, all watching screens showing the same landing moment.

Cerebrum Subsidiary Bought

Two former employees of Cerebrum Lighting - Dominic Calvert and Richard Horley - have acquired shares in Presentation Consultants Ltd, a company formerly owned since 1988 by Cerebrum Lighting's managing director, John Lethbridge.

Presentation Consultants offer an independent consultancy, design, installation and project management service for medium to large scale lighting and display projects in the entertainment, leisure and architectural markets. They intend to work equally with clients and suppliers, offering value added services and overall project co-ordination.

Dominic Calvert is a degree qualified industrial designer who has practised lighting and system design for over six years on projects as diverse as international nightclubs to shopping centres and AV display installations which he has also successfully project managed. Richard Horley has a 15 year background with technical systems and field servicing, and for the past three years has run a lighting design business. He has also freelanced for a number of well-known industry suppliers, offering installation and commissioning services.

Gearhouse Harness Background

The Gearhouse Group, including PSL, have acquired the Los Angeles-based company Background Engineering.

Background specialises in offering a full rental service in video and associated services to the Hollywood and LA film industry. Gearhouse's acquisition is a strategic one, giving them a corporate base in California and one of the immediate aims is to strengthen a new division of the company, trading under the name Background Engineers Staging.

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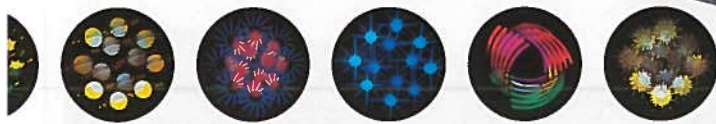
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STAGE SCAN

PRISM INDEX



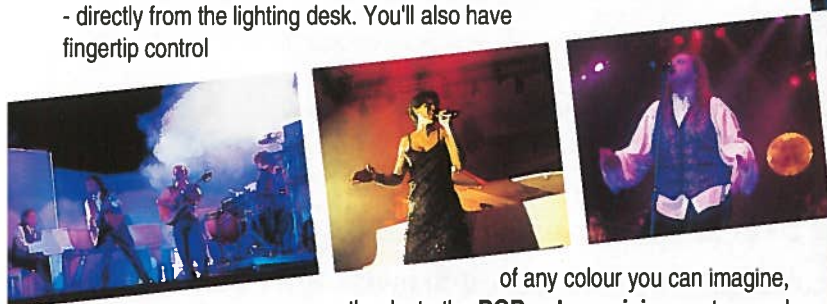
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The only limit is your imagination.

STAGE SCAN - the brand new luminaire for lighting designers working in the concert, television and theatre sectors. This new fixture joins **GOLDEN SCAN HPE** and **SUPER SCAN ZOOM** to create an absolutely matchless trio, setting industry benchmarks in terms of performance and reliability in the professional lighting sector.

With Stage Scan there's no need to hang around for the bulb to cool before switching on again: the built-in **hot-restrike igniter** means that the luminaire is always ready for action. You won't even be left in the dark after momentary power failures, so there's no need to keep your fingers crossed during thunderstorms! And when the shutter is closed, you can either power down the luminaire direct from the desk or select automatic power-down.

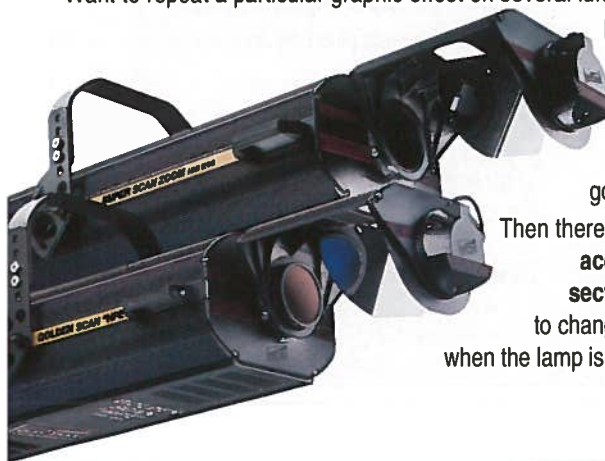
Stage Scan's innovative **MSZ (Multi Step Zoom)** system provides apertures from 13 to 25 degrees by selecting the most suitable of the fixture's 6 lenses - directly from the lighting desk. You'll also have fingertip control

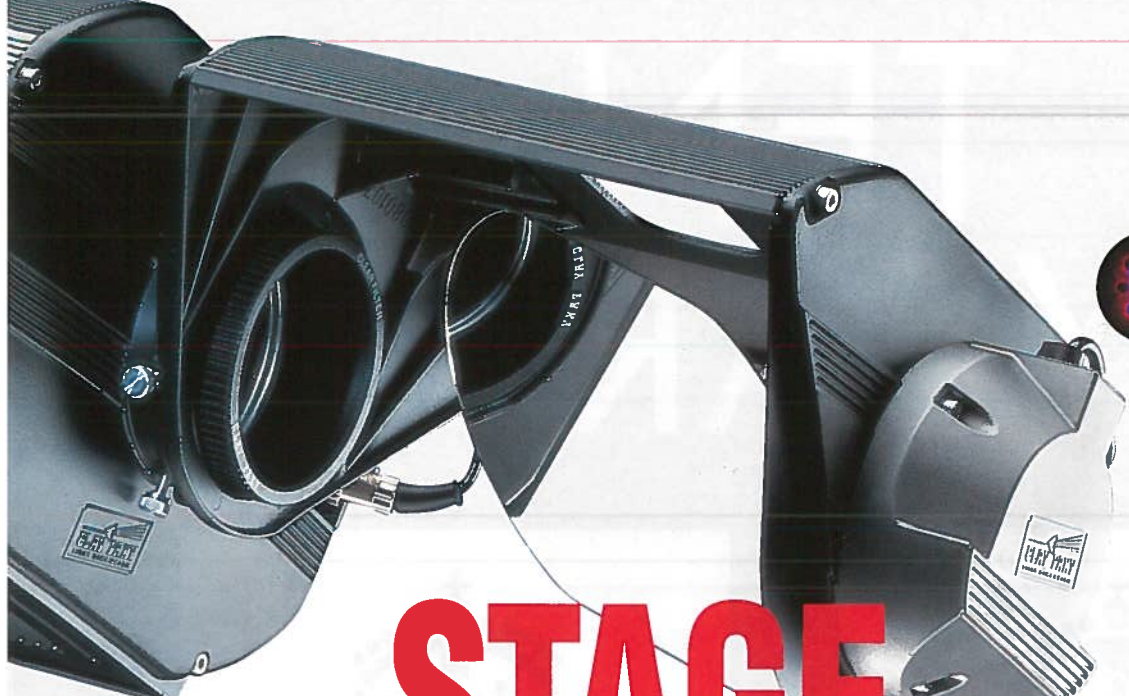


of any colour you can imagine, thanks to the **RGB colour mixing** system and to the special frost filters including the **exclusive Clay Paky "frou effect"**. Want to repeat a particular graphic effect on several luminaires?

No problem - Stage Scan features a **rotating prism indexing** system in addition to gobo wheel indexing.

Then there's the **independent access to the effects section** that allows you to change gobos, etc. even when the lamp is on, without burning





THE STAGE

your fingers or getting dazzled. That's just one of the details that make Stage Scan particularly suitable for professional applications. Further examples include: **easy access to the electronics**, mounted on the inside of the conveniently hinged back cover; conventional fuses replaced with

the more efficient and safer **circuit breaker**; totally simple **mains voltage/frequency changeover** system, making Stage Scan fully compatible with all world electricity grid standards. Noise? Hush! - every Stage Scan luminaire features a carefully designed **silencing system** that will meet the tacit approval of even the most attentive audience. So if you're into stage lighting, you've probably realised by now that Stage Scan has absolutely top-level credentials - just take a glance down this features checklist:

- HMI 1200 lamp, 110,000 Lumen, for uniform color temperature and extended life;
- Hot-restrike igniter;
- Gobo unit with two separate wheels controlled independently or in combination;
- 4 M-size metal gobos - static position and interchangeable;
- 4 interchangeable rotating gobos (indexed positioning), including two dichroic glass gobos;
- 10 additional gobos supplied as standard in a special housing in the body;
- RGB colour mixing with ultra-pure dichroic filters for an infinite range of colours;
- Special effects filters (bi-colour concentric beams, four colour beams, colour temperature conversion and ultra-violet);



- Three frost filters including the exclusive Clay Paky "frou effect";
- Multi Step Zoom (MSZ) for beam angles of 13°, 14,5°, 16°, 18°, 21° and 25°;
- Electronic focus;
- Independent access to the effects, to the lamp and to the electronics sections;
- Input signals protected against accidental application of mains voltage;
- Circuit breaker replacing fuses;
- Voltage/frequency changeover system;
- 16 control channels plus one optional channel for the remote lamp on/off;
- Self-test routine for diagnostics;
- Re-calibration possible from the control desk;
- Compatible with the most widely used digital control signals: DMX512, RS232 (PMX).



Clay Paky offers a wide range of metallic, photographic and dichroic gobos. The fascinating catalogue full of new high-definition images satisfies the creative flights of fancy of even the most demanding lighting designers. Also your black-and-white or multicolour images can be turned into original Clay Paky gobos.

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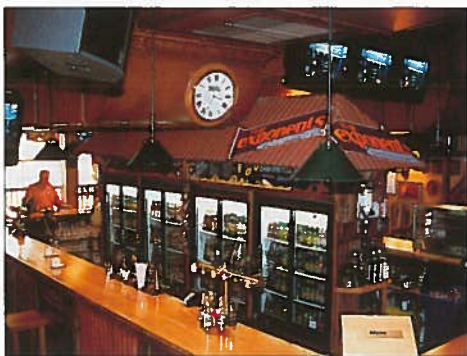
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Martin Wavefronts go Walkabout

Continuing the increasingly popular trend in themed venues, Regent Inns recently purchased the high-profile Irish live music bar, the Bottom Line on Shepherd's Bush Green, and converted it into a substantial flagship venue for the group - The Walkabout Inn.



The prestigious new Australian-themed live venue opened in mid-April.

Above, the upper bar area of the Walkabout Inn and below, (L-R) Paul Evans of Music Marketing Services and Lisa Fletcher of C-Audio with Sean Turk and Bill Webb of Martin Audio.

The £200,000 audio, video and lighting installation comprises a host of equipment with a Martin Audio Wavefront 8C system taking centre place providing the main sound reinforcement.



Installed by London-based Music Marketing Services, the main audio system comprises four Martin Audio W8Cs underpinned by six WSX sub

base, run with an MX5 controller. The system is driven by a combination of C-Audio SR404s, SR606s and SR707 amplifiers with two XR5001 amplifiers assigned to the sub bass cabinets. The mezzanine and under mezzanine areas feature a total of eight Martin Audio ICT 300s with four ICS 300s handling the lower frequencies driven by eight C-Audio SR606 amplifiers. All the audio inputs are controlled through a Soundcraft 32-channel Venue 2 desk.

Commenting on the installation, Music Marketing Services associate director, Paul Evans told L+SI: "Live bands will be the key feature to the whole venue and it was crucial that we had the quality of sound system that could cope with it." He had already paid tribute to the High Wycombe audio manufacturer during their previous Walkabout install, on Birmingham's Broad Street. "The thing about Walkabout Inns is that there are so many different environments and it is important to have the continuity of one manufacturer's products in a system that requires sufficient capacity, flexibility and quality to perform to the highest level of entertainment."

MMS also installed four fixed satellites and one motorised satellite along with two VCRs, terrestrial TV and a Denon 200-disc auto changer. Music is managed by a Rolex RC1214 controller backed up by a Denon 5-CD player. A pan and tilt and zoom camera will also be aligned to the stage. The venue also boasts a 20ft x 15ft video screen with a JVC super projector aligned to it and it is thought to be the only London venue of this nature to have a screen of this size.

The venue also features a specification of Martin Professional stage lighting comprising four Martin Pro 400s, four Robocolour 3s and four Pro 218s.



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Body Shop Panto



LD Phil Wiffen at The Dome, Brighton.

LD Phil Wiffen was in control at an Avolites Pearl console for a corporate event held recently at the Brighton Dome for 1,800 employees of The Body Shop.

The event was a special mock-pantomime, which took the story of Cinderella, set it in a fairy tale Body Shop outlet and called it *Scents and Sensibility*. Comedian Lee Hurst narrated the show and provided blue humour during the intervals, Frank Bruno made brief appearances and Anita Roddick played the Fairy Godmother.

Wiffen's rig consisted of 10 VL5s, three Golden Scan HPEs and two 5kW Pani projectors creating some excellent scenic effects. Wiffen refers to the VL5s as 'get out of jail fixtures'. Due to the height of the grid, the angles were necessarily very steep, so four VL5s positioned along the front of the stage were used to wash up into the set, and didn't look out of place despite their prominence.

The show ran very well, despite preparation time having been in short supply, as Wiffen explained prior to the show: "It's been tight. We haven't been able to do a technical, so we've had to light everything during rehearsals."

On the Box

Scottish Television (STV) recently went on-air with a new Virtual Set system developed and supplied by Boxer Systems. The Virtual Set is now in regular use for news and sports programmes all broadcast from the same studio. The Boxer system uses three channels of the Accom digital disk recorders intelligently linked to STV's robotic cameras. In use, the system is transparent to the camera operator, who sets up shots and makes transitions between stored camera positions in the normal way. A selection of background shots and pre-set camera moves were composed using a 3D package, rendered on a Silicon Graphics supercomputer and stored on Accom's 10 bit disk recorders. When a move or transition is initiated from the camera control system, a custom-built Boxer controller translates the camera positions and brings up the correct background or initiates playback on the disk recorder to keep the background in sync with the foreground from the camera.

Vertigo Go

Less than a year after their previous move, Vertigo Rigging have moved yet again to larger premises in London. The new 6,000sq.ft facility is situated 20 minutes from the city's West End, and should provide room for the company's expansion for the foreseeable future. Recent projects undertaken by the company include the rigging of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* at the Dominion Theatre, a permanent installation of Jim Henson's *The Muppets* in Fishguard, Yoko Ono's photographic exhibition at the Royal Festival Hall and the Vodafone Gala at Alexandra Palace, followed closely by the Referendum Party's election rally.

Big Spend for Sarner

Sarner International has been awarded a \$4million contract by Amcorp to design and install visitor high-tech entertainment in a major new retail mall in Kuala Lumpur.

The mall is part of a large development which covers 2.5million sq.ft featuring three towers, a twin retail atrium and office and hotel facilities. One of the key attractions Sarner will design is a 'moving image ribbon' which runs around the entire atrium, as well as effects for the occasional special event. Other features include a dynamic musical fountain which responds to sound and movement, an illuminated interactive multi-coloured children's 'hop scotch' patio and the first retail application of giant plasma globes.

Steeldeck to Sell Nivoflex in the UK



As part of ongoing expansion plans, Steeldeck Staging have secured a marketing partnership with German company Nivoflex, manufacturers of platforms, flying hoists and curtain tracks. Pictured is Phil Parsons of Steeldeck (front left) with colleagues from both companies.

Vari-Lite Winners

Vari-Lite Inc has announced the winners of the 1997 gobo contest, whose artwork will soon appear in the company's Vari*Image catalogue. The Grand Prize winner is Masa Kitani of Illinois for her design 'Tribal Breakup'. She will have the option to have Vari-Lite operator training at the company headquarters in Dallas or a cash prize. Another of her designs, 'Kitani Leaves', was also selected as a winner. Other winners include Tyler Roach of New York for 'Concentric Explosion', Glenn Voyce of Florida for 'Diamond Grid' and Bryan Neagle of Ohio for 'Ice Breakup'.

ESS Eastern

Following hard on the heels of company restructuring, Edwin Shirley Stages have entered into a joint venture with Nihon Stages of Japan. As part of the agreement, Osaka-based Nihon have purchased a full ESS Tower System, stage, roof and PA wings which, with ESS input, has already serviced the Michael Jackson tour across the winter months.

The operational side of the partnership, ESS Japan, is jointly owned and will co-ordinate the transfer of staging work between the two entities. Nihon's six tower system has recently completed its first show since the joint venture was formalised. With just one member of ESS's UK management team on hand in an advisory role, The Nihon Stages team provided a 74m x 24m platform and roof for a sell-out concert by Japanese pop group Sharam Q at the 35,000 capacity Osaka Dome on March 30th.

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VICTORY 250
VICTORY II 250

4 REGIA

REGIA 8
REGIA 12
REGIA 24
REGIA 256
REGIA 256/36
REGIA 512s/36

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NEWTON 1200
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P/82
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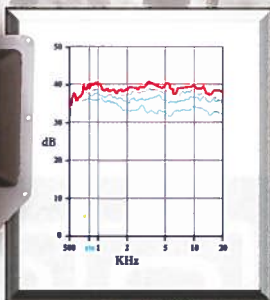
In fact, when we looked at the way most systems are designed one thing always stood out - they were very conventional, or in other words - ordinary! That's why no one arena system could really 'cut' it - until now.

The Wavefront 8 Compact incorporates unconventional technical advances in an extremely compact and flexible package. It can be stacked or arrayed to achieve both short and long throw for any size of venue. When flown in an array, its inversion capability together with constructive coupling of adjacent array elements enables it to throw further than conventional dedicated long-throw systems.

Coupled with the powerful impact of the ground stacked WSX horn-loaded sub-bass, the Compact leaps way ahead of its conventional competition in terms of sheer purity, and power. Until now, it has been impossible to combine such competing musical qualities as warmth with clarity or high sound levels with transparency. Martin Audio offers a new approach to eliminate these old compromises.

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Furthermore, the toroidal technology loading of the 6.5" cone driver increases its efficiency whilst employing a much lower compression ratio than that of the more commonly used 2" exit compression drivers - so the W8 Compact does not exhibit the "OI" factor or "shout" produced by the high distortion levels inherent in these traditionally used devices. This means it can be driven harder and will run cleaner at much higher levels than conventional systems.



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Glantre's £3.3m Deal

Glantre Engineering recently signed a £3.3m joint venture contract with PPC of Malaysia to work in conjunction with a host of consultants on the Petronas Towers Concert Hall in Kuala Lumpur.

On completion in 1998, the hall will be used solely for concerts, making the venue's acoustics one of its most important features. To this end, the American office of Theatre Projects Consultants has designed the hall so that the acoustics are totally flexible and can be adjusted to a number of pre-set levels for different types of music. The design incorporates a plunger ceiling which will weigh approximately 150 tons, the first time that a ceiling of this magnitude has been used anywhere in the world.

The ceiling will have a vertical travel range of eight metres via 56 screwjacks, whilst wall alcoves will hide 130 panels which can be pulled out to change the walls from a hard to an absorbent surface. Above the alcoves will be acoustic plastering and the walls will also be fitted with tracks for acoustic curtains. All the acoustics will be controlled from a computerised system. Glantre will also be supplying and installing all the stage equipment, which includes 21 point hoists, orchestra platforms, loudspeaker hoists, a projection screen and piano lift, trussing and full stage decking.

Canadian Link

Artistic Licence has forged ties with the Canadian company Crescit Software Inc. Crescit will be operating primarily as a distributor for Artistic, but there are also plans for some joint development work.

The company plans to distribute Artistic's software-based lighting control products across North America in conjunction with its own lighting software products. Artistic is currently developing Grand-Master Flash!, a PC-based virtual lighting console aimed at the moving light market. Initially, Grand-Master Flash! and Soft Plot Cue will have to be run on separate computers, but a complete integration is in development, creating the first multi-vendor solution not requiring external hardware to share the channel level information.

'Lady' Marks Two Firsts for Vari-Lite



The musical 'Lady in the Dark', which premiered at the Royal National Theatre in London recently, marks two firsts for Vari-Lite Europe.

The production is the first time that Vari*Lite automated wash luminaires have been installed at the theatre and, impressed by the results, the National has taken out a long term lease on the lights. Project lighting manager Mike Atkinson believes the VL5B luminaires offer a creative boost for LDs and are a practical asset to the crew responsible for quick repertoire changeovers.

This is also the first time that a West End production has used the VL5A luminaire, an MSR version of the VL5 with a unique fluid-filled membrane for beam control. Lighting director Rick Fisher, whose other credits include the multi-award winning 'An Inspector Calls' and 'Death of a Salesman', specifically chose the units because of their capabilities.

Safety Formula

Stockport-based Formula Sound has won a leading safety award from the British Safety Council. The company is one of only 1,000 winners from large and small enterprises all over the country in the public and private sectors. Apart from having low accident rates, winners must have good overall safety policies and a commitment to health and safety.

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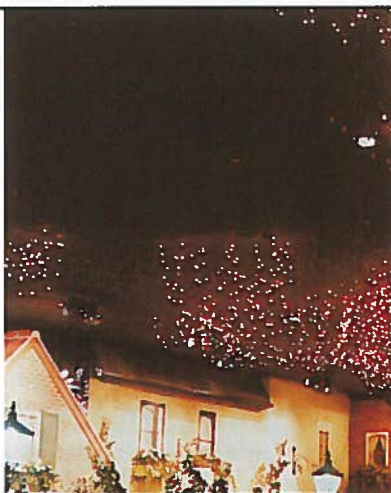
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Black Light Hold Open Day

Following previous successful events, Black Light Ltd will be hosting an Open Day on Monday 9th June 1997 between 10am and 6pm, at the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh, on the UK's largest stage.

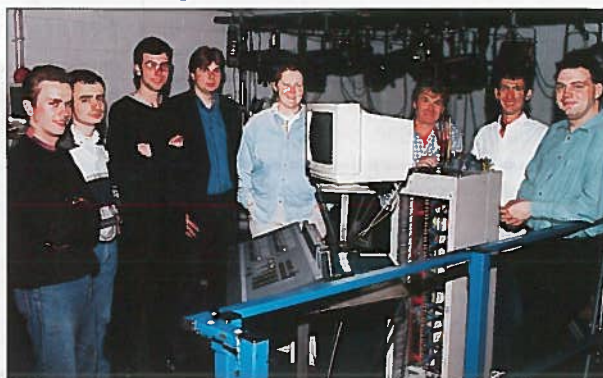
Following Black Light's recent appointment as Authorised Series 300 Vari-Lite dealers for Scotland, the complete VL range with the new VL5Arc wash luminaire will be on show with experts from Vari-Lite Europe on hand to answer questions. Also available for hands-on will be the ETC range of control desks and Source Four luminaires and a range of accessories never before seen in Scotland. Equipment from Rosco, DHA and Doughty will also be on display.

For further details, telephone Kirsty at Black Light on 0131-551 2337.

M&M - Training for Developments

M&M, the UK's sole distributor for ETC, recently held a series of 11 intensive one-day training courses. The aim was to provide delegates with an in-depth briefing, as well as an understanding, of how ETC products compare against those of other manufacturers. Each day covered an individual product area, giving delegates opportunities to try for themselves ETC's lighting fixtures, Expression and Express control consoles and dimming.

Pictured from left to right are Scott Martin and Paul Dwek of White Light, Dan Watkins, Theatre Futures Consultancy, Adrian Searle of Stage Electrics, Mandy Castile, The Pleasance Theatre and Paul Curtis of Theatre Direct with Richard Lambert, ETC's technical services engineer and Nigel Sadler from M&M.



PLASA on the Web - <http://www.plasa.org.uk/>

The PLASA Web site has undergone some notable developments recently, with the addition of several new areas. The most recent addition is the PLASA Light & Sound Show 1997 information section, through which Web users can pre-register for the show, read the latest news and receive exhibitor information. Following soon will be the exhibitor list and details on new product launches.

The Training & Courses section provides details on educational opportunities in theatre and rigging, lighting, audio and media and broadcast, and includes enhanced links straight to some of the premier educational establishments in these fields. Also new, and proving very popular, is the on-line Catalogue Collection, through which PLASA members can receive requests for their catalogues directly by E-Mail. The Classified section is available for listings of equipment for sale or hire, wanted or stolen. Anybody interested in adding an entry to any of the above areas should contact PLASA Publishing.

Plans for the future include protected credit card transactions for areas where payments are required, a keyword search facility and a PLASA members' discussion forum.

The Service Company

White Light has announced the expansion of its service department and the launch of a new branch within the White Light Group. Called The Service Company, it will offer a high standard of technical support to its customers in the UK and Europe. The company will share premises with The Moving Light Company and be led by Antony Bridges, a former service engineer for Strand.



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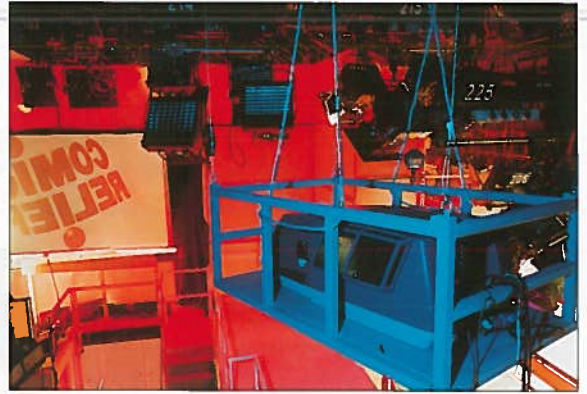


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JVC in Relief

The 1997 Comic Relief was the biggest and best comedy fund raiser yet, with a projected total well in excess of £23 million. This year's live comedy spectacular - hosted by Griff Rhys Jones, Jonathan Ross and Lenny Henry - had a much more technical bias than previously and Anna Valley - the Hampshire-based audio visual specialists - supplied several Hughes JVC 460 projectors (right), for the arduous task of back-projecting the broadcast from Television Centre.



Smakstak is The Bizness

Fourwinds Leisure recently re-opened their Blackpool nightclub, The Bizness. The club has been the subject of a major refurbishment programme and its new £67,000 sound system incorporates the new Ohm Smakstak configuration, featuring 16 SS3 horn loaded bass enclosures, 12 SS3 horn loaded mid/high enclosures, four BR15s flown in a central cluster, 16 FL1400s and one BSS OmniDrive.

The installers, Hype UK, were given a brief to install a clean sound system with the ability to reproduce high pressure sound levels. The SS3 or Smakstak is a three-way active, two-box modular system designed to suit a variety of large outdoor and indoor venues, and has quickly established itself as a versatile contender in this field. Carefully selected drive units, optimised enclosure design and complex acoustic modelling of the three horn stage, have resulted in efficient loading of the air throughout the frequency range of the system.

Rangers' £2.5m Screen

Glasgow Rangers has become the first Scottish football club to install giant video screens, following the official launch of the club's £2.5m Sony JumboTron twin 52sq.m wide by 6.3m high. The display (the same type as those installed at Highbury and White Hart Lane) was used for the first time at the home game against Motherwell on Monday May 5th 1997.

The screens will show a mixture of live close-ups, interviews and pre-match video magazine programmes featuring highlights from previous games.

Touring Tales

A slight change of hats has occurred in the production manager camp for the Supertramp tour. Due to commitments mixing FOH for Diana Ross, Lars Brogard has been obliged to hand over the PM reins to Bill Leabody. No ruffled feathers on anyone's part, except perhaps the band, as this will be their first tour in over a decade. Diana Ross opens in Rotterdam on the 7th June, while Supertramp kick off at the Stockholm Globen on the 28th April (look out for a special feature on Supertramp in L+SI).

Busy SSE, who in the past 10 months have purchased a substantial amount of new PA gear, still find themselves obliged to rent in four Midas XL3s to keep up with work. Tours with Metallica, Stomp, Cast, Man o' War, Mansun, Machinehead and Stevie Winwood, have seen their warehouse emptied and despite seven of their own XL3s, still need more.

Jean Michel Jarre is taking his new offering, *Oxygene II*, around the UK and Europe through May and June. Lighting Designer Roy Bennet is planning a visual spectacular with Icons, Diversitronic strobes (c/w color mags), VL4s and lots of conventional lighting.

Hank Marvin may be old but he can still do a six week tour with only three days off. Design is by Jude Aflalo and the rig features an all-conventional system run from a Celco 90-way Gold

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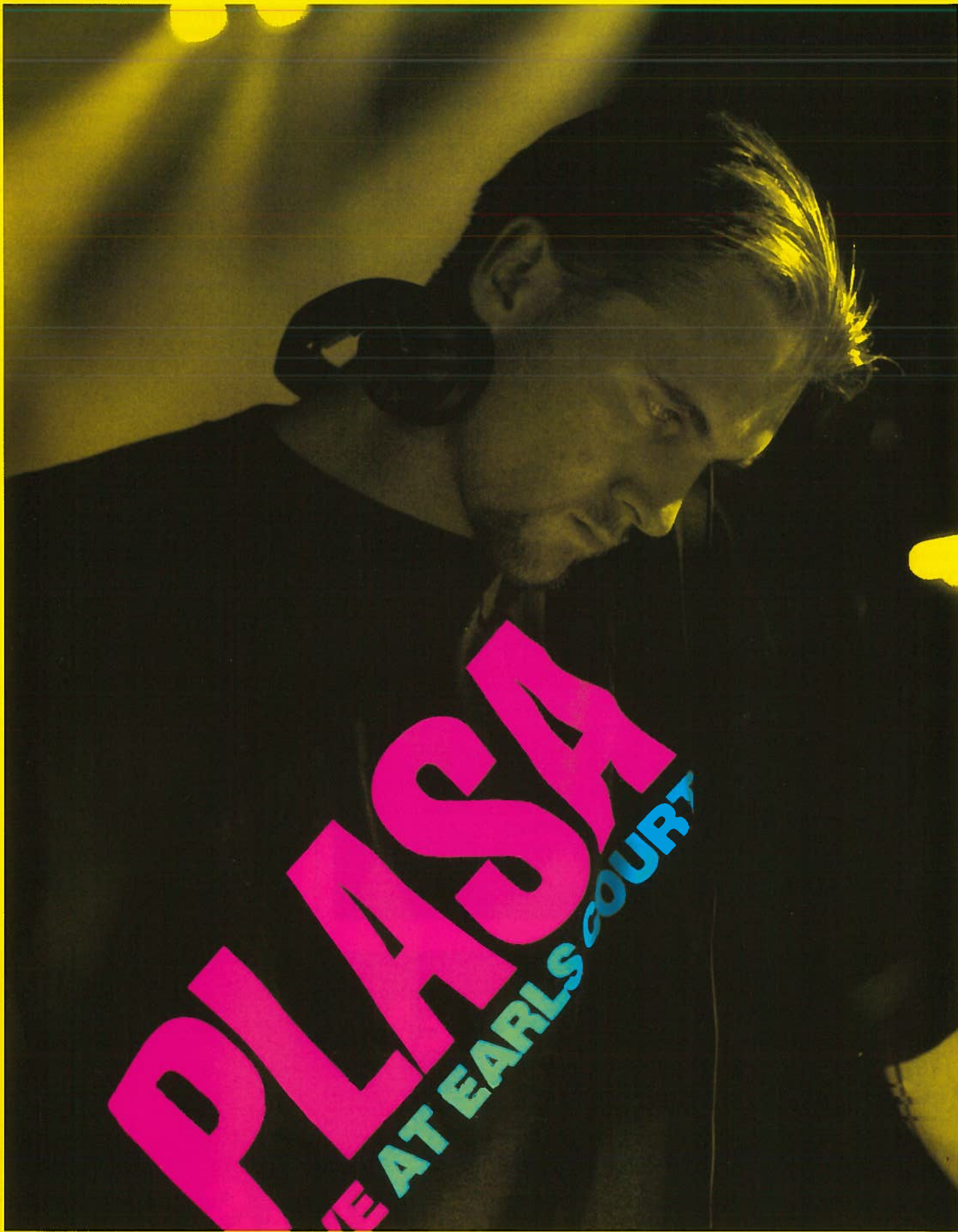
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Brilliant's Satellites

After three years of negotiations, Brilliant Stages have finally received a purchase order from Matra Marconi Space Systems for their most unusual stage set yet. To be assembled in the Aerospace centre at Filton, the aluminium framed structure is a special housing for the assembly of satellites. Its main function is to screen the satellite from external radiation while it is built, and the truss-like frame will be clad in a material not dissimilar to the absorbent foam found on the walls of anechoic chambers. The main dilemma of the structure is its size and how to support it.

The building within which it is to be built is already hermetically sealed against dust and other foreign particles, thus rigger Eric Porter who has been charged with its assembly is unable to drill or otherwise tap into any existing building fabric to provide anchor points. Similarly, Brilliant Stages have to ensure all necessary fabrication takes place prior to installation, and that all radiation panels and assembly points can be secured without need for engineering modifications. Naturally the biggest danger for Brilliant is the nightmare that they might accidentally mix up the satellite structure with those they've already built for Jean Michel Jarre, U2 and Supertramp.

Lightmasters Double Strike



Pictured above are Lightmasters' James Foster (centre left) and Kevan Cambridge (centre right) with Guido Nosetti (left) and Giorgio Biffi (right) of Italian pro audio company Outline after Lightmasters recently gained exclusive distribution rights for Outline's products. The line ranges from discotheque to theatre cabinets right up to a full touring system and the deal includes the company taking full control of product, spares and servicing. In a second deal, Lightmasters secured the dealership for German Light Products (GLP) with the Patent moving head light and the Max colour changer now complementing the FAL range at the company's St Neots showroom.

CRAP Event

For those who work in London theatre, the CRAP (Crew Reunion Annual Party) events have become a regular part of the West End theatre scene; a chance for show crews to meet, drink and have an evening of entertainment and fun - while raising money for charity along the way. The proceeds of previous events have helped the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, Crusaid and Comic Relief.

This year's CRAP party, to be held on May 28th at the Astoria Theatre on Charing Cross Road, will be helping a cause much closer to home: the Conor Boyle Appeal. Conor, who has cerebral palsy, is the 14 month-old son of Ray Boyle, master carpenter at the Apollo Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue. The appeal fund, under the patronage of Dame Diana Rigg, is intended to help send Conor to the world famous Peto Institute in Budapest, Hungary where he will receive intensive Conductive Education Therapy. To achieve this aim, the fund must raise £10,000. Events will be held throughout the year, and the fund would welcome any offers of direct or indirect help.

Anyone wanting to help in this way should contact the Appeal at 57 Wanlip Road, Plaistow, London E13 8QR. Anyone wanting to help by having a wild evening out with the theatre crews of London can obtain tickets priced at £7.00 each, by contacting Adam Daly on 0171 867 1128.

Robert Halliday

BASH GameWorks

BASH Lighting Services has successfully completed the first GameWorks project in Seattle, Washington. These new entertainment venues are the concept of Steven Spielberg and the Seattle facility is the first of over 100 planned installations. A second location opened in Las Vegas in May which will be followed by one in Ontario, California during the summer.

The 30,000sq.ft Seattle venue is designed as an old-style game factory that has been updated with the latest in state-of-the-art technology. To complement the interactive game playing, the designers have implemented numerous special effects to create a high tech sensory experience for the game players. As part of the consultation, design and technical team, BASH engineers specified and installed ETC Sensor dimmers and an ETC Impression LPC control console. Fixed lighting fixtures include Thomas Par 20 and Par 38 luminaires, whilst automated lighting fixtures include High End Intellabeams and Irideon AR5 luminaires which are connected via a DMX control interface system.

Sensible Expansion

Andrew Zweck's Sensible Events continues to expand in the two areas of event management and sponsorship realisation. The company recently completed the promotion and production of Luciano Pavarotti in Concert at Easter, whilst the year started on a high note when Sensible produced Michael Jackson's New Year's Eve concert in Brunei. In February, the company produced a 'Urban High Snowboard' event for Ballantine's whiskey at San Siro Stadium in Milan.

Further events for the company include the production of an open air Diana Ross concert event on top of a mountain in Ischgl, Austria.

HÖREN

Come on, lights on!

Faces on the Move

Glanre Engineering is expanding at a rate of knots, with over a dozen new staff having been taken on at all levels over the past few months. Starting at the top, Glanre has appointed **Richard Benyon** as non-executive director. An outsider to the entertainment technology business, Benyon joins in an advisory capacity. Glanre's project team A, which is working on the two vessels being constructed for Disney has been joined by **Alun Edwards** as deputy project manager. Previously a director of audio visual company Surtees MAV, Edwards will be based in the UK. Also reinforcing Glanre's audio visual skills is the first person to have applied for a job at Glanre via the Internet! (Through PLASA's recruitment pages on the web, in fact). **David Smith** has joined as senior project engineer and brings with him many years experience in professional audio and AV systems.

Also among Glanre's new staff are two Americans. Less than two months after opening its first US office, the company has appointed **Albert Cadaret** as field engineer. Before joining Glanre, he was Arts Environments' audio systems designer for Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's 'Vision' class project. At the same time, Glanre has recruited another American member of staff for its Reading office! **Alan Pickart** has joined the company in the newly created position of technical author. He has experience in the theatre, from scenic and lighting design through to properties and costume design.

Celco, a division of Electrosonic, have recruited lighting designer **Pete Sarson** in order to support the grassroots end of the domestic market, as the company refocus their attention on the UK. His experience will be put to good use at Celco. In addition to his on-the-road activities, he will also help to R&D new products, setting up demos and training, not only on the existing Ventura 1000 but also the rest of the range, including dimmers.

Leisuretec distribution have appointed **Peter James** as field sales manager. James, who has worked in the industry for 10 years, the last six of which were with HW International, will be responsible for new business development, as well as maintaining the existing client base.

Electronic Theatre Controls is reorganising its



Derek Gilbert (third left front) with the new team at Glanre.

US management. **Dick Titus** has been appointed as chief operations officer. Titus, who has been vice-president since 1990, will now be responsible for all operations and management of the US factory. The appointment will allow company president Fred Foster more time to focus on product development and strategy.

Lightfactor have appointed **Peter Coles** as UK field sales manager. Coles will initially be based in Greenford before taking his extensive sales experience on the road. Having previously worked with consumer electronics specialists Bandridge and prior to that as national sales manager with Martin Professional, his knowledge of installation and consumer markets will prove invaluable.

Strand Lighting have appointed **Horst Eickmann** as managing director of Strand Lighting GmbH. Eickmann joins Strand after many years with Siemens, working in local and international sales and general management. His appointment is part of Strand's plan to develop a central European-based operation.

Chassis loudspeaker manufacturer, Precision Devices have appointed a new development engineer **Neville Ryan**. His arrival in Rotherham follows hot on the heels of Alan Kilford who took up the post of sales and business development manager late last year. Neville joins from Celestion where he spent two years as technical manager of OEM products, having started his career with a 12-year stint at Goodman.

Ken Achard, managing director of Peavey's UK-based European operation has been elected as a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

Exhibition Diary

From late May to late September

May 31-June 1 • dj Culture

G-Mex, Manchester - P&O - Tel: 0171-370 8179

June 3-5 • Showtech 97

Berlin, Germany - OTSA - Tel: 0171-486 1951

June 18-20 • British Music Fair

London Arena, Docklands - MIA -
Tel: (01753) 511550

June 21-22 • Mad About Music

London Arena, Docklands - MIA -
Tel: (01753) 511550

June 25-28 • Exposhow 97

St Petersburg, Russia - Greet - Tel: (7) 812 325 6245

July 14-16 • Pro Audio & Light Asia

World Trade Centre, Singapore - PLASA
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July 14-16 • Music Asia '97

World Trade Centre, Singapore - PLASA -
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September 7-10 • PLASA

Earls Court, London - P&O - Tel: 0171-370 8179

September 12-16 • IBC

Amsterdam, The Netherlands - IBC -
Tel: 0171-240 3839

September 26-29 • AES

New York, USA - LIW - Tel: (0118) 975 6218

September 30 - October 2nd

Leisure Industry Week
NEC, Birmingham - Tel: (01932) 564455

PLASA at PALA

Following on from the success of the last two years, PLASA has negotiated a special rate at the Rasa Sentosa Resort during Pro Audio & Light Asia in July.

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Emerald Seas

Marquee Audio have supplied a large order of pro audio equipment for installation on Thomson Holidays' cruise ship, Emerald, moored in Athens. The order was supplied to London-based Conference Live, whose consultant engineer on the project was Roland Hemming.

The entertainment package is divided into six zones: the Piano Bar, pool decks, dancing area, interactive games room, lounge and main discotheque. The key sound reinforcement components were supplied by Electro-Voice and comprise Deltamaxes, plus two S40s and a pair of S80s whilst the system is driven by a combination of Yamaha P3500, P2500 and P1500 amplifiers.

Trantec's S5000 UHF radio mic system is also well represented, with five handheld and three belt-pack transmitters, in addition to Shure WH10 headworn mics fitted with Trantec connectors. Shure SM57s and 58s are also in the spec.

Fall Guys

London-based rigging company Summit Steel has now added Fall Arrest equipment to its range of rigging equipment for hire or sale. The Fall Arrest system includes a harness fitted with an energy absorbing lanyard, plus a fall arrest block or anchorage line alongside the rope ladder or other access point, with a horizontal lifeline along the truss.

First Leisure Delfont Awards



First Leisure, the leisure company headed by Sir Michael Grade, honour staff at the annual Delfont awards. The venue for the event, the Winter Gardens in Blackpool, was transformed by Grosvenor Productions into a flashback of the days of black and white movies. The sound equipment was brought in by the Music Company, whilst the lighting system was supplied by Martin Professional UK, installed by DLD Cambridge, designed by Andy Keightley and programmed by Mark Ravenhill. Because of the size of the system, a substantial controller was needed, the task being given to a Flying Pig Systems Wholehog II, with background lighting controlled by a Jands ESP11.

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GOODBYE GIRL

Rob Halliday reviews the latest musical to arrive in London's West End



While the blockbuster musicals continue to rack up the years - *Cats* is now 17, while *Les Misérables* is about to undergo a sprucing up to celebrate its 12th year - producers seem to be convinced that there is also space for smaller scale musicals, perhaps to offer appeal to those who shun the 'mega' shows, or just to capture the tourists who left it too late to book tickets for one of the biggies. The latest of these shows is *The Goodbye Girl*, now running at the Albery Theatre following an out-of-London season at the Churchill Theatre in Bromley.

Beginning life as a film written by Broadway comedy legend Neil Simon, *The Goodbye Girl* was then turned into a stage musical written by Simon with music by Marvin Hamlisch (composer of *A Chorus Line*) and lyrics by David Zippel, and has undergone considerable re-working for the London production, with Don Black contributing many new lyrics. The London producers are E&B Productions, a company who specialised in producing pantomimes across the UK for many years, but who are now establishing a solid reputation for their work in London: the long-running *Buddy* is one of their shows, as was *Jolson*, which enjoyed a successful year in town before packing up and heading off to Toronto, where it opens during the summer.

E&B are not yet in the Mackintosh/Lloyd Webber league, however - they do not have a huge raft of investors that they can use to fund their shows. E&B's production manager James Wells thus came up with a new approach to

attracting investors to the show: advertising the opportunity on the Internet. A series of World Wide Web pages described the plans for the show, including a breakdown of the production budget and running costs. Wells seems quite happy with the response: the site registered over 3000 'hits' from Web browsers, amongst them a Japanese fan of the musical and the owner of a small New York theatre who had been involved with an earlier production of the show; both became investors in the London production. He also sees it as something the company can build on for their next production, feeling that some people who found the site may just have thought of it as another fly-by-night Internet scam - but that those people might be more convinced about the seriousness of the opportunity next time round, when the track record of *The Goodbye Girl* will be on show. The Web site makes interesting reading - not least because of the costings it includes, figures which are normally only available to people who are more vigorous in pursuing theatrical investment opportunities.

So what do you get for an investment of £650,000 in the West End these days? For starters, you get to re-unite the creative team behind the acclaimed *Jolson* - director Rob Bettinson, choreographer Tudor Davies, designer Robert Jones and lighting designer Jenny Cane, and add sound designer Rick Clarke, whose recent work has included the touring productions of both *Fame* and *Crazy for You*. The story they have had to tell is a comedy

domestic-drama with twists that will be familiar to anyone who has seen other works from Neil Simon's stable. Woman and her child live with out of work actor in his New York apartment. As the show opens they are excited about going with him to LA, where he has landed a big part in a film - but this quickly turns to disappointment when they discover firstly that he has left without them, and secondly that he has sub-let the apartment to another actor - without telling the newcomer about the sitting tenants. Paula, the woman (played by American actress Ann Crumb, star of the original production of *Aspects of Love*) and Elliot, the man (the ever-endearing Gary Wilmot) are at first hostile, then reach a compromise when they realise that any other option will leave one of them homeless, and eventually (of course!) fall in love.

The problem facing the creative team was that the show zips between locations - unsurprisingly, given that it was originally a film. Though the main scenes take place in the shared apartment, we also get to see the street outside, the gym Paula works out in, the rehearsal room and venue for the appalling fringe production of *Richard III* in which Elliot is appearing, and the rooftop of the apartment building where Paula and Elliot finally realise their love with the help of gallons of dry ice and a set of Hollywood-style top hat and tails dancers. As if all that wasn't enough, they also decided to add a little extra New York-style razzmatazz of their own: rather than hiding the

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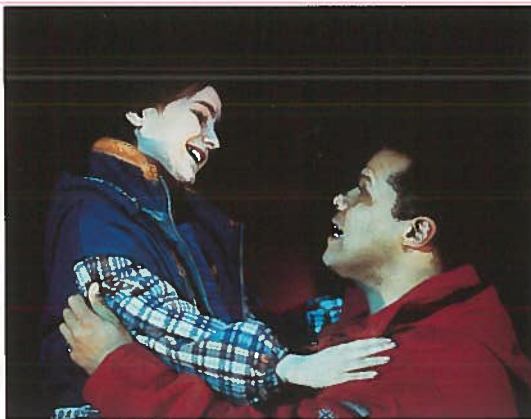


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orchestra in the pit, they open the show down stage centre - then lift and truck upstage during the overture, reappearing again at the end of the show.

The rest of Robert Jones' set fits around that band truck, and consists of a series of small elements - trucks, lifts and flown pieces - that can be re-arranged around each other to provide an interesting variety of scene changes. Paula's apartment, for example, sits on one large truck that rolls downstage, passing under the orchestra truck on its first trip upstage. A painted gauze drops down in front of the apartment truck to create the street outside the apartment building - but to add to the New York feel, a three-dimensional front door-and-steps to the building then pops up through the floor down-stage left. Different combinations of flown flats then form the windows in the gym and rehearsal room, while an empty stage augmented by some steps is the stage-within-a-stage in the play scene.

The problem came with trying to cram all of this into the Albery Theatre, a traditional West End house which still has a largely hemp flying system. With the heaviest flying piece in the show coming in at around 2500kg, production manager James Wells and his team of carpenters - the Albery's Martin Gelder along with Phil Large, Colin Small, Al McLeod and Mitch Mitchell - not only had to install 15 temporary counterweight sets into the building, but also had to spend around £10,000 reinforcing the theatre's grid to take the loads being placed upon it. The relatively simple pop-up door also required the digging of a 'very



Cast members Dina Tree and Gary Wilmot.

expensive' hole, which extends two metres below the stage - and so also into the water table below the theatre, immediately earning it the nickname Bettinson's Brook in honour of the director!

The digging work was carried out by Weld Fab Stage Engineering, who were also responsible for the band lift. Although superficially appearing similar to the band lift in *Jolson*, that lift could only travel up and down and was hydraulically powered; *The Goodbye Girl* has the band platform slung between two upright lifts which can track up and down stage, thus allowing the band to move from floor level downstage to 3.5m in the air upstage, or any position in-between.

This movement necessitated the installation of a cable management system to carry the 48-pair sound multicore, twin video lines, band mains and three-phase power to the 5kW


electric motor that lifts the bands.

Quite apart from cable management, the moving band also meant that sound designer Rick Clarke had two completely different sets of band 'sounds' to deal with. He decided to concentrate his efforts on the band's upstage position, since that's where they live for most of the show. "I got the flat which flies in front of them in that position soundproofed to some degree," he explains, "which went some way towards taking the band out of the room, making them easier to deal with."


The band sound travels down the truck multicore and out to the Amek Recall mixing desk operated by Steve Jonas or Steve Brierly, where it is combined with the vocals picked up using B&K 4050 miniature capsules fed through Trantec S5000 radio transmitters, along with the associated software and computers. This combination, supplied, like the rest of the sound and communications equipment, by Orbital, is less common than the Sennheiser system seen in many other West End shows, but Clarke finds the Trantec system "offers a much more useful display, flagging problems in a much clearer way". The combination of microphones and transmitters offers him a "very clean, clear sound."

The sound is processed using XTA DP200 delay/equalisers and then distributed to the audience through a rig made up largely of d&b loudspeakers, including Clarke's first use of the E3 miniature loudspeaker, with which he has been very impressed. "It's a miniature speaker which can handle 122dB," he remarks, "making it very useful for applications like front fill,





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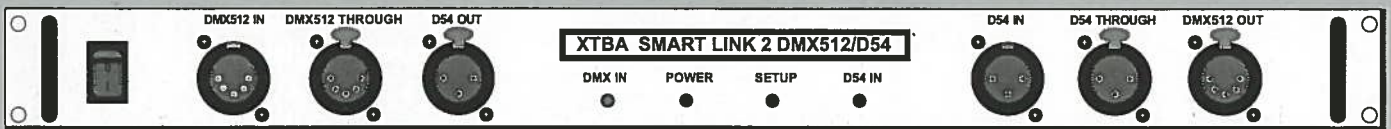
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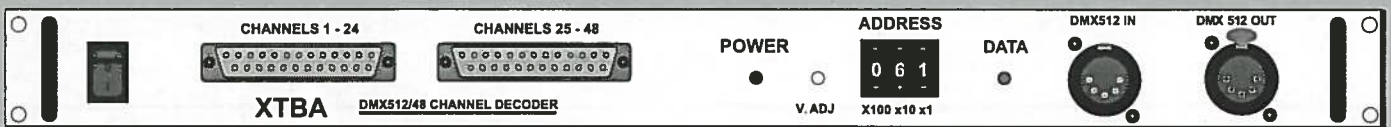
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where size is very critical, but you need a lot of power to maintain the image throughout the house". Because the Albery is not that large a theatre, Clarke has also used E3s in the speaker cluster flown on an advance bar, to provide coverage to the sides of the horseshoe-shaped circles; the rig was completely redesigned from the version used in Bromley, since the auditoria of the Churchill and the Albery are about as different as it's possible to be!

As well as the acoustic and cable management challenges to be solved by the sound team, led by production sound engineer Andy Collins, the show presented them with one other interesting problem: where were they to hide the radio mic and transmitter in the scene where Gary Wilmot undresses? This has been solved in the past by hiding mic and pack underneath a wig, but Wilmot's short hair ruled this option out. In the end, they hid the pack on his inner thigh (which remains coyly hidden by some cunning blocking and a carefully placed guitar!), and used an artificial skin product to disguise the cable running up to his head.

Lighting designer Jenny Cane's challenges were broader in scope: how to tie together the naturalistic elements of the show - the domestic apartment scenes, complete with cues to bring up and take down lights as the actors flicked light switches - with the introspective songs and the big musical numbers. Fortunately, that range of styles matches the range of Cane's career, with just her recent credits having included a large-scale musical (*Jolson*) and two more conventional Neil Simon comedies - *Chapter Two* and *The Odd Couple*.

With the show a mid-scale one with a tight budget, Cane has designed a rig largely free of the lighting 'toys' of larger productions; Wybron's Autopilot system was considered for a time but "it would have eaten into the budget too much". The budget did run to 16 Rainbow scrollers though, used partly to provide colour options from a rig that was limited in size by the lack of space, especially in the downstage area - but also for several sequences of live colour changes with changes in the music. "I love live scrolls; they can be very effective if you get the



Shezwa Powell as Mrs Crosby.

colours in the right order," Cane explains.

Supplied by Stage Electrics and installed by production electricians Chris Nicholls and Gavin Norris, along with the Albery crew led by chief electrician Brian Darrah, the rest of the rig consists in the main of a mixture of Par cans and Strand Cantatas, with the front-of-house profiles all being neatly top-hatted to minimise flare problems in the lightly coloured auditorium. Stage Electrics also provided a small quantity of extra dimming, though the majority of the rig was controlled from the Albery's in-house dimming and their ARRI Imagine desk - fortunately, the Churchill uses the same desk, allowing the show desk to be transferred to London with moderations then made to accommodate the revised FOH lighting positions. (When are manufacturers going to add a function that allows their desks to read the disks of their rivals?)

Cane did also manage to slot a few newer lanterns into the rig, being another one of the many converts to ETC's Source 4. Many of the front-of-house gobos and lanterns providing her favourite low crosslight are now Source 4s - a change she did make with some trepidation. "Chris Nicholls has an excellent FOH rig in

Bromley, and I did wonder whether I was mad to consider replacing Cadenzas with these little 575W lamps. But the 10 degree Source 4s from the circle front are superb."

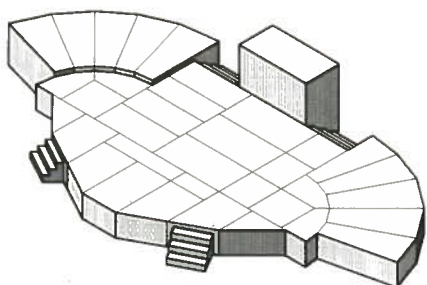
The style of lighting the different scenes in the show developed out of conversations between Cane and director Rob Bettinson, and also the trust gained working on earlier shows together. For example, while most of the apartment scenes are treated naturalistically, there is one gospel-style number performed in the apartment set by Shezwa Powell. "I felt it needed more excitement, a lift from the lighting and suggested it to Rob - who just told me to get on with it. So we did, he liked the result and it stayed in the show."

For the musical moments, Cane also received invaluable help from her two followspot operators, who travelled from Bromley to London with the show. She's also found another new piece of equipment to love: the Lycian 400 spots supplied by Stage Electrics. "They're a nice colour and you can get a good soft edge - letting you use them a bit like glorified beamlights, in a way."

Cane continued: "We all worked closely together; Rick Clarke and I, for example, realised very early on that we'd probably be fighting for the same positions and that it would be better to discuss things in advance. And it all worked out very well."

The critics didn't necessarily agree with that verdict, most of them treating the show to some of their most negative remarks. It doesn't really deserve them - it's not the best show in the world, having suffered from its slightly confused history and also from trying to grow up to fit some of the scenic complications that have been added to it. But, on the other hand, the description applied by one of the creative team - "a well produced piece of fluff" also fits it well. And a piece of fluff that its backers - from the internet and elsewhere - will be hoping can cling on through the summer tourist season. The break even is 55%, or 454-and-a-bit people per show, according to the Web page. How hard can that be? Hopefully E&B's Internet site will let us know . . .

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HARTWALL AREENA

*Europe's third largest indoor arena opened recently in Helsinki.
Lee Baldock joined technical consultants Eastway Sound & Light and
systems contractor Light & Sound Tech for the ambitious opening celebrations*



Above and below: Helsinki's Hartwall Arena, Europe's third largest indoor venue and first ever NHL-type arena, inside and out.

Hartwall Arena, main venue for the 1997 World Ice Hockey Championships, is a surprisingly new feature of Helsinki, having been built from scratch in around 18 months. This is an incredible feat when you consider that it is the third largest indoor arena in Europe after the Nynex in Manchester and the Globen in Stockholm, and bear in mind that it nestles partly in an enormous hole blasted from solid rock. What's more, the degree of thought and preparation that has gone into the construction of this 13,600 seater multi-purpose venue has been immense, making it one of the most well-equipped and flexible spaces of its type, anywhere in the world. During this year it will host concerts by Bryan Adams, Aerosmith and Luciano Pavarotti, as well as events such as showjumping, basketball, athletics and trade fairs, in addition to performances by circus acts and magicians.

Hartwall is the name of one of Finland's main breweries, and the fact that there are now road signs all over Helsinki emblazoned with 'Hartwall Arena' has been a cause of some aggravation among their rivals. Still, the arena, which was the brainchild of Harry 'Hjallis' Harkimo, round-the-world yachtsman, entrepreneur and owner of the Helsinki Jokers ice hockey team (European Champions, no less), has been financed almost entirely without government assistance, and corporate sponsorship is the name of the game, both inside the venue and out. A major slice of the funding has come from 'selling off' the seating. Consider the following figures: there are 78 corporate suites around the top tier of seating, 73 of which have been sold to large



corporations for FM1.2m apiece. (The remaining five suites can be reserved by the public, and two of these are actually saunas overlooking the hall!) Each suite contains 15 seats, and every time they are used, each seat costs the same price as the cheapest seat in the Arena. There are also 1,600 club seats, each of which has been sold for around FM20,000, and still costs the basic seat price each time it is used. So, converting your Finn Marks to pounds, that's about £14.6m for starters, which is nice, and the seats will continue to pay for themselves, which is even nicer.

OPENING IN STYLE

For the opening celebrations, the organisers wanted to demonstrate the versatility of the hall by staging three very different shows, one after another. The first was to be the official opening by the Finnish president, with a party for

children on the Saturday afternoon. This was followed in the evening with a concert by the phenomenally successful Finnish crooner Jari Sillanpää, which drew an audience of 8,000. After this, there was a fast turnaround to give way for a mega-dance event for a teenaged audience, with live bands and DJs taking the entertainment through to the early hours.

Eastway Sound & Light acted as technical consultants for the venue, and designed and installed the 24m by 16.6m Thomas mother grid which is flown from the steel roof beams with 15 two-ton Verlinde Stagemaker hoists at the stage end of the arena. The hoists are controlled by a customised controller called the Jyrki 18, after Eastway's production director and technical consultant for the Arena, Jyrki Hytti. The grid itself can be subdivided and reflown to suit a variety of applications. Interestingly, the roof beams from which this



Preparations for the show at the front-of-house position.



The view from backstage as the hall filled up for Jari Sillanpää.

grid is suspended were originally specified to be made from Finnish wood, as the architect wanted to demonstrate the strength and reliability of this national resource. Unfortunately, he hadn't bargained on the size of the loads expected to be carried by a modern venue of this type, hence the steel roof.

For stage formats, the seating at this end of the hall folds back into itself and is hidden to make way for the stage set. The moving light rig for the opening day's shows consisted of eight Studio Color and 18 Cyberlight fixtures from High End Systems, along with eight VL5s, controlled via a Whole Hog II console (with another for backup) supplied, along with the arena's four Super Trouper II followspots at the rear of the hall, by AC Lighting in the UK. The conventional lights consisted of 41 Thomas six-lamp bars (246 Par cans in total) and eight Thomas 8-Lites. Dimming was from Avolites, and consisted of two 72-channel racks and a 30-channel rack. The conventional lighting was controlled through a veteran Celco 60-channel Major, linked with a 30-channel Major console, still doing their stuff admirably well. Incidentally, it was also quite impressive to see the entire arena adequately fogged with just two DF50s - one either side of stage. The beams from the four Troupers were so sharply defined during Jari's performance that Eastway's sales manager Olli-Pekka Kallio commented that you could almost walk along them! (The next evening we saw violinist Vanessa Mae at the much smaller Finlandia Hall, for which Eastway had supplied just the one DF50.)

Jari Sillanpää, a deceptively average-looking guy, is often jokingly referred to by his compatriots as the Finnish Tom Jones. Rather like Rene Froger in Holland before him, he has gone from pub singer to national institution in

a short space of time, and is evidently one of the most talked-about people in the country. His show at Hartwall Areena was the final gig of his national 'Auringonnous' (Sunrise) tour, so the equipment that had been out on the road with him was now added to the house rig of the arena to make for a visually spectacular event.

Flanking the stage were flown stacks of EAW KF850 and 853, flown from the mother grid, with 10 SB850 sub-bass cabinets at floor level below, while the clusters of the distributed EAW house system were used as delays. The PA was driven by a mixture of Crest 7001 and 8001 amplifiers and processing for the various speaker elements was from Klark Teknik (DN3600), XTA (DP200) and EAW (MX200/MX300). Mixing front-of-house was Eastway's Ari Sirkiä with a Yamaha PM3500, while monitor engineer Russell Sladek was using a Midas XL3 left of stage.

Eastway have also supplied Cyberlights and Studio Colors to the arena for the Ice Hockey championships. The Cyberlights are used for projecting the national flags of each country onto the ice during the build up and intervals of the games, as well as a number of corporate logo gobos which are also projected onto the ice. These litho pattern gobos were custom-made by Swedish company SSR Stagelight. Another nice touch from the Cyberlights is that they strobe the goals where a goal has been scored, adding to the excitement and, of course, the humiliation of the goalkeeper. For colour-washing the ice, just four Studio Colors are enough to achieve an

even, colour-changing wash, producing a highly decorative effect.

The centrepiece of this impressive venue is a huge 21 ton octagonal frame (or 'gondola') flown above the centre of the ice, embedded in which are four Sony JumboTron screens, each facing a stand, with four electronic scoreboards positioned in-between. The screens, each measuring 8.5sq.m, employ a total of 72 JTS17 units and display live video transmissions, replays, pre-recorded material, promotional footage and pre- and post-event entertainment. This is the first time these screens have been used in Finland, and Paavo Kilpio, Sony Finland's display project manager, said of the project: "We couldn't have a more prestigious venue than this for the debut of JumboTrons in Finland. The gondola configuration is ideal for this application as it means that everyone gets a close-up of the action."

Of course, the JumboTron modules can be individually controlled, and during Jari Sillanpää's performance, the screen facing the stage was turned off because, as Kallio pointed out: "Otherwise he'd be looking at himself all night." This, I could believe.

After Jari had done his bit, the arena floor seating (during shows the ice is protected by thick, insulated foam tiles) was quickly cleared away and the preparations for the techno-dance event were made. Admittedly, things were running a little behind schedule at this point, but the turnaround slots had been tight, to say the least, and nobody was much surprised by the delay. The fact that three successive and very different shows could be put on at all within such a tight time scale is demonstration enough of the flexibility of the arena, and everyone was happy by the end of the night.



L-R: Eastway's production director Jyrki Hytti, his brother Juha (managing director) and sales manager Olli-Pekka Kallio.



Project engineer Olli-Pekka Suominen (left) and managing director Kimmo Junttila of Light & Sound Tech.



Monitor engineer Russell Sladek waits by his Midas console as the techno-dancers begin to filter into the hall.



Designer of the Golden Star Cafe and frontman of the Leningrad Cowboys Sakke Järvenpää (left) pictured in the Golden Star with another VIP guest, Formula One racing driver Mika Salo.



The Golden Star Cafe boasts the longest bar in Finland, an Irish Pub, a wine bar with an open fire, and a flown, Par-laden dragster - perhaps one of the world's most expensive pieces of truss!

HOUSE INSTALLATION

The entire electrical installation for the venue came under control of ABB Installations, a branch of electric giant ABB. Around 600km of cabling is laid in the arena, covering network multimedia, Internet, Intranet, ISDN and ATM connections for the arena's extensive conference facilities, satellite and optical fibre connections for worldwide TV coverage and an internal TV-net. For the house audio and lighting systems, the expertise of Helsinki-based Light & Sound Tech (officially endorsed by ABB as a first class supplier of sound, lighting and AV systems) was called upon.

Light & Sound Tech have been distributing professional lighting, sound and AV equipment in Finland since 1987, and have also carried out a number of installations for clients ranging from theatres and nightclubs to museums and shopping malls, as well as more high-profile entertainment and AV systems installations such as the Planet Hollywood restaurant in Helsinki. The cruise liner industry is also an important area for Light & Sound Tech, who have worked on a number of vessels, including Royal Caribbean's latest passenger liner, Enchantment of the Seas, which is currently under construction in Helsinki shipyard.

As mentioned above, the main house audio system is a distributed system based around nine flown EAW three-way clusters. Each cluster consists of an SB-250 bass cabinet, with a single short throw MH-692 mid high and two long throw MH-662 cabinets above. The central cluster, consisting of four MH-692 mid-high units and an SB-250, is flown beneath the JumboTron screens, and is automatically over-ridden by the emergency announcements to ensure maximum intelligibility through the

whole of the arena in such instances, even during high levels of crowd noise.

The design and installation was overseen by Light & Sound Tech's MD Kimmo Junttila and project engineer Olli-Pekka Suominen, while Eastway's Jyrki Hytti acted as technical consultant to the client. Installation manager was Yrjö Fonselius, working with Iiro Heiniö and Marko Hyvärinen. Unusually, the budget for the project was fairly flexible, so the main criteria in deciding on a solution was to achieve maximum speech intelligibility, and not to stay within the confines of a restrictive budget. Kimmo explained how the team had researched the standards of sound reinforcement in other arenas before deciding on an approach for the Hartwall Arena. "We visited a number of arenas in the States to find out how other contractors had approached the audio system. Many have gone for a simple central cluster, which is relatively quick and easy to achieve. I am not against this solution - it's adequate for those venues and they have a great atmosphere. But they always produce some level of 'slap' from the surrounding walls. We needed our sound to be very sharp and very clear."

So a distributed system was decided upon. EAW speakers were chosen due to their weight to output ratio, which allowed the size and number of clusters to be kept to a minimum. The result of the installation is a RASTI value of 0.63 - greater even than the already high level of 0.55 originally specified. Frequency response is 60 - 12,000Hz at 3dB.

The whole system is controlled through a PC software application custom-designed by Light & Sound Tech, called LS-Link. This application is indicative of the unique solution that the considerable expertise of the Light & Sound Tech team has brought to the project. LS-Link

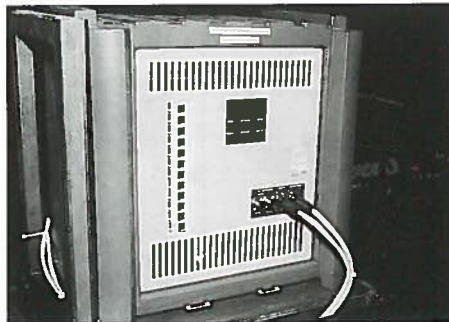
allows total control over the amplifier channel of each loudspeaker, giving values for level, muting and phasing, as well as controlling the state of the amplifiers, showing temperature, signal level, power consumption, output impedance, etc. This level of control enables the operator to manipulate the sound in any part of the arena, over-riding any cluster or speaker within a cluster if necessary. For example, when the stage is set up, the end cluster facing the seating positions which are folded away are not needed, so these channels are cancelled. The arena can also be divided to host two smaller events, and the flexible control of the house system also caters for this. There are 10 pre-programmed zone scenes in the LS-Link memory, and this is expandable, should it ever become necessary.

Another useful feature of the system is that each of the racks of Carver amplifiers is positioned up in the roof, as near to each cluster as possible, ensuring minimum power loss from over-long cable runs. The amp and processor racks themselves are all externally wired to allow maximum flexibility and accessibility in relation to touring sound systems. The house system can be tapped into very easily, allowing the clusters to be used for delays, as with the additional system used by Eastway for this show. The pre-amplifier stage uses digital, programmable equaliser and delay units from Biamp. The equalisers are preset with four different programs for varying uses and these are protected from unwanted interference.

The Carver amps are supplied with PC card slots, although the cards that Carver intended to use were based on the MediaLink system, which subsequently became unavailable. This prompted Light & Sound Tech to custom design



The WholeHog II desks at the front-of-house position prior to the performance.



High above the ice, Zero 88 ID dimmer packs for the house lighting system.



Jari Sillanpää's dancers atop the 'Auringonnousu' (Sunrise) scenic motif.



The Silver Star Cafe, Hartwall's second largest restaurant, has a spectacular view of the arena.

their own PC cards with the use of the amplifier service manual, and Carver have naturally been very interested in their achievements in this area. Also to be found up among the catwalks are the Zero 88 ID dimmer packs for the house lights, controlled from the main control room by a Zero 88 Sirius console, which provides some spectacular chases around the arena on the lighting panels which front the second tier of seating.

For the public areas of the arena, a total of 370 ceiling-mounted CT8-BHT speakers from Sound Advance Systems (formerly BES) were installed, while in areas where ceiling mounting was impracticable, Bose Freespace 25 speakers were mounted (60 in all). Sound from the arena is relayed through this system during events, and is over-ridden by emergency and public announcements, as is the arena's central

cluster. The arena and public address systems are digital delayed at every stage, so that there is no audible change during the move from passageway to inside the arena.

There are three restaurants in the building, besides a number of fast food outlets and shops. The largest is the Golden Star Restaurant, which is strictly for the use of those lucky enough to occupy places in either the suites or the club seats. This boasts a number of interesting features, not least of which is Finland's longest bar (40m - very sociable) and a separate wine bar with a large, open log fire, the incongruous presence of which is made possible by the 32ft high stone chimney above it. You can also sit in the traditional Irish theme bar, or perch yourself beneath an upside-down drag racer flown from the roof. This very large and shiny bauble carries 20 Thomas Par cans

and has been jokingly described as the world's most expensive piece of truss. The man responsible for the interior of this striking place is the multi-talented Sakke Järvenpää, restaurant designer, Harley Davidson importer and leader of the Leningrad Cowboys, a band that is probably Finland's most famous export to Europe after Nokia phones.

Throughout the Golden Star and all of the public areas, are dozens of Sony monitors which relay live or replayed footage of the action in the arena - there really is little chance to get away from it (Sony supplied 142 television screens in total, along with 23 projectors, 75 VTRs and 15 Hi-Fi systems). The Silver Star restaurant, which is open to all comers, is positioned behind the stage end of the hall, and you can have a meal here while looking out over the arena. Public address here is from a mixture of Bose Panaray 502A 'banana' speakers and smaller Bose FS-SAT units, with low end from Mach bass cabinets at either end of the bar.

Virtually every aspect of Hartwall Arena - from its location (five minutes by train from the city centre, adjacent to the television broadcasting centre) to its 'Hartwall cash card' retailing system, seems to be the result of careful and considered planning, especially in the case of the very extensive and very high quality technical facilities. Understandably, all of those involved in bringing the arena to its present stage in such a short space of time convey a great enthusiasm for the venue, and a pride in the higher profile it looks set to give to the city of Helsinki.

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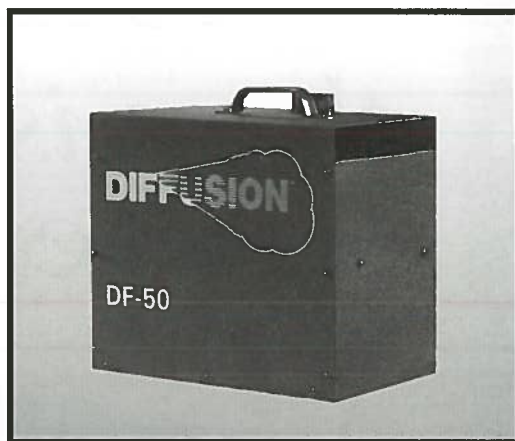
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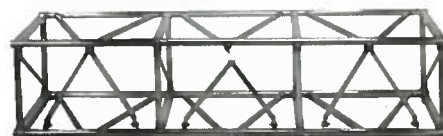
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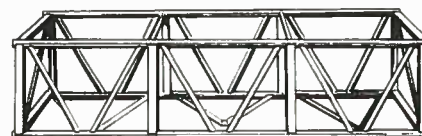
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position of fold flat truss when open



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GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT

Tony Gottelier at Showlight 97



Ken Ackerman, Showlight Chairman (left) with Bart Doucet, director of the Flemish Opera House (centre) and Derek Gilbert of Glantre.



VIP speakers Rick Fisher (left) and Jim Tetlow.

I can't remember who originally 'brought the good news from Aix to Ghent' in the classic poem, except to say that it was probably the ubiquitous John Watt, but in any event it is certainly high time that the ancient and architecturally beautiful Belgian city disseminated some good news of its own.

So, let's start with that good news: the four-yearly colloquium which is Showlight was alive and kicking in the last week of April, when it took to the stage at the Flemish Opera House, and is showing every sign of health and vigour as it moves into the sixth edition which will take place after the millennium, God help us. If you can think or plan that far ahead, and you are someone who knows, and who really cares about where entertainment lighting is heading, or lighting for the performing arts as it is more poetically put in the programme, make a note in your notional diary now to avoid disappointment in 2001.

There are three elements which are key to the success of such a symposium, and they are not entirely 'Location, Location, Location', as in the vernacular of the property people. Though Location is certainly one of the three, the other two are Content and Conviviality.

With regard to location however, the Opera House was an inspired choice and Ghent is one

"One of the really nice things about Showlight, everybody says so, is that nobody has an axe to grind, everyone is there to exchange ideas and to move the professional lighting business on."

of those European cities for whom time seems to have stood still and even the developers' vandalism of the fifties and sixties, which did so much damage in the UK, seems to have passed them by, or at least has been incorporated with a minimum of impact on traditional structures. I have been before, but without the time to dwell on that occasion either, although I am sure it is a place well worth a weekend stopover. What we saw of it in a busy three days, was certainly charming and redolent of our European heritage.

There were questions about whether somewhere closer to home might have been more attractive to potential delegates. While I am sure that would be the case for many

members of the ALD, who played a welcome and more proactive role than ever before, why do we assume that London is the epicentre of European performance culture? No, the organisers should be more aggressive in tracking down pan-European speakers who have done great things in the four years between, and set about attracting an audience from a broader church. I beg you, let's not get parochial, let alone xenophobic, about it. The great nomadic tradition of Showlight should be continued: London, New York, Hilversum, Bradford (where?), Ghent. Next stop - who knows? Unless we are all doing our travelling by wire on the Internet by then!

The Opera House turned over its splendid auditorium to the seminars and its even grander, not to say opulent, banqueting hall to the side shows, the exhibition of some 33 stalls of merchandise in the best French market tradition of equal emphasis for all. In effect, these are Showlight's sponsors for, although they can certainly hope to win friends and influence people in the informal atmosphere which is the tradition of the event, they certainly cannot expect to take too many orders.

Those of you who are still awake, and John Watt, will have noticed that the word colloquium has already been expunged from



David March and Anne Valentino of Vari-Lite with Bill Klages (right).



Showlight papers chairman Bob Anderson (left) with speaker David Taylor of TPC and Ken Ackerman.

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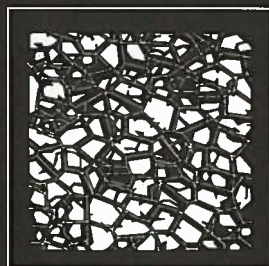
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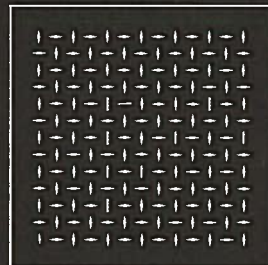
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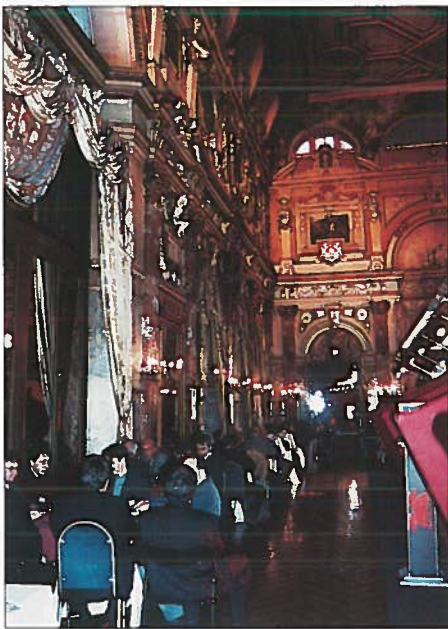
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The opulent setting of the Flemish Opera House provided a stunning backdrop to Showlight.

my text; it is just too tough a word to use throughout this piece and, anyway, who knows what it means apart from the founding fathers of the event, who probably vacuumed it out of an ancient copy of the Shorter Oxford? Anyway, I defined it last time and the time before and I am b***d if I am going to do so again. If you want to know, look it up.

There were other pure sponsors too, those that simply hand over money or kind, not the least of which was ADB who virtually considered themselves the hosts because of their national pride. They sponsored the splendid and traditional banquet, so I can see that we are moving smoothly on to Conviviality, but not before crediting some other local input, from Arf & Yes who designed the stands, Sylvania, who provided the delegate packs and Barco, who offered projection equipment.

One of the really nice things about Showlight, everybody says so, is that nobody has an axe (or is it an aix?) to grind, everyone is there to exchange ideas and to somehow move the professional lighting business on. To learn from each other's experiences and even from their failures, without commercial pressures or threats of copyright infringements. Hence the essential conviviality which, of course, is lubricated by both the structure of the proceedings, with three daily breaks between sessions, and more particularly the attendant social events. These, of course, are vital. From Strand's 'welcome' drinks party, to the company hosted dinner, to the theatre and



Mike Goldberg of M&M (right) with Carl Kirk of Nene College.



David Manners and Don Hindle of CCT flank Jamie Lewis of Melbourne Theatre Company.



David Catterall of ETC (left), Howard Eaton of HELL (centre) and John McDowell of High End.

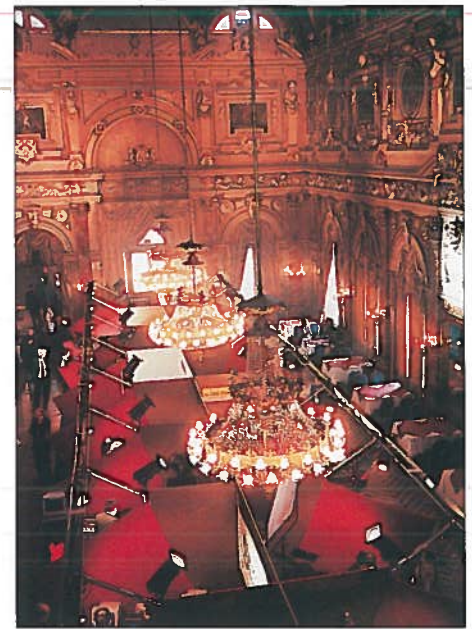
studio visits, to the Showlight banquet, and finally to the farewell tea courtesy of ALD, there was never a dull moment, nor hunger pang for delegates.

All of this was made the more effective by several new innovations on the entertainment front for which committee members, Derek Gilbert, and his irrepressible sidekick, Carolyn Cerrino, were, I believe, responsible. Derek, of course, is renowned as one of the great hosts of the business so his skills in that department were not going to go amiss. The first new departure was that several exhibitors hosted tables at various restaurants on the opening night, and delegates got to give preferences for which companies they chose to burden with their presence. In the light of what was to come later, it was a blessing that we didn't all have to move to a different venue, and therefore a different host, between courses! However, this was a hugely successful idea and gave the opportunity to socialise in an informal but intimate way and to exchange views and ideas across the dinner table. The numerous sponsors are to be congratulated.

At the formal banquet we were berated by stand-in chair persons John Watt (I bet that surname's not on the birth certificate - it's just too good to be true) and Ruth Rossington, into moving to the next table after each course, one third going clockwise and the others in the opposite direction, while the faint hearted (yes you know who you are) stayed behind. Again, a successful manoeuvre in the mingling stakes.



Showlight committee members Bob Anderson (left) and Brian Fitt (right) with Ignace D'Haese and Giovanni de Schampheleire of Arf & Yes.



The view across one of the two exhibition halls which hosted 33 exhibitors.

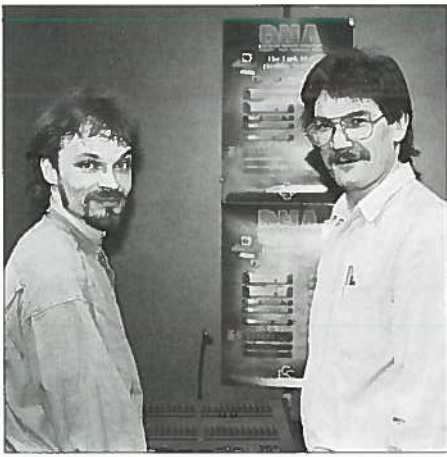
The meal was terrific, in great surroundings in the attic room of the 10th century St. Peter's Abbey, the most exercise I got all week was climbing all those stairs, and the pre-prandial Genevres cocktails at the International Club, which must have been the crypt, went down a treat beforehand.

During the dinner we had the opportunity, with the help of both the ebullient Mr Watt and the venerable Bill Klages (who came all the way from LA for the occasion), to pre-empt the possibility that Showlight chairman and driving force, the thoroughly delightful Ken Ackerman, might decide to chuck in his gavel prior to the next edition. That gavel, the prime purpose of which is to bludgeon reluctant contributors into submission, has been put to very good use over the years and delegates would be very reluctant to see that era pass. However, just in case Ken fails to succumb to the pressure to carry on, the diners registered their thanks with a toast and L+SI takes this opportunity also to wish him well. The fifth Showlight says farewell to two other stalwarts of the committee, Bob Anderson and Bill Lee, and much thanks is due to them also.

Whilst others headed off with ADB to the nearby VTS Studios, I went on the two theatre visits, as did large numbers of others and I must say that both the Minard and the Voorhuit are extraordinary in their own way. The Minard is a bijou theatre built for the proletariat by a wealthy Flemish architect as an antidote to the opera house which was, of course, the preserve



Lighting designer Robert Ornbø (left) talks with David Howe of White Light.



Eki Honkakoski of Teatek with Gary Pritchard of LSC Electronics.



David Cusworth of Strand Lighting (right) with David Cannings-Bushell of the BBC.



Dirk Van Nieuwenhuysen of ADB (left) with Erik Hansen of Norwegian Broadcasting.



Bill Smillie (left) and Jon Reay-Young of DeSisti flank Mike Wood of High End Systems.



L+S's Tony Gottelier (left) with Glantre's Derek Gilbert (centre) and Jim Tetlow.



Graham Merritt and Paul Topliss on the Lee Filters stand.



Chris Pearce (left) and Wolfgang Schweitzer (right) of Sachtler with Dave Roberts of the BBC.



Don Courchaine of Beo Brackman with Eva Pintelon of Flashlight.



Bill Lee (left) with speakers Walter Lassally, Gill Roberts and Freddie Francis.



Freddy Lloyd of Zero 88 with Nigel Morgan of Rose Bruford College and the ALD's Nick Hunt.



Neil Rice of Optikinetics (left) with Herman Fresen of Flashlight.



Kees Frijters (left) and Michael Hall (centre) of Rosco with speaker Nigel Godfrey of Corpus Christi College.



The packed crypt at the International Club of Flanders - venue for the pre-dinner reception.



Andy Collier of Teatro (right) with Carl Kirk of Nene College.



David Manners of CCT Lighting (right) with Marcelo Gonzalez from Brazil.



Carla Maris, Peter Alt and Rocyn Williams of Sylvania with L+SI's Ruth Rossington.

of the rich who were generally French-speaking at the time. Now the property of the city, it has recently been doubled in size by the pragmatic addition of a bolt-on, breeze-block bunker behind the proscenium arch which duplicates in geometry, but only in geometry, the proportions of the classic auditorium on the other side. As you may imagine, this new structure is as minimal as the other is ornate. By removing the stage and introducing mobile seating systems at either end for the stalls, the Minard can now be used in various configurations, though in-the-round seems the most practical. The addition of a clever, flexible and thoroughly modern rigging system, also duplicated in the Gods in the original, was the icing on this extraordinary combination of ancient and modern.

The Voorhuit was equally interesting, but for different reasons. Built by the Socialist Party at the beginning of the 20th century, it started out life as what was basically a union hall. A series of rooms, some big some small, where the party could present itself, provide respite for workers and the under privileged on day visits, and eventually entertainment and art therapy. Following occupation during the two World Wars, the buildings had fallen into disuse and disrepair, when a group of enterprising young people persuaded the burghers of Ghent that the Voorhuit should be brought back into purpose as a centre for artistic development



Roger Duncan of the BBC with Debbie Lovelock and David Morphy of Cirro-Lite.

and at the same time shed its political past. With the aid of grants and income from a very successful cafe, concerts, discos and dramatic productions, the Voorhuit is slowly being renovated with a target for completion by the millennium.

By then, its two theatres, three concert halls and seven multi-purpose rooms will be in full swing. Not that all the rooms are not being put to full use meanwhile for rehearsals, industrial presentations, plays, musicals, performances of all sorts, art shows and all the other revenue-generating activities aforementioned. One can only envy Ghent this wonderful facility which, in time, will blossom into something of architectural value also.

Now to the content of the seminars and, as usual, it was a mixed bag. Perhaps a little bit too much commercial content, thinly disguised as something other than product promotion. But I guess that's inevitable and you can't blame people for having a go if their papers are accepted by the committee. As I said above, more aggression in pursuing those who have done great things in the intervening years between shows would not go amiss. The opportunity to show those achievements to one's peers should be enough of a hook for anyone. There was more talk in the recesses and at the luncheon tables on this topic than even the impending general election in the UK.

However, there were numerous interesting



ADB's Mike Musso (left) with Showlight organiser John Smith and his wife Daphne.

papers but rather than run through them all which will be boring for those who were present, I will simply mention my personal highlights. Jim Tetlow came from the USA to show us how he successfully crossed-over from television into lighting live performances via industrials, now styled 'Corporate Theatre' in the jargon emanating from the States, where nothing can ever be called quite what it really is. Virtual unreality.

Rick Fisher, ALD chairman, who also gave me an excellent and highly entertaining dissertation on the Spanish practices still redolent in crewing arrangements on Broadway over dinner later, had everyone on the edge of their seats with the exquisite simplicity of his lighting to produce the added benefit of 'natural' and, as an effect, 'supernatural' shadows. His Peter Pan yearning for the return of the missing umbra to add an extra dimension to the mood of the story on stage, later also supported by a paper from Anthony Bowne of the Hong Kong Academy of Performing arts, was certainly the talk of Showlight.

Then there were both highly amusing and genuinely thoughtful contributions from Richard Thompson, lighting manager of Bingley Little Theatre (billed as near Bradford, where's that?), and from BBC TV engineering manager, Ian Dow, on how he tried to light the Channel Tunnel on no less than five occasions for different OB broadcasts, up to and including



Derek Jones, Jim Douglas and Ed Pagett of Vari-Lite with Alan Luxford of Strand.



John McDowell of High End with Mick Hannaford of Lightfactor and Rick Fisher.



Bill Smillie, Jon Reay-Young and Fulvio Cotogni of DeSisti.



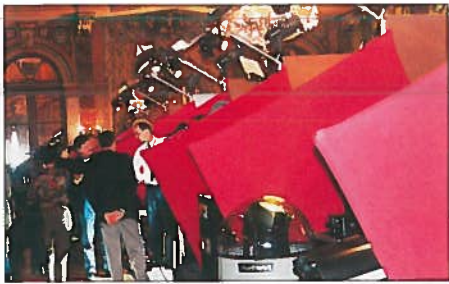
The Van Nieuwenhuysens Dirk (left) and Lucien (right) with Gerard Jongerius of Flashlight.



Delegate Robert Larrimar with speakers Mary Tarantino from Ohio State University and Glyn O'Donoghue from AC Lighting.



Peter Marshall of Theatre Projects (left) with Ivan Myles of Strand Lighting.



The trade show in the best French market tradition of equal emphasis for all.



Jim Tetlow with Dedo Weigert.

the official opening, and in some measure came unstuck on each attempt.

Bill Klages' delivery on AutoCAD was an excellent demonstration of how a designer can put down his pencil and make a CAD system his own. Bear in mind, Bill is no spring chicken, and I know many designers who can give him decades, but are still clinging to the lead, though only swinging it in their technophobia. A clutch of movie people gave us the view from the camera; Walter Lassally showed us that, even in movies, lighting has its fashions, while Oscar-winning Freddie Francis tried to persuade us that he knows nothing of lighting whatsoever.

From the world of television, we had Duncan Brown showing his artistry on various BBC



Delegates at the Civic reception hosted by the Mayor of Ghent.

programmes with Arcs, Florries and Dedo lights; Harry Hollands, a lighting designer with Philips, gave us the low-down on some of his excellent exterior architectural lighting schemes, culminating in his pièce de résistance, the lighting of the ultimate heritage site, The Pyramids, for the daily tourist spectacular; finally, David Taylor set us alight with his explosive tales of daring-do at the Tricycle, which could have been entitled 'Fanny Macbeth by Gaslight'.

Thence to that very English tradition of the Farewell Tea. Well, it ain't over until the fat lady has sipped her cup of Darjeeling. The fact that this last genteel act of Showlight '97 was sponsored by the ALD, and their closer involvement in the event as a whole, gives me



Chris Watts of the ALD with Carolyn Cerrino of Glantre Engineering.



Steve Valiardi of ETC with Bill Lee.

great hope for the future that this delightful and important date will not be lost from the calendar. For, while all sectors of the supporting organisations are under pressure, especially film and television, the sheer enthusiasm of the ALD and its leading officers should carry it forward to even greater things.

I missed the final speeches, but I trust that ample praise was heaped on Lighting+Sound International, not because I am partisan, but for the team's organisational skills which shone throughout. Great job, especially since it was all done in the odd moment between editing two journals. And so we slipped away, heading for the ports to get us back in time to change the world from the UK perspective in a somewhat different way.



Ben Weijters (left) and Wim Berghs (centre, right) of Wytec with Ken Sewell of Pulsar (centre, left), Ben Pickersgill and speaker Richard Thompson.



Martin Christides (left) and Fernand Pereira (right) of Philips with Dave Roberts of the BBC.



Speaker Jesper Garde Kongshaug with Bob Anderson.

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Arses in the Stalls . . . Ian Herbert

Out in Battersea, where usually the faithful few huddle in corners of the old town hall's three theatres to watch BAC director Tom Morris's latest imported Israeli dance company, or a couple of Lecoq graduates doing strange things with sellotape, there has been quite a buzz these last weeks, as four theatre critics have been struggling hard not to make complete arses of themselves as directors.

They've been quite well protected, since they have been able to attract not only some top name actors, but also some very handy design folk to this daring (some would say suicidal) venture. And a budget of £40,000 for four fringe plays is rather more generous than most small theatre companies can usually offer, although most of it seems to have been spent on an extensive publicity campaign featuring the four beauties lined up for an Alcatraz-style photograph of the Usual Suspects.

James Christopher had probably the most difficult job, putting a non-starry cast through their paces in a new play, *The Shoe Shop of Desire*, by the quirky Robert Young. He got tremendous visual help from Simon Vincenzi's set, constructed entirely of shoe boxes, but didn't realise that an all-encompassing set with only one small door makes for interminable scene changes. Covering them with music doesn't solve the problem, either, when there are so many changes and the music is so insistently monotonous. The People Show's Chahine Yavroyan supplied an intelligent lighting rig which produced the right atmosphere for Young's black fairy tale and wasn't over-used.

Michael Billington's attempt at two subtext-laden shorts, Strindberg's *The Stronger* and Pinter's *The Lover*, seemed to be still stuck in the rehearsal room. A very basic set from Roy Bell gave the stage a diagonal divide and offered for the Pinter a practical, ugly cupboard in which any conceivable prop had to be kept. The lighting plot seemed to consist of two instructions - OK, lights on the stage and OK, turn them off.

In considerable contrast, Nicholas de Jongh had enrolled Robin Don to create one of his usual brilliantly economical settings for Anouilh's *Traveller Without Luggage*. A hundred feet or so of rectangular scaffold-bars flown at waist height enclosed a square acting area and marked off a corridor around it where the actors could prowl. Full-length neo-Gothic mirrors guarded the exits. Where Billington ignored the power of lighting completely, de Jongh (using the same lighting designer, Mark Doubleday) went cheerfully overboard, with a huge rig delivering gobos in the corridors, an overhead yellow spot to emphasise the jaundiced solitude of the



Four beauties lined up for an Alcatraz-style photograph of the Usual Suspects.

central character, and a couple of lurid lilac floods for the play's frequent purple patches. Perhaps Mark should have explained that a straight play, even a *pièce rose*, is not an excuse for *son et lumière*.

Jeremy Kingston used a bold design from Ti Green to set Michel Tremblay's memory-play *Albertine in Five Times* in a multi-level pit round which the audience could gather like Romans watching gladiators. Technically the most successful of the four, it had effective lighting (with more lanterns than the auditorium had seats, something of a Fringe luxury) from Ben Ormerod to mark spaces and moods with professional subtlety, though the configuration - deep pit, low ceiling - meant that some spots lit the audience as well as the players. Where this production stood out from its companions was in the obvious co-ordination of a class team that included an assistant director and movement coach, an assistant designer and even a dialect adviser. Talking to the critics after their openings, I found them shattered but exhilarated. Whatever the merits of this exercise for the play-going public, it will at least have left the four suspects a little more aware of just how much has happened before the lights go up on the couple of hours entertainment in front of which they sit every night. I doubt that they will want to step outside their career path again, though there are worrying signs: even as I type, Sheridan Morley is on Classic FM doing a voice-over for Telecom. Next time a theatre critic offers to clean your windscreen or take out your appendix, tell them to get on with practising for their own job.

It's not as if the full-timers always get it right: last week I saw the transfer of the RSC production of Peter Whelan's *The Herbal Bed* from the Pit to the proscenium stage of the Duchess. Robert Jones's flowered backdrop had worked well as the back boundary of a thrust stage, but looked very dull as the rear wall of a fourth wall show. Irony of ironies: in the flying-free zone of the Pit a change from this garden set to the musty confines of Worcester Cathedral was

simply and effectively achieved by drawing a purple drape across it and letting down a large crucifix from the lighting grid; with the improved facilities of the Duchess it was possible to fly in both curtain and cross. On the opening night, both got ignominiously stuck among the battens and a blushing house manager had to announce a five-minute pause while they were untangled. It says much for the actors that they were back in character instantly when the play did resume. An even more impressive bit of actorly *sang-froid* came from Rupert Graves and Daniel Craig on the opening night of *Hurlyburly* at the Old Vic. After the IRA (or - surely not - someone from

the NT down the road) claimed a starring role by ringing up with a bomb scare halfway through the last act, the Old Vic's highly efficient house staff evacuated the theatre in two minutes flat. What to do? After a period of hanging around waiting for the Vic to go up in smoke, director Wilson Milam had one of those let's-do-the-show-right-here brainstormers and set his actors loose in the little wino-settlement park opposite. With no lighting, and a tree and a bench standing in for a Hollywood apartment set, the two delivered a stormer of a scene. What they had learned from Mr Milan, a real director, was the rhythm and orchestration that can make a play sing - attributes sadly absent for most of the time at BAC.

More horror stories from the latest no-hope West End musical, the revamped *Goodbye Girl* at the Albery (see full review elsewhere in this issue). Robert Jones (busy man) repeats the star moment from *Jolson* by moving the pit band up and over the set, but unfortunately this is the first thing we see and practically the last scenic excitement in a dull, dull evening. Jones's colourful variations on Manhattan skyline cut-out backdrops are neatly served by Jenny Cane's lighting, but surely both should have put up more of a fight against the idiot who insisted on a 275 million kW dead white followspot for the songs, that destroyed any lingering scenic sense on stage. The state of the show is summed up by the length of batten that fell off the curtain cloth just after the walk-down: fortunately no one was under it, but here is a production coming apart at the seams. It also provided a fine example of sound-man-speak: the screen of their control board at half time announced that the next item would be an En Tract.

Of course anyone can cock up from time to time. My own latest example was last month, in attributing the sets for the Old Vic *Cloud Nine* to Tom Cairns' assistant, Robin Rawstorne, when a closer study of the programme suggests that, as one might expect, Mr Cairns designed the show, as well as directing it.

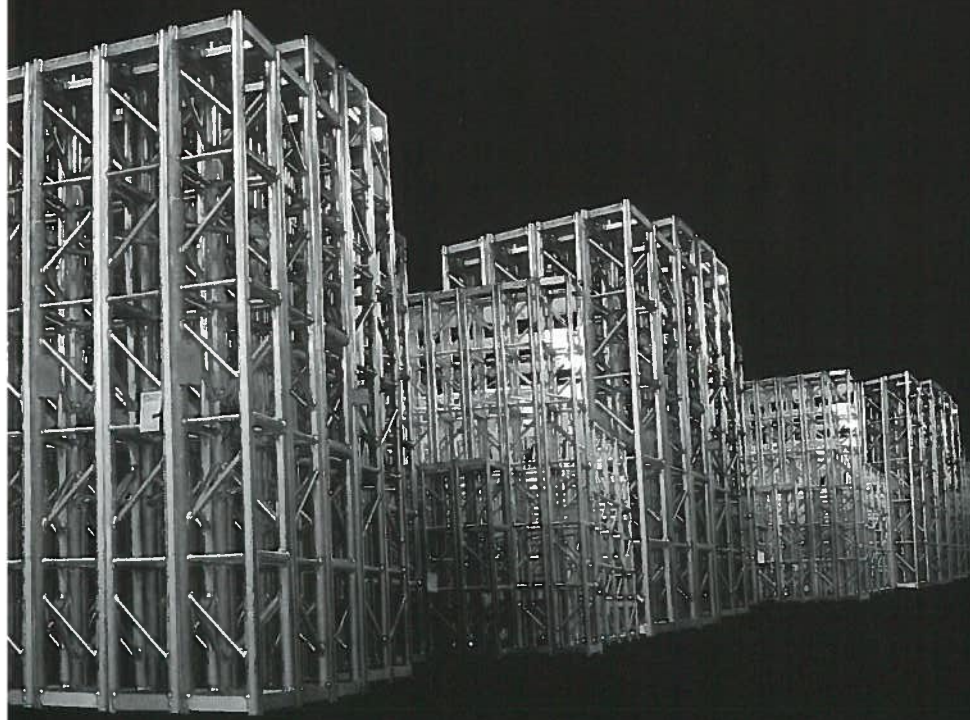
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ON TOUR

by STEVE MOLES

AND PRODUCTION NEWS

Peter Andre

York Barbican

LD: Paul Normandale

SD: Eric Simpson

As I drove in to see Peter Andre, the following questions ran through my mind. Is a washboard stomach, film star good looks, and some powerful marketing all it takes? Why are sub teenage girls prepared to stand outside a venue all day and be satisfied by the merest glimpse of their idol just seconds before they go inside to watch the show? Should I have worn my baggy PVC sweat suit and gelled my hair before I left? By the time I departed the show I had the answer to the first two, the third is of course flippant; as far as the audience were concerned there was only one masculine presence in the building, and it wasn't going to be someone who looked like their dad.

Production-wise, this is a very tight package - a modest rig from Lite Alternative, the economy-sized d&b 402 system from WigWam, and a modicum of stage set. It all fits in one 45 feet Stardes trailer (including Home Cooking's gear) and yet this is a five act show. As a pop package, aligning four opening acts with Peter Andre might be a useful vehicle for exposure, but for the audience it's a little trying. The first act were mediocre pop/hip-hop, somewhere between Eternal and The Fugees, but achieving neither; the second were too appalling to describe and, after a brief 20 minute break, we had a boy vocal duo from Ireland who had bags of personality and a DAT tape with four glitches on it that they'd lived with for the last month. The most interesting thing about their post-Osmonds performance was how they innocently looked aghast towards the sound engineer every time a glitch hit in. Now Living Joy were a league apart. One of those acts I'd never heard of but knew every song from the clubs. The first or fourth opener would have been more than enough to warm up this pheromone-drenched audience, but instead acts shuttled on and off every 20 minutes like Saturday morning cartoons on TV, something to snack on, but what we wanted was something of substance.

SOUND

Sound engineer Eric Simpson started his career with Nick Kershaw, and he's spent the past couple of years with Boyzone. His ability and confidence with such acts showed immediately as we discussed the performance criteria of the star. "He's pretty good with his mic' technique, though I had to tell him to sing into it, not at it. In fact, I told him I'd break his arm so we could splint it in the right position if it would help." A jest of course, but it's as well to underline that experienced professionals in the business can help along a young artiste.

Putting aside the pin-up physique, Peter Andre does have a good voice. As Simpson told me: "He warms up his voice properly every night, he shoots



Peter Andre performing at the York Barbican.

for pitch not power." Fortunately, the merchandisers do a roaring trade in referees whistles and the sustained high end blast several thousand of these instruments can produce ensures that no-one, not even the star, can hear that well.

Eric Simpson runs his show off a Yamaha PM3500, has a minimal amount of outboard effects, and a rack filled with playback devices which is how all the opening acts get on and off so fast - there are no musicians. Because the general room noise is so fierce, especially the opening couple of numbers, Simpson has to fly blind as it were, which justifies his use of a dbx160xt compressor on Andre's vocal channel: "I can just look across and see at a glance, to the nearest dB, exactly where he's at."

Simpson is, by his own admission, a Midas man (though he harbours a fondness for Gamble as well), but likes the PM for its facility, if not its sound. "One niggle though is that the insert point is post EQ. If I want to change the EQ on anything during the show, then I also have to alter the settings of any off-board device." Is there enough room to fit just one more surface-mounted switch on the channel module? Between the desk and the PA, eight stacks per side on the floor, two flown, and four subs, there was no shortage of power or quality available. To discern it was another matter, but as Simpson had the low end well under control, there was never a time when you couldn't hear Andre's voice, and between surges in the whistle blowing there was a tasty band in there.

LIGHTING

The lighting design is by Mr 'nice cup of tea' himself Paul Normandale, but finding his talents in great demand these days, the show is run by Eamonn Hunt. The design is simplicity itself, minimalist even, consisting of just two trusses with 40 Pars on

them, two six-lamp bars on the floor and barely a box full of Vari*Lites - less than a dozen VL6s and six VL5s.

It's the scenic elements that Normandale has designed in (a few fragments of corrugated iron hung randomly beneath the truss on ladder beam which each conceal a VL6) that makes this a slick presentation. The trash motif is continued in the fascia of the risers and to most of the wedges with more iron work and a nice splash of graffiti.

The set is the handiwork of production manager Ian Whitehead. What's interesting is the evolution of the show, as Hunt explained: "When we went into rehearsals, Paul Normandale had some ideas and we quickly programmed in at least a couple of major looks for each song. Normally at that point, we might sit back and look for how to develop things - look to the musical nuances and add some subtlety. But no, his management Blitz said 'that looks great, don't do any more' and so we've done just that."

A bit frustrating for Hunt, who coming from a theatre background sees opportunity clearly. I watched his fingers at the Avolites Sapphire frequently tapping imaginary flash buttons or easing faders on the blank surface next to the mastering panel. The Pars provide a real powder paint selection of colour, those vivid blues, magentas, oranges and greens so redolent of art class, age seven. The VLs, especially the 6s, produce a couple of very striking images, notably powerful downlight to acutely shade the famous washboard stomach when it is finally revealed in the sixth number, but more frequently to provide gentle animation of the ironwork with slow sweep chases overlaid by gobo chases. Subtle but nice.

All the elements were there, good looking production, nice sound when you could hear it, and good voice and songs. But Andre has no charisma, no star presence. Take away the muscles, the simulated copulation and genital caressing, and there's nothing there. Sorry.

Manic Street Preachers

Doncaster Dome

SD: Robb Allan

LD: Brien Leitch

James Dean Bradfield may jump around like Pete Townsend, arms flailing, legs akimbo, but was there really any need for his Marshall amp to join in the festivities and spontaneously combust during the fourth number? What happened was almost surreal; smoke slowly thickened in the air above the amp, Nicky Wire casually walked over and alerted Bradfield who continued to play with undiminished vigour, and, after what seemed an age, an asbestos fingered roadie casually walked across the stage, unplugged the amp, and carried the smouldering wreckage to the dumpster. It could have been part of the show. We could almost imagine the band were so out of their heads that they missed it. But they weren't: sitting astride a career peak underlined by their recent Brit Award, the Manic Street Preachers performed at the height of their powers and were 100% there.

SOUND

The lighting crew kind-heartedly jibbed sound engineer Robb Allan about the size and impact of his rig and when you saw the wall of Turbosound each side and the eight cabinet clusters in the air you knew it was going to be loud. But with the width of the Doncaster Dome, spread is everything and big stacks can reflect desire for coverage as well as power. As it transpired it was loud, but then if you stood at the lighting desk on a four foot riser you were confined to a zone of concentrated highs and it didn't sound great. Down on floor level, where the bleachers were folded away so 95% of the audience were at that height, it was concentrated power across all frequencies. Some effort had gone into achieving this - the roof isn't high enough to make use of in-fills beneath the two deep flown clusters, so they were used top row of the floor stack. Hung from the centre of the front lighting truss were a pair of Floods angled out and down in the same way a pair of UPAs might be used at a classical concert. With most of the top row floor stack kelped down by the highly efficient Mk1 piece of 2" x 1", this array was all about targeting.

The Britannia Row Turbo system is a relatively new entity for Allan. Last time I reviewed this band, in '94, they had Tour Tech's quasi S4 system and it was only through last year's work supporting Oasis that the band and their management came into contact with the blue boxes. Allan is of the hands-off persuasion: "The band already have a good idea of the dynamics on stage - they're built into the arrangements and are clear and separate." Thus, having produced the desired image, he stands back and lets it run.



The Manic Street Preachers performing at the height of their powers.

My only minor criticism would be over uniformity of level. The 60 minutes I heard had nothing in terms of ebb and flow, but everything else in this mix spoke volumes for the fact that Allan has been their engineer virtually since the band started touring, raw and raucous on the surface, but upon closer examination carefully layered beneath. He uses a Recall (sub'd in from WigWam), whilst his partner Ian Beveridge on monitors has an XL3 in the position it's made for.

LIGHTING

"A group effort," claimed an exuberant Brien Leitch feting his youthful lighting crew with paternal praise. Leitch, like Allan, has also been with the band almost since their inception and is fully conversant with their desires. "The band wanted something simple, but striking," he explained. "They also wanted the biggest video screen they could get." The resultant presentation has achieved these goals thanks to a pair of Barco 9100s from PSL and an

eclectic light rig from Leitch's own company Art of Darkness. A lot of effort has gone into masking all the trusses and the borders of the dominating screen back stage centre. Leitch also added pillars of white muslin down each side of stage, perhaps two feet in diameter, with a VL5 top and bottom.

The depth perspective the pillars give to an otherwise black chasm of drape makes for a neatly undefined lighting space. It's a space Leitch exploits with relish, swapping between the moving light sources he has and the many lighting positions. It's a big truss grid with relatively few lamps - 32 VL5s, 18 VL6s, four Golden Scan HPEs, four Bi-lites and four 4 lamp ACL strings. Not content with the ample truss yardage, many of the lamps are out hung, under-hung, or in the case of the ACLs, rigged at a rakish angle in the corners.

The result is enclosure of mainly concealed sources that Leitch calls upon with well chosen precision. His familiarity with the songs is obvious, the automated lamps take the lion's share of the work, but little inflexions in a song will draw a brief flash from the Bi-lites at just the right moment. The two main objects of the stage - the screen and the pillars - are not overplayed. Although the imagery on screen was often quite startling, the energetic Mr Bradfield was enough to make this an adjunct, not a focal point. The pillars too had their moments and most effective was the matching of colours between VL5s and 6s, the former lighting the tube softly from within, the latter with its greater intensity laying gobos upon the outer surface. A 'group effort' not only of crew, but of lamps too.

There's nothing curious about this band's success - it's the tried and tested route of talent, hard work and application.

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EQUIPMENT NEWS

Soundcraft Launch Series Five Console



Soundcraft has launched the Series Five - a new live FOH console. Extensive research has been put into not only its features and layout, but also the mechanical integrity of the frame and modules. Series Five is available in a range of sizes from 24 to 48 mono input channels, with each size including an additional four mic/line stereo inputs - so the 48 channel frame gives a total of 56 mic/line inputs.

To complement the launch of Series Five, the company has also released a new Power Supply - the CPS 2000. The unit boasts a three-year warranty and features such as a front panel mains voltage meter aiding correct voltage tap setting and plenty of spare capacity, even with the largest console size.

For further information contact Soundcraft in Potters Bar, telephone (01707) 665000.

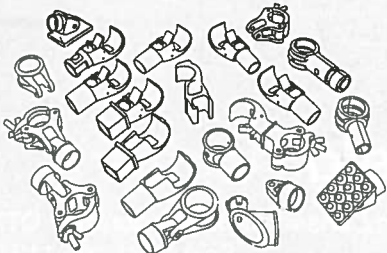
Yamaha's EMX640

Fuelled largely by the current explosion of bands playing in small venues and the demand for high quality and affordable PA, Yamaha has launched the EMX640 powered mixer. The EMX640 is a total PA system composed of four separate elements; a high quality mixer, digital reverb processor, two graphic equalisers and a high powered two-channel amplifier.

For further details contact Yamaha in Milton Keynes on telephone (01908) 366700.

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Atom Gets Mightier

The recent success of the Atom range of consoles from Australian manufacturer, LSC Electronics, has been further enhanced with the release of the upgraded 1997 version.

The console now boasts an inbuilt bass trigger for stepping chases, crossfading of chases on the sub masters, video output that displays current status, stored memories and extensive 'on screen' help menus. LSC has also shipped the first production units of the new Axiom 48 and Axiom 60 consoles following many months of development and prototype showings at exhibitions. Production has now been stepped up and the many back orders will be shipped during May.

For details contact LSC Electronics in Melbourne, telephone + 61 3 9561 5255.

Wybron Forerunner

Wybron Inc have introduced a new 16-frame colour changer, which they launched at the USITT trade show last month. According to the company their lowest-cost unit ever, The Forerunner is designed to deliver the quietest, most reliable colour changing in its class and comes in 7" and 4" units with a separate 16-head power supply. Others features include daisy-chaining without power loss, compatibility with other colour change systems, Autoload gelstring loading and individual DMX addressing.

For further details contact Wybron UK in Slough on (01753) 533001.

GRI Mixer Updated

Allen & Heath have launched an updated version of their GR1 zone mixer. An upgraded remote control voltage of +10V now makes the GR1 compatible with all the major computerised installation systems, whilst audio feeds to the unit's six input channels can be selected from up to 24 separate sources. The three balanced output busses are on XLR connectors and the unit can feed either three independent mono zones, or one stereo and one mono zone. The key to the GR1 lies beneath its 1U frame. Clearly presented internal jumpers and trimmers allow the systems designer to create an individual package, whilst the front panel mounts only those controls for day-to-day operation.

For further details contact Allen & Heath in Penryn, telephone (01326) 372070.

Martin Enter Multiplex Market



With a radical departure from their touring and pro contractor ranges, Martin Audio have entered the high-definition cinema surround market with two new systems: the Effect 2 and Screen 4.

The Effect 2 has been designed to produce a full-range surround performance for both large-scale and smaller multiplex cinema applications. Its shape allows it to be wall-mounted, with a 15 degree down angle, by means of its simple fixing bracket. It is a passive two-way system incorporating an 8" bass driver and a 1.25" HF device, mounted on a 90 x 60 degree elliptical waveguide, which controls the directivity of the system above 2kHz. The crossover network has been designed to allow selection between either a flat high frequency response or -3dB/octave high frequency roll-off.

The Screen 4 is intended for large-scale cinema environments. The system is supplied in two sections - the bass enclosure and the bracket-mounted compound horn section. The low-frequency enclosure has a shallow profile for behind-the-screen placement and utilises twin 15" high-power, reflex-loaded bass drivers, which operate up to 500Hz. A unique 90 x 40 degree combined mid and high frequency horn operates above 500Hz and exhibits pattern control to minimise seat to seat variation.

The company have also extended their ICT series with the release of the ICT 10 - designed to meet the increased demands of modern music/paging systems, interactive audio for video and high-quality distributed sound.

For further details contact Martin Audio in High Wycombe, telephone (01494) 438669.

Seleco's new SRP 41C Projection Cube

Seleco have recently launched a new rear projection cube - the SRP 41C - which the company claim is one of the slimmest on the market. The cube has undergone a redesign of its high resolution optics and uses liquid-coupled CRTs. The SRP 41C comes out at just 43" for a cube with a 41" screen. The SRP 14C can transmit computer generated VGA images with a horizontal scan frequency of 32 KHz as well as displaying standard video sources with enhanced vertical frequency to 100Hz. For further information contact Seleco in Italy, telephone +39 432 670605.

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MERSEY BEAT

Liverpool's Adlib Audio is gaining significant ground in the tough world of concert sound.

Mark Cunningham talks to company founder Andy Dockerty

Del Amitri, Texas, Gun . . . apart from being among Scotland's top bands, they all have one thing in common when they are on tour: PA rental company Adlib Audio. Given the often volatile nature of the hire industry in the UK, it is a credit to their determination that this low-key outfit has carved an enviable niche in the market over recent years. But it was surprising to learn that Adlib's history dates back as far as 13 years ago, when a 23-year-old Scouser named Andy Dockerty first set up his fledgling empire in the 'Pool of Life'.

Dockerty's active interest in music evolved in the mid to late seventies through assisting school colleagues' bands by "flicking light switches on and off". After leaving school, he worked for several years as an electrician, but his big turning point came in the spring of 1984 when his job came to an abrupt end (an event greatly overshadowed by Everton winning the FA Cup). He quickly seized the opportunity to enter the government's Enterprise Allowance scheme and established Adlib with a transit van full of equipment he had accumulated from working with local bands in pubs and clubs.

Moving onward and upward, Dockerty began engineering at weekends for cabaret bands such as Liverpool Express, best known for their summer song of 1976, 'You Are My Love'. "It was so incredibly simple back then because all I did was set up a couple of speakers either side of the stage, plug some mics into a 16-channel HH console at the side and oversee a static mix for most of the night. When I formed Adlib my first system consisted of a good old pair of JBL 4560s with a pair of ATC 2 x 12", 75W drivers, RCF horns and an RSD crossover - nothing more than a standard cabaret rig."

In 1985, he was joined by Chris Leckie who grew as an engineer with Adlib through the years and has gone on to reach greater heights. One year after Leckie's arrival, Dockerty bought out a local PA company who went to ground after their vans failed the MOT! From this he acquired the Adlib fleet and a 2kW rig. It was beginning to look like big business. "It all snowballed for us from there - customers had less of a choice about who to go to for a PA."

COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Although a major part of its business, audio rental is not the only area of Adlib's expertise. Its devotion to the design and build of its own loudspeaker cabinets has recently influenced the formation of Adlib Audio Sales Limited - a separate company run by Nick Bellis, designer Dave Fletcher and Ken Dockerty (Andy's father) - which is concerned solely with equipment sales. Their progress in this area has already been applauded by major organisations including Soundcraft, BSS, JBL, Crown, C Audio, RCF, Celestion and, more recently, Precision Devices, all of whom have all lent support to various Adlib Audio projects. "They all think the projects we are taking on are extremely worthwhile. That's brilliant, but



Adlib founder Andy Dockerty.

unfortunately we need the end user to tell us we're great and not the suppliers. This would make greater demands on our output and turn us from cottage industry to something hopefully a little larger. And there are plans."

Adlib has become one of the few rental companies in the UK to develop its own speaker systems. This potential was realised when Dave Fletcher joined the team in 1993. "I'd always had the idea of going down this road and through Dave's long background in the development of amplifiers and speaker systems, we started work on some ideas. I was attracted to it because I was finding it harder and harder to justify spending £3,000 on a box whose component value was only £700. It just didn't make sense. Living in the outback of Liverpool, we knew there was little chance of attracting sub-hire clients so that kind of investment in equipment seemed pointless.

"We achieved good results very quickly, and our initial ideas manifested themselves as the DF1 and DF2, both two-box systems. A by-product of this is that we are now selling our JBL and RCF-loaded Cabaret range of boxes to

the local market, even though they are capable of applications much further afield."

One of Adlib's greatest assets is its in-house joinery shop which, theoretically, allows a rough product concept to be designed and a prototype built and sent out on the road for testing in a practical environment, within 24 hours. "We can quickly see if it's working to order," explains Dockerty, "and have it back at base for any adjustments before making a fully-fledged product. Many companies like us just don't have the facilities to do that. This advantage has allowed us to produce boxes like the DF1, which we knew sounded great three or four years ago. Until recently, digital products were built for specific systems and there wasn't the flexibility to put different types of speakers on the end of them. To make a speaker sound great, you first need to get the mechanics of the box right, then you need a tool such as the BSS Omnidrive, which we use to do the more delicate adjustments, and you end up with an amazing result."

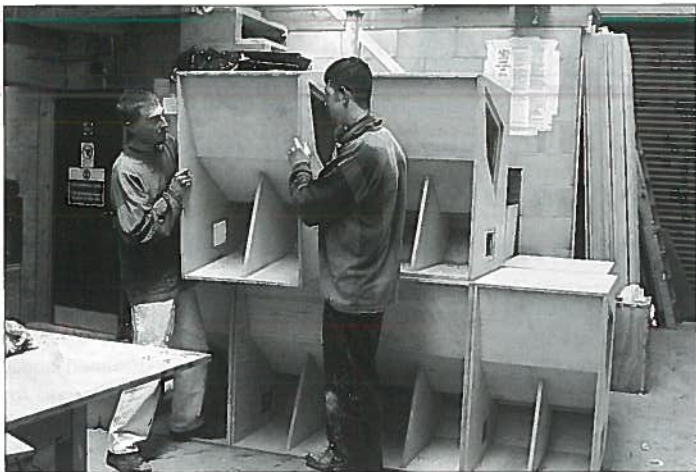
Such know-how has captured the attention of the Blackburn installation firm Romers, which commissioned a new stadium speaker cabinet design from Adlib, for permanent fixture at Maine Road Football Ground and other sporting venues: "Because of our cottage industry attitude, we are good at fulfilling orders for 25 or 50 units, but not hundreds! The smaller orders are where we are at, but we don't plan to stay here very long, because we've been applying for grants which will enable us to upgrade our manufacturing facilities."

INNOVATION

Another of Adlib's strengths lies in its ability to dream up ingenious, practical solutions, far beyond the normal call of duty for such a company. When I first met the Adlib team at a Del Amitri gig at the Hammersmith Apollo a couple of years ago, I was drawn to a simple,



Part of the Adlib crew pictured at their Liverpool HQ - Steve Pattison, Steve Martin, Steve Cole, Matt Byrne, Alan Lynch, Steve Beesley, Emma Barwell, Dave Kay, Dave Jones and Phil Stoker.



Dean Lyles (left) and Robert Pinto take care of some unfinished business.

but invaluable, adaptation of something Andy Dockerty had seen at a Def Leppard show. The idea he took and adapted for use with the Dels was a pressure mat built into a box with an oscillator which, via a Drawmer noise gate, triggered the opening and closing of backing mics.

"Constantly open microphones are always a problem on stage and it was the whole reason for the existence of noise gates on drums. Using a pressure mat to indicate when a singer is using a mic or not means you can use a gate on vocal mics as well as drum mics. Another idea I had to solve the same problem of constant open vocal mics came from a visit to the Gents in an incredibly nice hotel. I walked away from the toilet and it automatically flushed. Now, I find I am often inspired in an environment where I can sit back, relax and have a good think, and toilets can be quite thought-provoking places! I originally thought that this toilet was triggered by some sort of infra-red device, but discovered it was a proximity detector. I thought that if you got something similar for a microphone that would mute the signal when the singer moved out of range which would be a major asset. Unfortunately, an American company has already developed something similar and by the time a company such as ourselves could realise this idea, the Americans would have introduced it over here at a much lower price than would be comfortable for us."

Soundcraft and BSS are currently working on another of Adlib's brainwaves - an idea which Dockerty described some time ago to an excited Bob Doyle of Midas. "The idea is designed to streamline the use of automated EQ for monitor desks in cases where an engineer is employing something like a t.c. electronic system or BSS Varicurve, both of which have remote control devices. You can be listening on PFL to Mix 1 and the remote graph will display the Mix 1 curve, but when you then go and listen to Mix 2, the graph will continue to display Mix 1 and will not adjust until you hit the recall button for Mix 2. At times when an engineer is under extreme pressure, it is possible that this could lead to a problem because he may be looking at the wrong graph when he is adjusting settings at the desk. The time factor involved in manually switching between mix recall settings on the remote may prove a creative obstacle. But if all PFL outputs on the console had a MIDI facility which communicated with the Varicurve or t.c.

system, the graph would automatically change to the mix you are listening to, at the precise moment you hit the PFL button. That's the theory anyway!

"When we were working with the Dels on the Bryan Adams' tour last year, Jason Sound's president Jeff Lily also thought it was a great idea. It's all under development at the moment and if it does reach fruition it will be an incredibly useful tool. Our in-house think-tank, consisting of myself, Dave Fletcher and Dave Kay, are always coming up with such concepts. However, it is rare we actually have the facilities to put any of them into action and it can get frustrating to see big manufacturers enjoying success with ideas that we scribbled on the back of a ciggie packet years ago. But that's the nature of the beast!"

GROOMING ENGINEER TALENT

Of the 24 staff at Adlib, 16 are on the payroll, four are freelancers and another four have been taken on through various government employment schemes. Dockerty smiles: "Due to the youth of some of the people we employ through government schemes, it can often involve me being as much a social worker as I am an engineer."

On the hire side of the business, Dockerty is the first to admit he is somewhat of a dinosaur where technology is concerned, and with the programming of his microwave oven only recently conquered, he is looking forward to being able to set the clock on his video sometime before the end of the century! Utilising the technology now available to system designers and operators was realised by the recruitment of Dave Kay in 1995. His main role is to steer the hire ship whilst writing and maintaining the Adlib web site.

On the road, Kay has worked with Gary Clark's most recent band King L, Del Amitri and



Sales manager Nick Bellis (left) with Dave Fletcher and operations manager Mike Moran.



Designer Dave Fletcher with some cabinets from the Cabaret range in the company's demonstration room.

Squeeze, and is currently expanding his talents to include combining the role of tour manager and engineer for Liverpool-based band Proper. Alan Lynch has been drafted in to help Kay at the helm of Adlib Audio Hire. Lynch is currently front-of-house engineer for The Bootleg Beatles and rumour has it that his dark and distant past included front-of-house mixing for Slade, in the days when front-of-house mixing was a new phenomenon. Dockerty refuses to give away Lynch's age, but casually mentions that his first foreign gig was manning the PA at the burning of Joan of Arc.

Adlib's engineers also include Steve Cole (The Real People and The Bootleg Beatles), Roger Kirby (Space), Marc Peers (Therapy? and Gun), Steve Beesley (Dr Phibes and Audioweb) and Dockerty himself, who is known for his work with Texas and Del Amitri. "Steve Cole has been with us for about five years and he is only 25," explains Dockerty. "Marc Peer's the same age and he joined the company in 1987, so they've all come through the ranks and progressed naturally. It's very rare that we will take anyone on with a long industry track record, because they may have that 'been there, done that' attitude. I'd rather work with somebody at grass roots level and train them up from their late teens.

"About three years ago, a situation arose whereby bands playing the university circuit started to bring support acts with them, so you never had an opportunity to take one of your young engineers, put your arm around him and take him through a gig. Practical hands-on training became difficult, so we then decided to take a step backwards and service pubs with a small PA system, and formed a small company called Mars PA especially for this purpose. Steve Cole got his grounding there and it's obvious where it has taken him. It's a very basic system that fits into a transit van and can be assembled in about half an hour. It went out for peanuts, but it gave our young trainee engineers a chance to operate a system with bands at the most basic level."

Quite rightly, Dockerty cites Gary Bradshaw (Pink Floyd, Eurythmics and Simple Minds) as one of the industry's top sound engineers. But whether it is out of painful realism, modesty or narrow-mindedness, Dockerty cannot ever see a time when either himself or his staff engineers would be able to reach those dizzy heights. "In PA hire and sound engineering I often feel that too much emphasis is placed on the physics and not enough on common sense. I strongly

believe that by displaying this vital human quality, an engineer can climb to a respectable professional level. Learning to cope with real-life situations and the occasional difficult musician is as important as the amount of engineering ability you may have.

"Through having Dave Fletcher on board, the knowledge I've gained from learning what speaker systems actually do has definitely helped my engineering, but it's also made me realise the more you know, the less you realise you know and it becomes very worrying. Being a systems engineer and a sound engineer are two completely different ball games, whereas a few years ago specialisation wasn't really an issue. Some engineers make the mistake of thinking they have the ability to run a particular venue, but there is always someone like an acoustic consultant who could have drawn a much better rig specification while the engineer got on with balancing the sound."

DEALING WITH THE COMPETITION

Whilst maintaining client accounts has rarely posed a problem for Adlib, thanks to its thorough and consistent service, competing on cost with their Goliath counterparts is always an issue. "It is getting increasingly difficult all the time," Dockerty comments. "You see the top two or three rental companies fighting against each other for an account and when one of them eventually loses they are left with a warehouse full of PA stock. The knock-on effect of this is that they can then put their gear out at very competitive prices, and second division firms like ourselves lose out, although at the



A flown array of Adlib's DF2 speakers.

moment there seems to be more work around for everyone than there has been for many years.

"Texas have a successful new album out and are big news all over again, and I predict that within a few weeks the big boys in audio rental will be on the phone to try and secure their touring account by throwing in silly quotes. I just hope that I'm not put in a position where I have to match their prices, because I know the band and GR Management are very happy with us."

For most of its life, Adlib has remained one of the world's best kept secrets. Judging from reactions to its recent tours and sideline achievements, however, it seems the cat is

most definitely out of the bag. As for the future, Dockerty is playing his cards close to his chest and maintaining a sensible outlook: "Right from the start, our business has been based on going to the bank and seeing how much finance we could raise. Of course, as the business has progressed, the bank loans have got much bigger! But where further growth is concerned, I am not a great believer in extended borrowing; it has to come from cashflow. I think our future development rests with continuing to provide the level of service we offer to our current client base, encouraging our very talented young engineers and furthering the relationships we have with key manufacturers. It's very flattering that BSS and Soundcraft use us regularly as a sounding board for their own R&D. I think it's because they know that whenever they send something to us to test, we will give it plenty of attention and tell them everything we can."

Thirteen years down the line, Dockerty is yet to be convinced that his lifelong hobby has turned into a viable business. "I'd actually be a lot better off if I left this all behind and took off as a freelance engineer, because I plough most of my earnings back into the company and draw a minimum wage. My lifestyle doesn't depend on having vast amounts of money, I'd rather have great gear to take out on tours and a loyal staff. This all started for me as a hobby and that's not ever going to be the basis for enormous financial return, but it gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction that we've all come this far. It's still early days though, and I am a firm believer in Adlib's potential. That's enough to keep me going."

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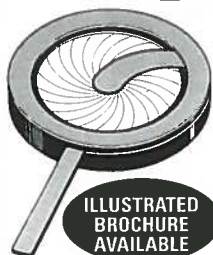
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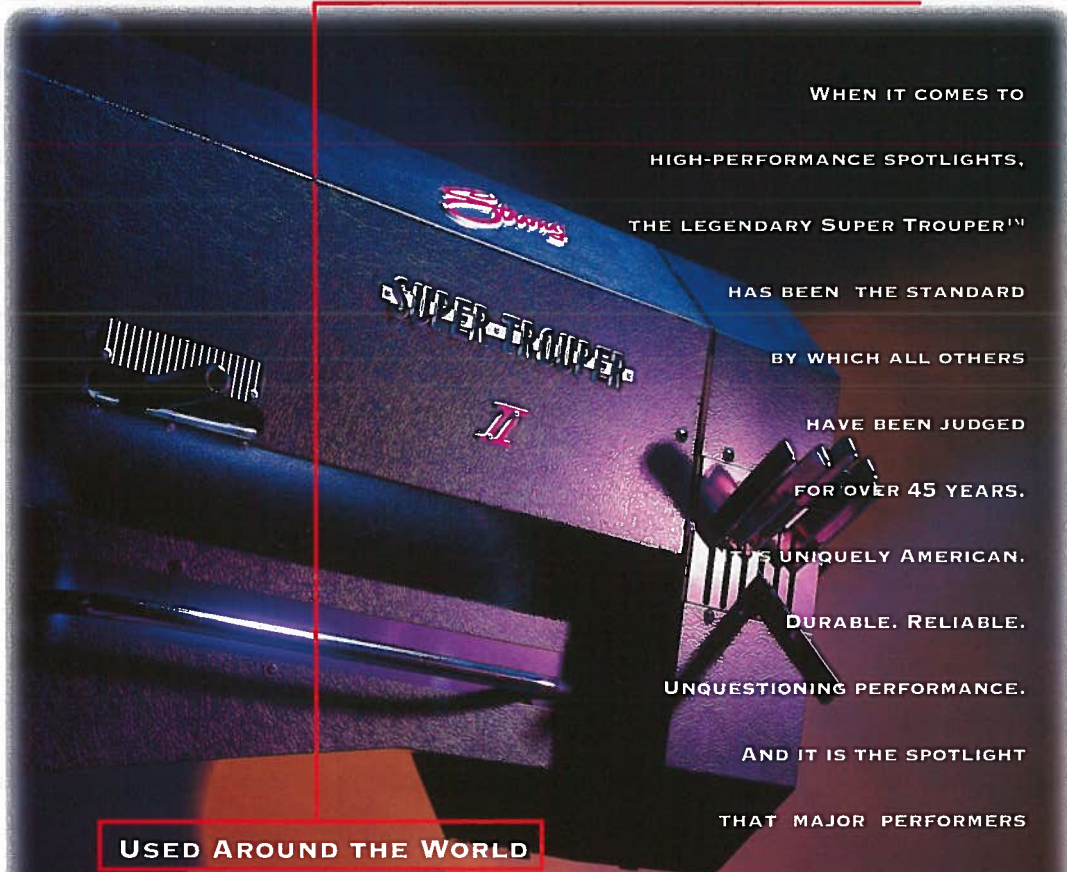
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OSCARS ON OVERDRIVE

The trend in live award shows is moving towards ever more ambitious staging. L+SI looks at the complicated audio set-up at this year's Academy Awards

When Hollywood pays tribute to its own, it certainly does it with style and the 69th annual Academy Awards, highlighted by the return of Billy Crystal to hosting duties, were certainly no exception. What may not have been quite so obvious to the millions watching from the comfort of their armchairs worldwide was that this latest offering included the show's most elaborate live sound reinforcement design and installation to date.

The specialised system was assembled by Audiotek Corp (ATK) of Burbank, California, and sound designer Patrick Baltzell who, working on his ninth consecutive Oscars ceremony, also provided the house mix. Held at the 6,800 seat Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, the biggest sound reinforcement challenge proved to be that of working around the show's elaborate scenic elements to provide the high audio quality required, as Baltzell noted: "The trend in live awards shows is to open up the television view of the stage and venue, while at the same time, hiding elements like loudspeakers, trusses and cabling - it makes things a little bit more tricky."

Further complications were caused by the main stage walkway extending all the way to the front seats and being flanked on both sides by conductor Bill Conti's 47-piece orchestra. It created daunting potential for too much spill from the reinforcement system into the mics of both the orchestra and presenters/performers straying to the edge of the stage extension.

The selection and placement of the main loudspeaker arrays, combined with the experience of the design team, proved to be the key to resolving these issues. ATK's Scott Harmala drew attention to one major advantage; the team utilised a speaker configuration developed and refined over the past year.

Four clusters of EAW KF860 and KF861 Virtual Line Array (VLA) speakers were flown high across the proscenium, covering most of the main floor and about one third of the balcony. Each cluster comprised four KF860s (60 degrees by 40 degrees coverage pattern) topping a single KF861 (90 degrees by 40 degrees). The two centre clusters were tucked up just out of the way of the proscenium, while the two on the sides were split in a dual hang to cover upper and lower seating areas.

These particular



Preparations for the Oscars outside the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.

loudspeakers have been designed specifically to meet the needs of live televised shows, housed in low-profile horizontal cabinets that stay out of sightlines, while providing very tight

KF860s, because it would take double the amount of cabinets to get both the pattern control and output that they provide."

Most of the rest of the balcony seating was covered by three more KF860 arrays flown left, centre and right, from the ceiling. A truss fitted with six custom Audiotek two-way loudspeakers handled the last two rows, with single EAW JF80s covering a dozen seats on each corner of the balcony.

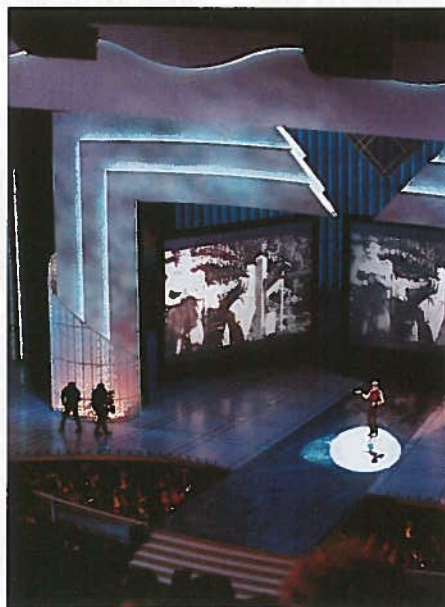
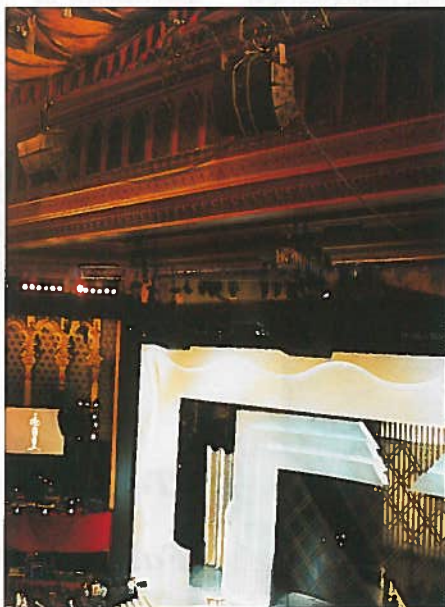
A total of 12 subwoofers, double 18" driver loaded and designed by Audiotek, were positioned to the sides of the stage and further along the sides of the main floor. Seven EAW UB82 compact, low-profile loudspeakers covered the under balcony, while JF80s built into the front of the set provided

"With this system's size and complexity, as well as the number of crew members it takes to make it happen, we must have a clear plan backed up by mounds of information."

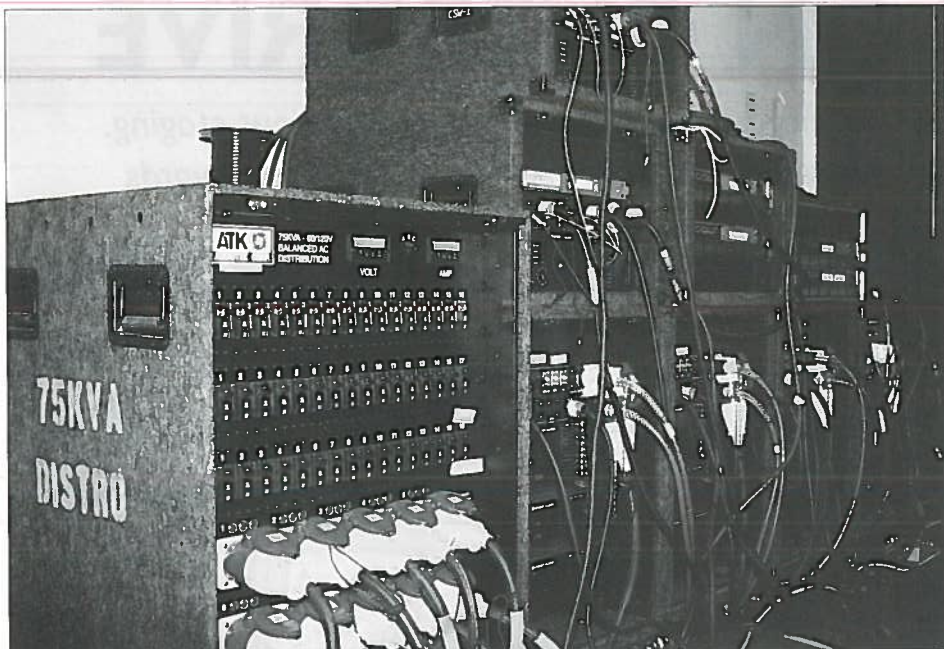
vertical pattern control. "Utilising this horizontal line array topology is the best solution," said Harmala, "in particular the

some front fill. The front/corner fill was bolstered on each side by dual EV DML-1152 cabinets, while compact loudspeakers on 70V lines were placed under every other seat in the front rows in case additional dialogue presence was needed, given the steep flying angles required of the main clusters.

"This project takes on the characteristics of a fixed installation," explains Baltzell. "We map out the design precisely, section by section, noting every minute detail. With this



Above: the EAW clusters were flown high so as not to obstruct the view for the television cameras.



The seat of power: Audiotek Corp's power distribution and amplification racks backstage.

system's size and complexity, as well as the number of crew members it takes to make it happen, we must have a clear plan backed up by mounds of information."

An ATK staple is the '60/120V Symmetrical Power Supply', an AC power distribution system which delivers a reduction in the potential and effects of ground loops. It also lowers the system's overall noise floor by as much as 10dB. Two of these specialised supplies fed ATK's custom power amplifier rigs, located stage left and right. Amplifiers are divided into universal two-way and three-way packages, each with elaborate multi-channel switching systems that afford quick configuration changes and troubleshooting.

The three-way packages, matched to the loudspeakers, included Crest 9001s to drive the lows, 8001s for the highs and 7001s for the mids. Meanwhile, the two-way packages included Macro-Tech Crown MA-3600VZs for the lows and Micro Tech MT-1200s for the highs. Layers of time delays, all timed back to the two front/centre clusters, kept everything in sync. For the KF860/861 clusters, BSS Omnidrives supplied delay as well as EQ, while XTA DP200 processors were utilised in this capacity for the remainder of the system. Essentially, each loudspeaker had its own EQ.

"In the old days, we used to have racks and

"We used to have racks and racks of delay units for shows like this. Now, it's handled within each loudspeaker's own domain."

racks of delay units for shows like this," said Harmala. "Now, it's handled within each loudspeaker's own domain, which is much easier to manage." At the FOH position, Baltzell manned a Yamaha PM4000 and 24-channel Soundcraft Delta sidecar mixer. Immediately behind him was EQ technician Barrett Bassick of Solstice Corp, helping to integrate the loudspeakers and making slight adjustments on Klark Teknik DN410 equalisers.

Virtually the entire show was live, the only taped portions being the music for a performance of Best Song nominee 'That Thing You Do', and a tap-dance performance paying tribute to great cinema dance moments. Both proved too complicated from production and logistics standpoints to allow a live source. Crystal's opening monologue, featuring an original song paying tribute to the year's Best Film nominees, featured a unique mic

application. He was outfitted with two Vega UHF wireless bodypacks, with a Sony ECM-66 cardioid mic on one lapel and a Vega LM-210 omnidirectional mic on the other.

"I mixed the two in combination, with the cardioid primarily for low-frequency and the omni to capture the rest, which was especially good when he was moving his head from side to side while singing," said Baltzell. "This microphone combination, along with some high pass filtering, provided plenty of level to get over the live orchestra."

The podium mics, as well as the one raised from the centre of the set (via pneumatics), employed a design that ATK has perfected from years of doing the event. Two Schoeps elements, a hypercardioid and cardioid, are placed in custom mounts that line up to keep sightlines clean. The combination of the two best captures the voice, regardless of its pitch, force, or distance from the mics. A Countryman omni-directional mic is also concealed in the windscreens of these mics to help pick up voices (for the TV mix only) for larger groups of presenters or award winners.

Eight Shure UHF systems, all accompanied by handheld transmitters, with Beta 87 capsules, were on hand, as well as 10 of the Vega UHF systems with bodypacks. Greg Parsons of Pro Wireless manned the RF position, monitoring RF energy levels and frequencies with an IFR analyser. Adjacent to Parsons was the monitor mix position, where David Velte was using a 40-channel Ramsa 840 console feeding the sparse stage monitoring. Low-profile custom Audiotek wedges, placed on custom-built platforms on the front of set, handled the bulk of the monitoring, with three-way sidefill cabinets also moved around as necessary.

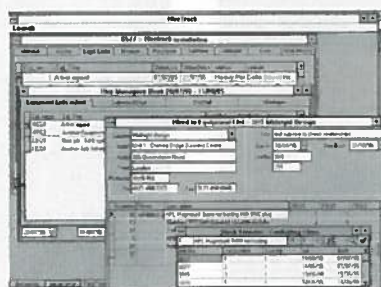
The task of providing such an elaborate sound reinforcement package for an event as high profile as the Academy Awards might seem somewhat daunting, but the consecutive years of service by Audiotek and Patrick Baltzell show that despite the rather nerve-racking aspects, it's still a challenge that they enjoy meeting: "You can't do this show and get away with saying that only eight seats out of 6,800 aren't getting the best coverage," concluded Baltzell. "It's not acceptable because everyone is much more demanding since they work in this business. When it's all over, you know you've accomplished something worthwhile."

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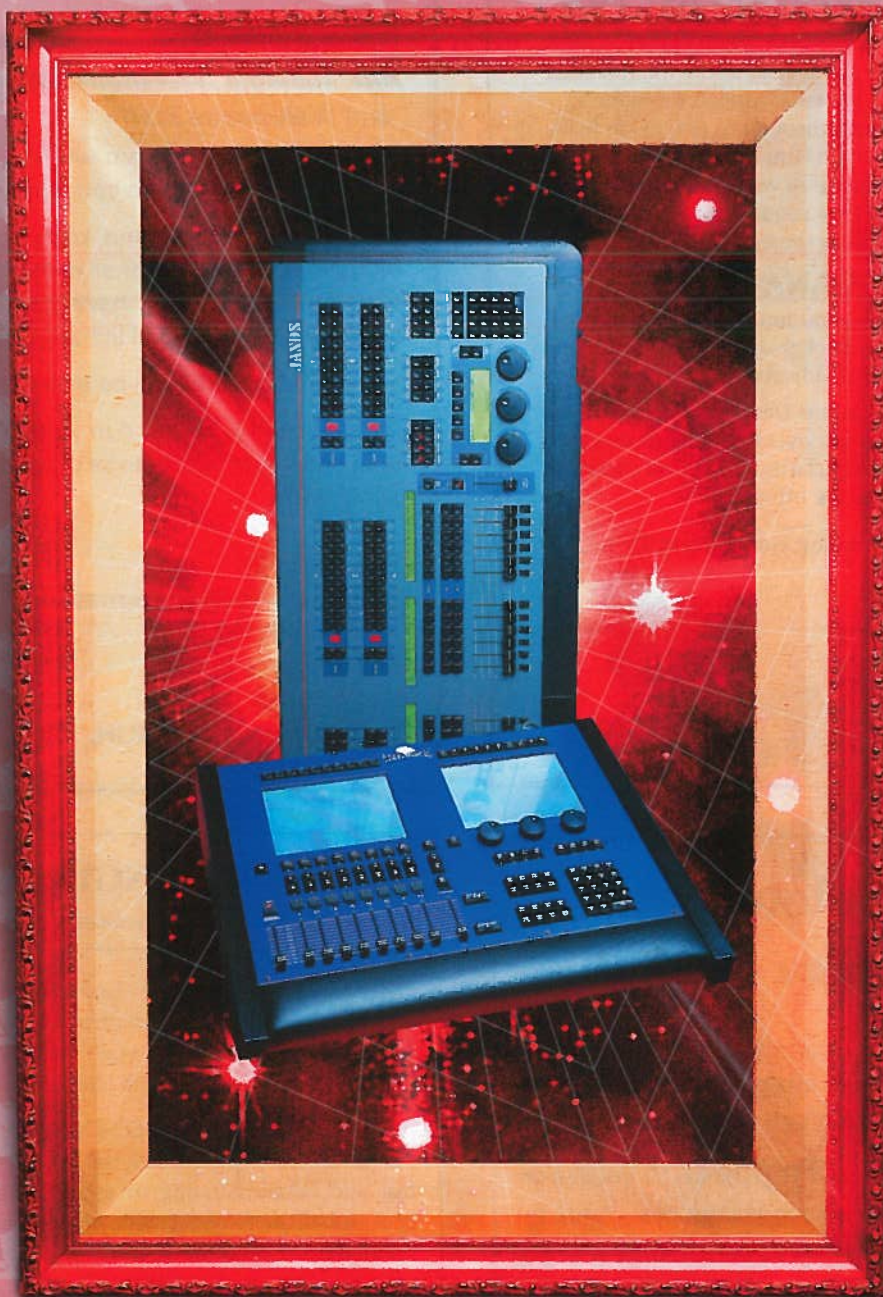
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Second Take . . . *John Watt's view from beside the camera*

I was listening to 'Desert Island Discs' this week (TV fans please note: radio still exists - a world of perfect lighting and scenery provided by the only acceptable form of virtual reality). Andy Hamilton was the guest, co-writer with Guy Jenkin of *Drop the Dead Donkey*, a show which I was proud to be associated with in its earlier days. He was talking about the idea of an office-based sit-com which eventually resulted in DTDD, which leads me to wonder if the world is ready for a lighting backstage sit-com. It may be the only salvation for the likes of me, who must learn to either laugh or cry at the state and status of TV lighting.

It could be set in a very high-tech new building made almost entirely of glass where people sit at £10,000 desks imagining that open management exists because they can all see one another. Smart cards dominate access to all doors, including control room to floor and back again, and even to the loos.

Largely hidden from the outside world amongst three floors of digital electronics is a downsized low-tech black box known to those of a generation who have never seen a real one as 'the studio'. The chief engineer - sorry - director of engineering, decided that £25,000 was better spent on a marble floor inlaid with the company logo instead of a few boring lighting hoists or pantographs. He not only made the fundamental mistake of reading the camera manufacturer's brochure, but actually believed the things could see in the dark.

So that's the scene: no problem finding a location as half a dozen already exist. There is a rich spawning ground of story lines within television companies and plenty of characters to observe. There is no need for exaggeration, as the punters will find regular TV types beyond belief as it is.

Scene one could involve getting the queuing audience to unload a concert grand from the truck without a forklift, parked in a busy street on a double yellow line. It's blocking in an ambulance which has an LD with a heart attack aboard, brought on by a presenter turning up in a blue suit in front of a chromakey backing on a live show. Wobble to flashback of studio exec' saying, 'This studio will have a fixed rig and it's just for news'.

Scene two: audience and piano in transit through corridor, pressed into use as a scene dock. Two are jammed between the piano and a skip full of empty champagne bottles from the seventh floor's opening party. The piano tuner is doing his level best to find middle C whilst on the move, making the assumption that 'the band' know what middle C is. Wobble to flashback of the studio exec saying, 'This

studio doesn't need scene hands, it's a fixed set up'.

Scene three: the audience are in place and being warmed up by a man with a ring through his nose who doesn't know any jokes, but knows a lot of four-letter words, which he considers a more than adequate substitute. If the oldies look embarrassed, he makes them feel welcome by saying if you don't like the bad language you shouldn't have come.

On set the group, ably abetted by the head of sound, a neurotic, chain-smoking walking advert for famine relief who can hear a pin drop at 50 paces but insists on monitoring at a level that will shatter the lens on an old Mole 5K, are erecting a kit of much-travelled amps and speakers. They place them in prominent positions but have found a useful clear spot to stand themselves between the cyc and groundrow.

Given the time scale - i.e. the floor manager is calling for quiet for a take, the LD decides that since this area was used only 10 minutes ago by a magician who, with the aid of several mirrors, a lot of smoke and a rubbish compactor, made a fully-grown Bengal tiger disappear, that the pragmatic approach is to light the group with the groundrow.

In a misplaced attempt at pulling something creative from the wreckage, this much put-upon LD decides a central backlight with a bit of blue - 132 will do - may give him an opening look (long shadows downstage of the amps and mic stands). He insists on 'a minute' which the director moans about, but effectively utilises by booking a table for himself and the wardrobe bloke at L'Escargot. LD grabs steps, climbs for the only spare 2K. Cut to flashback of studio exec saying, 'It's a fixed rig, we won't need sparks and LDs'.

Up the steps, he has now got the safety band off, the bent nail out of the spigot and has collected three croc clips in his teeth for safe keeping, when the band's manager bursts through a door beneath. The LD tries to shout "watch the door" and swallows the croc clips. However, a vigilant ASM (they only employ ASMs as they are cheaper than SMs) does shut the door, just as the LD has grabbed the top to save himself - he descends at high speed into the groundrow, knocking the colour out of eight frames. Somehow, the 2K gets rehung back centre, a bit of 132 is gafferred on (can't find any more croc clips) and the LD arrives in the box just as the clock does that annoying 10 second blip. The director is enthusiastic about the surreal lighting effect, but gets apoplectic when the board op goes to silhouette after the band play a false ending, and consequently end up doing the last 16 bars in

the dark. Studio exec arrives in control room (his smart card opens all doors) and is actually in need of a loo, but took a wrong turning. He is in alien territory here, the austere surroundings being in stark contrast to the seventh floor, but since he is here he says: 'You should have rented a few Cyberlights for that number'. Wobble to flashback of LD thinking, 'No, nothing usable happens in real life to make a lighting sit-com'.

Enough of this speculation and on to other things. The strange chemistry of rechargeable batteries makes it desirable that from time to time they are completely discharged and then re-charged from the flat state. I hope the same technique applies to lighting designers' batteries, as mine have gone through both processes this year already. The discharge process, in part reported in this column, concerns the accelerating degradation of creative lighting on TV. The nearest most of us get to light entertainment is on game shows (there are a few about as you may have noticed). Mostly, these provide opportunities for the lighting man even if some budgets are all too visible on screen. Drama is almost exclusively on film and long ago I set off in the opposite direction to the rest of the world in regarding 'the film look' to be inferior in many ways to good video. Look at the work of Keith Reed, Duncan Brown, John Treays for instance. Even some of the British soaps remind us what can be achieved economically on tape. But what of talk shows, sports programmes, location interviews and, last but not least, news? Well, it varies from the mediocre to absolute crap lighting-wise, usually masterminded by producers who, if they aim to make their shows look good, tend to aim low and miss.

I need a complete recharge myself from time to time and this month I received it at Showlight in Ghent (see report on page 45). To spend three days with one's peers, on the commercial as well as the creative side of the business, is most rewarding. To see the stunning work of Duncan Brown for the BBC and to hear of the exploits of Messrs Klages and Tetlow from America and to laugh and learn at the throwaway approach of Ian Dow from the BBC was rewarding in the extreme. Maybe the reflections of the beautiful architecture on the canals was equally inspiring. One speaker even had the temerity to show some Rembrandts - watch out news editors, I'm going to have one more go at persuading you to shoot presenters from a complimentary angle, without verticals growing out of their heads - old fashioned, but until something better comes along . . .

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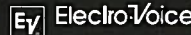

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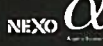

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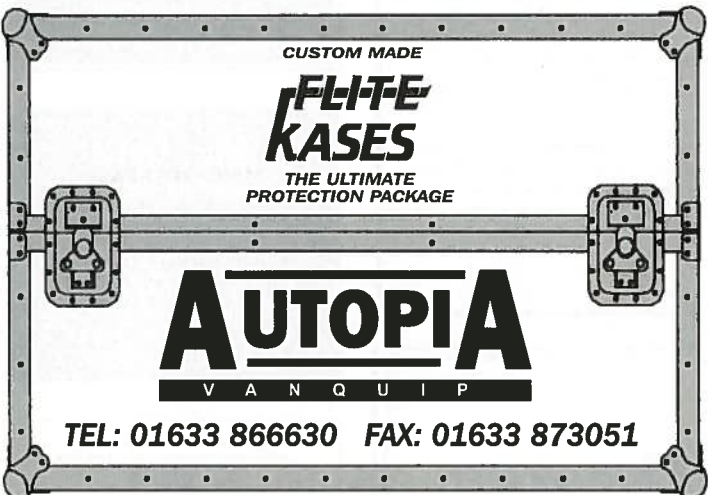
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Ruth Rossington talks to lighting director Bill Lee

In my various dealings with lighting director Bill Lee over the years, I'd always been impressed by his very gentlemanly approach to everything that came his way and his always courteous manner of dealing with things. So when I found myself once again in his company at Showlight (see article this issue), it was an irresistible opportunity to find out how he came to be in this industry and also to press him for his thoughts on how a young pretender could learn to become a television lighting director.

He started in feature films as clapper boy and later worked as focus puller, working with such notables as Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger along the way. With the advent of commercial television, he decided that video offered a more secure future and was taken on by Associated Rediffusion: "I went for an interview hoping to get taken on as a camera operator and, to my astonishment, was offered a job as a lighting director."

Towards the end of this period he went to Munich to light a drama shot on film with multi-cameras. Sadly, the system trials ceased when AR lost their contract and he then transferred to the newly-formed Thames Television where he was involved in lighting a wide variety of shows including 'Shades of Green' and 'Edward & Mrs Simpson'. He left Thames in 1985 after lighting a one-hour pilot of 'The Bill'. By this time, Channel 4 had started and for the first time there was a market for the freelance lighting director. "At that time it was exciting to be a freelancer and I lit a whole variety of programmes including 'Opera' with Janet Baker, a number of different series with Hat Trick including 'Who Dares Wins' and everything from commercials, corporate, locations, music and, of course, drama." Despite the busy workload, he also managed to fit in a five year stint as a visiting Lighting Tutor at the National Film School in Beaconsfield.

At the beginning of last year he decided to reduce his commitments and to only do projects that appealed to him. Inevitably this led to his great passion for teaching the craft of lighting. He teamed up with Bill Curtis at Ravensbourne College where, together with the students, they produced a tape on 'An Introduction to Light and Shade' among other projects and ran a series of lighting workshops. Later in the year he was pressed by Hat Trick to light the fifth series of 'Drop the Dead Donkey' at LWT Studios and enjoyed it enormously.

His love of teaching is clear and I asked what

prompted it and invited him to offer his thoughts on the current prospects for anyone wishing to become a lighting director.

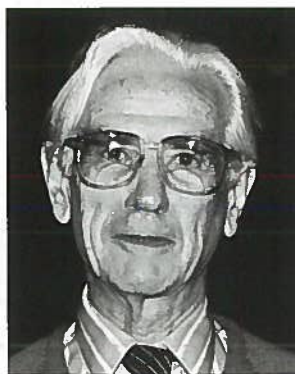
"I'm intrigued as to how one might clearly explain the process of creating images with light and shade. It is a process that one tends to think happens instinctively or from a gut

reaction and one that cannot be translated into words or logic. Whilst it is true that creativity may be purely instinctive, much of what we do is, in fact, explainable and understanding it enables students to then work with their own individual creative talents."

He is concerned with the present situation regarding lighting training. At one time applicants would spend time with lighting directors watching and learning how to tackle a variety of lighting problems. Some companies even had formal training and indeed at the BBC there was a progressive movement of staff through vision control and then console operator, combined with tuition at the Evesham training centre. But the modern world of television dictates that the majority of staff are employed on a casual basis and obtaining work on productions of all types is highly competitive. "Consequently, the camaraderie and desire to pass on the benefits of years of experience has evaporated. After all, it requires a remarkable degree of altruism to pass on one's hard earned skills to a camera operator for example, who the following week may offer to take over your production. It is very difficult to learn to be highly skilled in lighting."

During conversation, it emerged that there are, amazingly, around 700 media courses on offer from colleges and training centres throughout the UK. For educational centres struggling to earn further financial support, media studies are now hot property. "Unfortunately, some are not very good, even though they may offer to train students to standards dictated by their examination boards. The simple fact is that it is extremely expensive to obtain the facilities and equipment essential to provide practical experience. Too many colleges simply do not have the essential resources.

"Students should not be afraid to ask searching questions about facilities - one learns



about lighting by actually doing it and viewing the results on camera. Theory and discussion form a useful background, but the real learning process comes from using and experimenting with lights."

There is no doubt that there is a need and a strong demand for lighting training in broadcast, in both the professional and the semi-professional fields, and Bill Lee feels there is an onus on lighting equipment suppliers and manufacturers to actively support

this expansion - that it is, in fact, in their long term interest to do so. After all, it is possible to produce flatly-lit pictures with inexpensive permanent lighting rigs to the accountant's delight. Of course, the pictures will be dull and boring in comparison to those lit with creative flair.

More recently, again with Bill Curtis at Ravensbourne, he has been writing up a series of modules on lighting training which are supported by Skillset. They also have hopes of extending the experience or producing training tapes to include lighting training on CD-ROM at a later date. On the broader scene, which such a wide spread of colleges offering courses of varying degrees of usefulness, there is great difficulty in knowing which are worth pursuing. It would be helpful for the lighting industry to investigate the situation.

"A report and recommendation on how people seeking further skills might best pursue their interests would be a useful start. As would some degree of co-ordination and willingness to support the better institutions with equipment and other aids. Not for altruistic reasons, as I've already stated, but simply to ensure that the lighting industry as we now know it, retains its important role in supplying a wide variety of equipment to a rapidly expanding media industry."

Amen to that.

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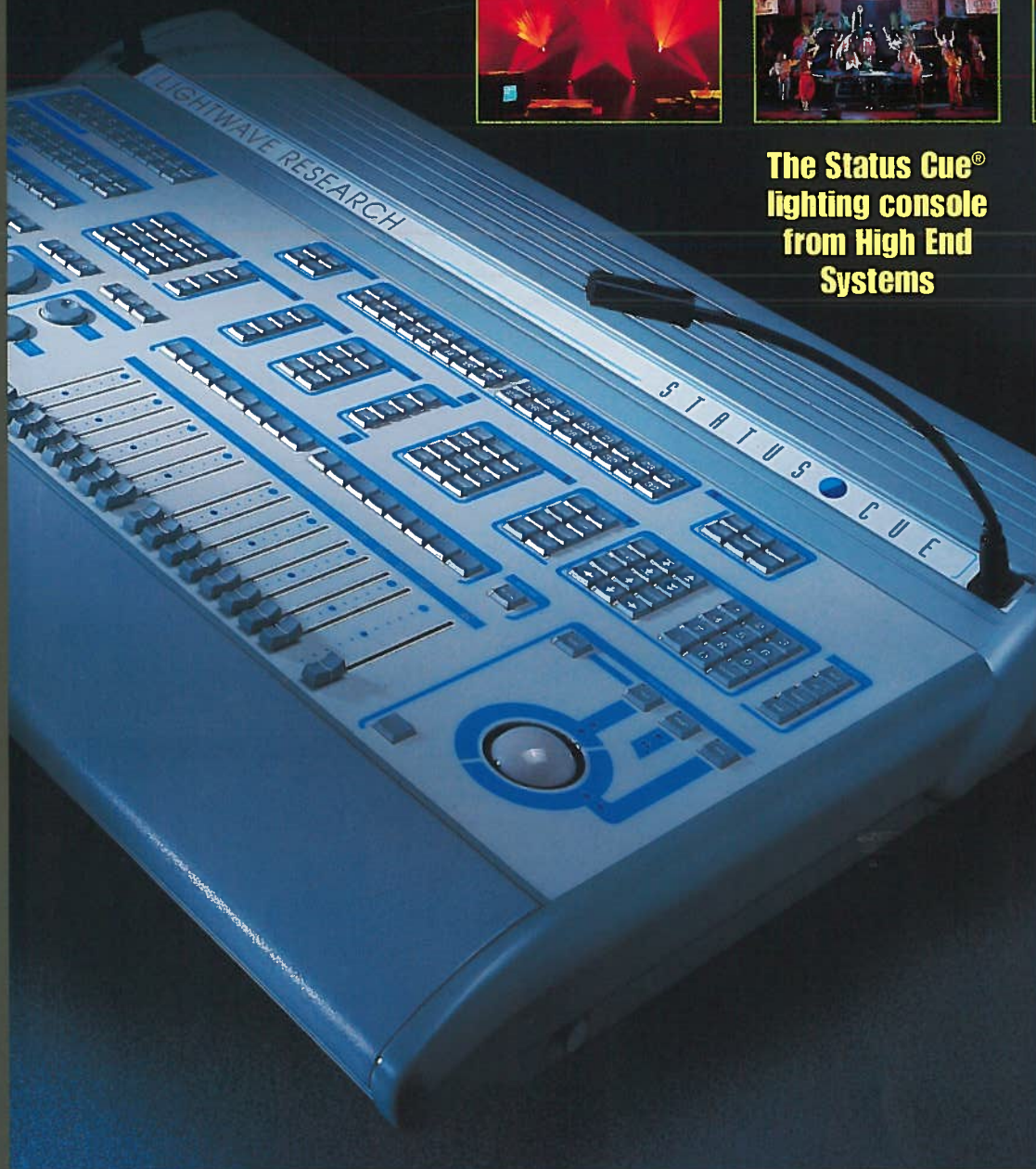
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