

Lighting & Sound

November 1999

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

Peace in Paris

- Eurhythmics back in action after 10 years

The Lion King

- Disney's latest musical hits the West End

Genetic Modification

- Birmingham's newest nightclub, DNA

Third Rock from the Sun

- Behind the scenes at CBS Studios

Stone Forest

- Laser and light spectacular in China

Theatre of Form

- Unique theatre from Hotel Pro Forma

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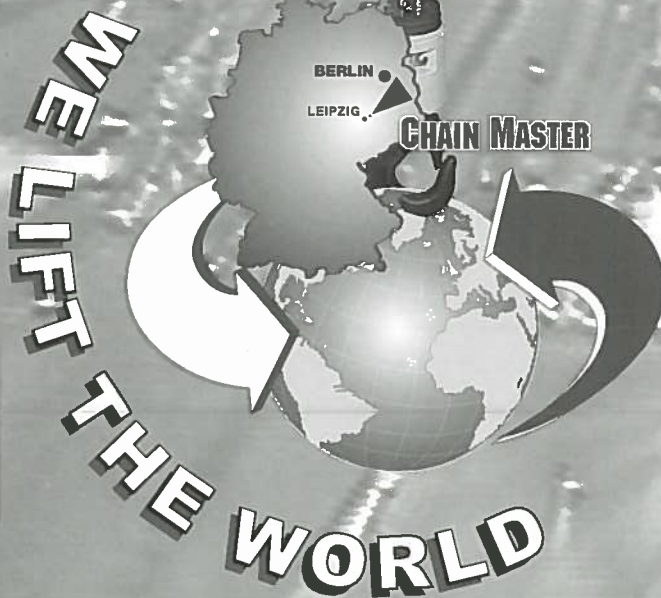
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Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

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Hammersmith Palais

L&S visited the famous West London venue that re-opened at the end of September, after a three-year closure.

The £1/3 million technical refit for the Palais reflects perfectly its dual-purpose nature; joint owners Leopard Clubs and Po Na Na intend to recreate the venue's reputation as a live venue as well as a commercially successful nightclub. For this reason, and because of good reports from Leopard's Clapham Grand club, Nexo was chosen as the house and on-stage monitor system, with Alpha-e high-mid enclosures flown in neat 3 x 2 arrays almost up to the ceiling. Twin sub arrays (with eight ALB 118c boxes in each) are built into the stage wings and a handful of PSI5s are available for the wide stage. The size of the performance area required a 'serious' sidefill system, and judging by the levels on stage during afternoon soundcheck, the full-range Alpha-e cabinets are more than capable of doing the job. Unusually for a club installation, this is it; no fills or satellite systems, just a left/right pair of arrays, which, as well as underlining the live/club application, also helps intelligibility by minimising the number of acoustic sources.

Power for the Nexo system is by Crown, with four 5000 amps and a trio of 3600s all connected to the Crown IQ system for monitoring and control. The audio equipment was supplied via Marquee to Tarsin Entertainments, with Peter Kellet of

ViberOptics acting as installer and consultant on the audio and lighting systems. An Allen & Heath GL3300 takes pride of place in the sound control area, with remotely-controlled Sabine equalisers for monitors and conventional graphics for the house feeds.

In the spacious control area, light jockey Neil Vitamin is in charge of the Martin Case effects lighting console and the Strand MX which handles the more 'rock and roll' shows. Intelligent lighting is exclusively Martin, with 26 Macs (250s, 500s and 600s), eight Roboscans and a dozen destroyers. The only generics in the rig are 24 Par cans over the stage area. One of the many surprising elements of the club is a pair of 32" mirror balls - which echo the club's history as a dance-hall venue.

Though much of the décor is retro (with leopard prints in abundance), the video system is certainly cutting-edge. Video king is Stuart Scott: "We are using live video editing to mix between animation, live and recorded footage. We have a six-input digital mixer which can take two cameras, two off-tape feeds and two internal sources." Scott's radical ideas revolve around the idea that video is important enough in a club to warrant a 'VJ', who can mix and edit in real time in the same way a DJ does. This type of instant-access, high-bandwidth technology is not commonly available, however. "I first went to the BBC to find out how I could



achieve what I wanted - and they just laughed!" he recalled. "I couldn't find an off-the-shelf system, but Edwin Mullion of EMC said he could design a system to do exactly what we needed. Effectively I'm beta-testing the software." The Touchmix package consists of a touchscreen-based controller and ultra-fast hard disk storage for animation and acquired clips. While Scott would have preferred to use LED screen technology for extra brightness, budgetary constraints limited him to a pair of Sharp XG-XV6E LCD projectors. These (the first two in the country) deliver an impressive amount of light, but cannot always battle their way through the smoke and overcome the spill from the main rig.

The Hammersmith Palais is a much-needed addition to the West London club market, and it is heartening to see such high-spec live sound and video systems being installed. It seems a pity, then, that its interior design, with its animal prints and metallic curtains, does not reflect the future-proof nature of the technical fit-out. But then, if it's what the punters want . . .

Mike Mann



INDUSTRY NEWS AS IT HAPPENS - www.plasa.org/news

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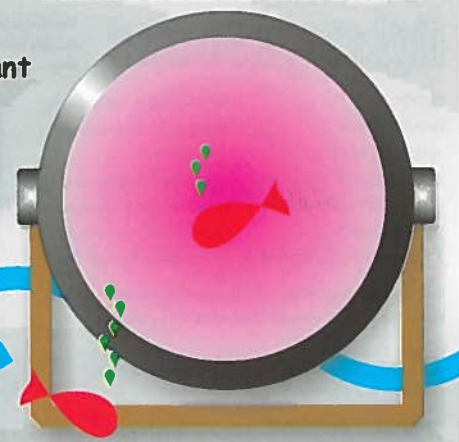
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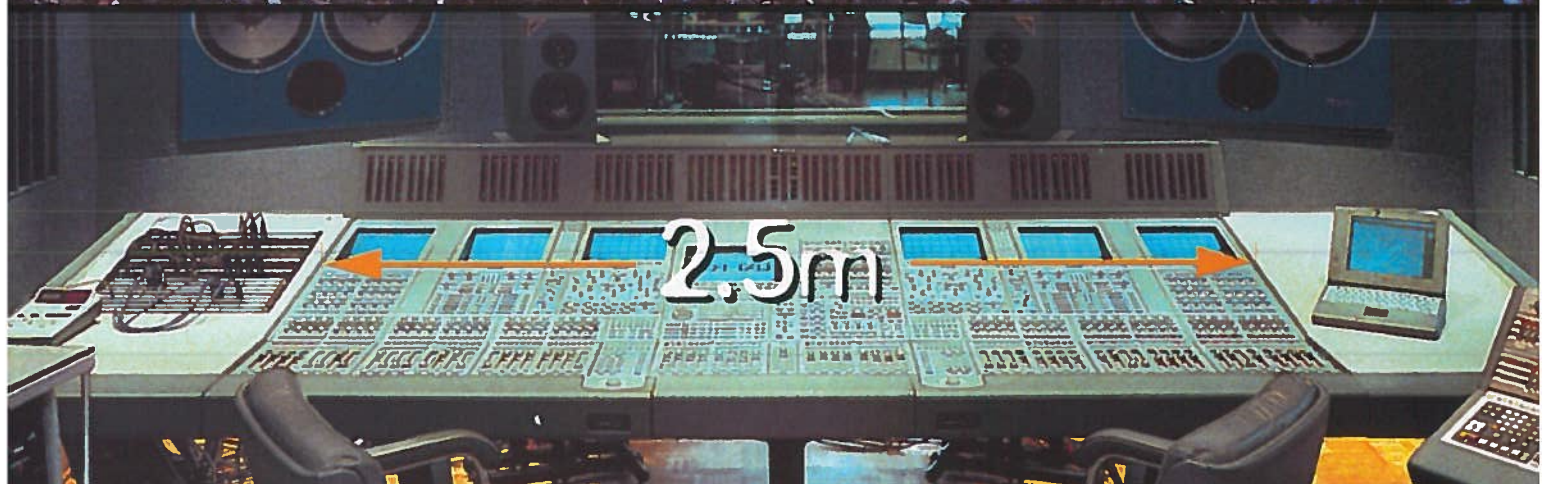
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News Round-Up



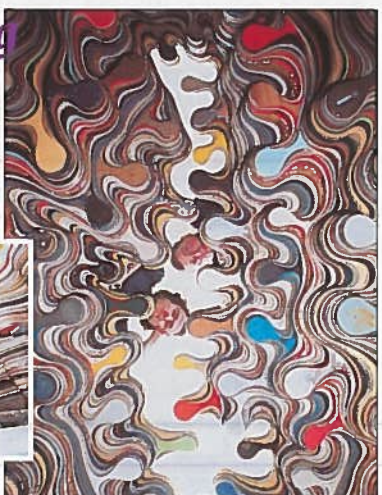
The Science of Rigging

Vertigo Rigging has completed the rigging of an intricate and complex art installation in the newly-opened Challenge of Materials Exhibition at The Science Museum in South Kensington.

Sculptor and designer Tom Heatherwick was commissioned to produce 'Materials House', a large exhibit measuring 6 x 3 metres and weighing 4.3 tonnes.



The piece, the world's largest composite 'sandwich', was constructed (in situ) from over 2000 pieces of material arranged in 213 layers. When completed, the structure required raising and suspending from the ceiling of the Museum at 65 degrees. The whole lifting operation was incredibly delicate as Material House could not tolerate twisting or bending of any more than two degrees. The front of the sculpture was lifted first, and the back tracked



along a rail, using base jacking wheels, specially fabricated by Vertigo, until it reached 60 degrees. Once in place, the trussing bed was dismantled and the ground support system was de-rigged from above it.

PLASA Launches Major New Services

PLASA (the Professional Lighting and Sound Association) has introduced two valuable new Membership Services.

The first, a Business Support Helpline, offers PLASA's UK members useful and relevant advice on a range of topics (including tax and PAYE, VAT, Employment Law, Company and Contract Law, Copyright and Patents, Debt and Debt Recovery) by advisors who are all widely experienced in their respective fields. This helpline will initially be completely free to members of the Association, who will have unlimited access to the service. Also new is PLASA's Business Reporting Service. PLASA has negotiated a competitive rate for business risk evaluation reports through Dun & Bradstreet, a company with 150 years of experience in analysing and assessing credit risks. This service is available to all PLASA members.

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FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

"He was taken on by both, and spent the next 12 months sitting next to the likes of Alan Burrett and Wayne Dowdeswell, and behind others such as Chris Parry and David Hersey. There was plenty of time to watch and learn the lighting design process."

Ian Herbert profiles Hartley T A Kemp

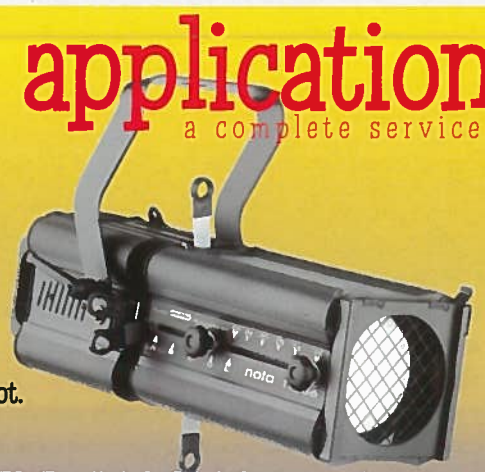
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Keep your Shirt on Kiwis

Despite their recent setback, New Zealand can be proud of its rugby tradition. How often does an island with a population of just 3.5 million get to dominate a sport at world competition level? That may go some way to explaining why a 22-metre tall All Blacks shirt recently appeared on the front of the New Zealand Embassy in London.

"We were approached by MEI Design to help with rigging it," explained Grant Smith of rigging specialist Summit Steel. "The shirt covers almost 500 square metres of the building; the colour and famous Fern motif is printed onto a perforated PVC fabric by Scanachrome." Naturally, being such a size, the huge piece of fabric required some careful attention. "Rigging it appears fairly straightforward," explained Jez Craddock, the rigger charged with putting the shirt up. "But with such a large expanse of cloth, consideration has to be given to wind, not just once it's attached, but actually getting it up in the first place."

Summit developed a plan using nine vertically tensioned cables which allowed the shirt multiple

attachment points as it was hauled up by a horizontal truss across its top edge. "Lifting the whole affair proved difficult as well," added Smith. "Only single-phase power was available on site, and you can't just turn up with a three-phase generator in central London at 6.30 on a Thursday morning."

Luckily, Summit has a long established relationship with



hoist suppliers PCM in The Wirral who were able to help. "Summit is a good customer of ours so we were happy to lend them four of our GIS single phase motors." PCM's John Jones was too modest to add that PCM went that extra mile on this occasion and fitted each hoist with 40m chains for an unusually long lift.

After all that, the shirt was up for just three short days coinciding with the Kiwis' first game of the World Cup.

IR 35: New Rules

The Inland Revenue has announced the terms of new rules governing "tax avoidance using Personal Service Companies". These new rules, which will come into effect from April 2000 and may well affect individuals and small companies within this industry, have been amended since the plans were first put forward in the 1999 Budget. The proposals are designed to stop the abuse of self-employment status to avoid tax payments and National Insurance Contributions (NICs). However, as 'employed' or 'self-employed' are not terms defined by law, there remains much confusion about who will be affected by the new proposals. The best advice to those who are unsure is to contact their local Tax Office, who can issue written decisions on employment status for tax and NI purposes.

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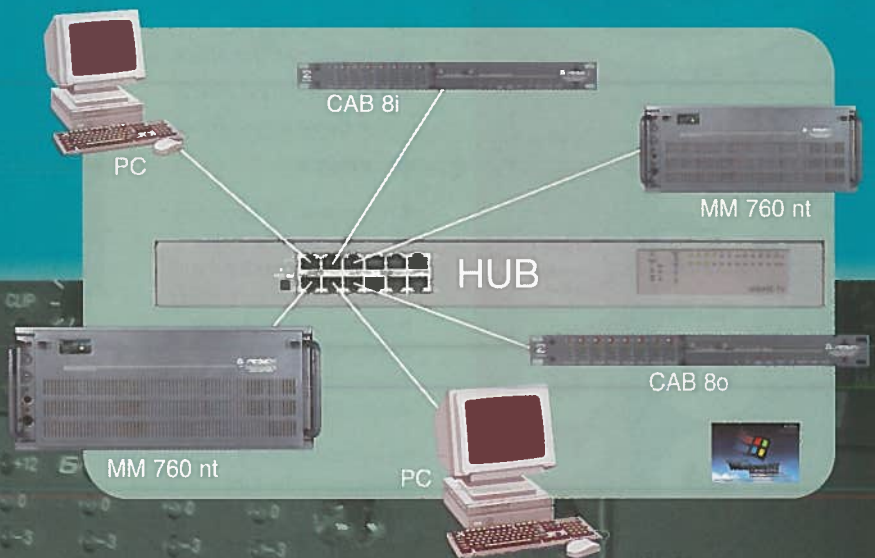
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News Round-Up



Stories of companies picking up Dome contracts are now a regular occurrence at the offices of L&SI. The latest batch cover three elements of the project.

ETC dealer LT Projects has been awarded the major dimming contract for the Millennium Dome. In what is believed to be the largest single installation of the system in Europe, LT Projects is installing 3,000 channels of high density ETC Sensor dimmers.

Meanwhile, Canford Audio has successfully tendered for the supply of event communications to the Dome. In co-operation with Telex UK, Telex's RTS TW intercom equipment will be provided to meet a demanding specification requiring modification for operation over a fibre-optic network. Providing the platform for this and linking the zones is an extensive AV framework using a fibre backbone at its core. The communications specification was outlined by the Dome's head of sound Roland Hemming. Working in conjunction with a development team from Telex, Canford has overseen the customisation of the RTS equipment. The modification has enabled the high frequency signalling tones used in the intercom to be translated for transmission over the 20kHz audio channels provided in the



Dome News

Dome's fibre-optic infrastructure. Canford and Telex believe that this is the largest RTS TW system anywhere being used over a fibre-optic network.

Finally, staging specialist Maltbury has won the contract for the design, manufacture and installation of all the fixed floor areas throughout the Home Planet Zone. Working under principal contractor Kimpton Walker, Maltbury will provide all flooring and ramps for a large ring walkway surrounding a 30m revolve.

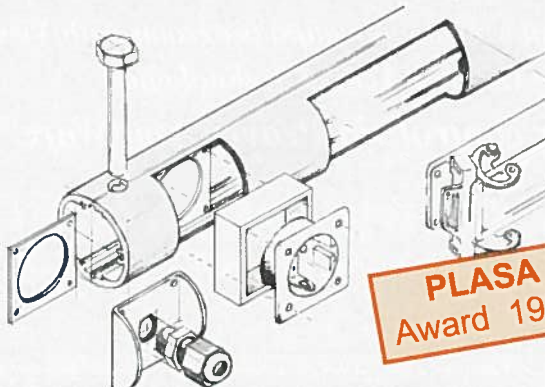
Did you know that the Dome is the largest fabric structure in the world, with 44 miles of steel forming the 'cobweb' that supports the roof? And, for once, Europe has something bigger than America - the Dome at Greenwich is twice the size of the one in Atlanta, Georgia. If you turned it upside down and placed it at the bottom of Niagara Falls, it would take 10 minutes to fill with water!

GB Country of Honour for SIEL 2000

SIEL 2000 looks set to welcome around 300 exhibitors to Hall 3 at the Paris Expo-Porte de Versailles from 6-9 February 2000.

For the first time, the event will be divided into two distinct shows, with SIEL Entertainment covering theatre, pro audio and events, and SIEL Night & Show catering for the nightlife industry. The Country of Honour for 2000 will be Great Britain, and PLASA, together with the DTI, is responsible for organising the British Pavilion that will group together around 20 British companies. Further details are available from PLASA on +44 1323 410335

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PROFESSIONAL SHOW LIGHTING



If you haven't yet heard of the boy band Northern Line, it's a sure bet that you soon will. Their fresh, good-looking faces will soon be staring out of pop magazines and their up-beat tunes blasting into the hearts of teenage girls everywhere.

Northern Line

There is money and industry clout behind this recently-launched band in the form of Elton John, who gave his glowing endorsement of the boys via video at the Dorchester Hotel launch party in September. ESP were given the mammoth task of turning the Dorchester's grandiose ballroom into a less formal space with a hip, club atmosphere - by the time they'd finished there wasn't a chandelier or an inch of wallpaper to be seen.

The company is now something of an expert in the field of full turnkey solutions for events, since expanding their audio operation and taking on the distribution of Court audio equipment. David Stressing feels a turning point came for ESP after their profile was given a huge boost when they undertook a job for the Trans-Euro moving company at their warehouse launch earlier this



year (see August L&SI). He believes this is one of the reasons they were approached for the high profile Northern Line gig.

Part of ESP's brief was to give the ballroom space it clearly didn't have, and this illusion was achieved by covering the walls in 150m of Chris James flexible mirror. The opening of the boy's set, in which they performed several songs including their launch single 'Run For Your Life', obviously needed to look sensational, so ESP had each of the five boys simultaneously smash through panels of sugar glass which were placed just downstage of the 6m x 3m rear projection screen. The intention was that it would look like they were smashing through the video screen which had

previously been screening images of them (via a Barco 9200 projector) in the build up to their entrance.

Stressing's 10 member crew worked hard to create a fully masked stage at one end of the ballroom and all rigging was from temporary self-supporting truss. The lighting rig consisted of MAC 600s, 500s and 250s with 18 Par 64s, six Par 56s and six Punch lights. Controlling all this was a Compulite Sabre desk powered by an RVE digital touring rack. The sound system for the band, who sang live to backing tapes, centred around Court speakers and monitors and RAM Audio amps, alongside EV DX34 system processors and Shure hand-held radio mics, with control provided by a Midas XL200 48-channel desk.

ESP has now been engaged to design and install the massive New Year's Eve party at the Dorchester. It appears that the company are successfully on track to provide innovative designs for a variety of applications. Stressing added that he had received praise from the band and their management and that he and his team had thoroughly enjoyed the experience, even if they did have to halt the fit-up for the Dorchester's sacred ritual of High Tea.

Jacqueline Molloy

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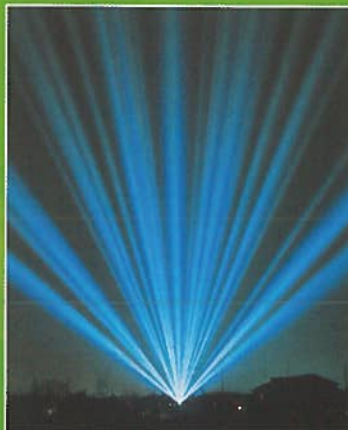
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PLASA Seminar, Conference and Training Programme

The PLASA Show this year included a comprehensive Conference, Seminar and Training Programme, covering a wide range of topics.

The Seminar Programme, which ran on the 6-8th September, kicked off with a presentation by Goffe Schat of Belgian show control system manufacturer Avenger, which covered issues surrounding control strategy design and programming, maintenance and the networkability of systems. This session was followed by a line-up of experts discussing the challenges faced in the booming market of entertainment for cruise liners, in 'Technology on the High Seas'. Issues discussed included installation in the marine environment and the reasons for over-specification in such projects.

'Lighting the Millennium Dome' featured a panel of designers involved with Creating the New Year's Eve spectacular at the Dome. The session provided some fascinating insights as to what will form the centrepiece of the much-discussed New Year's Eve celebrations.

The Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) seminar - 'Insights into Themed Entertainment Project Management' - was headed by TEA chairman Peter Ed of ETC and featured a number of 'experience creators'. The session addressed the issue of 'What is it that ensures a successful project', and the panel examined a series of successes and failures in the world of themed entertainment.

The National Systems Contractors Association (NSCA) from the United States brought its successful two-day conference programme to the Show. 'An Introduction to Audio Technology' provided a solid foundation in areas including the engineering number system, decibels, Ohm's Law, Kirchhoff's Law, resonant circuits, psycho-acoustics, wave theory and reverberation.

AV Magazine's AV Trade Convention (pictured) attracted a strong audience on the Tuesday and Wednesday. An all-day seminar, chaired by Peter Lloyd, editor of AV magazine, scanned a wide range of issues including the size of the market, the requirements of users, how lessons can be learned from AV dealers in the USA, the opportunities of E-commerce, distribution issues and business in the new millennium.

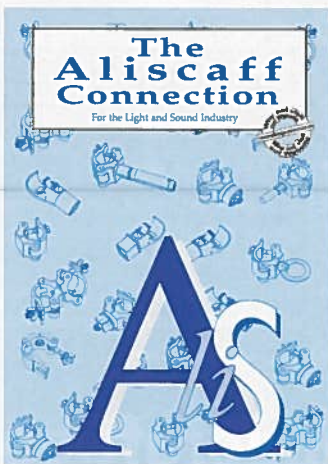
The Convention continued with four sessions on the Wednesday, including a Presentations Workshop covering technology and trends in the projection market; a Staging and Rental Workshop which looked at how one company can successfully provide a service across the disciplines of audio, video displays and lighting; a Systems Design and Installation Workshop which looked at the changing face of business and communications and how this will affect the systems designer of the future: the final session



covered Video, New media and Video-Conferencing, including the effects of developments in transmission, compression and DVD technology.

The emphasis was well and truly on safety in the Training Programme: John Jones of PCM and Andy Tinnevel of LGH Rigging led three daily sessions on Safe Rigging Practices. These sessions discussed the new LOLER and PUWER regulations, and also included the application of the Health and Safety at Work regulations to the entertainment industry. Over 100 people attended these sessions.

Andrew Harvey of Le Maitre presented daily sessions on a Code of Practice on the use of pyrotechnics as defined by Le Maitre. These sessions focused principally on the correct use of pyrotechnics and the importance of line of sight for operators and risk assessment. Other sessions included those on PAT testing and safe working with discharge lamps, delivered by John Revington of Premises Management Services, while Paul Tew of the Acoustics and Noise Partnership gave a presentation on noise control.



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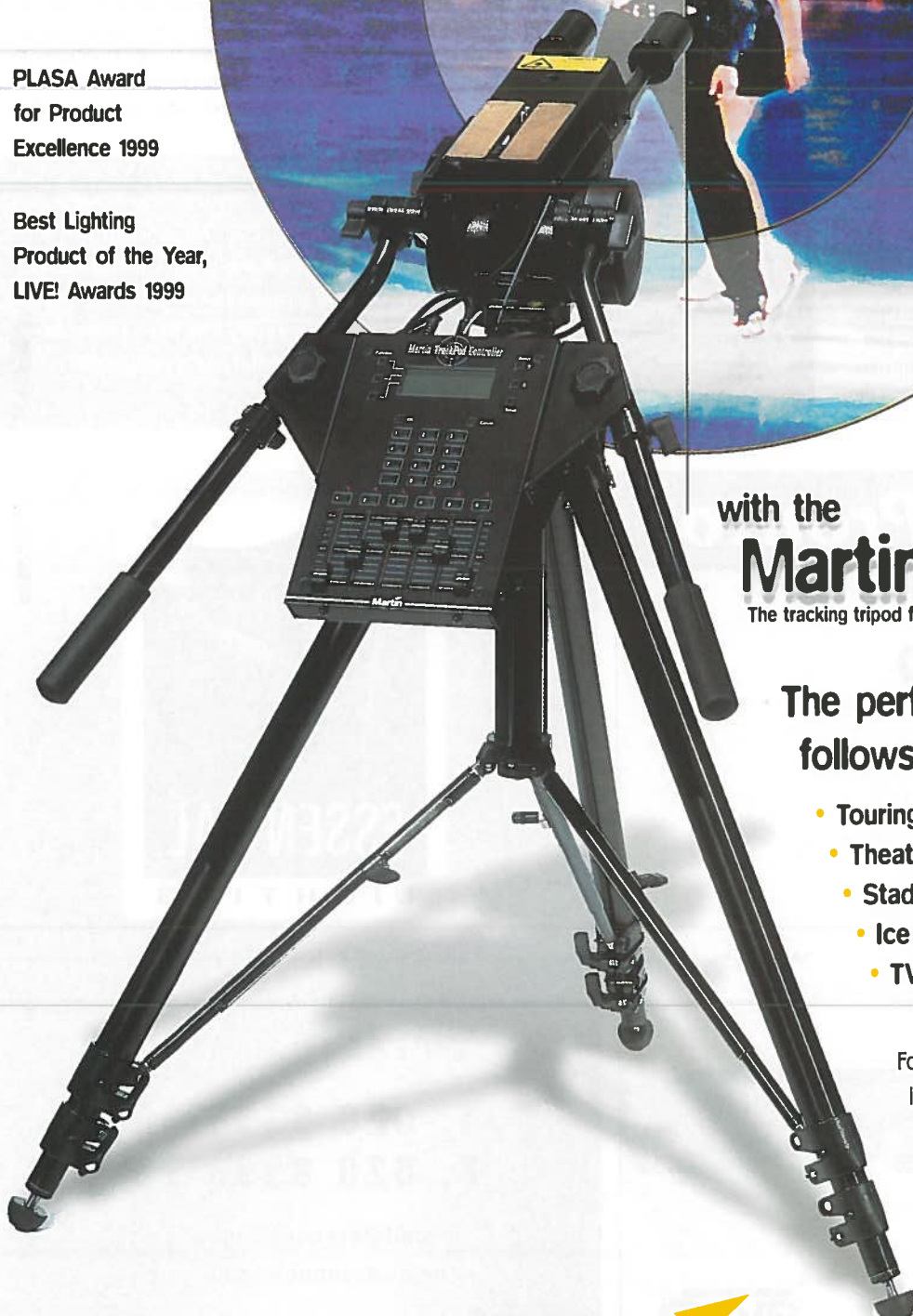
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Opus' Plymouth Unveiling



Visitors to Plymouth Pavilions' public inauguration of their new sound system were able to judge Opus Audio's contention that live sound should be "just like listening to a hi-fi system, only better".

The Pavilions is a 4,000-seat multi-purpose arena. Opus Audio Developments won the contract for the new sound system following a day-long product 'shoot-out' at the venue, in which the Opus Integrated System emerged a winner. Opus Audio is somewhat unique in that it designs and manufactures only complete systems, comprising controllers, amplifiers, loudspeakers and even the cables. Optimisation of the whole system includes

matching of the amplifier power and signal management, to the individual drivers in each loudspeaker.

The Plymouth arena is now equipped with AT1000 mid/high units and SB218 bass bins, both flown and ground-stacked, PSD800 delay loudspeakers and MP400 stage monitors, all powered with the appropriate HD amp modules, fed from XS-134 system controllers. Unusually, the racks of HD amplifiers and controllers driving the flown

loudspeakers, are also flown, keeping cable runs to a minimum.

C Audio Relocate

Expansion has forced C Audio to vacate its Potters Bar premises at Linkside House in favour of larger capacity at Cranborne House situated opposite on the Cranborne Industrial Estate.

While production has been taking place at the larger building for some time, C Audio will now streamline its R&D, sales, marketing and administration departments in the one building with immediate effect. The new address for C Audio is Cranborne House, Cranborne Road, Cranborne Industrial Estate, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 3JN. Tel: (01707) 643643. www.c-audio.com

Bright Idea - *Paradise Tour Production Aps, Pan & Tilt A/S and Gøgler Lys Udlejning A/S have merged to create a new company - SeeLite. The new venture, which has been set up by Søren Nørgaard, Jens Lind, Frank Paulsen, Viggo Ladekjær, Leif Hellberg, Lars Nissen and Martin Corneliussen, will focus on the rental of lighting and truss systems, made possible by an impressive stock inventory which covers control systems, truss and lifting systems, dimmers and conventional and moving lights.*

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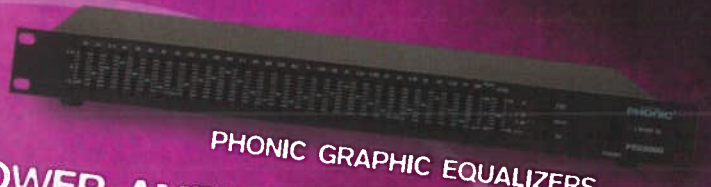
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P&O's Clarion Call

P&O Events, organiser of the PLASA Show, has changed its name to Clarion Events.

The name change, which became effective on November 1st, follows the acquisition from P&O of the Earls Court and Olympia Group by the Morris Family and Candover Investments. Designers are currently working on the company's new brand image which will be unveiled before the end of November.

New Products at Dundee Rep ...



and interface to Metro Audio's new PMZ88 Digital Audio Matrix. At The Rep, the PMZ88 is being employed as the central paging control unit.

At the same time, the production lighting installation is also being brought up to date with a huge order being placed with

Strand Lighting for dimmers, desks and luminaires. The new LD90 dimmers are being driven by a Strand 520i console with riggers control. Northern Light have specified 34 of Strand's new SL luminaires as well as 24 Cantata F, 10 Alto F, 15 Nocturne and six Coda 3 fixtures.

According to the theatre's production manager, John Miller, the new technology forms a major part of an overall rebuild programme, which will also include new counterweights, flooring and seating. This will be followed by a second phase of spending, including office and workshop development.

A £5m refurbishment project has recently been completed at Dundee Repertory Theatre, funded by a National Lottery grant and the City of Dundee.

Contracted to supply and install production lighting and stage comms, Northern Light will feature new equipment from Metro Audio, Strand Lighting - as well as their own new digital stage manager's desk. The touchscreen programmable SM desk is the first off the production line, beating the desk destined for the Royal Opera House by a couple of weeks. It features touch panels for cue light control, SM systems switching

Gatecrasher Makeover

A new clubbing venture is on the way for 2000! The former Music Factory, situated on the outskirts of Sheffield's City Centre, has been taken over by the Gatecrasher Group.

The Music Factory is synonymous with Northern clubbing and has a long history of successful club nights. The venue has been closed since April this year and will undergo a much-needed interior and exterior refurbishment and is projected to open in February 2000.

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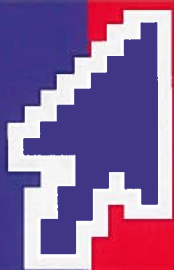
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News Round-Up



Annie at the Rowntree, York

David Bushby is theatre manager, stage manager, organiser and general factotum for all that takes place within the Rowntree Theatre in York.



The theatre runs as a charity supporting its own enthusiastic troupe of players, as well as local amateur dramatics. As such all the stage hands, electricians and sound engineers are voluntary. The Rowntree has recently played host to a production of Annie, performed by the Shiptonthorpe Drama Society, starring Francesca Bilham in the title role (her first ever) and - I must declare a little self interest here - Birtie Moles as Sandy the dog. This was a serious production, the theatre seats 430 and the six shows plus matinée were just shy of a total sell-out.

Audio for this musical was highly demanding - there were in excess of 50 performers - which stretched the theatre resources to the limit. Daniel Shrimpton has just taken over the Spirit Live 4 console, and is mainly hampered by vocal capture. Although Bushby was recently able to invest in 10 Sennheiser UHF radio mics, Shrimpton is still reliant upon a pair of Sennheiser rifle mics to pick-up the rest of the cast. Orchestra back wash from the pit is acute. The stalls are covered by just a pair of old Martin CX2s driven by a Toa amp, whilst the balcony has four Pro-Ac speakers run off a Crest 901. Balcony sound is adequate, but the stalls suffer badly, the CX2s are still in working order (they must be 20 years old) but there's just not enough of them.

Shrimpton's FOH position is like the PA, lightly armed, but not without quality. "A Behringer Composer, which I use just for compression on the vocal mix, a bit of reverb from an SPX990 to open the vocals a bit, and that's about it really." He also has a Sony MDS 520 Minidisk recorder for some pre-recorded voice effects.

Shrimpton's first ever live show, the opening night of Annie, received some criticism in the York press for the orchestra overwhelming the vocals. Hardly his fault, conductor Michael Thompson did rein them in on later performances, and Shrimpton learned to ride the faders more. (He had only one dress rehearsal and a technical run through to note all his cues!)

Apart from the control desk, a Strand SLX 24, the lighting is pretty old fashioned with Strand Permus dimmers no less! Thomas ground-row on the cyc, and CCT Sils are about the most modern pieces of kit. Most of what sits overhead are Patt 223s and 23s. Nonetheless Bushby (did I mention he's resident LD as well?) makes a good job of bringing director Robert Readman's cartoon set design to life. Who needs moving lights and colour scrollers we ask ourselves?

Funding for all equipment comes from the revenue raised by selling ice creams and sweets. As Bushby notes, the biggest problem is expertise: "I've had many youngsters here who have since gone on to the professional world. Technology, however, has advanced to the point where they can't just pick it up. We need volunteer help from people with up-to-date expertise." Anyone inclined to pass on their skills can contact Bushby at the Rowntree, Haxby Road, York.

If you'd like to sample the delights of a quality amateur theatre, Rowntree are currently presenting the Caucasian Chalk Circle.

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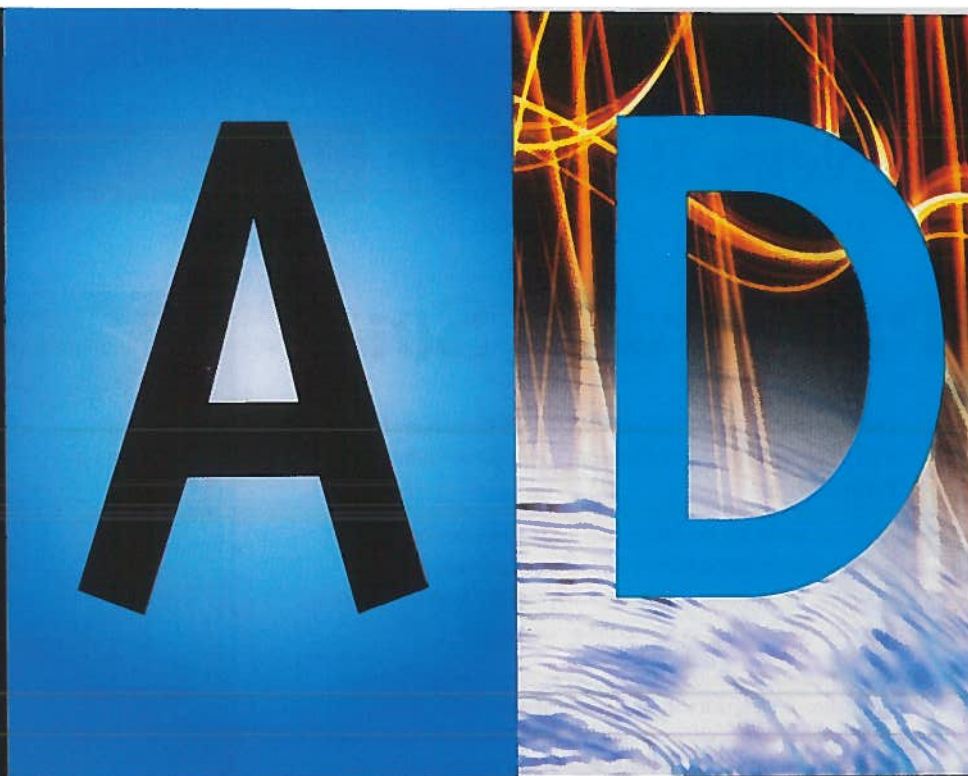
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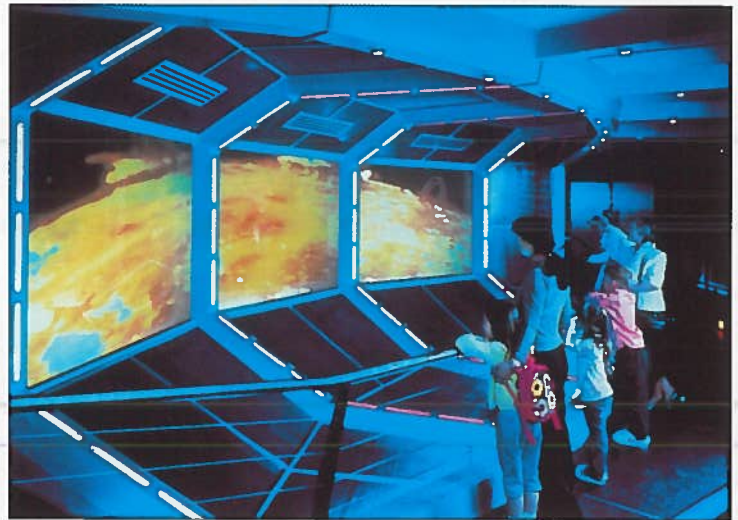


Primordial Soup

'Our Dynamic Earth', is a new visitor attraction on the site of an old brewery near Edinburgh's extinct volcano 'Arthur's Seat'.

Dynamic Earth is a major Millennium-funded project with an overall project budget of £34 million: it forms the centrepiece of a larger enterprise, incorporating conference and catering facilities to appeal to a business audience as well as the general public.

In this spectacular exhibition, designed by Event Communications, information is designed to be accessible at many levels, from observational to in-depth exploration. Visitors pass through a series of galleries examining the creation of the universe and our solar system, volcanoes and glaciers, the evolution of plants and animals, and various habitats.



This is achieved through extensive use of multi-screen and multiple-image video technology. Much of this is video-based, but in some cases slides are used to achieve a different 'look', or to solve difficult optical problems. Event selected a number of producers for the AV content - McLean English Productions, Media Projects International and A Slight Shift produced the shows, while Atacama produced the interactive exhibits. The control and image display systems for the whole exhibition were designed and built by Electrosonic.

For the first part of the exhibition, each area is a separate show with synchronised sound, lighting and imagery - special emphasis is placed on the quality of sound, especially when it comes to earthquakes! This means that visitors go through on the 'pulsed flow' principle, while the later galleries are free-flow. State of the Earth is the introductory gallery, containing monitors showing regularly updated footage from NASA and Reuters. Video replay is from an Electrosonic MPEG2 Server and audio is on ESTA solid state sound.

Visitors then move on to the Time Machine, where they travel back 4,500 million years to the start of the universe and the Big Bang. The 'ride back in time' effect is achieved with double-height infinity boxes, back-lit images, fibre optic star fields, and a dataflash light.

On leaving the time machine, the visitors enter a futuristic spacecraft where they witness the Big Bang - the birth of our universe. This is achieved using a three-screen rear projection presentation, using Barco 708s with line doublers, which incorporate stunning images from the Hubble space telescope. The three pulsed shows have two different edits, in order to address peak days (3.5 minutes) and off-peak days (6 minutes), and the Electrosonic Server is able to swap between these two options as the exhibition's operations manager requires.

Restless Earth is also a three-screen rear projection (Barco 708s) presentation. This covers the movement of the Earth's crust, volcanoes and earthquakes. The drama is augmented by overhead heating panels, flowing lava, a moving earthquake floor, and cinder cones that spew smoke and sulphur smells from the set. 'Shaping the Surface' incorporates the use of Caprino's five-screen technology, displaying some spectacular footage of a

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helicopter journey over a Norwegian glacier. When the visitors enter this space, they are only aware of an image being projected onto the central screen, as the other four screens are concealed by full-height ice walls. Within the first few seconds of the show these ice walls automatically move back to reveal the other four screens, providing the visitor with a spectacular 120 degree panoramic view of the ride.

The 'Human Animal' gallery has a central icon - a model of a human brain, suspended in clear silicone and contained within an elegant cylindrical tube. Different coloured lights pass through the liquid; the changes in colour being co-ordinated with sound and surrounding graphics that are highlighted as the visitor is invited to consider human attributes that distinguish the human from other animals. Visitors pass from this space through an area with dramatic satellite images that cover both walls and ceiling, and then into the first habitat zone - 'Oceans'.

In the first section of Oceans, visitors pass five metre-high graphic banners that wave in a slow graceful manner, evoking the giant aquatic kelp found in the Pacific Ocean. Video is projected onto the banners



via an NEC LCD projector. The next scene is an underwater submersible, where five different aquatic eco-systems are viewed through specifically-developed virtual aquariums, where bubbles and information displayed on adjacent message repeaters are all controlled by the Electrosonic Server via ESLINX, using a Barco 708.

On entering the 'Polar' region, visitors are first 'put on edge' by the massive, fragmented falling walls that surround them, before being confronted by the enormous iceberg that dominates the central space. In here, the angled walls are used as rear projection screens, using an NEC LCD projector and nine 35mm ES5050 slide projectors. In the 'Journey of Contrasts' visitors explore more different habitats, travelling from the tundra, through urban areas to deserts, and the savanna. This journey is displayed in a layers, incorporating complex lighting cues that reveal different graphic gauzes, monitors, message repeaters and backlit images. The display forms a 20m long curving wall, which changes between day and night, with a wave of light representing dawn and dusk. Opposite this are three large high-level front projection screens, separated by two large rotographic panels.

In the 'Tropical Forest', Event has created a replica of a south-east Asian tropical rainforest, complete with mangrove swamp and views across coastal coral atolls. The time frame of the forest is compressed to show a 24 hour period within 30 minutes. The forest includes a fast-running river, two torrential rainstorms, constantly changing lighting scenes and moving creatures. Within the set are three projection screens, using a combination of Toshiba video cube engines, a Barco 708 and an NEC LCD projector, allowing animals to appear at random throughout the accelerated day/night sequence. Once again, it is the Electrosonic Server that controls the show, ensuring that the effects and projection all happen at the correct time throughout the sequence.

The Auditorium space is fitted with a 14m diameter Spitz planetarium dome, and six banks of three slide projectors providing a spectacular 'all-sky' presentation. Stunning images of volcanoes, earthquakes, tidal waves, drought and hurricanes are seen, along with the impact these natural forces impose on the human race.

Kaleido at Ambient Lighting

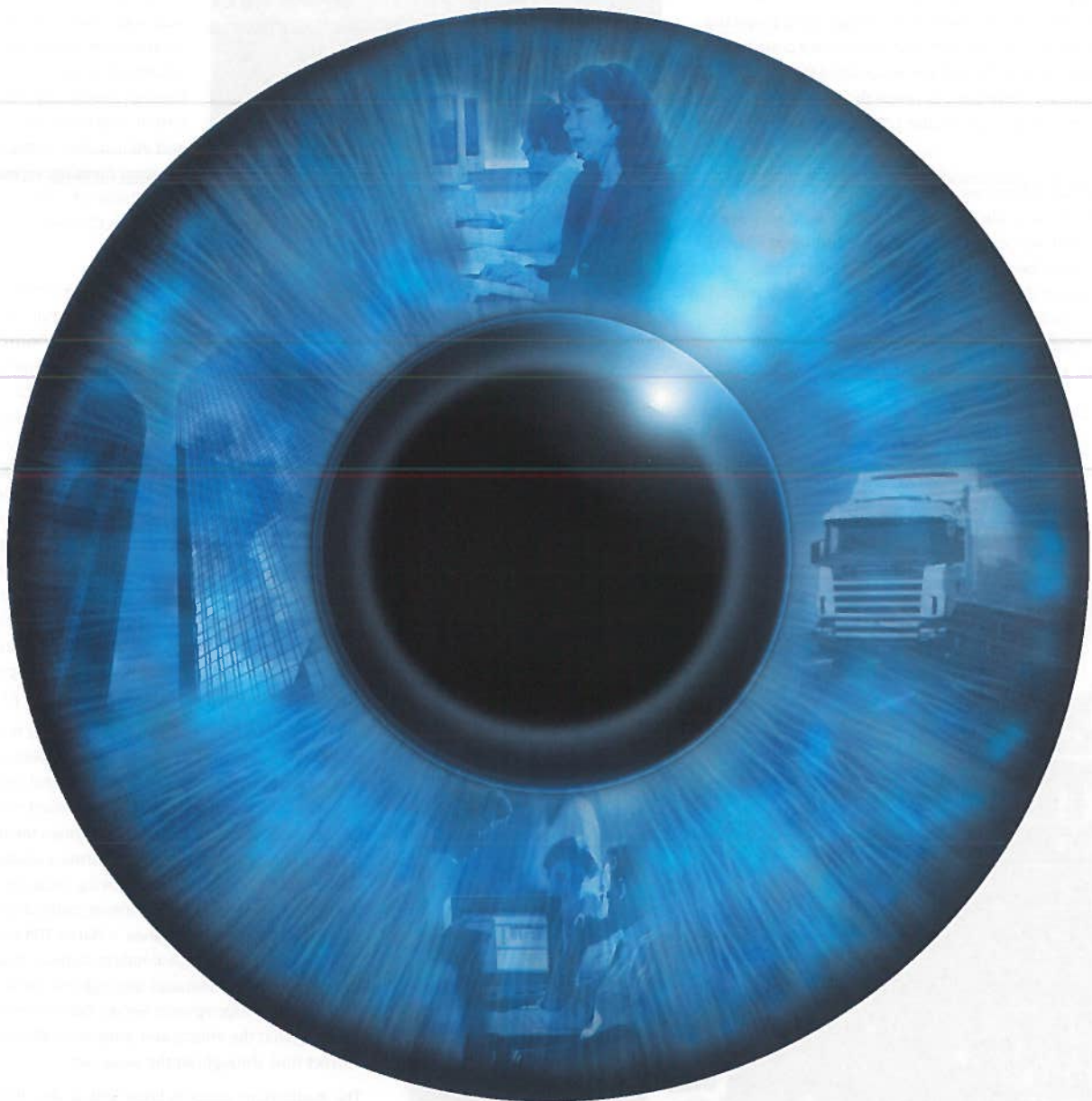
Griven's new Kaleido, the compact CYM colour-mixing architectural flood launched at PLASA, is now available for demonstration from UK distributor Ambient Lighting.

Kaleido is fully weatherproofed (IP44), uses a 2000-hour MSD575 lamp, has in-built auto programs or can be controlled via DMX, and has a wide angle of coverage. Its base-mount bracket can be substituted for a flying bracket, supplied with the unit, to allow truss or roof mounting.

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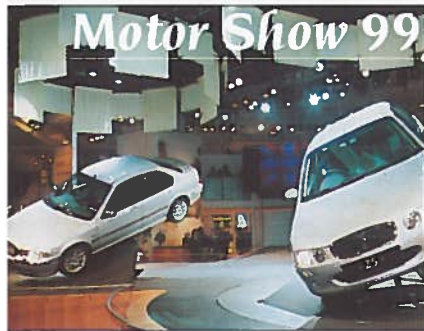
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Motor Show 99 - Earls Court

The London Motor Show, which took place at Earls Court in October, featured some interesting presentation and control work by Stage One Creative Services.

"There are really two aspects to the show," said Jim Tinsley, technical director at Stage One. "One is for

the media, where the live reveal of new models is what matters; the other is the static exhibition which is more for the punters. Not every manufacturer chooses a motor show to launch a new model, but they do need to make some form of presentation and that means controlling what happens on stand."

A good example of this control takes place on the Rover stand, built by Clements & Street, a bespoke display company. Their role is to build the stand and ensure the quality of finish, which is why they form partnerships with other companies, sourcing specialist engineering from Stage One and lighting from CP Electrical. Rover are featuring three models, all individually turntable-mounted. Alex McBride has programmed the show using Stage One's Q Motion system, a PC-based software package that will run any stock pneumatic, hydraulic or electrical motion device. Each car is encircled by long vertically hung strips of white calico, one metre wide, mounted to electric roller devices, again supplied by Stage One.

"I've programmed the roller blinds to raise in a pattern," said McBride. "They end up castellated at the top, but I could put them anywhere, even make them dance." As the car is revealed it's tilted nose-on to the grandstand. Once raised, the two rotational devices, plate and turntable, start off in opposite directions. The effect is dramatic, the vehicle remains fixed face-on towards you, but smoothly pitches to left and right. Crucially, the software enables cue programming determined by factors of distance, or time parameters. So events can be choreographed precisely to a physical movement position, or a time in an audio or video sequence.

But there are other, more exotic features. Nearby on Carabiner's Vauxhall stand, the new Sportster is presented using Q Motion to control all aspects of the show. Sending cues via Autograph's Conductor, Q Motion also triggers John Pope's Vari*Lite rig and a 40kW Lightning Strikes through a Whole Hog II; all Creative Technologies' Video playback and projection; and for audio, a discrete PA of d&b E9s from Theatre Projects. When you spot the two Crackers beneath the podium you know you're in the realms of full-on showbiz.

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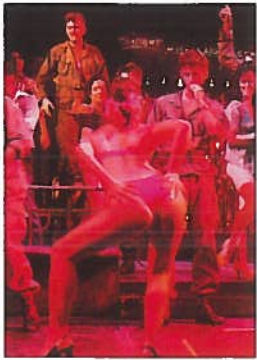
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Goodnight Saigon

Miss Saigon has ended its record-breaking run at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The show closed there on October 30th following a record-breaking run of more than 10 years.

White Light have been with the show from the very beginning, supplying David Hersey's complex and ambitious rig and then supporting and updating it through the years. The original rig included one of the earliest uses of the now-ubiquitous Rainbow scrollers, along with 110 CCT Silhouettes, 80 Par cans, 12 R&V beamlights and over 110 Coda floods of various types, as well as classic lanterns such as Patt 264s and Patt 23s

used to dress the club scenes. Control for the rig was from the theatre's Galaxy 2 console for the length of the run.

Miss Saigon also saw the first use of a colour-changing version of the motorised light curtain earlier used on Les Misérables - an effect achieved using a then newly-developed Rainbow light curtain scroller. The original light curtains were upgraded over the years, with The Moving Light Company's Dave Isherwood devising a way of attaching a second, reversed motor to each line of light curtains to improve their movement. These were subsequently upgraded to DHA's Digital Light Curtains (developed for Miss Saigon in New York), but even then the originals were kept and re-deployed to light the show's side-screens, a lighting effect originally omitted from the London production but subsequently introduced on the other worldwide productions.

High End Advances Architectural Side

High End Systems has launched a new architectural division using the Lightwave Research brand. As a result, the High End brand will be used for entertainment lighting products, whilst the Lightwave Research brand will now be used for products developed for the architectural lighting market. Charlie Hulme has been promoted to architectural sales manager for Lightwave products. He will oversee sales and distribution, as well as design support of Lightwave products.

ATI Appoints EAG

ATI has appointed European Audio Group (formerly known as GAE Sales UK) to handle distribution of its ATI and API Audio line in Europe. Based in the UK, EAG is a cartel of distributors who will keep their own names, but be a part of the Group giving ATI/API a solid presence throughout Europe.

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

"Have you ever used that polystyrene foam in an Aerosol? It's a bit like a recently-retired TV Centre LD - once you push the button there's no stopping it, it pops out of every available orifice and sticks to everything."

John Watt having a Second Take on Page 78

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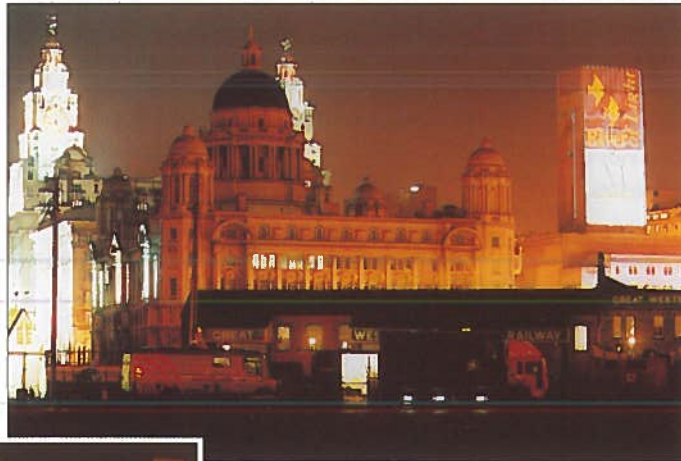
Liverpool - Rocked by Technology

A stunning array of technologies united to produce a taste of what's to come on a much larger scale for Liverpool's Millennium night celebrations, in The River of Light project.

The project called on the expertise of the cream of the UK's production industry and the demonstration was staged in Canning Half Tide Docks on Liverpool's impressive waterfront development. It served to give all the companies a dry run of the event and a chance to deal with some of the anomalies of staging this ambitious event in this challenging location.

The River of Light Project is a technically complex projection, lighting and laser show, designed to make Millennium Eve in Liverpool a spectacular and memorable night. Project-manager is locally born lighting designer Lee Forde, assisted by Kirsty Blakeman and Nick Handford as operations manager. Large-scale projection techniques for film, video and stills, lighting and laser animations will all be combined to throw images, colours and effects onto a number of different surfaces and buildings. The show will be synchronised to music and watched free by an audience of thousands. Millennium Eve is only the tip of the iceberg for the River of Light project: it will be the largest outdoor lighting festival ever attempted in Europe and will have a life beyond Millennium evening.

The recent demonstration was a scaled-down event illustrating examples of the different technologies that will be amalgamated on Millennium night. Lighting fixtures were provided by both Light &



Video projection onto the water screen was operated by Creative Technology's Jon Hodgson, using an Electrohome VistagraphX 7000 machine. Footage was shown from the new digitally re-mastered version of The Beatles' classic psychedelic cartoon masterpiece, Yellow Submarine.

Illuminatum showed off one of its new Diablo 7000kW moving yoke searchlights, which panned around the dock and shot beams across the mouth of the Mersey



Sound Design and outdoor lighting specialists Illuminatum. The nearby St George's Dock Building had its base illuminated by four Studio Due City Colours (from Illuminatum) set on a random colour chase. The top had specially-commissioned slides

by three locally-connected artists projected onto it by a 7kW Hardware For Xenon projector, supplied by Creative Technology.

Fountain Installers provided what is arguably the largest waterscreen in Europe. For the purposes of the demonstration, only a fraction of the potential power of this water feature was used, producing a surface area measuring 18m high by 30m wide. At full throttle, it can expand to 30m high and 60m wide - as it will on Millennium Eve. This impressive screen was lit by 14 High End Systems Systems Studio Spots and four of the new Coemar 1800kW Panorama colour-changing architectural washlights, all of which were operated from the dockside by Chris Banks, using an Avolites Pearl desk.

over to The Wirral. On Millennium Eve, it's planned to have six Diablos reaching out and 'joining hands' across this same stretch of water. The company also had two lasers on site - the new 40W YAG and a 12W full colour laser, situated in its mobile laser truck. These will write sponsors' logos and animations onto the water screen and buildings.

Audio came from Tour Tech's L-Acoustics ARCS system. The company provided a smaller version of the same system designed for Millennium night. For the demo, sound needed to be thrown 150 feet across the dock, a feat easily achieved with six ARCs boxes and three subs. This distance will increase to 250 feet on Millennium Eve when the display area moves to the larger Canning Dock running parallel to The Strand, which will be blocked off to form the viewing area.

The one totally unpredictable element was the weather, which had been notoriously cantankerous during the set-up day. However, for the demo evening, the wind dropped to millpond levels, the sky cleared and the moon shone, allowing the immense potential power and magic of the River of Light project to unfold.

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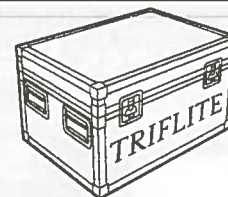
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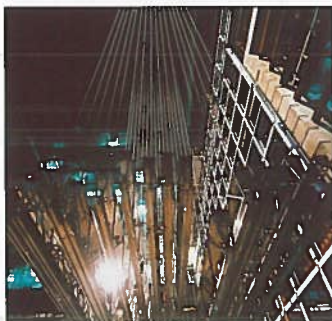
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Unitruss Installed at ROH

Covent Garden's Royal Opera House is now home to 108 bars of Triple E's new UniTruss: the 2,808 metres form the entire inventory of flown bars.

The system is the result of a joint collaboration of design and manufacturing with James



Thomas Engineering. Triple E also supplied and installed motorised UniTrack in the Studio Theatre.

Another product which sprang out of the Opera House project was UniRing - a specially designed plastic ring which enables borders and legs to be clipped directly into track sections.

Entech 2000 Shapes Up

Australasia's leading entertainment technology exhibition, Entech, is set to outstrip all previous Entech events when it opens at the Sydney Olympics site in Homebush Bay, 5-7 March 2000.

Features of Entech 2000 will include the opening night's Carnivale under the stars, the Boulevard of Light, and the PA system shoot-

out, while daily lighting comparison seminars will also be held, as will technical tours of the nearby 110,000-seater Olympic Stadium.

The DTI has now offered PLASA funding for a trade mission to Entech 2000 for UK exporters. Under the terms of the offer, British Trade International (BTI), will cover 60% of exhibitors' space and construction expenses, up to a ceiling of £2,300. Anyone interested in taking advantage of this offer should contact Anna Pillow at the PLASA Office on +44 1323 410335.

Five to Try

If you're surfing the net you may like to check out the following web sites

5

1. NetAid is a site dedicated to raising money to fight extreme poverty. A key draw is live webcasts of concerts from top artists.
www.netaid.org
 2. The Theater Services Guide - an on-line directory of companies who provide services to the entertainment industry.
www.theaterservicesguide.com
 3. All 32 volumes and 44 million words of the Encyclopaedia Britannica now freely available.
www.britannica.co.uk
 4. The Royal Mail's website allows you to search for UK postcodes and addresses and get information on postal services etc.
www.royalmail.co.uk
 5. Watch a load of goats in a barn - no kidding.
www.teleport.com/~randyf/goatcam.html
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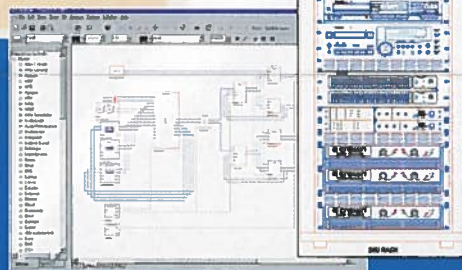
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The High End of Intellabeam

The last ever Intellabeam 700HX has come off the production line at High End Systems (HES) headquarters in Austin, Texas.



The unit - number 18,871 - was presented to High End co-founder Richard Belliveau (pictured centre with Lowell Fowler (left) and Bob Schacherl (right) in September. It was Belliveau who designed the Intellabeam 400 back in 1989, and it became a success in dance clubs worldwide. The later 700HX model, with its silver

livery changed to black, continued its success. HES co-founder Lowell Fowler told L&SI: "Though we've now retired the line, we'll still support Intellabeams with parts and service, and you'll see them used for many more years to come."

BBC Reviews Theatre Technology

Earlier this year, PLASA was involved with the making of a BBC Radio 4 documentary series, covering the development of theatre technology from the earliest days to the present.

PLASA's managing director, Matthew Griffiths, took part in interviews with the research team, excerpts from which are used in the series. The programmes lined up some diverse topics, ranging from venue acoustics, architectural practice and the impact of recorded sound, to the technological achievements in theatre lighting. The first episode was broadcast in mid September and completes this month. We're hoping to get hold of tapes of the programme, so watch this space!

BBC Radio 4 (UK) - Tel +44 171 580 4468

Europe's Largest Touring Retail Show

Marks & Spencer is set to unveil its latest range in what will be the biggest ever touring retail show in Europe.

The event, designed and produced by CJ Spencer Associates, will take place at four shopping centres across the country and to accommodate the show, a building measuring 50 x 30m has been specially created, which will house two 400-seater theatres, together with a reception area. Martin Mac 600s Vari-Lite VL5s, Clay Paky StageScans and three Wholehog desks are just part of the lighting spec, whilst a range of d&b speakers, amplifiers and controllers, together with Yamaha and Soundcraft desks, Denon and XTA processing and Shure microphones provide the audio element.

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**News
Round-Up**



Island East, Hong Kong

Island East is a massive new commercial and high class residential development in Hong Kong. Its 'by appointment only' corporate visitor centre includes show areas, meeting rooms and marketing suites tailored to different kinds of customers.

One of the key features is a 180° video show, designed by Electrosonic, which uses five Barco 707 projectors, with butted images projected onto a metal mesh. The screen has lighting effects behind and during the show, the centre screen splits to reveal a rear projected image.

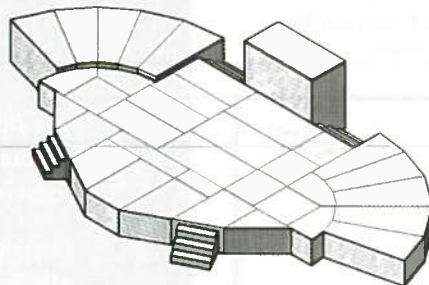


All video sources are from Electrosonic MPEG2 video servers. Electrosonic ESLINX is used to control the 48 channels of dimming, the video servers, the Peavey X-Frame Media Matrix and the motorised doors.

Blackout Launched in Lisbon - A new rental and production company - Blackout Ltd (in relation to the London-based drape and installation company) - has been launched in Lisbon, Portugal, to serve the live and television production markets. Local distributor Access All Areas has supplied a complete equipment inventory to the new company. This includes connectors from Neutrik, Camlok, and Socapex, with cable from Tourflex. Par lanterns, ACLs, 8-Lite units and meatracks were brought in from James Thomas, with colour changers from the Chroma-O range. Strong Super Trouper IIs, Reel EFX RE fans and Anytronics Deathstar strobes, along with Artistic Licence DMX equipment, were also added to the list.

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People News

latest industry moves available at www.plasa.org/news

Major changes have been taking place at Screenco recently. Following the news that **Mike Walker**, formerly at sister company Creative Technology, had joined as business development manager and **Andy Bramley** had joined to manage Screenco's new Portable Production Unit (PPU), came the news that **Ray White**, **Stuart Young** and **Anita Page** have left the company. The moves follow a period of restructuring for the company. It has recently completed the merger of its Holland-based subsidiary, Screenco BV with Screenco UK. **Jeroen Jongenelan** is the new sales director of Screenco Ltd and **Graham Filmer** has been appointed general manager of the new pan-European business. Screenco's UK-based rental sales and project offices are re-locating to new premises in Hampshire, UK.



Multiform Electronics has enlisted **Ian Rose** as UK and export sales manager. Rose has a degree in European Business Studies and is a member of the Institute of Export; he will liaise not only with Multiform's UK distributors, but also its distributors throughout Europe.

Richard Castillo has joined the expanding Lightfactor Sales team as Southern Area sales executive. His assorted work experiences include two years as a club light jockey, working with a sales and rental company and two years as a freelance lighting designer.

High End has promoted several key sales representatives. HES Canadian sales rep **Patrick Bouchard**, who's been involved in the Canadian lighting market for many years, becomes High End's regional manager in Canada. Elsewhere in the company, **Charlie Hulme** has been promoted to a new position as sales manager for Lightwave Research Architectural Products. Hulme will oversee sales and distribution, as well as design support.

AC Lighting has appointed **Lisa Young** to join the busy export administration department in High Wycombe. She will work alongside **Jo Young**, assisting with order processing and despatch.



Above, new BSS recruits Ben Wilmot and Matthew Bate.

Left, the Marquee team of David Homewood, Jimmy Potter and Andy Morrell

Further changes to the sales and marketing team at PRG Lighting Group. **Bill Groener** and **Zoe Paine** move to expanded roles at Production Arts, while **Patrick Eagleton** now has new responsibilities within the PRG Lighting Group. Groener becomes vice-president of system sales for Production Arts, whilst Paine has been appointed director of rentals and production sales. Eagleton, meanwhile, becomes marketing support manager for the newly formed marketing group at the (PRG) Lighting Group.

Expotus has taken on **David Cole** as technical sales manager. Cole brings with him a strong

grounding in product manufacture and technology, gained from his work in R&D and subsequently in technical support at Turbosound.

BSS Audio has completed a successful year by strengthening its support

team. Joining the company at its new headquarters are **Matthew James Bate** and **Ben Wilmot**. Bate has experience in both engineering and club installation, gained first with AdLib Audio in Liverpool and later with CVA. Wilmot has been promoted from software test and support to a technical sales support role.


Marquee Audio has added three key new recruits to its staff. **Andy Morrell**, rejoins the company after 15 months with Canford Audio and will specialise in AV and blue chip business. **Jimmy Potter**, whose industry experience includes 10 years as studio manager at Nomis, joins as sales co-ordinator to manage all incoming sales. Finally, **David Brian Homewood** will provide technical support for Marquee Audio's growing lighting business.

Entertainment Technology has appointed **Paul Smith** from Sapphires Retail as the new sales/product manager for the Titan DJ brand. He will be responsible for all UK and international accounts.

Event Safety Guide - The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has worked with organisations across the music and events industry to update its guidance on health and safety at pop concerts and other similar events. The Event Safety Guide is aimed at those who organise anything from a major outdoor festivals with thousands of visitors to local concerts for just a few hundred people. It covers emergency planning, communications, crowd control, first aid and the use of special effects.

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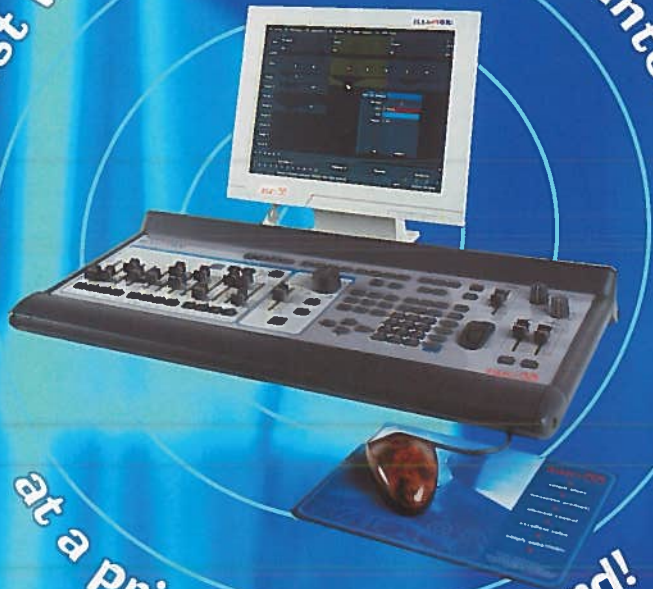
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MA LIGHTING



The Ultimate Business Merger?

Three of the industry's leading event management companies have just announced that they are to merge.

Business Pursuits Event Management, The Ultimate Experience and Richard Groves Catering and Events have been in discussions for the last six months with a view to integrating their operations to form a new £10m plus turnover group that will be uniquely positioned in the UK events market. The deal follows Business Pursuits' acquisition of Witney Marquees last year and the rebranding of their activity-based division, Pursuits Unlimited, this spring. The three companies will continue to trade under their established names under the umbrella of a new

Business Pursuits Event Management, The Ultimate Experience and Richard Groves Catering and Events have been in discussions for the last six months with a view to integrating their operations

top company, Concerto. Ultimate Experience's in-house production company, Ultimate

Productions, will also be combining with Business Pursuits' Intensive Productions to form a new full service technical production house branded as CORE.

The new group will be under the chairmanship of Sam Gill and the deal fulfils both his ambition, and that of Guy Rodger and Richard Groves, to create the first full service event group in the UK. The news follows hot on the heels of Business Pursuits' appointment as an Official Hospitality Partner to the Dome, Ultimate Experience's launch of events at Vinopolis, City of Wine and RGC's relocation to new kitchens in Wandsworth.

BBC Experience for LIPA Students

Sennheiser LIPA Scholarship Students, Adam Garret Fulton from Canada (pictured far right) and Chandra Fleig from Germany (shown left), recently completed a four-week work experience placement at BBC Television Centre with BBC Resources, London Operations. The two students, who are



both studying for a Sound Technology degree at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, spent over a week in each of the sound, video editing and graphics departments, gaining first-hand and hands-on experience across a breadth of television production skills.

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

"The back of the screen is sprayed with a thin layer of buttermilk. I kid you not! Kongshaug learned the trick from a television guy. He admits the technicians hate him for it, but it is part of the 'secret' of the projection looking so good and so vital."

Hotel Pro Forma - Louise Stickland - page 73

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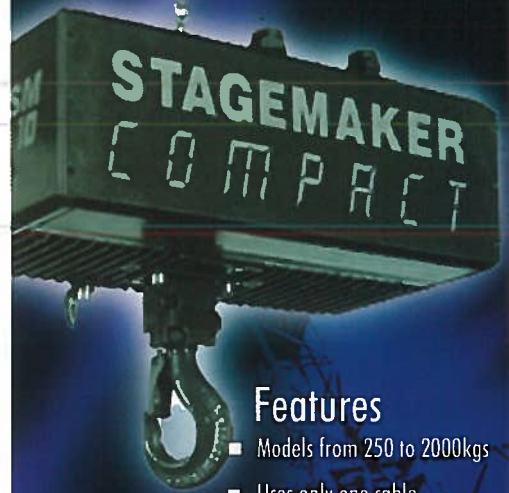
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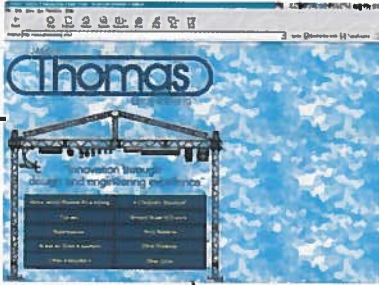
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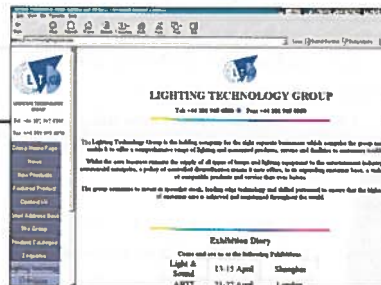
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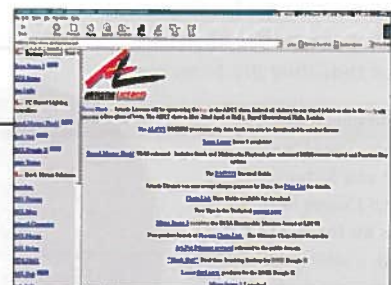
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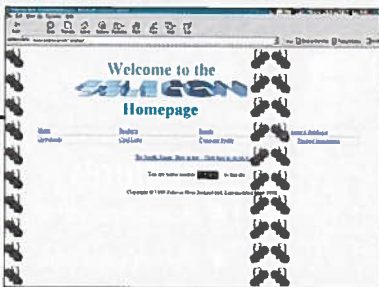
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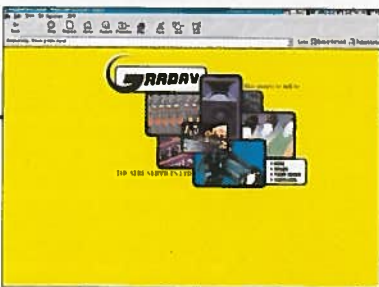
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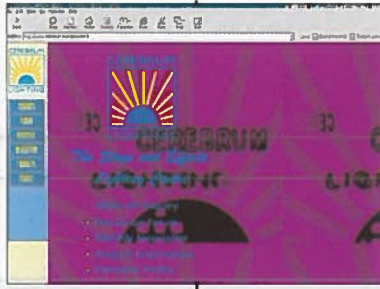
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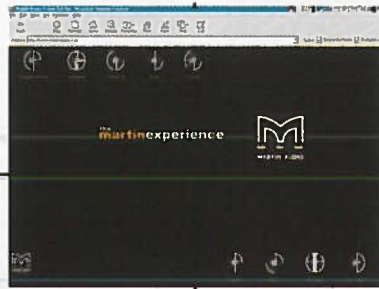
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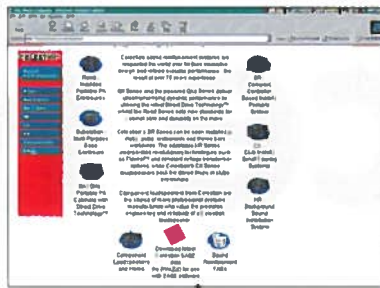
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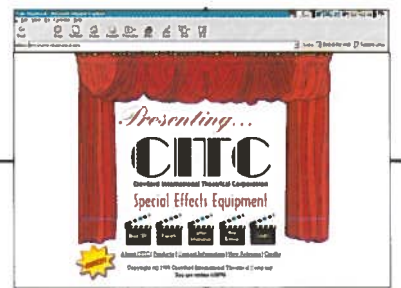
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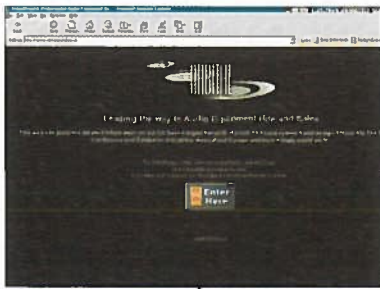
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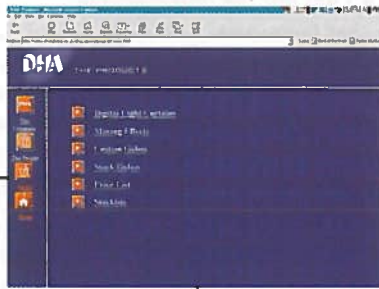
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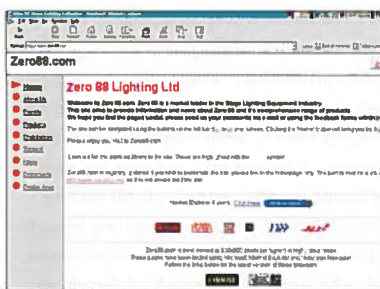
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Peace is

Following a much publicised split, The Eurythmics have reunited for their first major tour in 10 years. Steve Moles was one of the few journalists invited to see them perform in Paris

Paris lay basking in the late autumn sunshine. Young couples wearing only t-shirts and jeans walk, arms and hearts entwined, down the Champs Elysée. It's mid-October and 65 degrees, yet it's not just the unseasonable temperature that feels surreal. Halfway down the street there's a cow in a tree, part of an open-air sculpture exhibition. Neither challenging nor confrontational, the inert bovine avian rests pleasantly in the boughs, like a cradled infant. (Oops, sorry, that's a direct translation from the French catalogue).

No such vision of tranquillity is to be found further east at the Palais Omnisport, Bercy, where the Eurythmics are playing the seventh show of their World Peace Tour. So named for its noble goal of raising funds and awareness for Amnesty International, the tour is far from at peace. Before I'd even ventured over the Channel I had received unsettling news from rehearsals. "Simon [Sidi] sat down and designed this weird, abstract silver rig, lots of unusual truss shapes," reported Micky Curbishley of LSD, confirming the brief Sidi had been given for 'an emphasis on deconstructionism'. "The band rehearsed under it for a week," he continued, "then on the final night turned around and said, 'We want it black, with loads of film lights'." Oh, ho, ho, what fun Sidi and his crew had

turning around the whole rig, and re-programming in the 15 hours before the trucks left for the ferry.

Tim Head, responsible for artistic input, had encountered similar problems: "Many of the ideas I conceived for the show are no longer part of it," he admitted ruefully in Paris. (Head, it should be noted, is arguably Britain's pre-eminent Abstract artist: "He taught Hirst," exclaimed Sidi, "and he has 16 pieces of his work on display at the Tate." He's also a friend of Dave Stewart.)

There was a palpable tension in the air at Bercy. Edgy on stage from the onset, by the end of song three there was a petulant outburst against Sidi from Lennox, citing imaginary technical problems for lack of light, followed by a surreal plea from Stewart. "We can't see what we're f***ing doing up here," delivered with all the venom of a man ordering a bag of chips.

That said, I have to say it was an excellent concert. Whatever the unsettled atmosphere on stage, all was tranquil in production, where Ian Day and Kahren Williams held a steady, confident hand on the tiller. Steady that is, whilst constantly having to re-plot a course. In lieu of this, Sidi was, by Paris, on lighting design number eight, yet still smiling. Matt Askem, video director, was conjuring bravely with a constant re-vamp of directives from above, while Head, who provided so much of the video content, sat bemused but accepting. Only Pablo

Boothroyd on sound was serene: "I only have to deal with a constantly changing set list," he said. "Tonight though it's the same as the last show, so who knows? They may be settling."

For those who have time to burn and free-phone connections, you can watch every show of the tour on-line thanks to World Online, the official tour sponsors. It's the one area that Matt Askem is most concerned about, not because of the extra work involved, but because of what he can offer. "The trouble is, they have to put out my final mix, and that's configured to fit Head's letterbox screen."

Askem is being a little hard on himself. The Screenco LED screen that spans the stage consists of three conventional aspect ratio 4:3 screens (each 4 x 4 modules), set side by side. Naturally, when Askem spreads a live camera feed across a super-wide 12 x 4 module screen (making the ratio 4:1) he has to mask like crazy, and the resultant image frequently features severely truncated bodies. "I end up using only about a quarter of the captured image," he lamented. "The live camera stuff was originally intended just for the side screens and only occasional use on stage."

Two projection screens flank the stage, each with a pair of Barco 9200s, all supplied by Screenco, as are the six cameras and an extensive PPU. "I've got 10 bays of video racks," Askem continued, "screen processing, hard disks for cueing and key effects, three racks for the Mac G3 computers, and four bays of the Screenco Directors racks."

up on Dave's guitar neck, it's the perfect shape." But he has been hard-pressed by the constant lighting evolution.

"Originally, the live camera work was very limited, Tim [Head]'s graphics doing most of the work. Now 12 out of 22 songs are live camera and Tim's work is restricted to three numbers. With Simon [Sidi]'s first design, there was no front light at all except followspots - today there is. From an engineering point of view, lighting is evolving all the time and we're having to do the same."

An avowed lover of straight camera work ("I'm a cut and mix man really," he said), Askem is also coming to terms with the need for effects. "I run the 'Gospel Section' - that's Ball & Chain, Would I Lie, and Sisters - all in black and white, with a scratch overlay to make it look like old film stock. I'm surprised how well that works." He also does Chill in black and white with blue overlay, which is equally striking: "A simple but strong modifier. I really like it."

While Head was sanguine about the curtailment of his work ("The whole reason for the screen's aspect ratio was for the colour fields

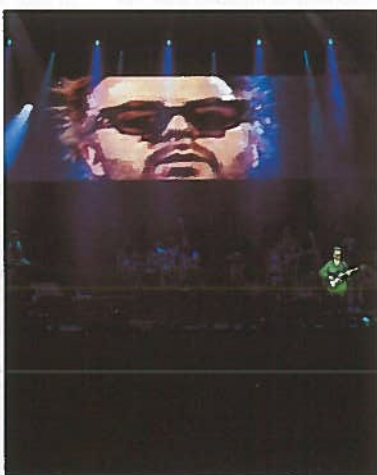


just a Word

It's apparent that Askem, a freelance director, has worked with other video companies before and is impressed with the hardware Screenco have indulged him with. "This is good stuff, I can't fault it." Which only seems to deepen his personal disappointment at what he perceives as the shortcomings of his on-screen work.

Head's input, though now severely restricted, is interesting. "His view was quite refreshing initially," explained Askem. "The three G3s can generate up to 16 million random colours, and his idea was that with such a variety, every show would be uniquely different. That for me was quite stimulating. Normally my main motivation is to make each show as close to the previous one as possible. It really gave me a kick up the arse about the way I think." But Head's lack of concert experience did tell in the realisation: "Essentially, the Mac G3s create constantly changing colour fields. Trouble is, they have no reference to musical time." Which maybe one reason why their use is now so restricted.

Whatever Askem's personal reservations about the Web feed, he does have his moments of fun. "Sometimes that stretched screen aspect works really well - for instance, when we close-



to break the convention of the usual. I made everything for the show based on that idea. Of course it's all gone now."), Askem was still finding it hard to overcome his conditioning for a conventional TV format: "I really like this screen," he said in reference to the LED technology, "but it should have been designed with live camera work in mind," meaning formatted conventionally. He should take a leaf out of Head's book. What he gets on screen might not conform to the norms he was trained to achieve, but it's still visually engaging. After all, none of us present came to watch a TV show.

"In 15 hours we turned it all around," LSD's Micky Curbishley was justifiably chuffed. "Simon did a terrific job, as did all our crew. An amazing feat I thought." That was two weeks before Paris. Now such changes have become a daily, if not quite so radical, occurrence. "The towers are the only thing that have stayed constant," said Sidi, referring to two 32ft verticals of pre-rig, though they have, of course, been painted black. Sidi was likewise unrestrained in praising his crew: "I've tried to keep changes to a minimum, but even so they've all coped really well. Special mention must go to Phil Broad from Star Rats who's had to deal with a completely fluid rigging plot on a daily



TOURING



just a Word



basis. So far we've had to change something for every show, though now I've been given carte blanche to do as I like."

Which may go some way to explaining how Sidi can appear so calm and relaxed after such turmoil, though I'm more inclined to the view that touring Roger Waters' recent outing has changed him. "Do you know he [Waters] stood behind me at rehearsals and asked me to show him everything I had in mind for his music." A statement that no doubt gives Messrs Park and Fisher pause for a wry chuckle.

What began as a rig of odd and unusual truss shapes has now morphed into a highly conventional three-truss rig, with the aforementioned towers on the flanks. This is doubly unusual for Sidi, who is prone to the asymmetrical, though he has retained one element of his trademark here, placing four strings of ACLs juxtaposed around the stage. What's most striking is the height of his design: not only are the towers tall, the front truss trims at 35ft above stage, the other two trusses are not much lower. That height, coupled with the extraordinarily wide screen, gives an immense spatial quality to the stage. In recognition of which his main lamps - LSD Icons and the High End Studio Colors in particular - are used unremittingly as narrow-beam instruments, exaggerating that distance. "That's one of the reasons I chose the Studio Colors, I wanted a moving Narrow Par."

That apart, the initial retrench to film lighting instruments has now eased. Sidi currently has just six Space Lights (each a hexagonal cluster of 1kW halogen linear floods, normally seen in studios within a lengthy white sock for diffuse lighting), positioned as audience floods on his mid truss. The only other film tool being a pair of antique 5kW fresnels (in jumbo 10kW

housings) which are wheeled on for the 'Gospel Section', performed as an informal ensemble centre stage, under the baleful glare of the two lamps.

"The important thing is traditional lighting values," continued Sidi. "I'm defining lighting for the cameras. With the followspots in the house and on the towers the key lighting for Dave and Annie is always good, but I have to be careful to pick up the BVs for Matt when they sing." He also has to balance this with what the two principal artists ask for. "They hardly talk to each other," he enlightened us. "Both are totally different people with different ideas. As well as lighting for the camera I have to make it look beautiful, in a classic sense. Fortunately, their ideas do complement each other in the end." Which is as much attributable to Sidi's sensibilities as it is to the band's. "Truth is, if I came in now with my original design, they'd probably go for it." Obviously there's more to this timing business than just what happens at the control board.

Like everyone else on this tour, front-of-house engineer Paul 'Pablo' Boothroyd is new to the band, having first met them at the Brit Awards earlier this year. A fortuitous meeting that has seen him with them ever since, engineering one-off shows like Party in the Park, and more recently at the album launch performed on Rainbow Warrior on the Thames facing Butlers' Wharf. His introduction to the touring regime was a little unorthodox, though by comparison to the rigours of lights and video, quite mild: "We did some extensive sound rehearsals with the band, but no Dave and Annie. And we had it sounding very much like the original recordings. Then they turned up and changed it all." Not that he wasn't expecting it. "What they wanted was the original flavour, but it's like anyone who's performed their work over and over - they like to change the arrangements here and there."



Boothroyd is using an EAW system from Concert Sound, primarily the longer throw (or narrower, depending on how you want to look at it) KF853 boxes. "It's very much a guitar and vocals show; as such I'm not looking for big super lows. I wanted something that would be especially good for her voice and I like the 853 mid-range. The transition between the mids and lows isn't that great," (by which he means 'isn't that large', as opposed to 'isn't that good').

In a slight deviation from the norm, Concert Sound has developed some interesting makes on how to hang this system. The gap of nine inches between horizontal rows has been mentioned in these pages before, and is claimed to smooth that transition Boothroyd alluded to, as well as enhancing long-throw performance relative to coupling and cancellation. Seven-wide each side, the main hang of 853s takes the first five, and is almost flat to the room; the latter two are the wider-dispersion 850s, acutely off to the side seating. There's no denying the carry, though inevitably in such a wide arena as the Bercy, coverage is a little patchy between where the 850s end and 853s pick up to the sides. However, considering the number of boxes used, this is a

good pay-off. Systems control, after the EAW processing, is all performed by XTA, the latest 226.

What's most noticeable about Boothroyd's control set-up is that - effects apart - there's just a solitary rack next to his Midas XL4, filled with

dbx 160 SLs. "Her vocal range is what prompted my choice," he explained. "It's very dynamic, from whisper to scream in a second. I looked at quality outboard compression and this unit is second to none - super clean and super quiet."

As his compressor of choice, Concert Sound elected to give him enough for everything:



"Having just invested in a substantial number for Clapton, who's not touring at the moment, they let me have them." Lucky chap. He uses no external EQ, being more than content with what's available on the desk: "The Midas mic pre-amp is superb, and the EQ is good. When she hits it hard," he added, "it does come out hard. But I didn't want to stick anything else in the chain." Though he did admit to having a dbx Quantum with him, "but I haven't even begun to experiment with it yet."

On the effects side, things are more conventional. "My reverb of the moment is a TC M5000. I have the twin machine so I can to and fro between Annie's vocals, saxophone and Dave's acoustic guitars. There's a PCM 91 just for drums, and an 81 for anything else I might want to grab. For example, when she does a vocal jam with Dave, I'll just put a little delay on her voice." And apart from that just an H3000 used for fattening the backing vocals.

Boothroyd is blessed with a safe pair of hands on the monitor board and Concert Sound must like him too, judging by John Roden's opening remarks: "I wanted a new Midas Heritage board, and blow me they went out and bought one. It addresses the whole thing. I have three BVs, Annie and the saxophonist, all on in-ear systems - Shure's PSM600 IE system (Shure also sponsor the tour, incidentally). The radio system is probably the most stable I've come across, which is important because we're running 16 channels, including the mics and guitars. Everyone else has Concert Sound wedges. Annie has a pair as well. The desk is great because I can do up to 12 stereo mixes, and it's built specifically for monitoring. Yes, there's always something you might say could be done better, but the layout is very good, though the colour was a bit of a shock, but that doesn't seem to affect sonic quality."

As you can tell, Roden is old enough and adept enough to enjoy his work, even when he has a new board to learn. "My biggest problem is Dave. He's all over the stage. For his wedges he likes a full mix, and loud. When he travels I just use the side fills - two KF750S per side and a pair of SB1000



subs. They give good coverage, but when he goes I just have to dump it over to one side (he has the SF feed on pan pot)." At this point Lennox appeared at the venue, and having said she didn't want to sound check promptly changed her mind, and Roden departed, dinner in hand. So much for the romance and glamour of rock and roll.

Whatever the tensions of the show, it's a killer performance. Maybe that edginess is good for them? Only two worries remain. Will Dave and Annie be able to keep it together until the end? And will they make any money for Amnesty? The answer to the former I have no idea on, and the latter I'm almost sure will be 'No'. After Paris, the tour went to Ghent, then Australia, to be followed by a return to the UK and another visit to USA. There are more days off than shows, and a bizarre routing, none of which does anything to lessen the production budget, or defray the start-up costs. Maybe World Online have deep pockets? For the egalitarian French, the impact of some Amnesty flag waving was minimal, so what's it all mean? Dave's a genius, ask him.

photos: Steve Moles/Screenco

Eurythmics UK dates:

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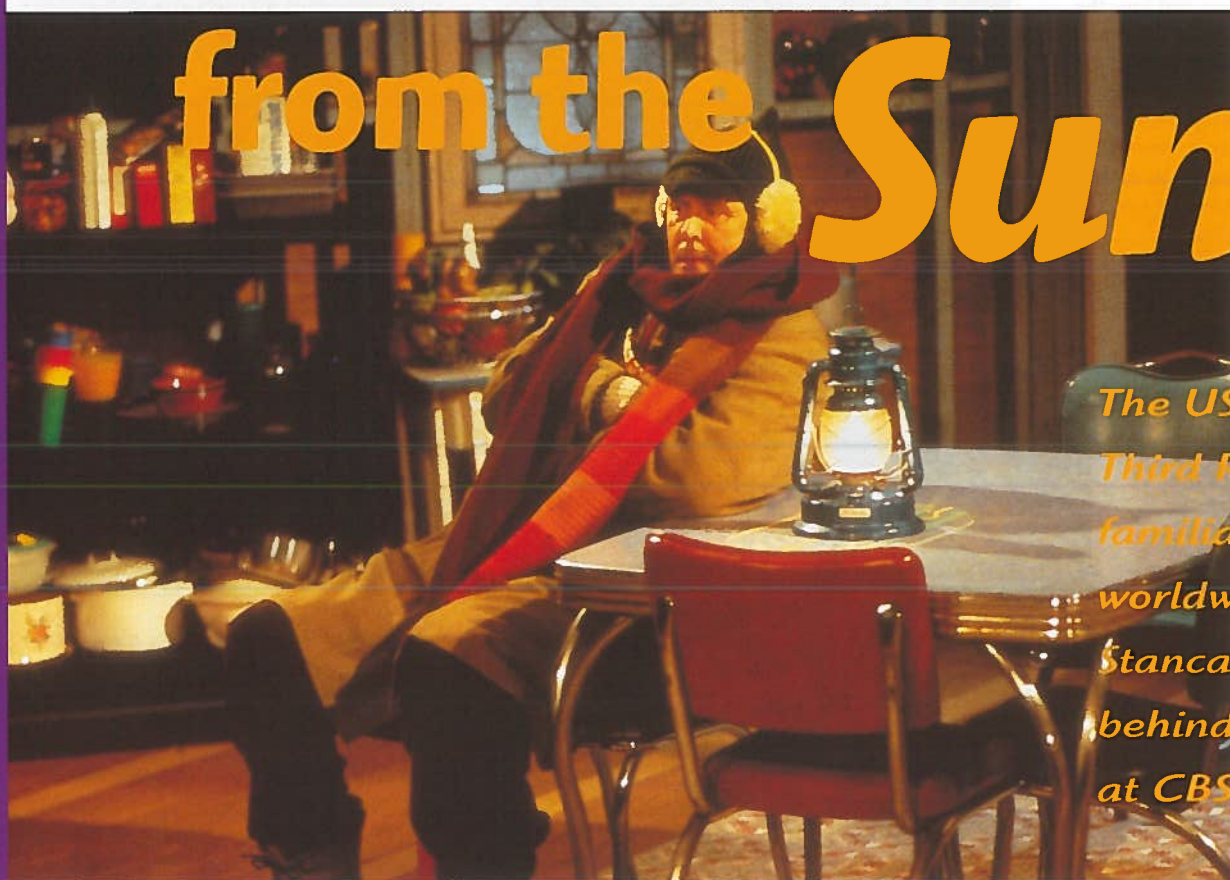
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Third Rock

from the Sun



The US sitcom Third Rock will be familiar to many worldwide. Sharon Stancavage goes behind the scenes at CBS Studios

The premise for the US sitcom *Third Rock from the Sun* is simple: a crew of four aliens are sent to earth on a mission to learn everything they can about human civilisation, as well as the human condition. The team is led by Dick Solomon (played by award-winning actor John Lithgow), the High Commander, who teaches physics at a Midwestern University and becomes involved in a relationship with his co-worker, Dr. Mary Albright (portrayed by Jane Curtain, formerly of *Saturday Night Live*.)

The team consists of Sally Solomon (played by Kristen Johnston), the second in command security officer who is frustrated by the position of women in today's world; Harry Solomon (French Stewart) plays the show's 'communicator,' who receives occasional messages from their supreme leader, The Big Giant Head (guest star William Shatner) and finally, Tommy Solomon (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), the ship's science officer who is actually older than Dick, but is given the form of a hormone-filled teenager who attends high school. "They're human beings that haven't been tainted by society to think one way or another," explains production designer Garvin Eddy. "They simply are humans acting, many times, in very naïve ways, but actually sometimes it's very refreshing, because they don't carry all this baggage with them. They came in here and have no pre-conceived ideas as to what human beings are about," he concludes.

The show, which began as a mid-season replacement and is now in its sixth season, is the brain-child of prolific writers Bonnie and Terry Turner (who are also executive producers on the show) who have worked on such projects as *The Brady Bunch Movie*, *Tommy Boy* and *Wayne's World*. The *Third Rock* team is rounded out by executive producers Marcy Carsey, Caryn Mandabach and Tom Werner, who are the nucleus of Carsey-

Werner Productions, the company behind *The Cosby Show*, and winners of numerous American television industry awards.

The series is filmed in Studio City, California, at the CBS Studio Center, the home of numerous television shows. The stage encompasses approximately 14,000sq.ft, which includes facilities for a 200-person audience. "That's an average size stage for the kind of show we do," reports Eddy. As a production designer, he is essentially in charge of the overall look of the show. "It used to be that the main job was the art director," he explains, "but the titles have changed over the years, and now everyone has switched to the production designer title. But basically, I'm the art designer."

The show has three permanent sets: the attic living room, the kitchen (which includes a roof area used for 'family' discussions), and Dick's office. There are also numerous 'swing' sets that Eddy uses, which vary with each of the 25 episodes aired each season. "There are probably 15 other sets that come and go - the most challenging part of my job is trying to accommodate the number of swing sets in the space that's allowed on our stages," he comments. "Sometimes, we run four, five or six swing sets per episode - trying to create those in the space allotted and also creating the illusion of space is quite difficult," he concludes.

The attic set also includes a stairway up into the set, which is very logical, but quite unique for a Hollywood sitcom. "I think the most challenging part of the basic set was trying to bring people in and out of the attic," Eddy comments. Rather than relying on cinematic tricks, he opted for a different track, and created a working stairway. "I thought it was more interesting to have them coming up some stairs and see their heads just appear, rather than just have the actors come around a corner or something - that seemed a little boring and not very interesting," he concludes.



TV/FILM

The concept of the stairway seems simple, but that's not quite the case. "The way you would do it on a single-camera show is to build the set up eight feet in the air, walk up the stairs, and have the camera up there - and it wouldn't matter, since you wouldn't have an audience," he explains. Third Rock does have an audience, and is shot with a total of four cameras. "We ended up digging a hole in the stage floor and putting the stairway in the hole.

Visually, the attic is made up of a number of diverse elements that seem to have no relationship at all to each other. That look is exactly what Eddy was trying to achieve. "The attic looks as if it's made up of a mish-mash of old stuff the landlady had sitting around, so nothing matches, and it's all kind of weird. In fact, it almost looks like a junk store."

The lighting of Third Rock is handled by veteran director of photography Ron Browne. Both Eddy and Browne have been with Third Rock from the beginning, and also work the Carsey-Werner production 'That 70's Show.' As director of photography, Browne is in charge of lighting the show, as well as the four-person camera crews: the camera operator, the first assistant camera man, the second assistant camera man (who does all the slating and the charts) and finally the camera loader. On

Third Rock, Browne has four camera crews, and a total of five days to light and shoot each episode.

Browne's lighting philosophy differs from many of his associates. "The lighting changes every week," he comments.

"I just don't go in and hit a switch."

The rehearsal lasts until 3.30pm or so, then script changes are made after that. This pace continues through to Monday, when the camera blocking is done. Finally, filming is done on the Tuesday, and on Wednesday the process starts all over again. "The crew I have here is unbelievable," Browne comments. "I can go in and tell them what I want and I don't have to stand over them and watch every minute - I can go over to the other stage, and when I come back here, it's done. I just go in and tweak it. It's wonderful," he admits.



Browne veers away from traditional sitcom lighting, which is primarily flat. "Most of the sitcoms today are done in an overall flat light," he explains. "In other words, everything is illuminated on the entire set. I don't use flat light at

all - I let the corners fall off and go dark," he adds. "If it's a dramatic scene, I play it way down and give it a real dramatic look, even though the show is a comedy," he explains. "I've been doing that for years and it seems to pay off."

Browne's lighting philosophy also differs from many of his associates. "The lighting changes every week," he comments. "I just don't go in and hit a switch. A lot of the sitcoms today take that approach and the sets are completely pre-lit," he explains.

Since Browne lights each show individually and avoids flat lighting (which is accomplished using a smaller number of large units), he uses approximately 300 units per show, which is two-thirds more than most directors of photography. "I use a lot of lights," he admits with a smile. "I like to spot light as I don't like to have any of the big units in there." The workhorse of his lighting kit is the Baby Junior, which is a 2k Fresnel unit. "I use a lot of Baby Juniors, as well as Juniors," Browne admits. "The Juniors are also 2k units that have interchangeable globes, which makes them really versatile." Browne also uses a number of zip lights (which are soft lights) on the set, as well as tweenies (a small, 500W tungsten Fresnel.) "I use the tweenies for lighting individual pictures in the set, so they'll stand out, and to pick up little areas in the background."

He also uses the tweenies in conjunction with any working fixtures on the set. "We use quite a few practical lights on the set, but they're not

The show has three permanent sets: the attic living room, the kitchen and Dick's office. There are also numerous 'swing' sets that vary with each of the 25 episodes aired each season

really used as a light source. If there's a lamp sitting on the table, then I'll use a tweenie up above that to light the people as they pass by. It's strictly an illusion that the lamp is lighting them," he adds. Browne also uses tweenies above any wall sconces on the set, to achieve the same effect.

Fluorescent lighting can also be found, but only in very specific situations. "Sometimes I'll go with all fluorescent lighting down the hallways to create a balanced even look," Browne admits. "I use 32k florescent lights, so I don't have to correct them which makes it really nice - we used to have to colour correct them and that was a bear to do."

According to Browne, one of the most challenging sets is the living room. "This is the most lighting intensive set we have," he explains. "I have approximately 150 fixtures in there which is a lot for a relatively small room." The reasons why soon become clear. "When I pre-light the sets, I light for three separate looks - morning, afternoon and night," he confides. "On these shows, you'll get a script, and you'll read it and light it accordingly. Then, all of a sudden, they'll decide to go to night instead of day. I'm already prepared for that. But it is three times the work everyone else does!"

The overall light level that Browne works at is also considerably different than that of his colleagues on other shows. "It varies with each show," Browne explains, "and goes from about 12 foot-candles to 40 foot-candles." This is dramatically below most sitcoms, which can go up to as many as 80 to 100 foot-candles. "I don't have the faintest idea why they go up that high," he admits. "It's so much easier on the actors when you're at the lower levels."

For his colour spectrum, Browne tends to stay with the warm hues. "I use CTO filters to create lots of warm colour." And, when the dramatic moment calls for it, he also mixes his lighting sources. "If the action moves to the windows, for instance, I bring in moonlight, and mix it in with inky light off a lamp. I use the warm light against the cold light and that gives a nice, moody look," he concludes.

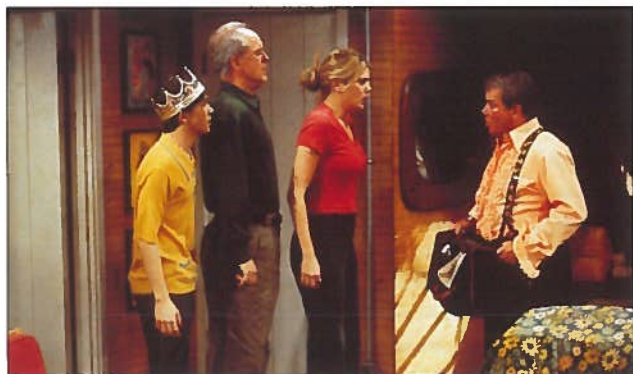
The live audio aspect of the show is handled by production sound mixer Jesse Peck, who joined the show in its second season. Working alongside Peck is Todd Graves, who handles the post-production mixing. The pair shared an Emmy award in the '96/'97 season.

Peck's job centres around the cast rehearsals and, as would be expected, the actual day of filming. "We come in on Monday and we go through the scenes one by one, and while the cameras are blocking out their moves, we work out the moves for our booms." Peck uses Fisher Booms on the sets, and the majority of his microphones are used on a boom. "The number of microphones we have varies show to show and set to set," he comments. Peck's microphone of choice is the Sennheiser 416, which is a standard shotgun microphone. "I

All of Peck's booms are on a boom track system, which is becoming standard in most studios today. "The boom sits on top of a small dolly, and you can slide the boom back and forth on the track below," he explains. "That's a great help to work around lighting. If one of the actors walks downstage and you're using a longer arm, you simply slide the boom to the slide and physically come downstage with them."

The biggest challenge for Peck is the numerous swing sets that appear on the show. "We're pretty settled into most of our regular sets," he confides, "but we do have a number of swing sets on the show, and some of those can be quite challenging."

To record *Third Rock*, Peck depends on a Tascam DA98 as his main machine, with a DA88 for back-up. Originally, the show was recorded on a 1/2 inch, four-track machine, which was rather limiting. "On the four-track, I only really had three tracks, since one of them was a dedicated time code track," Peck reveals. "Now, with the DA98, I have a lot more versatility, since I have eight tracks, plus a separate time code track."



When mixing the show, Peck uses a Yamaha PM3000. "We have great equipment on the lot from CBS-Radford." Post-production is handled at Warner Brothers, but doesn't include a large amount of sweetening. "We have fairly good audiences, and it's a popular show," Peck explains. "So the audiences are really into seeing the show, and they laugh a lot. We try to avoid using canned laughter."

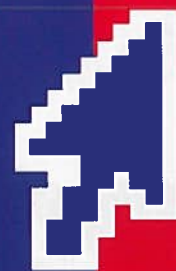
also use the AKG Blue Line microphone for my audience reaction and occasionally for plant microphones," Peck adds. While some shows will venture into the wireless microphone territory, Peck chooses the traditional route, if possible. "I really try to avoid wireless microphones if I can help it," Peck admits. "They just don't sound as good as the shotgun microphone. Of course, if we have to go on location outdoors, sometimes it's unavoidable," he concedes.

The key component to making the show successful is the blend of actors and crew members. "The show hasn't got out of hand, and I think a lot of that has to do with the professional attitude of the cast and the crew," Eddy comments. "This show works - the cast is wonderful, the crew is great and it's a pleasure to work with this group of people," he concludes.

photos: Chris Haston/Paul Drinkwater



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Tony Gattelhor

No Comment...

As a dedicated industry watcher, and one who cares about the people and the companies which are the very fabric of the business, I am becoming increasingly exercised about what seems to me to be the bizarre logic behind some of the decisions taken in the boardroom at Vari-Lite of late.

"As I understand it, patent law in the USA is something of a minefield as compared with the European model."

We have to bear in mind that Vari*Lite's have always been a premium product - THE designer label of our game - and to that extent maybe they had it too easy, too long. With the touring market sliding and the arrival of competition, has the company become a victim of its own success? As the top marque, Vari-Lite has been running on high

octane fuel for many years - yet, within months of entering the race for the ultimate prize money, at the NASDAQ race track, our once sleek racer had been relegated to single figures in the constructor's championship.

Of course, there is the infamous issue of the patents. I don't want to get into the rights and wrongs of that, but I do wonder if all that reliance on proprietary rights, and the pursuing thereof, is not proving to be a major distraction from operating the business per se. I have to put my hand up here and say that I am not a believer in the use of patents as an offensive weapon - or as a defensive weapon for that matter, but there is no doubt in my mind that if Vari-Lite had set up a licensing department years ago, they could

have used their intellectual property rights to provide a considerable income stream by co-operative negotiation, with a financial finger in most people's pies. It wouldn't be at all surprising if some products disappear from the American market, at least temporarily.

Then we have what seem like conflicting signals coming from Dallas, and not just the stuff that's stirring up the regional offices of VLPS, but more significantly the issue of whether the company can successfully reinvent itself as a manufacturer and sell product. The move is being justified on the basis of market access and revenue growth. Surely that must have been the case for several years? I believe that they should have taken this stance as soon as they saw the threat from competitors with sophisticated manufacturing processes. I just hope it's not too little, too late.

As I understand it, patent law in the USA is something of a minefield as compared with the European model, which may, in part, explain why the present disputes are not more clear cut. And why Martin, Clay Paky and Coemar, the present targets for infringement claims, have wandered, all unsuspecting, into such hostile territory. In order to simplify the process and make the achievement of patent protection more accessible, the US patent office leaves the responsibility for research of the prior art in the hands of the applicant. This is on the basis that, if it were ever subsequently proved that an applicant had been aware of the existence of such a previous invention, albeit unprotected, then severe penalties would be applied. The problem is, you have to find someone with money enough to launch such a claim, and the patentee can always claim ignorance.

A second difference in the process is that third parties do not have the opportunity to intervene

while a patent application is in process - in fact, until such time as it has actually been granted. Challenging a patent at that stage is a costly process, so it rarely happens.

Our American cousins are great advocates for a level playing field in trade matters, so maybe it is time that the WTO looked at standardising patent law internationally, as they already have with copyright piracy.

In one of those strange twists of trade which seem to be endemic to our end of showbiz, Tracoman has become the US distributor for the previously mentioned Coemar, taking over from Obies following the latter's acquisition by Westsun. One door closes and another opens!

European readers may need reminding that Gerard Cohen's Tracoman was originally Martin Professional's distributor in the USA, until Martin decided to go it alone following a financial settlement with the canny Frenchman. Thus, Tracoman neatly avoided all the nuclear stuff surrounding Martin's gung-ho marketing in the USA under Peter Johansen, and managed to keep clear (at least so far) from the patent litigation also. Now they may be in the thick of it with our Italian friends and, consequently, LDI should be very interesting indeed this year.

Domestically, all the action this month has been on the dancefloor. Rank finally unloaded all their discos onto Northern Leisure, which must be quite a lump for them to swallow. Meanwhile, former Rank operations director, Tony Marshall, was keeping mum about his future at Leisure Industry Week now that he has parted company with Butlins.

Luminar are reportedly eyeing up Allied's nightclub estate, which they have only recently bought as part of a package from European Leisure, though Luminar are apparently being rather choosy as to which sites they want, which probably doesn't suit Allied too well at all. In the meantime, it looks very much on the cards that First Leisure's portfolio of nighteries will go to a management buyout headed by present divisional managing director, Mike Payne.

So, once again the entire UK discotheque sector will have reformed and regrouped in a matter of a few weeks. I can hardly keep up with it all.

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As the latest Disney musical offering hits the West End stage, Rob Halliday reports on how the production has successfully made cartoon characters tread the boards

Lion King Roars In

With the 1994 appearance of the stage musical *Beauty and the Beast*, a new part of the Disney empire was born: Disney Theatrical. Through clever costume design in particular, that show managed to translate many of the visuals of the film onto the stage to create a spectacular pantomime that could run year round, around the world.

The question it didn't immediately answer, though, was what Disney Theatrical would do next. How many times would the public take a stage show filled with people dressed as scaled-up versions of the on-screen characters - giant plates/candles/teapots - before accusing Disney of following a formula? Especially when renting the video costs just a few pounds, while taking a family to see the stage show is starting to edge into hundreds of pounds.

Strangely, the project they chose next was perhaps the least likely candidate from their back catalogue: *The Lion King*, a more complex story with shades of *Hamlet* rather than pantomime. Evil uncle Scar kills the lion

cub Simba's father, the lion king Mufasa, in order to take his place on the throne; the cub enters self-imposed exile, eventually returning home to triumphantly rescue his kingdom. Even if that story could be told, how would it be staged? Actors dressed as *Cats* had already been done, and that show was still running!

Despite the doubts of many so-called experts, the show opened in 1997 to triumphant reviews, in a production that re-invented the film in a style that encompassed the musical sounds of Africa (through the work of South African composer Lebo M) and presented it in a uniquely theatrical manner. The show swept the 1998 Tony Awards winning the best musical, best director of a musical, best choreography, best set design, best lighting design and best costume design categories. Now, after a two year wait, London has its chance to sample the show that is still wowing audiences every night in New York.

DESIGN

The *Lion King's* distinct visual style stems from what many considered to be Disney's bold choice of director - Julie Taymor, a multi-skilled artist billed not just as director, but also as costume designer, mask and puppet

co-designer and author of additional lyrics for the show. Her productions over the years have become renowned for their use of puppets and masks, and this continues in *Lion King*. Her early fascination with the show came from the challenge of portraying the variety of creatures required without resorting to fluffy, *Wizard of Oz*-style lion costumes with actors completely hidden inside.

The eventual solution, evolved through a long pre-production period, was to create masks that have the lion's head floating above the performer's head, keeping the human visible while clearly defining who they are playing. The masks of the principal male lions have a further trick: mask and puppet co-designer Michael Curry devised a mechanism that allows the lion head to suddenly lift up, forward and away from the actor, the effect suggestive of a lion's mane rising as they confront each other.

The concept of revealing the performer inside the animal became the guiding principal for the rest of the cast, and is achieved in many ways. Giraffes, for



THEATRE

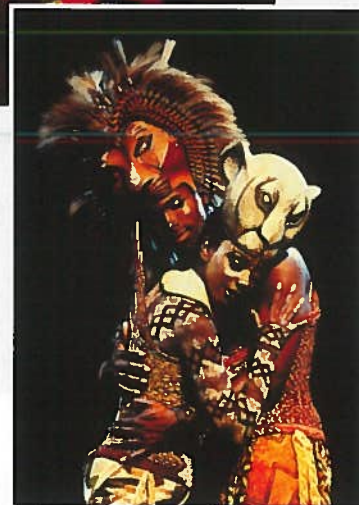




The most complex feat of engineering is the floor. Downstage this contains three lifts that can drop right down into the substage area to allow performers to be set and then rise up to stage level.

Upstage is a section of flooring that is automated to allow it to be raked for certain scenes, and within that is the complex, nine tonne drum revolve. This can be used as conventional turntable, but also houses the raised spiral of Pride Rock; one half of the revolve's surface turns and opens and, as the revolve turns further, the semi-circular Rock telescopes up and unfolds into position.

All of the scenic engineering was carried out by Delstar Engineering, with the scenery built by Terry Murphy Scenery and the rigging work by Vertigo - the same three



companies who collaborated on the London version of Beauty and the Beast, and it works well - the low noise levels as scenery moves being particularly noticeable. Control for the revolve and the flying pieces, all of which are automated, was by Jetter Automation, a name more familiar to those who specify automated handling systems for factories than to theatre practitioners.

The show's long fit-up period was masterminded by production managers Stewart Crosbie and Simon Marlow, along with production carpenter Mickey Murray, Vertigo's project manager Ken Mehmed and, it seems, most of the carpenters working in London. The potential nightly backstage chaos, with scenery and animal costumes stored in every spare centimetre of the Lyceum's wings (with 14 chain motors simply for storage), is now run by stage manager Greg Shimmin with the show called by deputy stage manager Claire Libbey - from the traditional British wing location rather than the front-of-house location initially suggested by the American producers.

LIGHTING

"I had a good time in London: the crew were outstanding, one hundred percent behind the show, albeit with lots of friendly ribbing - both ways!" is how lighting designer Don Holder recalls this, his first experience of working in the West End. The team garnering the praise was led by UK associate lighting designer Alistair Grant and production electrician Pete Lambert and included Chris Dunford and Steve Reeve, plus a selection of guest electricians, all working alongside Holder's US associate Jeanne Koenig Rubin and VL programmer Aland Henderson.

Audiences clearly love this show, enjoying it for its beauty and magic rather than trying to analyse what the masks mean or study the hundreds of years of international theatrical tradition that lie behind them. That, perhaps, is Taymor and her team's triumph. all the way."

example, are a performer standing on two short stilts who leans forwards propped up on two longer stilts that become the animal's front legs, with the long neck-and-head resting upon their own head. The effect, particularly in silhouette, is stunning. More difficult characters take the split between character and performer further: Timon the meerkat - one half of the typically-Disneyesque comedy duo with warthog Pumba - is the extreme, a complete character puppet attached to the front of his performer and manipulated by movements in the performer's torso, arms, legs and head. This puppet is the most Beauty and the Beast-esque in the show, and could easily have been an actor in costume. But it is remarkable how quickly one stops watching the performer and focuses on the character he is bringing to life - while at the same time fully aware of the work the actor is doing.

The scenic environment supporting these creatures was created by designer Richard Hudson, well known in the UK for his work for subsidised theatre and opera companies. Zimbabwe born and educated, Hudson turned to these African roots for his design which had to allow Taymor's varied creatures to be presented in what appeared to be the vast open plains of Africa, while also taking the audience to the other locations demanded by the script. The design looks simple in picture or model form - but even the expansive Lyceum had to have its basement excavated further to accommodate the set's mechanics.

The basis of the set is a big open space backed by an enormous cyclorama. The stage space is made to feel 'epic' because the cyc isn't hemmed in by the usual black legs and borders. Instead, the legs are white light boxes that extend the feel of the cyc to the side of the stage, while the borders are white cloths with curved edges that feel like floating clouds - both can be covered with black masking for the darker, spookier scenes such as those in the elephant's graveyard. Flying (including performer flying by Foy) and tracking modify the space further. Two huge skeletons are trucked on for the elephant's graveyard (which also features a compressed-air powered smoke geyser effect devised by Howard Eaton Lighting, to replace the expensive-to-run liquid nitrogen effect used in New York), while the stampede that leads up to the death of Mufasa and Simba's subsequent exile is achieved using an upstage scrolling painted cloth then a series of rollers containing increasingly-large wildebeest models with side portals creating a valley; an old-style effect, but an effective one.

Holder's aim for the London production, as with all of the departments, was essentially to re-create the American show; that design won him the 1998 lighting Tony award. However, he notes: "We were aware of the concern about the economics of the production, particularly because ticket prices in London are lower than in New York. But we'd also already done the show a number of times, in Minneapolis, New York and Japan; this experience let me go back through and take some things out of the rig. The result is fundamentally the same, yet the rig is cleaner - and the whole production feels richer and denser."

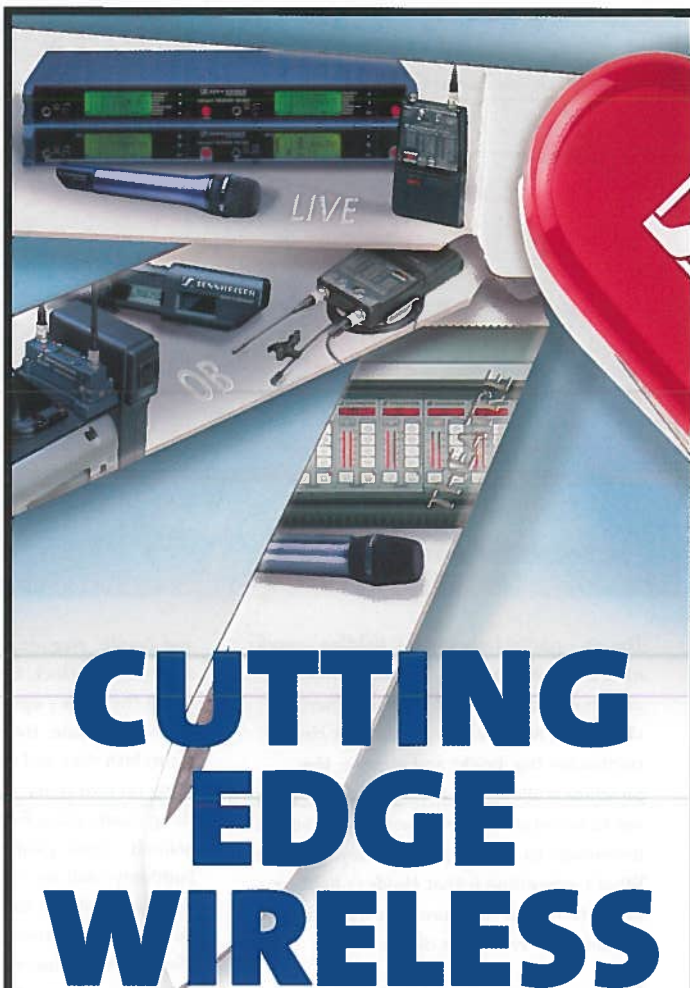
The core of the rig is moving lights - by a quirk of history, Lion King's moving light rig is practically identical to Beauty's (Disney had a leased Vari*Lite package from a Beauty tour which closed early and just moved it over) with a sizeable core of VL2Cs and VL4s backed by just a few VL5s and VL6s: four High End Studio Colors on the circle front round out the rig. London continues with this rig partly because the show exists in Artisan format, and partly because the lighting team haven't yet found a match for the VL4 washlight that does a great deal of cyc lighting work in the show.

The sizeable conventional rig became the subject of a fierce bidding war that ended somewhat controversially with the contract awarded to Westsun in Canada, who have supplied the American productions of the show. The majority of the equipment and cabling in the rig appears to be new, as the company quickly learnt about the UK and West End markets - in particular the need for CE marking and the requirement to permanently install equipment for long-running shows. Production electrician Pete Lambert notes that the advantage of having everything bought specifically "was that we could specify exactly how we wanted things, down to the lengths of tails on multicores," and the result is a beautifully neat installation.

It is also an enormous one! The Lyceum's existing 400-odd Strand LD90 dimmers are all used. But 345 new ETC Sensor dimmers in seven racks have also been installed in the grid, one running from a 110V transformer and feeding the 110V elements of the rig, such as the 240V-unfriendly lines of seven M16 flood battens called for by the width of the set. The new dimmers were installed by Stage Electrics (who carried out the original dimmer installation during the Lyceum's refit, and are now servicing the show for Westsun); they are fed from a new mains supply run up from the basement by RWS Electrical, who also installed new, Howard Eaton Lighting-built patch boxes with Socapex outlets around the grid that allow the rig to be neatly plugged up. The dimmers are controlled from an ETC Obsession 2 located in the theatre's followspot box, since the room set aside as the lighting control room doesn't actually allow a view of the stage! Vari*Lite control is now from a mini-Artisan 2, after an Artisan was used to program the show; the consoles are now run, and the rig maintained, by the show's resident electricians team of Rachael McCutcheon, Alan Boyd and Duncan Elsam.

On the ends of the dimmers hang over 600 ETC Source Fours and the huge array of floodlights that the cyc, borders and side lightboxes demand - 100-plus conventional L&E 3-circuit Ministrips, plus over 70 custom Ministrips mounted in the leg lightboxes. There are also a line of fluorescent floods at the base of the cyc and 35 Altman T3 six-cell flood units (12 flown, 23 as groundrows); these and the RDS Scene Machine effects projectors had to gain CE approval prior to being used in London. The DMX network also controls 170 Wybron ColorRam scrollers, 18 High End Dataflash strobes (these mounted into short-nose Par can housings to reduce flare), five 2.5K RDS Scene Machines (used for clouds and projecting the tiny dots that form one stunning transformation sequence) and two Pani BP2.5 projectors, mounted on a circle front bar re-engineered to accommodate their depth. Custom rigging was also created for the on-stage ladder positions, sections of which are hinged and tracked to allow them to roll out of the way of passing scenery.

With a large cyc, lightly-coloured floor and white legs and borders, one of the most challenging aspects of the rig became controlling flare: practically every lamp in the rig has a top-hat, the insides of these covered with flocking material. Lambert and his team are also now intimately familiar with every light leak in every type of lighting fixture after spending a day covering them with countless rolls of blackwrap!



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The rig - particularly the cyc lighting - works hard through the show. Taymor's animal costumes are seen to best effect when in silhouette, and the silhouettes that Holder creates are big, bright and intense; the punchiness allows the feeling of the brightly-lit sky to be retained even when light is added downstage to build big, bright daylight states. What's interesting is that Holder's lighting seems to reflect the show as a whole in dividing into two quite distinct styles.

There are the beautiful, heart-stopping moments where the magic of masks, puppetry

and simple, elegant theatricality are used to their fullest effect, the most notable of these being the show's opening sequence. The houselights fade, the colourful abstract frontcloth rises and light reveals firstly clouds rising up into space then a colourful, cloth sun rising slowly rising from the floor. The first animals - those giraffes - appear on stage. Suddenly birds are flying overhead. Then the edge of a gobo in the auditorium catches your eye and, as you turn, you realise that an elephant is lumbering down the stalls past you! The sequence builds and builds, the African chanting slowly resolving into the

familiar form of Circle of Life, the hit song from the film, as the stage fills with creatures of all types and Pride Rock then rises to reveal the king, the queen and their newly-born lion cub.

Then there are moments that seem somehow to owe more to Disney than to Taymor: a character sauntering on stage singing the eighties pop hit 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight'; another quipping that the scene "wasn't like this in the film", while the Vari® Lites do a rock-and-roll sweep out over the audience. Holder handles these moments with style, though, as he does the moments where the lighting has to solve the purely technical challenges of hiding the 'tricks' (such as performer flying lines) or silhouetting the miniature puppets used in some scenes. But it is the cyclorama, in particular, that lingers in the mind: dressed with floods, but then with areas picked out using the Vari® Lites; its triumph is that it is never quite symmetrical, never quite even, which is what makes it live as a spectacular sky rather than just a well-lit cloth.

SOUND

The sound design for Lion King is in the hands of Tony Meola, who also worked on the more recent Hunchback of Notre Dame for Disney in Berlin. Bidding for this element of the show was again fierce - understandably, given the general expectation that the show will run and



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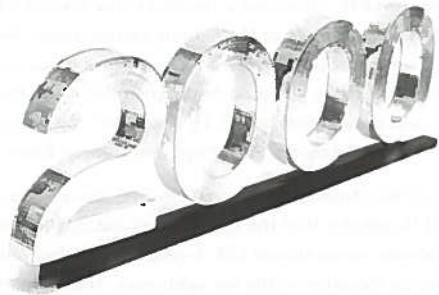
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run - but the contract was eventually awarded to Autograph because of their proven ability to support even the most complex shows. Autograph's Andy Brown also served as UK sound associate, working alongside US associate sound designer Marie-Renée Foucher and assistant sound designer Kai Harada once the show moved into previews and Meola jetted off to his next project.

The installation of the rig was overseen by production sound engineer Thomas Ashbee, another Disney veteran after filling the same role on *Beauty and the Beast* in London. Though large, the basic rig isn't that outlandish in current musical terms. Vocals are collected by 40 Sennheiser SK50 radio microphones, some of these permanently attached to masks rather than to the performer's heads, and presided over by Nihal Badik and Paul Gatehouse. The orchestra, located in the pit with the exception of two percussionists who are housed in auditorium boxes either side of the stage, are miked with a wide assortment of microphones from Shure, Sennheiser, AKG and Neumann, and the resulting feeds are collected by a 99-input, 14-subgroup, 14-VCA Cadac J-type mixing console with 89 of the faders motorised, run by Nicky Matthew.

This sound, along with a few effects replayed from Denon DN-995R MiniDisk players, then passes through Meyer CP-10 EQs, BSS TCS-804 delays, Apogee DA-800 and SA-700 amps and out to what appears to be a very small loudspeaker rig, particularly around the proscenium arch. This is, in part, because vocals are fed out through four LA-28 speakers from Walt Disney Imagineering - wide-dispersion column speakers created for the theme parks that look like narrow tubes and are visually unobtrusive when mounted on pros booms. These are backed by six Meyer UPA-1Ps, six UPA-2Ps and four USW-1P speakers, all self-powered. Tom Ashbee comments that his work has suddenly become much more like the lighting department's, because he's dealing with a mains installation rather than just low-voltage signals.

Each speaker is individually fed in case of problems. The rig also uses Apogee SAT-3 and AN-1000x loudspeakers as front-fills and as a surround-system used for effects and the vocal sounds of animals who enter from the rear of the auditorium during the opening sequence, with the whole rig equalised using the Meyer SIM system.

More challenging for Ashbee has been the complex detailing required by the system. The opening sequence animals are hidden in a section of the stalls bar prior to their entrance and therefore needed coverage for both radio mics and the stage management's radio comms - yet this area was a radio blackspot. Local antenna therefore had to be concealed above the bar with the cabling then following a complex route back to the stage ("there was one particularly nasty void, and in the end we went and bought a crossbow and used that to shoot the draw-line through!" the ever-inventive Ashbee recalls).

Video monitors were also installed in the bar area, working as latecomer monitors for most of the show, but switching to show the conductor on an event from the Cadac.

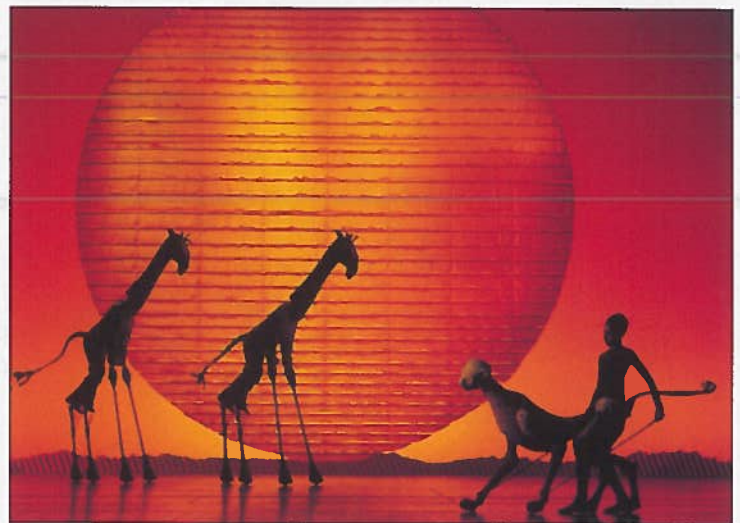
The complex comms requirements also led to the decision to install a separate feed to each Clearcom comms pack, fed from an Autograph-designed power supply that cuts off a pack in the event of a fault, leaving the rest of the comms system undisturbed.

All this somehow left a few dull moments in the long fit-up, which the sound team filled by firstly fitting plexiglass side panels to either end of the sound desk, then adding show logo decals. Bored again during previews they installed ropelight to upright the logos - and were planning to finish off this project by wiring the ropelight to the houselights, so that it faded gently at the start of the show!

The show's sound, for the most part, fulfils Meola's stated ambition of making a sound that is "lush, as it is on the albums and in the film". As with *Hunchback*, it's not in-your-face sound, but rather takes the vocal sound and presents it to you neatly, clearly and cleanly. It also manages to deal with the challenge presented by the younger audience present at the show, lifting the vocals

over their general ambient hubbub, the rise and falls of which clearly show which bits of the show bore them and which enthral them - though it is slightly sad that they don't get to see the final moments of the curtain call, their view obstructed by the adult audience who rise to give the hard working cast a standing ovation.

A real ovation, though, with cheers and whistling and boos for the bad lion, not a forced 'we've paid our money, we feel we should stand' ovation. Audiences clearly love this show, enjoying it for its beauty and magic rather than trying to analyse what the masks mean or study the hundreds of years of international theatrical tradition that lie behind them. That, perhaps, is Taimor and her team's triumph. That and proving that a Disney



musical doesn't just have to be padded cartoon costumes!

But even the success of this show leaves a question unanswered. For their differing styles, all three of the stage shows (*Beauty*, *Lion King* and *Hunchback*) have effectively had the benefit of extensive try-outs in film form. Disney haven't yet mounted a successful new, theatrical show from scratch. To see whether they can achieve that we must wait for *Aida*, opening in Chicago in December and (they hope!) coming to a theatre near you sometime soon after that!

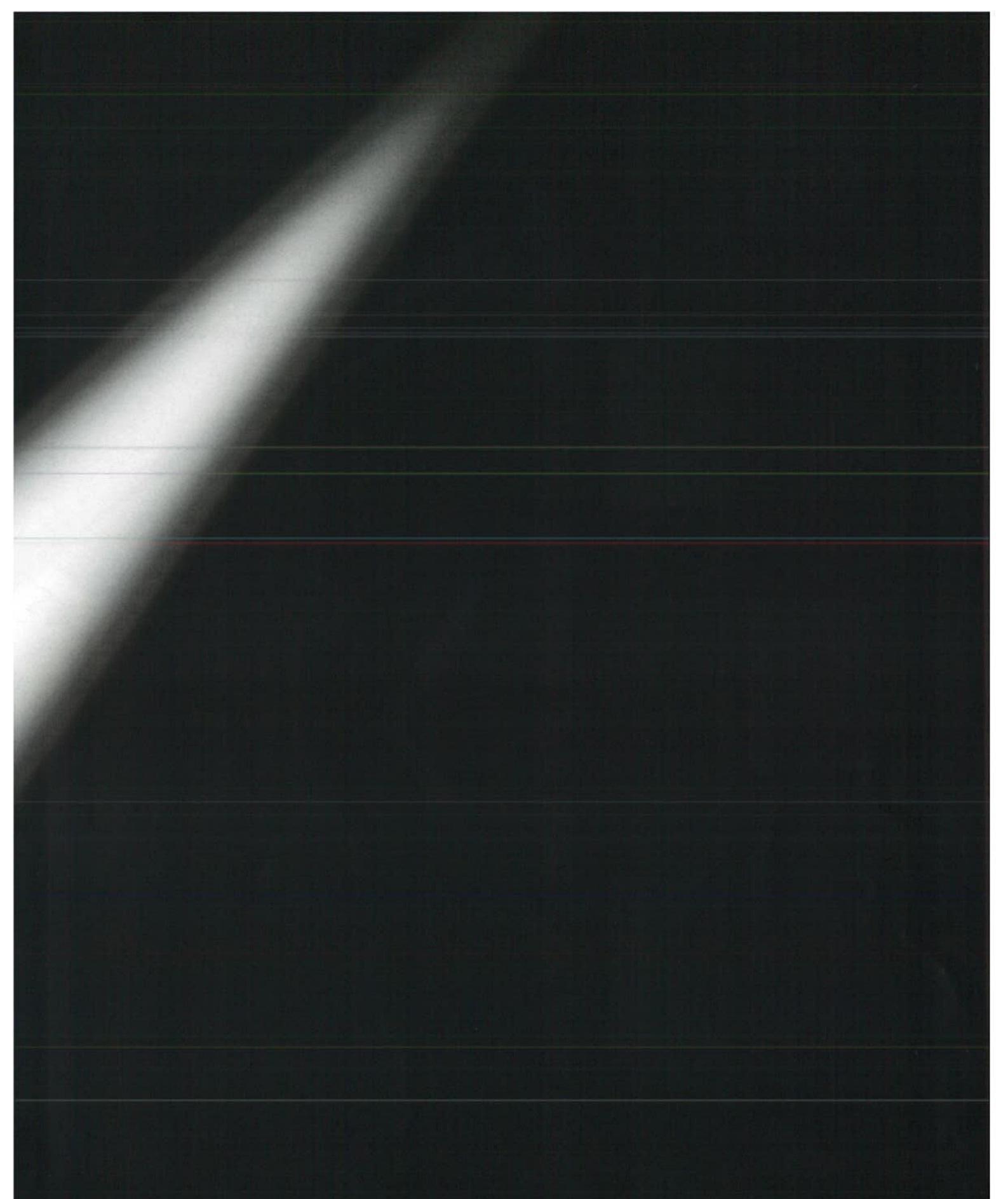
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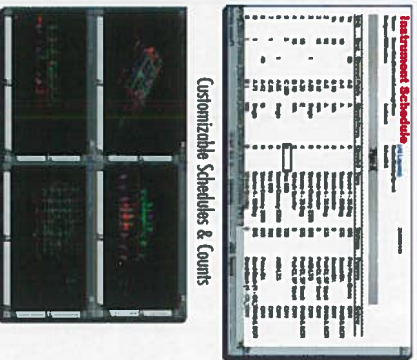
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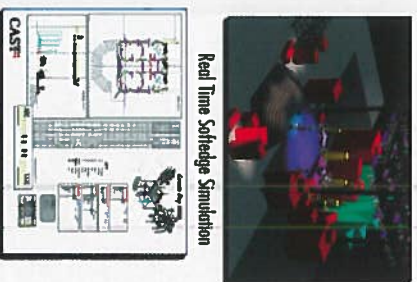
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Genetic MODIFICATION

*Birmingham's newest super-club,
DNA, marks a new lease of life
for one of the city's oldest
entertainment quarters. Mike
Mann takes a look.*

The emergence of Broad Street as the place to be seen in Britain's second city has inevitably detracted from Birmingham's other traditional nightspots, but these days there is an undeniable atmosphere of optimism on John Bright Street, where the 1650-capacity DNA opened its doors at the end of September.

The building that houses the new club is an Edwardian picture house, the Futurist Cinema. Amazingly, this remained an independent cinema until its closure in the late seventies. Having remained unoccupied since then, even the projectors and seating were still in place when Leamore Leisure moved in to create a new venue in the heart of Birmingham. DNA's general manager Rob Collett takes up the story: "We were granted a licence in October 98 and started work two months later. We were of a mind that the latest crop of big clubs were all pretty much the same, using tried and tested concepts that were known to work. As an independent, we wanted to be brave and to produce something completely unique." With an unusually tall venue as a starting point, architects and interior designers Newnam Gauge were called in to create a multi-level space that would retain the interest of the club-goer while providing a traditional club atmosphere.

With a total of seven bars on four levels, including enclosed VIP and dining areas, the club's centrepiece is undoubtedly the Sky Bar; a 75-capacity glass-floored pod suspended nearly 20 metres above the ground. Accessed from open steel stairways to either side, the Sky Bar employs no less than three tonnes of glass to provide its occupants with all-round views. This does not



NIGHTCLUB

seem to put off the clientele: "The only people who don't like standing on the glass dance floor are our security guys!" joked Collett. Elsewhere, the use of some very purposeful steelwork helps to give the club a feeling of solidity, and is very much in keeping with Birmingham's industrial heritage.

Refreshingly, the venue's name has not sparked a blinkered theming exercise - but this, according to Collett, has more to do with the naming process itself. "We didn't want a themed club, as they date so quickly," he explained. "The name 'DNA' just came up during one of those long and boring naming sessions. It's not that it means anything special, it was just the only name we all agreed on!"

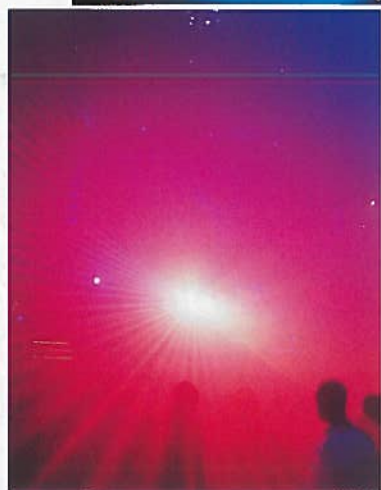
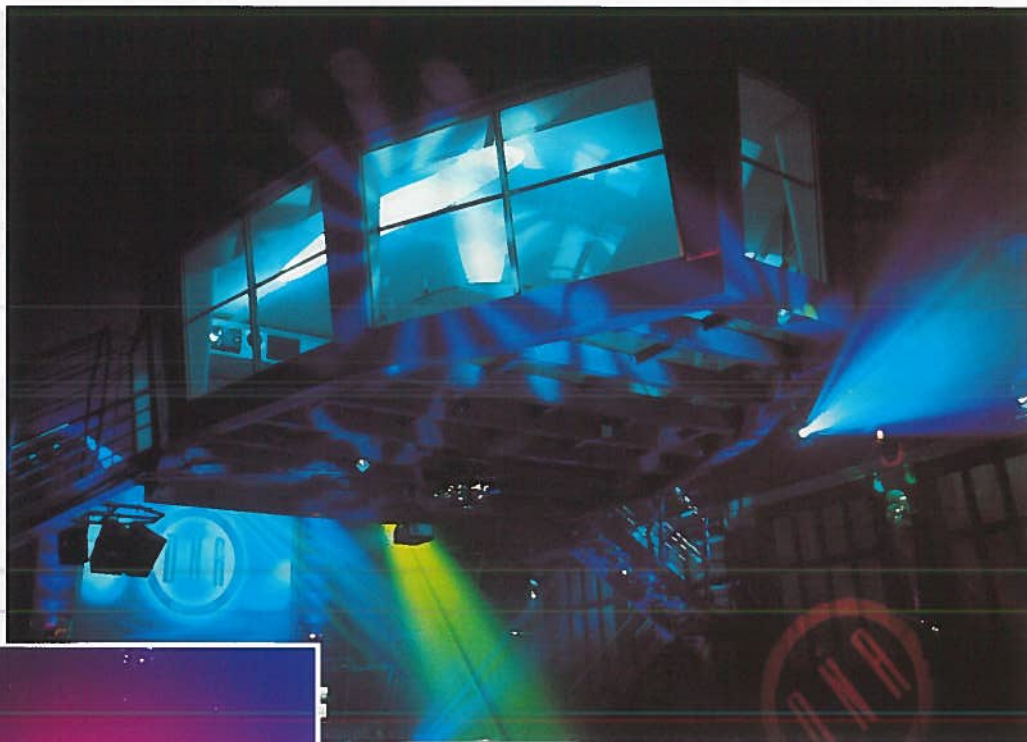
The sound and lighting installation was completed by Cambridgeshire-based Lightmasters, who had previously equipped Leamore's other club in Tamworth. "We have a long relationship with Lightmasters," commented DNA operations director Tony Mason, "even though we put the project out to tender, they came up with the best scheme." Mason travelled to Italy to see the manufacturing facilities at Outline, who provided the speakers and amplification, and FAL, who provided the intelligent lighting for the club. "We were very impressed with the way the equipment was designed and built, and had the chance to see and hear it first-hand in a number of clubs in Italy. Since we were looking to create something different, it made sense not to use the usual names when it came to equipment," added Collett.

The concept of both the lighting and sound systems was to keep the airspace over the main dancefloor as uncluttered as possible. This meant distributing the loudspeaker system as well as the light fixtures. Four main flow speaker points are used, each with a pair of Outline Doppia



2 cabinets and two Integra A full-range enclosures. The former are horn-loaded mid-high designs, which are angled steeply onto the dancefloor, while the smaller cabinets look after the 360-degree balcony areas. Lightmasters designed a custom-built octagonal flying frame to support each cluster of four speakers. Eight dual-18" Outline subs are recessed into features around the dance floor, with outlying bars being furnished with smaller, distributed systems, each under local level control. The peripheral areas are so spacious and popular that Lightmasters have increased the output of the system in these areas by substituting more powerful Outline cabinets.

In the rack room, Outline's diminutive amplifiers disguise the power of the total system. The T4.5 (2 x 1300W) and T2.5 (2 x 800W) both occupy a single rack space, yet are gutsy enough to handle the feeds to the subs and low-mid drivers. PA2006 and EX600 amps complete the power package, while Sabine GRQ-3102 digital graphics are used to set the system up. In the DJ booth, the ubiquitous Technics decks are to be found, alongside a Cloud CXM 12 mixer that allows for PAs as well as conventional club nights. A single-channel AKG wireless mic system and Denon playback equipment complete the list.



space to reflect the laser's twin beams, Bullock also has a series of animated clips at his disposal, ranging from abstract patterns, through birds in flight to Bart Simpson!

The FAL moving light installation for the main space comprises 14 Proscan 1200W HMI projectors, 12 360/2 moving head projectors

have so much height above the dance floor," commented Bullock from his commanding position in the control booth. "Because the lighting is positioned so high, I can fill the air with light."

Graphics were envisaged as playing a major role at DNA, though Bullock points out that at present there is enough work to do running the light show and laser. The venue's cinematic roots are emphasised by a large projection screen on the back wall, overlooking the first-floor bar, while a second projector fires directly onto a curved wall. Sources are a mixture of live, recorded and digitally-generated, with a Kaleidovision graphics system, Philips VCR and DVD machines, a Vortex dome camera and a GPS Bullet camera all fed via a Kramer VS808 video matrix. Doubtless the club's mission to provide something different will lead to an opening for a talented video jock to support the mood of the venue.

Though the minimal quantity of lighting may be seen as a limiting factor, the effect of distributing the power around the entire dancefloor (rather than having it concentrated in a few square metres) is very deceptive. The ability to use narrower beams over a longer distance to cover the floor area works well for a space like DNA, and certainly serves to emphasise the volume of the building. The complete absence of any truss above the dancefloor gives the occupants of the Sky Bar a bird's eye view of their counterparts below; similarly, anyone looking directly up from the floor has the opportunity to check out the underwear of the Sky Bar's clientele!

Sound is complex to manage in a distributed environment, and the relative distances between each of the four main clusters and the dancefloor mean that very careful set-up needs to be done to avoid serious intelligibility problems. Having said which, the DNA installation neatly avoids the usual problem of spraying high-energy sound at the walls by using a much lower-level system to feed the peripheral bars. Also, the height of the main arrays above the dancefloor means that path

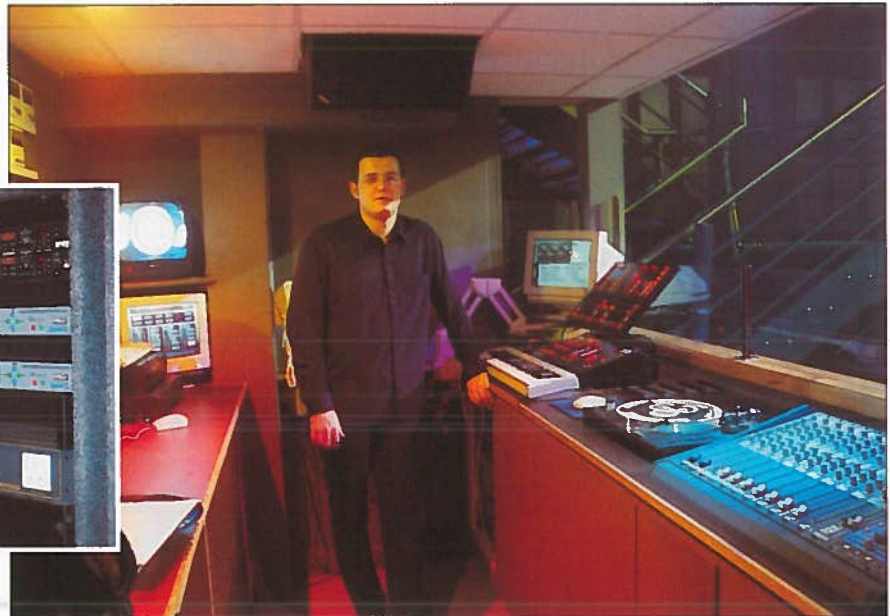
Steve Bullock is DNA's Light Jockey and is also responsible for keeping a watchful eye over the audio and projection equipment. "I liked the idea of a minimalist look when I first saw the designs," he recalled, pointing out that most of the lighting fixtures are wall-mounted around the periphery of the club. "We wanted something that was not the usual 'ritzy' neon look, and I think that we have achieved that," he concluded. Indeed, there is no controllable neon in the installation, with only stair-tread illumination using this technology. The 10W Laser Studio laser, seven -colour laser is a spectacular addition to the moving light system, with a fibre-optic splitter giving a 50/50 split to simulate a two-head device. As well as the countless mirrors used throughout the main

and a single Nebula 1200W HMI located under the Sky Bar. Bullock is a big fan of the Italian moving lights: "We already have FAL in the club in Tamworth, and they have been brilliant there. They are reliable, and easily as good as others." Apart from the moving lights, six Anytronics Megastar strobes are incorporated into the minimal design, with a pair of Griven Ku-Bos and 18 Par 64s. "The Pars are only ever used sparingly - just for the mad house nights!" commented Bullock. The Sky Bar is equipped with a pair of 250W FAL 2000 projectors, while the other bar areas, staircases and reception area are fitted with a number of 150W fibre-optic projectors and custom harnesses to provide synchronised colour changes around the entire building. The individual fibres are connected to eyeball fittings for overhead lighting, with side-emitting stranded cables used behind diffuser screens to backlight bar areas. "In fact," expanded Bullock, "from the LJ position I can control all the house fibre systems, the architectural fittings and even the air-conditioning - all via DMX!"

For control, Bullock is provided with a ShowCAD system, Zero 88 Linebacker and a MIDI keyboard and fader panel which he uses as an assignable live control desk. Smoke comes courtesy of four JEM ZR22 machines, which make the most of the distributed effects lighting. "I love the fact that we

"Sound is complex . . . the relative distances between each of the four main clusters and the dancefloor mean that very careful set-up needs to be done to avoid serious intelligibility problems."

Main picture left shows the view from the dance floor to the glass-floored Sky Bar. Inset, the 10W laser. Right, LJ Steve Bullock in the control booth, and inset, the Outline system controllers in the rack room



differences between one speaker and another are not noticeable from below. The crushing mid-bass produced by the Outline subs is, thankfully, limited to the dancefloor itself; elsewhere, though levels are fairly uniform, the low end is curtailed, which at least allows bar staff to interpret drinks orders!

Tony Mason was previously the manager of the Dome, which is the focal point of the Broad Street development after dark; he clearly relishes the challenge of the new club. "This is the first serious competition that the Dome has had," he commented, "And we are pleased to see that there have been people in DNA from every other club since we've been open. I know that we've surprised the big boys with what we've done in here. I don't think we could have done anything else to make DNA more unique." One disappointing factor for Mason and his team is that DNA does not see much of Birmingham's early evening business. This is largely due to the lack of good pubs and eating establishments in the immediate area, which keeps people in the Broad Street area until nearly closing time. However, this will change as

the rebirth of John Bright Street continues; and in any case, judging by the happy clubbers that I met at DNA, the nature of this brand new venue is enough to get them into serious party mood! Everybody loves an underdog, so nothing makes us happier than seeing an independent company daring to go against the grain and create a unique product.

In terms of its architecture, technical installation and atmosphere, DNA is a major landmark in the UK club scene. Leamore Leisure, Lightmasters, Outline and FAL can all be proud that here is proof (if proof were needed) that the small fry can give the big guys a run for their money - and even come out on top.

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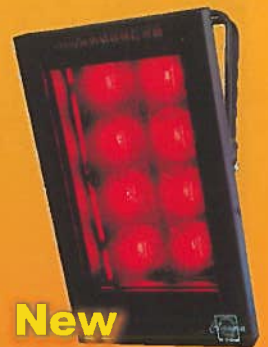
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Forest of Stones



TOURIST
ATTRACTION

For years the sole preserve of the Chinese ruling elite, the Stone Forest in China's Yunnan Province is one of the wonders of the world. Ruth Rossington looks at how Laser Creations International have helped to make it even more spectacular . . .

The Stone Forest, some 120 kilometres south east of Kunming, is one of the major attractions of Yunnan. The area is characterised by extraordinary cast formations of sandstone - a 'Forest of Stones' networked by tree-lined pathways and huge lakes. Those of a scientific bent will tell you that centuries of erosion and weatherisation have created this remarkable feature, but local legend has it that the Forest was created by Chinese Gods who tore down the mountain to create a haven for lovers.

Associations of this kind exist for many Chinese sightseeing attractions and the Stone Forest, run by the Yunnan Tourism Group Co Ltd, has been successfully operating as a tourist attraction since 1983. Whilst it currently attracts about 1.5 million visitors a year, Yunnan Tourism wished to widen its appeal, particularly to an international audience. They were keen to encourage visitors to the attraction at night and, in turn, create more business for the expanding local hotel trade.

It was fortuitous then that the Yunnan Group should meet with Brett Salmon of Laser Creations International (LCI) - a company with an impressive pedigree in creating something out of nothing - in October 1997. The two discussed the project and Salmon could see that techniques the company had applied successfully elsewhere would transfer very effectively and give the Stone Forest that extra dimension Yunnan were looking for. Two months later, Salmon travelled to Yunnan's offices in Kunming to take a more detailed briefing and to conduct a site survey.

During the winter months that followed, the team at LCI, led by Salmon and technical director Tony Clynick, began to sketch out a concept that would become central to the entire project. Salmon, meanwhile, was doing his homework on the area and his research led him to the local legend of Ashima. In brief, this tells the tale of a local princess whose hand all the eligible men in the land competed for when the time came for her to marry. A local man, Arhei, emerged the victor, but Arzhi, a jealous rival, in a fit of rage pulled the magic plug causing the area to flood. Ashima drowned, but her spirit came to rest in one of the Stones in the Forest. This legend, well known to Chinese people, became the focal point of LCI's proposal with the tale of Ashima being played out on a series of water screens across the major lakes in the park.

Yunnan were so taken with this concept that within a month, the company had been commissioned to prepare a detailed feasibility study and, after an intensive period of work both on site and at LCI's London office, the scheme was presented to Yunnan during the first week of May 98. In the weeks that followed, further refinements were made and in July 1998 LCI finally signed the contract for phase one of the project (total US \$6.3 million) to be completed by October 99. Phase two will commence around June 2001.

To implement phase one, LCI returned to the companies they had collaborated with on the initial proposal. In the case of lighting, this meant calling in Roger Beckett of the London-based Light Projects Group to supply and install all the required effects and architectural lighting. They, in turn, called on the theatrical and architectural lighting talents of LD Benny Ball (aided by associate Stanley Wilson) and freelance project manager Adrian Whittleworth. Bristol-based Sardis International were tasked with supplying and installing all the surround-sound systems, and were also commissioned by LCI to develop and record all the atmospheric and show music, and other sound effects, under LCI's direction.

The various teams then set to work, doing much of the preparation work in the UK and then containering kit out to China to complete the installation and set-up on site. During the months that followed, members of the UK creative team worked alongside



local crew to prepare the site, laying the tons of cables necessary and putting in place the infrastructure for what was to follow.

The concept of the night-time journey through the Forest is relatively straightforward: on first arriving at the park, visitors are ferried across the illuminated Entrance Lake, whilst the tale of Ashima is related to them. To create an

used singly inside weatherproof jackets. Two other key features of the Entrance Lake area are a pair of four-metre tall Fire Fountains which sit behind the front water screen and for which LCI had to install underground petroleum tanks to feed them. There's also a computer-controlled pyrotechnic system comprising just over 30 3.5" mortar tubes in two firing bunkers across the back of the Lake,

three DPL digital projectors (sited in a custom-built projection bunker at the far side of the lake), one of which is feeding two of the screens, firing through the first and on to a second positioned behind it. In addition to the main video sequences, there are a number of laser animation effects digitally projected onto the water screens. Programmed on site by LCI's Martin Kapp, these come courtesy of three high-power laser systems - a pair of 10W argon laser effect systems and a single 10W mixed argon/krypton gas laser system. The main laser provides the central laser animations and special effects graphics designed by LCI's creative manager Andy Day, whilst the two mixed gas systems are there to give a bit of 'poke' to the show, having all the main colours filtered out, leaving only the familiar green.

The filmed sequences for the shows were handled by London-based Jean-Hicks Associates. Once Laser Creations had devised the storyboards, Simon Hicks and the team at JHA undertook the direction and co-production of all the filmed sequences, under LCI's direction. This involved flying a Chinese actor and actress to London to reenact the tale of Ashima, in a swimming pool of all places, filmed by an underwater camera and then edited for use.

The legend of Ashima has its own musical heritage; with the help of a Chinese composer - Mr Wong - Sardis were given the melodies for the principal characters which they then remixed in-house at their studios. Several trips to Kunming Television Studios followed so that Sardis could record traditional Chinese instruments on to a portable ProTools studio. These samples were then mixed into the production tracks back in the UK and later synchronised to the video projection.

The audio system design for Lotus Lake was based on an eight-speaker stack array around the audience area in front of the lake. Peter Giles and the team at Sardis needed to achieve a high level of volume within the area, yet this couldn't run so high that the sound would 'bleed' to the nearby hotels, situated on the hill just behind the show area. Sardis used their own surround-sound technology to effectively ensure that the concentration of the eight speaker stacks (again, their own manufacture) focuses enough power where required, with a noticeable drop in volume beyond.

All the speaker cabinets had to be fully waterproofed to withstand the inclement weather, not to mention the sprinkler systems directly drenching the garden speakers twice a day. The mid-high speakers are rated at 300W with the sub-bass at 600W. The audio control room has 24 1.1kW amplifiers powering the system and the signal is triggered via timecode and processed through a Sardis System 48. This is the 'magic box' which creates the soundfield and decodes the surround sound programming within the soundtrack.

Once the show is complete, visitors walk through Ashima's Garden towards the Lake where Ashima's Stone can be found. Ball has gone for bold strokes of colour in this area: Par



The cover page shows a montage of images from the Final Conflict sequence. Above, the musical fountain system on Ashima's Lake. Inset is the final show and right, the illuminated Ashima's Garden

other-worldly feel to the lake, which can be as deep as five metres in parts, Benny Ball opted to submerge waterproofed Par 64s just beneath its surface. Mindful of the fact that the effect would be lost if half the lights kicked out, he opted for lamps with staying power - 110v in this case. Other architectural fixtures were used to illuminate the sides of the lakes and the pathways running along the edges - principally M16s. In a dimmer room nearby, sits a bank of Strand US CD80 dimmers chosen in preference to LD90s for their "balls".

In a second dimmer room stands another bank of Strand CD80s - this time managing the lighting for one of the key features of the Entrance Lake, the six Willow Fountains, which sit below the water level. This water feature is lit by Par 56 underwater fixtures manufactured by US company Hydrel. Lighting states are never static: the majority of the rig fluctuates, punctuates and accents with cues throughout the Park, adding to the shifting atmosphere of extreme beauty and threatening danger.

Some specials were created for the project: White Light North customised Par cans with extended tubes to take a gobo plate and a standard effects projector lens; also the 1kW HQI tubular ripple lights, used for both fire and water effects. Other luminaires included standard profiles from Strand Lighting (some fitted with DHA gobo rotators) either used in groups and hidden in 'vomitories' (keeping fixtures hidden was a prime consideration in an area of such outstanding natural beauty) or



triggered by an Sam Woodward firing system.

There are two main control rooms, one dedicated to lighting, the other for audio and lasers, which serve all the various show elements across the Park. Because of the distances this involved, a fibre-optic network was spec'd to carry the vital information between the control room and the numerous tech rooms and bunkers across the site. In the main lighting control room, four Strand 510i desks, programmed by Ball back in the UK and subsequently fine-tuned on site, provide the driving force for the architectural lighting. Also in the room is a pair of Strand MXs for local control of 'house' lighting.

Once across the Entrance Lake, the visitors disembark and move to a viewing platform sited above the main lighting control room where they have a clear line of sight through to the Lotus Lake, where the next part of Ashima's story - the Final Conflict - unfolds. Here, visitors see video footage relayed onto water screens. The four screens (one 36m x 8m, the remaining three 20m x 10m), are positioned on floating pontoons in the middle of the lake. These provide the projection surface for the

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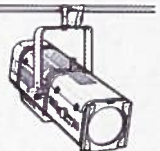


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64s (Light Projects' own fixtures) with dichroic glass colour, M11s and Strand Brios in jackets light the pathways and towering stones, ripple effects play on the entrance rocks, and strobes highlight the trees. A dozen Starlite Mk 5s in architectural domes provide stunning illumination, whilst a single 6kW Pani projector is used to throw images of flowers onto the cast formations. Francis searchlights with Rainbow colour-changers complete the palette, and Ball has also draped Toki string-lights from the trees.



The Gardens have several smaller soundfields quite close together, with no physical barrier between them. To achieve this, Sardis took a very focused approach. Giles and his team produced all the music in the same key, to minimise problems in the event of sound bleed. The effect is perfect: as you walk from one system to the other, the music gently falls away as you leave one zone, and grows again as you enter the next. Each soundfield in the garden consists of four S200 speakers, a Sardis System 24 and Sub 300.

Once through the Gardens, visitors arrive at Ashima's Lake, within which stands Ashima's Stone - the final resting place of Ashima's spirit and apparently a centre of pilgrimage for many devotees of the Ashima story. Here a second water show takes place on much the same principles as the first, but here there is a single digital video projector providing images of the spirits of Ashima and Arhei, together with images of birds and flowers to the water screen, whilst a second projects images directly on to the face of Ashima's Stone. In addition to the water screen, there is also a Musical Fountain system controlled by a ShowCAD system.

The audio system design for this area was only slightly less ambitious than that for the Lotus Lake. Another eight-way system, which completely surrounds the audience area and lake, was installed with each stack consisting of two sub-bass units and two mid-highs. The Sardis surround sound system enabled the company to localise sound sources so that Arhei could appear to call to Ashima from different areas around the lake. The system uses the full frequency range from each speaker, ensuring that the bass is not

omni-directional as with discreet surround systems. (A discreet surround system would not have worked and the amount of processing needed to commission a discreet system of this size would have been financially prohibitive, not to mention ineffective in an arena of this size). 16 amplifiers and a second Sardis System 48 provide the control.

This second water show completes the tale of Ashima and the journey of the visitors. The route through the Forest itself takes just under an hour and whilst Yunnan Tourism were looking for a run-rate of 2,000 people per evening, in reality this has translated to approximately 1,500, largely because managing such a large number of people through such a complex attraction has to be tightly controlled. The local crew have been well trained by LCI to manage all the safety and operational aspects of the site effectively.

All the above has been operational since October; the plan for LCI and the creative team now is to address the elements of phase two, which will include such exciting-sounding features as the Time Tunnel and the Trail of Danger - more of which at a later date. Although not actually operational yet, one other feature worthy of mention is the Simulation Theatre, where a pre-show 'edutainment' sequence, detailing how the Stone Forest was formed, will be run. Camber UK designed and built the hardware for the 56-seat theatre, with LCI devising the software. The complete pre-ride show was produced entirely in-house by LCI from a sequence filmed on a Helicam attached to a model helicopter.

Work on this particular aspect will commence at the close of this year, with work on phase two beginning in June 2001.



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Theatre & Form

Since 1985, The Hotel Pro Forma has been producing provocative and unique theatre, yet they have achieved

the rare balance of critical acclaim and success.

Louise Stickland finds out why



DENMARK

Hotel Pro Forma's recent production of *The Chinese Compass* played 14 sold-out nights at Copenhagen's Kannonhallen. It was a re-worked version of the show premiered at last year's Arhus Festival, where it was originally presented on a much larger stage. Unusually for Hotel Pro Forma, who frequently perform in museums, town halls and anomalous public spaces, *Chinese Compass* was staged in an end-on, black box theatre environment.

The production is a dizzying explosion of colours, shapes and forms, almost hallucinogenic in quality, which unites ideas from East and West. It counterpoints and melds music, sounds and visions from two very different cultures and lifestyles. There is no conventional narrative, no beginning, middle or end - no neat storyline. There is image and text and the transitory space between these two poles - the imagination - is free to conjecture at will.

The day after the show I find myself at Hotel Pro Forma's massive office and studio on the top floor of an industrial building in east Copenhagen. It is gleaming, white, light and incredibly well ordered.

The huge desks and work-spaces are surrounded by neatly filed shelves, glistening computers and pristine in-trays - there's not a hair out of place! It has a sense of precision and perfection - not unlike their productions. Founder and artistic director Kirsten Dehlholm is an internationally-respected creative director, renowned for producing original and innovative, contemporary productions.

Hotel Pro Forma productions can appeal unilaterally to people from all backgrounds, ages, abilities and interests - rather than being the exclusive preserve of a bunch of arty intellectual snobs. Whilst not mainstream 'popular' theatre, they have almost performed the ultimate subversion - art house as accessible.

Gravity, or rather anti-gravity, is something Hotel Pro Forma have nurtured, developed and expanded. Dehlholm is convinced that theatre audiences have become blinkered and one-dimensional by

being bombarded with conventional 'horizontal viewing'. Hotel Pro Forma have presented several pieces where the audience's viewing angle is above the performance space, looking down or below it, looking up - in bird's eye or aerial perspectives.

Space is one of her major concerns. "Space decides everything. For me it's a departure for starting to think in visual terms about a piece. It decides so much of our experience and how we conceive the piece." Even when presented in a conventional surrounding like *Chinese Compass*, space is still a vital component: space, spaces and form take on a strong psychological role in the performance. Dehlholm herself admits that the piece is "Not complicated, but complex."

Visuality is at the very essence of Hotel Pro Forma. Each production is a collage of disciplines including architecture, the visual arts, film, music, language, dance, the natural sciences and multimedia. This defies all preconceptions and experiences and the way things appear on stage also embosses Hotel Pro Forma's work with a huge sense of fun and adventure, always coaxing the anticipation of what's coming next. When lighting designer Jesper Kongshaug commented that Hotel Pro Forma and Las Vegas were ultimately seeking the same sensations, he wasn't wrong!

Dehlholm believes that *Chinese Compass* has benefited enormously from being performed on the Kannonhallen's smaller stage and more intimate environs. Other changes from last year's original include her shortening the work by 10 minutes, and the introduction of a shiny, reflective black stage, painted with the circles and markings of the compass. Similar to the Chinese yin and yang, the performance is about opposites and reflections. Characteristically, Dehlholm took several aesthetic risks - a practise at which she excels. It ensures her work stays constantly vital and ground-breaking. Firstly she asked writer, novelist and journalist Carsten Jensen to write a text. Although a well-known author throughout Denmark, Jensen had never produced a work for stage. Not content with this, Dehlholm pushed further - she persuaded him to perform in *Chinese Compass*

The next artistic gamble was in asking composer Pierre Dorge to write an opera piece for a Chinese and a Western





Title page and this page – *The Chinese Compass*. Dehlholm was keen to include certain political references which would trigger ideas, not present prejudices. Kirsten Dehlholm is pictured below (left) with LD Jesper Kongshaug

soprano that amalgamated both classical European and Chinese opera – two complex and incredibly refined expressions shot through with centuries of tradition! He accepted the challenge and at Dehlholm's suggestion, drew on influences such as Purcell, Puccini, Alban Berg and a selection of classical Chinese operas. The result is an unusual fusion of rhythms, tonalities and instruments.

As always with Hotel Pro Forma, the creative process started with lighting and visuals. Dehlholm has always had conviction about the essentiality of strong, decisive and expressive visuals. Between 1977 and 1985 she worked as a visual artist with her company Billedstofteater (Theatre of Image), producing off-beat, often site-specific shows and performances. Before then, she studied and worked with textiles.

Jesper Kongshaug has worked with Hotel Pro Forma since 1992. Dehlholm has tremendous respect for him. He's had a great influence on her attitude to lighting and Hotel Pro Forma's visuality has taken a significantly different direction since *Operation Orfeo*, Kongshaug's first production as LD. With projection often high on the agenda, Hotel Pro Forma weave together lighting, images and effects projection in a scenographic style.

The original idea for *Chinese Compass* was to keep the whole production, including the projection element, simple and easily tourable. The projection was intended to resemble the slightly random, dodderly type of slide show you might expect during a lecture. The 'simplistic' goal soon proved unworkable. Not just because of the nature of the images source material, but other factors like the galvanising task of controlling the 46 children in the cast, plus the necessary quota of backstage entourage.

Dehlholm decided to pull the vast majority of the image source material from Chinese

television commercials. These then required substantial computer treatment and correction before their preparation as large format slide artwork – so they would fill the screen at the determined projection angle. This task alone took several months to produce over 120 slides.

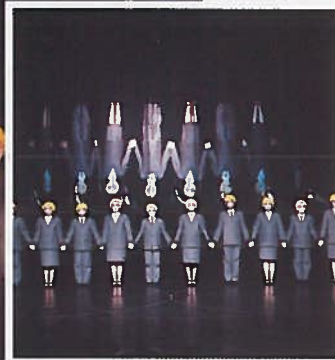
Projection assumes a central role as backdrop and information conveyor in *Chinese Compass*, with its bare black stage and no set other than the props carried on and off by the performers. It provides a framework for momentary flashes of the Orient. It offers a discrete two-dimensional cinematic feel to the stage, juxtaposed with the onstage performers.

It was decided early on to develop the inflatable element in *Chinese Compass*. The inflatable screen – in effect a giant channelled mattress – is the most extreme expression of this. Other props include inflatable chairs, inflatable red pointing fingers and inflatable dolls. The screen's first layer (nearest the audience) is completely translucent. The second surface (also facing the audience) is covered with a pale grey polycarbonate.

The back of the screen, facing the two rear-projected Pani BP4s backstage, is sprayed with a thin layer of buttermilk. I kid you not!

Kongshaug learned the trick many years ago from a television guy. It prevents any projection hot spots and allows the image to diffuse evenly across the screen with particular quality and clarity. He admits the technicians hate him for it! "The first time I brought in the container of buttermilk and spraying apparatus and asked them to do it, they thought I was completely off my head!" he explains laughing. It can be a proverbial pain – if it's not sprayed on correctly it has to be washed off and reapplied, and if it gets hot, it can become odorous! However, it is part of the 'secret' of the projection looking so good

and so vital. Over the years, despite experimentation with other materials and methods to get the same effect, Kongshaug has discovered none to surpass this.



In addition to directing, Dehlholm has also designed the stage and, together with Maja Ravn, the costumes. For the lighting, Kongshaug uses only about 100 light sources. They are mainly situated at the back and sides – with only basic key lighting at the front. He utilises a miscellany of lanterns, most owned by the Hotel Pro Forma, ranging from ETC Source Four profiles to strips of Par

36 DWEs. In one scene the latter, two-deep, produce a saturated block of red (Rosco 27) light along the bottom of the screen. The children in the cast enter stage and take up positions all over it sitting on translucent inflatable chairs. This results in the electrifying effect of the red glow being caught by the shiny surfaces of the chairs and defracted everywhere. Simple and very sexy!

Other production specials for this show include the 'moon', a 12v light source mounted inside a helium balloon pulled along on a string by a boy wearing a battery pack to control it. At one point the balloon is front projected by a specially-designed Hotel Pro Forma one-slide, fanless (i.e. silent) projector. The slide eventually mirrors an image that pops up on the rear screen.



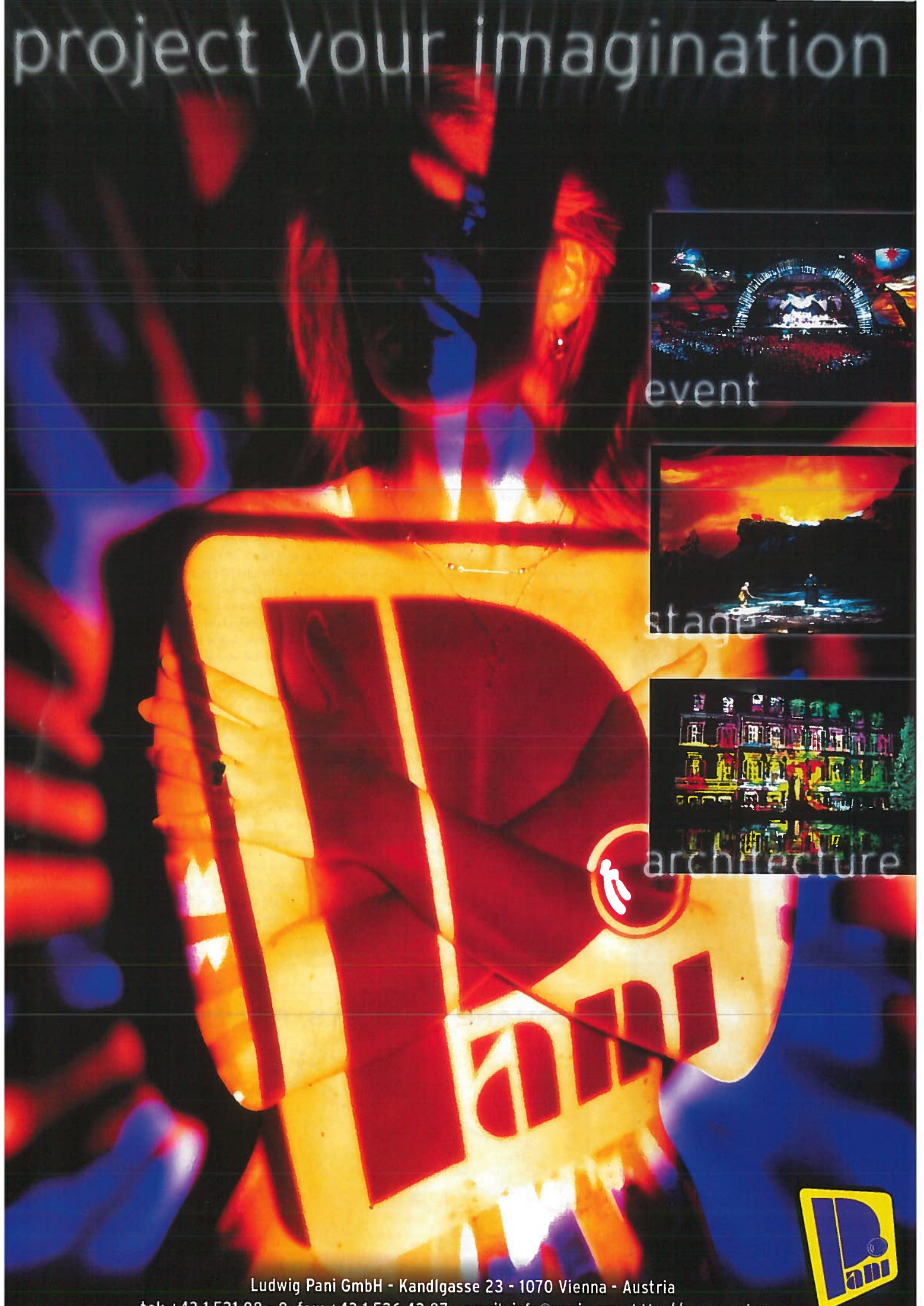
Kongshaug works on other projects while not consumed with Hotel Pro Forma and not surprisingly, he is the most wanted lighting designer in Denmark! He is one of 12 international LDs asked to create colours for the new Lee Filters designer range that was launched at PLASA. He debuted his Lee Yellow and Liberty Green on *Chinese Compass*.

He will be working with Dehlholm again in an up-coming production she is directing for the Danish National Opera, which will be the furthest this traditional dramatic establishment has yet ventured into the avant garde!

Having even a limited insight into the internal workings of Hotel Pro Forma productions, you can understand Dehlholm's need to keep in full control of the project and therefore the creative process. She is the aorta of the operation, through which all information must flow before being passed on to others. Some departments may not be directly in touch with each other, for example, Kongshaug usually has no production-related contact at all with performers or musicians.



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Production photos: Roberto Fortuna



Hotel Pro Forma's production of House of the Double Axe

Hotel Pro Forma's creative collaboration begins with core production team members, usually months in advance, and from there, Dehlholm researches exhaustively, introduces other constituents and energises them via her direction. The visionary buck stops absolutely with her.

One of Dehlholm's favourite Hotel Pro Forma pieces was last year's darkly sensual *House Of The Double Axe*. Two high-powered Pani projectors with scrollers running in opposite directions, were projected vertically downward, over the top of each other from high above the stage to produce a mesmerising moving carpet effect on the floor of the 'labyrinth'. These optical impressions alone formed the set and the setting. The "Seven picturesque actions from nine unbloody scenes" of the horizontal world scheme of *The House of The Double Axe* starred Danish pop diva and composer Dicte. The show's musical content surrounded her as she performed her pop songs in Latin as loving incantations, juxtaposed against seven women harshly reciting fragmented lyrics from contemporary pop bands like Suede.

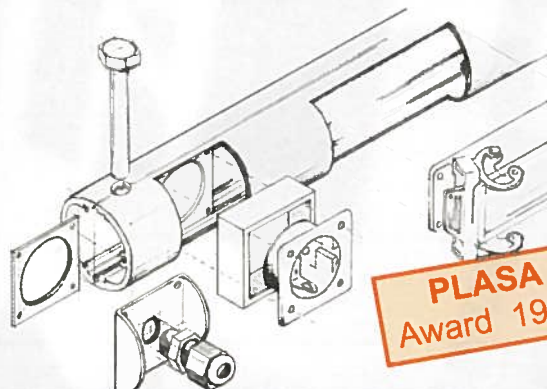
Dehlholm herself is an enigma. For one so creatively and emotionally absorbed in her work, she is also totally focused on the logistics of technical production. Confident and self-assured about redefining, devising and developing Hotel Pro Forma as a fertile dramatic tour de force, Dehlholm is refreshingly un-superior about her talent and her specific brand of theatre. She inhabits a lively, alluring, challenging world and is

deeply passionate about what she does, what she wants and how to achieve it.

The company receives a basic state funding. "It's never enough," says Dehlholm, shaking her head, smiling ironically. "People often think Hotel Pro Forma is richer than we are because of the detail we put into our productions. Being so detailed eats a lot of money!" Executive director Peter Hanke is kept fully occupied raising the extra cash required for specific projects. One of Dehlholm's long-term dreams is realised in October as Hotel Pro Forma produce *Operation Orfeo* at the eminent Brooklyn Festival of Arts and Music (BAM) in New York as part of the Next Wave. Also on the bill are high-profile artists like Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, Lyon Opera Ballet, The Kronos Quartet and Robert Lepage. They have been knocking on the BAM's door for some time and *Orfeo* is one of their most toured and best known productions. It uses the Orpheus and Euridice myth as a classical reference to a contemporary re-conceptualisation of the opera. It is a piece of visual art with formalised movements and symphonic singing "a language of tone and image that hints at the mythical narrative without ever illustrating it."

Hotel Pro Forma have never performed in Britain as yet. Dehlholm and Kongshaug's only foray into the UK was designing and producing the *Tall Stories High* show for the opening of the ARC centre in Stockton-On-Tees earlier this year.

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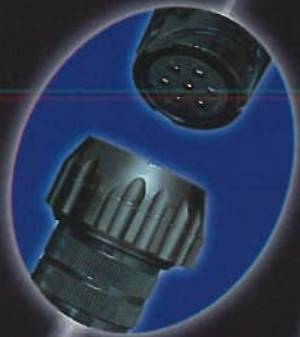
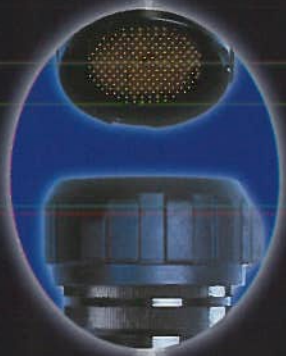
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John Watt

Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

A bit of a bleak summer, all things considered. My perception is that 50 percent of the jobs are lit by five percent of the lighting designers. Who was it that told me the other night that it has something to do with the five percent being

the best? Well, whoever it was is off my Christmas list - no brownie points for being a smart ass, even if it is true.

SO I MUST psych myself up like all serious actors before going on: it goes like this. Coffee pot just upstage of the mouse mat, Kodak Bodywarmer on (special offer in this month's 'In Camera'), pan glass round neck (last used during the Eclipse) plus the STLD diary to

remind me of the highlights of the month. What highlights? Well, have you ever used that polystyrene foam in an Aerosol? But I suppose that's another story, as even I can't pretend it has anything to do with lighting. Though come to think of it, it is a bit like a recently-retired TV Centre LD - once you push the button there's no stopping it, it pops out of every available orifice and sticks to everything.

THE SOCIETY of Lighting Directors' evening at Windsor Chapel was one of those events that restores your faith (no blasphemous pun intended), where you got a lot more than you paid for. The 'hook' was to hear from that famous double act of Ian Dow and Bernie Davis on how they tackled the recent Royal Wedding. This versatile pair seem to cover half the major events in the UK and are no strangers to this

location. Lesser men, well me anyway, would be completely daunted by this delicate interior which requires a velvet glove approach at every turn, even with some of the custom-made rigging aids that they have developed over the years.

BERNIE'S PHILOSOPHY towards this event was driven by a desire to make the equipment as unobtrusive as possible, particularly on some key shots. I was particularly fascinated by the choice of Par cans as the workhorse for the job, but the logic of having simple dimmer control and therefore flexibility certainly worked well. The first view of 'the dress', with the bride potentially silhouetted against a bright blue exterior as she entered the chapel, balanced perfectly in the event, both level and colour-wise and proved, as if proof were needed, that this pair again got it right. I think it was Richard Pilbrow who said the first step in any lighting is to find any space, as yet unoccupied, and colonise it. I suspect this principle was at work here, and to very good effect.

I'VE PLUGGED 'Stars in Their Eyes' before, but Tom Bardsey never seems to put a foot wrong. The rig has everything you've ever thought of using, plus a few things you haven't - but that's only half the story. Having had the talent to get that bit right, Tom then has the courage and taste to exercise restraint. On the 'celebrity' edition a few weeks back, one number featured Kirsty Young from Channel 5 as Peggy Lee, doing 'Fever'. The lighting complemented this famous old arrangement just perfectly, I thought, with hardly a moving light moving. I held my breath, luxuriated in every bar and thought I had gone to heaven (fat chance). Kirsty Young happened to be the winner that week, maybe not because of the lighting (she was suprisingly good), but it sure as hell made a big contribution.

MEANWHILE, DOWN at Wandsworth, you can still get a day's 'pick me up', another

reminder of how life was pre-satellite, digital, et al. Chances are that in Studio A, William G Stewart will be doing his ventriloquial act three times a day on 15 to 1. You can hardly see the strings, though for a mere three million quid Carlton pull them now. This accounts for the permanent grin on Bill's face, which belies the years, thanks largely to some cheekily low key angles used by the versatile Richard Dellow, wearing his lighting hat on this show.

I WAS IN 'B' lighting a corporate for the Crown Prosecution Service (and you thought I'd left the big time behind me). You never know when a contact in the legal profession may come in handy, especially if you write magazine articles. Anyway, it comprised people sitting on seats and not moving about against a set of blacks, and was therefore my sort of gig. We had a scary moment when the designer decided to hang three banners but Jeremy (the oldest swinger in the business apart from me) found three Par cans, so we were able to relax again. Later, I was asked for a silhouette ending (if you employ me this doesn't cost a penny extra) but remember this was against blacks! So we offered a single backlight look, which seemed to be a rational alternative (are you keeping up this month, Ian Penny)? The producer thought this was "brilliant" but for one small thing - could I put some light on the people! Seriously though, it's interesting that some of these corporate things still demand proper production values, whilst all around standards are out of the window. Maybe commercial people think quality products sell better? I do hope they're right.

I FORCED MYSELF to watch Jeremy Paxman interviewing Bill Gates the other night as they both have a lot to answer for in my book. As it turned out, both displayed the sort of arrogance it takes to rule the worlds in which they operate, and so deserved one another. My only reason for hanging on in there is that I got hooked on the balance between the set and the protagonists, which was interesting. The set was, without a shadow of doubt, the dominant feature. 'Look at me' it loudly proclaimed, challenging you to pay attention to what was happening down stage. Ah well, I think the original John Freeman 'Face to Face' interviews against black had it about right, but I guess it's unfashionable now. At least the lighting on the Paxman thing was static, whereas even I have been driven to use moving lights on discussion programmes, so I do understand the pressures exerted by producers striving for inappropriate innovation. How television has become dominated by the visually dyslexic, I'll never understand.

"... it's interesting that some of these corporate things still demand proper production values, whilst all around standards are out of the window. Maybe commercial people think quality products sell better?"

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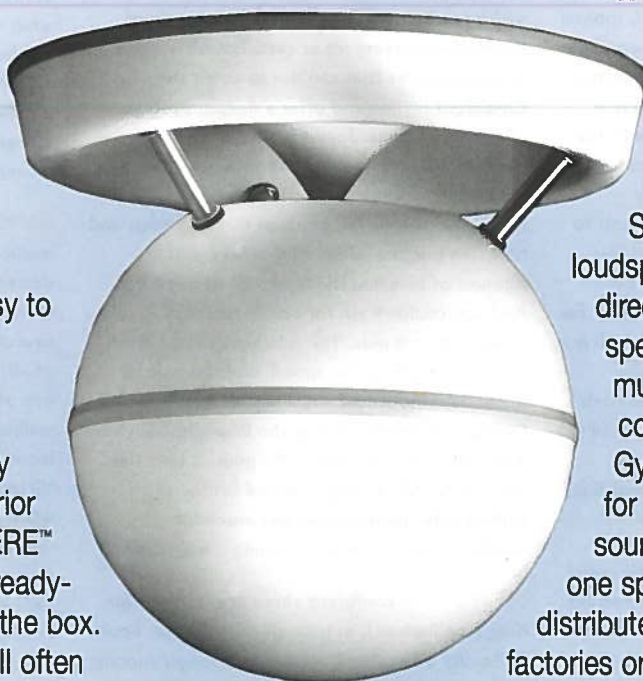
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Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

Isn't it time for the sound designer to move up a notch or two in the programme credits for musicals? At its best, big theatre sound is so good nowadays that it can make a show. The reverse, unfortunately, is also true.

"Almost all of the stage effects which so memorably replace cartoon sequences could be described by a mean-minded stage historian as derivative, even if they are quite superbly executed."

AT THE Victoria Palace, Terry Jardine comes some way down the list, behind two costume folk. He has delivered a very competent sound system for *The Pajama Game*, in which every word, spoken or sung, should be audible throughout the cavernous theatre. The band is in perfect balance with the voices, too. The catch is that this perfectly balanced sound seems to come from behind the proscenium, and stays firmly there: you don't for

a moment get the sense of a live show, which is a pity when you've got a real theatre band - strings, brass, winds and all - playing John Harle's arrangements in the pit. (Are they John Harle's arrangements? There are four other names credited with them, including the excellent Gary Carpenter.)

IT'S THE FAIRLY unanimous view of the critics that *Pajama Game* doesn't work, and I'm afraid I'd point quite a big finger at Mr Jardine for the responsibility. In his defence, it may be that he had to rein in the band because the principals were not big voices - not a criticism you'd level at Graham Bickley, but possibly at the charming, but untried, Lesley Ash and the understudy in the key role of Gladys. Another culprit could be Frank Stella, who has produced some very different set designs from what you'd usually expect, which is a plus; the minus is that they're

rather ugly, and so obtrusive as to distract from the action rather than complement it. A pity, because they come and go with a speed that's a credit to the stage crew. Birmingham's own Tim Mitchell has the problem of lighting Stella's extravagances and does what he can - not many opportunities for his usual subtlety here.

THE PROGRAMME credits at the Piccadilly give off a warm glow even before *Spend, Spend, Spend* starts: Lez Brotherston sets and costumes, Mark Henderson lights, Rick Clarke sound - you know you're in safe hands. And yes, there's a Brotherston model village upstage, with its own lighting system, with a big open downstage area which can be quickly accessed by a couple of travelators carrying set or cast. There's a big screen for slides that can rise to cover the Castleford skyline and offer a deeper upstage area for more sets. *Spend* is a very well-made musical, with music (by Steve Brown) that at times recalls Howard Goodall's English Choral style, a book that has much of the toughness and northern humour of *Blood Brothers*, and a sureness of touch in the length of its numbers. And you couldn't ask for better technical support than it gets. The relatively small band comes over with a live sound, and the cast all make their individual vocal impact, with Barbara Dickson unselfishly sharing the limelight with her lesser-known companions. My guess is that this show could run as long as *Blood Brothers*: it's stuffed with splendid solo and ensemble numbers, and it's funny, touching - and truthful.

I'M NOT SO confident about the run for *Lion King* (see feature), in spite of all the hype. Look at *Beauty & the Beast*, which is no longer running in New York, is coming to the end of a relatively short run at the Dominion, and is, to offer an unfashionable opinion, a better show. The doubts set in at the Lyceum when you hand over an incredible £3 for your programme: this sum, rather a lot of money for the younger members of the audience, pays for 23 pages of cast biographies and technical credits, nothing else.

THE PRODUCTION at the Lyceum is a curious hybrid: Julie Taymor has replaced most of the cartoon artwork with her own spectacular puppets and costumes, but left the comic characters - Meerkat, Warthog, even the scary hyenas - much as Disney intended. A typically bland Tim Rice/Elton John score has been touched up with more Zulu-inspired music from Lebo M - almost all the numbers in Act Two, except the hit 'Can You Feel the Love Tonight', are by hands other than Rice and John's. Richard Hudson's sets veer from the brilliantly minimalist to some frankly shocking sheets of kitsch - one of them memorably described in the show itself as looking 'like an Ikea shower curtain.' And what on earth are those expanded polystyrene borders doing up there? There are also some ghastly items of giant vegetation that look as if they've escaped from *Little Shop of Horrors*, alongside some beautifully realised jungle and savannah scenes.

ALMOST ALL of the stage effects which so memorably replace cartoon sequences could be described by a mean-minded stage historian as derivative, even if they are quite superbly executed: the wildebeest stampede scene, best of all, is created on a series of rollers, the first one at the back of the stage simply moving wallpaper, the others kicking in with ever-increasing sizes of model attached to them. It's a Victorian spectacle splendidly modernised, but when you come to sheets of silk for rivers, even a very effective one that disappears into the stage to suggest a lake drying up in drought, a tiny, uninvolved part of the back of your mind is ticking it off the list, saying 'oh, yes, oriental, seen that . . .' There's even flying by Foy.

NONE OF THESE minor niggles can detract from a show which remains a visual feast. Nor would it be polite to suggest that the lighting is what you might expect from a Broadway designer with what looks like more than 1,000 light sources at his disposal, not counting the starcloth and the phosphorescence on the theatre ceiling. The best thing about Tony Meola's sound design (with Autograph supplying the kit) is that it accommodates sound emanating from all over the theatre and give it good direction; the bonus is that he can handle two African drummer/singers in the circle boxes, well above the stage, let alone the pit orchestra, and let them rip on top of what he's programmed down below. He gets a suitably high slot in the Lyceum's programme. Further on, there's a payroll list three pages long, which includes (quite a way down) an Associate Sound Designer, an Assistant Sound Designer, Electronic Music Design and Programming, two on Production Sound, then Head of Sound, Deputy Sound, Assistant Sound . . . Well done all you chaps, whatever you've done.

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
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In Profile...

L&S Talks to the Industry Trend-setters

The name (and initials) of Hartley T A Kemp have been cropping up recently in the lighting credits of some memorable shows - Peter Gill's *Certain Young Men* at the Almeida, Michael Grandage's revival of *Good* at the Donmar Warehouse - but it was a surprise to find his name on the Edinburgh Fringe list of contacts as the manager of a venue. The opportunity seemed too good to miss, so I tracked him down to his office at the Royal Over-Seas League, better known for three hectic weeks of the year as the C venue.

**Ian Herbert
tracks down
Lighting
Designer
Hartley T A
Kemp**

He doesn't look a lot older than the students who inhabit the venue, and it turns out that he's not long down from University himself. But his lighting career stretches quite a way back: "I've always been interested in light. The first real chance I had to find out more about it was at Sixth Form

College in Cambridge, where they had a fully-equipped theatre." Hartley spent most of his two A-level years as de facto manager of the college's acting space, lighting shows and developing the instincts of a producer.

Accepted for Oxford, he wrote to the National and the RSC to ask if he could spend his gap year shadowing lighting designers. He was taken on by both, and spent the next 12 months sitting next to the likes of Alan Burrett and Wayne Dowdeswell, and behind others such as Chris Parry and David Hersey. There was plenty of time to watch and learn the lighting design process.

He arrived at St Peter's, Oxford and with his experience, he found himself much in demand, lighting shows and trying his hand at production.

The Old Fire Station had just opened, and he was able to work with professional LDs such as Hugh Vanstone and Howard Harrison on some of the Mackintosh musicals that were tried out there, among them *Moby Dick*.

The Over-Seas League had been run for some years as Oxford's

Edinburgh Fringe home, but when Hartley was in a position to take on its management it had just lost rather a lot of University money, with a previous management company going impressively bankrupt. It took some determination for him and his colleagues (including another LD, Bruno Poet) to raise the necessary funding, but in 1992 the C venue opened with half a dozen Oxford shows and a balance of visiting companies, and broke even. He has been running it ever since, though now it's more of a hobby, with full-time freelance work as a lighting designer taking up most of his year.

After Oxford, he worked on tours of *Scrooge* and *Five Guys Named Moe* as an electrician, lighting fringe shows and small-scale touring operas in between, and assisting Messrs Burrett, Vanstone and others.

The big break came with *Tongue of a Bird*, directed by Peter Gill at the Almeida in 1997. "It was done in America with lots of big sets," says Kemp, "but Peter wanted a simpler staging, with light doing more of the work." Since then, he has worked regularly with Michael Grandage, who has carved out a considerable reputation as a director in as short a time as Hartley has been making his mark as an LD. Designer Chris Oram completes the team, and what Hartley likes most about their working method is that he is present very early on in the production process, attending rehearsals and having a full creative input, rather



than coming in at the last moment to be given a cue list - something he believes doesn't do a show justice. "Michael is very receptive to others' ideas," something that is borne out by Hartley's highly imaginative use of lighting in *Good* and the Almeida *Doctor's Dilemma*.

He hasn't stopped taking on assistant jobs: "You have to earn a living," and still finds it very refreshing to work with more

experienced designers. Current projects include *Fifty Revolutions*, a new play by Murray Gold, for Dominic Dromgoole's Oxford Stage season at the Whitehall, and *A View from the Bridge* for Deborah Paige at the Sheffield Crucible.

Meanwhile he's immersed in the day-to-day running of the C venue. As always, he uses local suppliers Black Light for the rigs ("They do a brilliant job"), with boards from ETC. This year, the main C space has the luxury of some moving lights for its big show, *BoyBand*. They're not really a luxury, in fact, because they have to do a lot of work in making a bare-stage production come alive in its set piece scenes, where a group of strutting undergraduates make a very convincing impression as a teenage supergroup made up of former rent boys - those who have seen the West End *Boyband* will realise that this is not at all the same show.

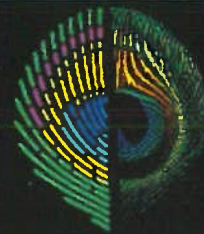
And what of the future - will he continue as a Fringe promoter? "I expect so," he says, rather guardedly. And what will he be looking for in the lighting world? "Anything that's interesting - and fun to do."

Of course, I couldn't resist asking what the trademark initials stand for. It's Thomas Aron, if you want to know. ■

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