

Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

May 2000

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

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Shakespeare in Shoreditch

- The Bard premieres at the Gainsborough Studios

Rock

- A new nightclub on London's Embankment

On Anon

- Chorion's latest venue rolls out

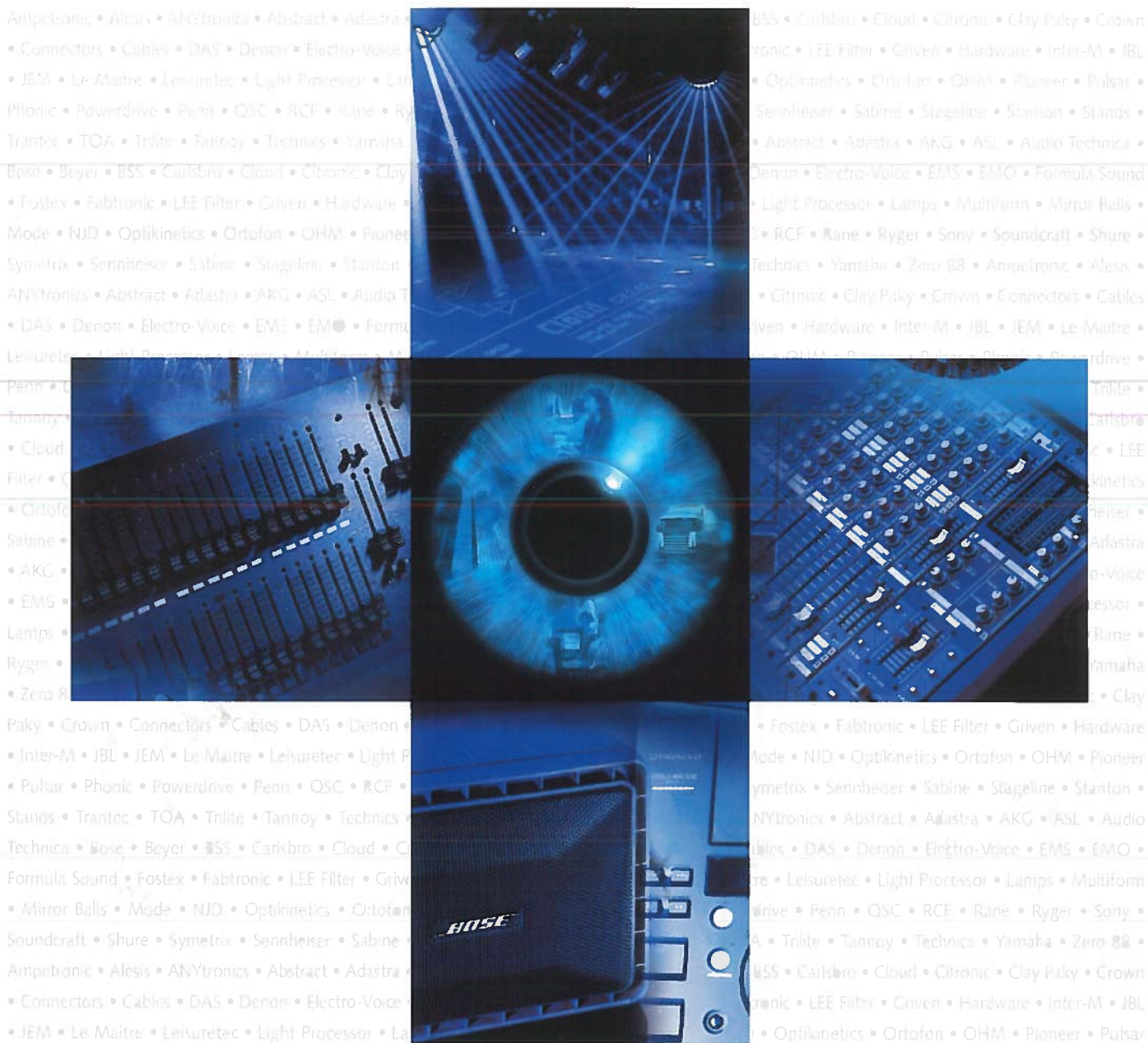
Less is More

- Puff Daddy and Prefab Sprout

Trade Shows

- SIB, Rimini and Musik Messe, Frankfurt

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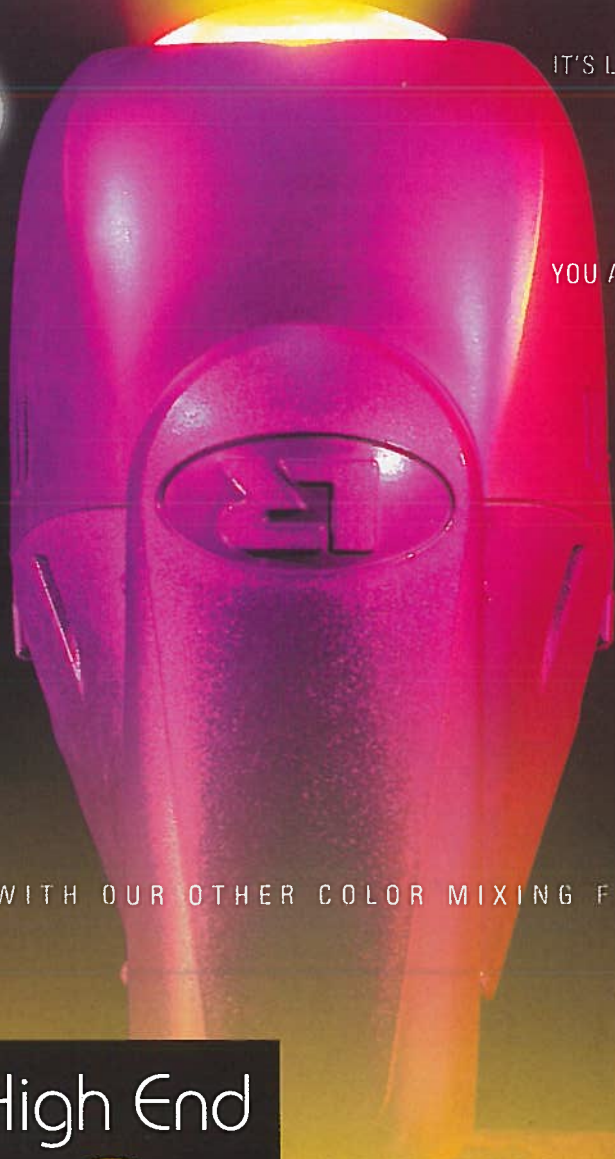


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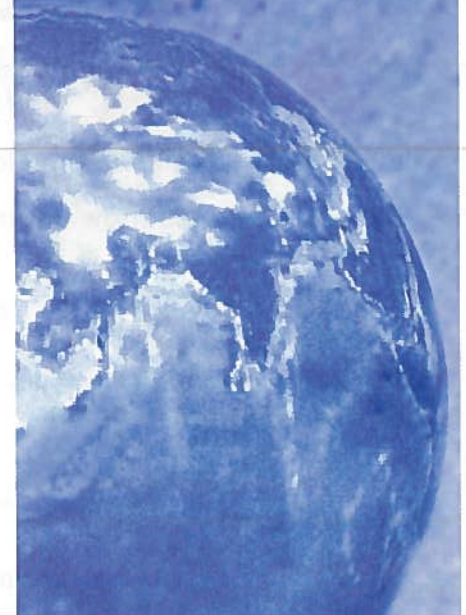
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Johansen Claims to Act in Company's Best Interests

As we reported on 7th April on our daily news service on the web, Peter Johansen - founder and former owner of Martin Professional - was on that day sentenced to three months in jail by the local court of justice in Aarhus, Denmark.

Johansen, through an intermediary, has now contacted Lighting&Sound International to offer his version of events. He explains that the ruling followed his attempt in the spring of 1999 to block the possibility of a hostile take-over of Martin Professional, 15 months after he left the company as CEO. He states: "Martin was under threat after a long period of unrest, which had driven down the value of the Martin stocks. I tried to top up my 25 percent stock-share to 33.33 percent to be able to block the board from selling to hostile bidders. To avoid further unrest, I decided not to publish my intentions. I did not want the market to get the false impression that I was trying to pave my way back as CEO of my old company."

Shortly after the attempt, which did not succeed, Johansen sold a major part of his stocks to Schouw & Co - the present owner of Martin Professional. The sale gave Johansen a marginal profit and whilst the court of justice acknowledged that there had been no motive for profit in his actions, the ruling states that he should have informed the Copenhagen Stock Exchange about his acquisitions. Johansen has decided to appeal against the sentence.

Mackie Completes EAW Deal

Following our preview news story in February L&SI, Mackie has now completed its purchase of Eastern Acoustic Works Inc (EAW).

Both Greg Mackie, founder and chairman of Mackie Designs and Jamie Engen, the company's chief operating officer, agree that there will be significant benefits from the combination of Mackie, EAW, and RCF. However, at Frankfurt, it was confirmed that the five existing EAW distributors will no longer carry the brand which will now be available through Mackie's existing network of distributors.

Piccadilly in Liquidation

L&SI has learned that Piccadilly Broadcast & Professional, a supplier of lighting, sound, audio-visual, broadcast, set and staging equipment with branches in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Rugby and Cardiff, has gone into administrative receivership. We understand that the company will continue trading as Piccadilly Hire.

Matthews Studio Group Files For Chapter 11

Just after the last issue of L&SI went to press, came the news that the US-based Matthews Studio Equipment Group - one of the largest suppliers of professional equipment to the entertainment industry - has filed a voluntary petition for reorganisation under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code.

The NASDAQ-listed company supplies conventional and automated lighting, grip, transportation, generators, camera equipment, audio and video equipment and theatrical supplies via its worldwide distribution network. Carlos D. DeMattos, chairman and CEO, told L&SI: "We have spent the past few months attempting to come up with a proposal that would address the company's challenges outside of a court proceeding. Ultimately, the time required to complete a restructuring transaction and the uncertain cost of closing unprofitable locations were too great to overcome." Earlier this year, Matthews sold one of its subsidiaries, Four Star Lighting, in an attempt to consolidate its core business.

Several of Matthews' subsidiaries were included in the filings as a result of last-minute demands by the company's lenders, to which the company was forced to accede.

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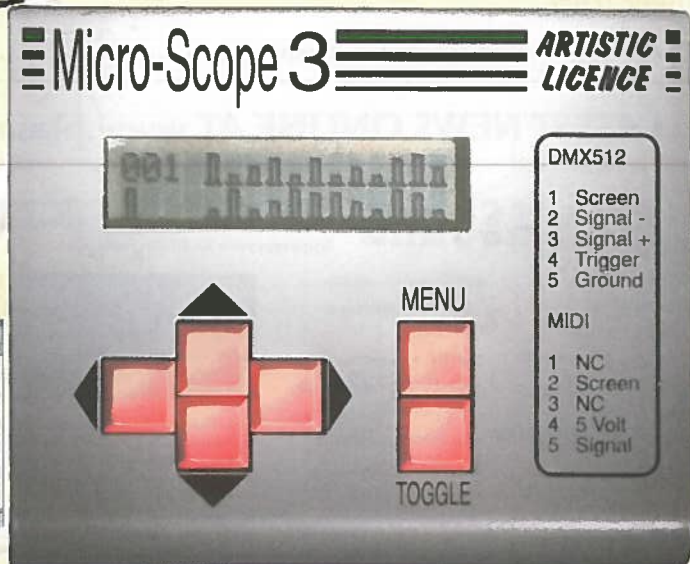
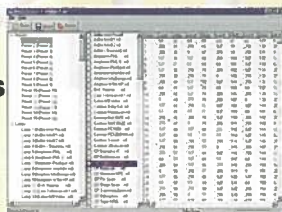
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Soho Theatre Company

It was a brave decision to make. Facing the end of their three-year tenure at the Cockpit Theatre in the centre of London, where they had premiered the work of 35 writers, the 25-year-old Soho Theatre Company began the search for a new home.

The company's name meant that they didn't want to move far, yet Central London doesn't really have an abundant stock of 200-seat theatres suitable for a company dedicated to new writing. Which is how Soho came to be the first, and so far only, organisation to buy a property on the open market with Lottery funds, when they found a promising building at 150 Dean Street. Paxton Locker Architects were appointed to design the conversion in 1996, building works began in 1997 and the new theatre opened to the public in March this year. Those three years and £10.6million of Lottery funds have seen the creation of a writer's centre, complete with rehearsal rooms, writer's rooms, conference facilities and a restaurant and bar. Inside the glass-fronted building, blonde wood reigns: the feel is quality modern, rather than run-down fringe theatre.

The theatre is located up a couple of floors, and here there is a return to darker colours: it is essentially a black box with an open stage facing around 200 quite steeply-tiered seats plus 'slip' positions on either side featuring bar-stool type chairs. The most noticeable design feature is storage: central London real estate isn't cheap, so every spare millimetre is utilised. Even the back wall of the stage is actually formed of a number of large cupboards! There is also a small scene dock;



Above, the main entrance to the theatre. Inset, Strand's Colin Cuthbert (left) shows an SL spot luminaire to production manager, Julian Cree



scenery reaches the theatre via a chain-hoist equipped dock door in the rear wall.

To equip the theatre, production manager Julian Cree and regular lighting designer Jason Taylor stuck to their own council and, with help from friendly suppliers, have managed to make their budget go a long way. The theatre's lighting rig therefore includes the type of conventional equipment you'd expect (60 Strand SL profiles, 60 Strand Quartet fresnels, 20 Cantata fresnels and 30 ETC Source Four Pars), but also some that you wouldn't at this scale - four City Theatrical AutoYokes and four Strand Pirouette Alto PCs, these moving lights selected by Taylor for their tungsten-based theatrical beam quality and low running noise. The rig was supplied by White

Light in a sponsorship deal stemming from founder John Simpson's reflections that since theatre was at the heart of White Light and writing was at the heart of theatre, the company really should strive to support new writers: the control room is now named the White Light Control Room to recognise its support. Strand Lighting has also been supportive: the Strand Dimmer Room contains LD90 racks which feed the fixed overhead grid via a 15A patch panel and, though currently using a 520i, the venue will be one of the first to use the new Strand 300 'baby' console upon its release.

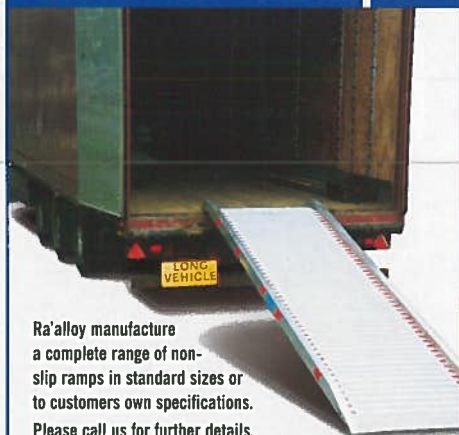
The sound installation was handled by the Oxford Sound Company, who created a system based around two d&b audiotechnik E9 and eight E3 loudspeakers driven by Epac amps, and two Community SC21s driven by Yamaha

P4500 amps. Control is from a Yamaha 02R desk and BSS Soundweb 9088, with playback in a system primarily intended to provide effects replay from two Denon Minidisc players and a Denon CD player. The Oxford Sound Company also handled the installation of the building's paging systems.

Cree and his technical team of Nick Blount, Jonathan Rouse, Bill Foster and Nicole Walker are now busy discovering how the building works in practice, having survived the opening season which saw them mount four plays in four weeks. It's early days for Soho's new home - but it seems set to serve them well through the next 25 years of supporting new theatre writing.

Rob Halliday

Rest on Ramps

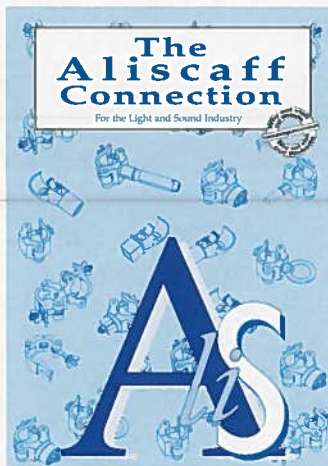


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People On the Move

Key changes took place at Tannoy just prior to the Frankfurt Music Fair. Henny Groenendijk was appointed managing director, following Alex Munro's swift departure to "pursue other interests".

Groenendijk, who was previously MD of another TGI Group subsidiary, Tannoy Nederland, has a long-term relationship with Tannoy dating back to 1985 when he started working for Tannoy's Dutch distributor. A year later, he bought them out and formed Tannoy Nederland. Subsequently, in 1992, Tannoy Nederland joined the TGI group.



Henny Groenendijk

Another company within the TGI Group has also said goodbye to a familiar face. **James Bowes** has taken over from **Alan Bond** the role of sales director at Tannoy Audix Systems Ltd. Bowes has been with the company eight years, most recently as director of engineering.

BBM Electronics has announced that long-time Trantec director **Chris Gilbert** is to stand down from his position at the end of April, but will continue his involvement with the company in a consultancy role. As a consequence, **Steve Bickford** will take up the new position of sales and export manager, with **Tim Riley** taking on responsibility for marketing worldwide.



Tim Riley and Steve Bickford

Bob Long, the managing director of Macclesfield-based Federal Signal Ltd, has left the company. Long was previously managing director of Akusta until the company was acquired by Federal Signal Inc, when he took on the role of managing director of the UK operation, which also incorporated Federal's other acquisitions - Millbank and Delta Sound.

Sennheiser UK has appointed **Paul Nunnington**, formerly of Sound Technology, as DAS product manager. He will be responsible for the sales of DAS products into both MI and pro audio markets. Sennheiser has also appointed **Dave Hawker** as special projects manager. He brings over 25 years' experience in the broadcast industry to his new role, which will include the design and installation of large systems.

Pulsar has restructured its sales and marketing department following the recent retirement of **Derrick Saunders**. **Andy Graves** has been appointed head of sales and marketing, with **Jane Monk** as marketing manager and **Snowy Johnson** as technical sales manager. To

complement the new structure **Simon Cox** joins the technical sales department, alongside assistant marketing manager **Sabrina Marengi** and assistant sales manager **Ben Thomson**. Support for the sales and marketing department will be provided by **Brian Baker** covering support logistics, and **Lesley Kerr** as support assistant, with new team member **Trevor Jackson** joining as support engineer.



Dave Hawker

Black Box-AV has appointed **Simon Markey** to head up its Attractions and Museums business. He will help the company achieve its ambition of realising significant growth from the Attractions sector.

Audio Design Services has appointed **Warren Morrow** as commercial director. Morrow has 30 years' experience in the audio industry, and will be known by many from his time at Altai Group, where he was responsible for the Eagle brand.

Following a successful first year of trading, Nexo USA Inc has made two new appointments.

David Solari has been brought in to expand the management team in the new role of chief operating officer. Formerly with both Meyer Sound and Cyberlogic, Solari also joins the main board of Nexo as international marketing director.



Paul Nunnington

The International Audio Group has announced details of a senior management restructure which has seen the resignation of **Stan Curtis** from his position as chairman of IAG. **Toshio Tamaki**, previously president of the Sansui Electric Co, and more recently of Akai Electric Co, has been appointed president of the Group. To assist him, **Ryozo Takahashi**, promoted from within Wharfedale's Professional Audio Division, has been appointed sales and marketing director of IAG Ltd.

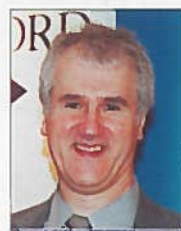
Patrick Eagleton has returned to New York-based City Theatrical as director of sales and marketing. Eagleton previously worked for the company from 1994 to 1997.

Martin Professional is to appoint **Stig Poulsen** as its R&D director. Poulsen takes up his new position in August, replacing **Finn Kallestrup** who leaves Martin at the end of July. Poulsen was previously technical manager at Danfoss Building Control Divisions in Denmark, and prior to that was engaged in development at Infocom Systems, Purup Electronics and ABB Scandia.

Simon Priestley has joined Allen & Heath as marketing executive in charge of the company's

PR activities. Priestley brings a wealth of experience in marketing & PR, which began in the early nineties at Link House Advertising Periodicals in Poole.

Canford Audio has appointed **Mike Reay** as key account manager. In this role, Reay will have responsibility for several Canford product lines,



Mike Reay

including the Totalsystems range of meters and amplifiers. He will also be taking over front-line responsibilities for Canford's exclusive UK distributorships of the Intelix range of audio and video matrixing units and DK-Audio's master stereo displays and matrixes. Reay was formerly sales manager of EMO.

Gary Orrell has joined NXT, the company behind the Surface Sound flat panel loudspeaker technology. Orrell began his audio career with Wharfedale Loudspeakers some 15 years ago before leaving to set up a hi-fi manufacturing factory under the name of SG Acoustics Ltd. Also joining NXT is **Geoff Boyd** who will oversee the development of the SoundVu licensees. Boyd co-founded Memotech - a UK-based PC company.

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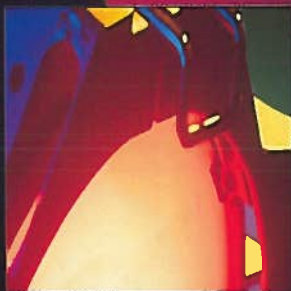
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Zeck Audio UK Formed



Mick Hannaford (centre) with Zeck's Max Wahle (left) and founder Richard Beck (right).

London-based Rossula Ltd, the company behind the Lightfactor Sales and LightProcessor operations, has entered into a joint venture with Zeck Audio Beck KG of Waldkirch, Germany.

The result is Zeck Audio UK Ltd, which will market the entire range of Zeck pro audio products throughout the British Isles. Rossula managing director Mick Hannaford told L&S: "This is an exciting opportunity to bring innovative audio products to the UK. Our aim is to deliver the brand across the country through a small number of strategic distribution partners."

Zeck Audio was formed in Germany in 1980 and today its production and research facility occupies over 90,000sq.ft feeding a worldwide network of distributors. Its product line-up is extensive, covering a broad range of applications. It includes microphones, UHF and VHF wireless systems, cables and connectors, multicore stage systems, compact mixing consoles, signal processors, amplifiers and a large range of passive and active loudspeaker enclosures.

Zeck founder and managing director Richard Beck added: "Teaming up with Rossula is a positive move that will establish our position in the UK marketplace."

Iranian Contract for Auditel

Amersham-based Auditel has secured a US\$4.5m contract from the Government of Iran.

The order is for a complete voting and sound and communications system for Iran's Ministry of Housing and has been won in conjunction with Sony Corporation of Dubai who will supply the television broadcast equipment. Auditel is responsible for the project management and already has a team in place in Tehran. The installation covers sound reinforcement, voting systems, audio and television and will be entirely computer-controlled.

Time Called on Drinking Laws

Proposals to modernise Britain's outdated licensing laws have been published by the Home Office.

Contained in a White Paper 'Time for Reform: Proposals for the Modernisation of our Licensing Laws', the measures will affect many working in our industry. They represent the first substantial change for over 40 years and offer the potential for round-the-clock opening for pubs, clubs and theatres.

Approximately 78,000 pubs and bars, 25,000 restaurants, nearly 4,000 nightclubs, 23,000 registered clubs, and 45,000 shops, stores and supermarkets would be affected by the proposals in the White Paper.

For further details visit www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

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Wellington Arts Fest 2000: Castles in the Wind

After decades of staying put, the Edinburgh Military Tattoo has marched outside the castle walls. No small excursion this, but a visit to a festival in the Southern Hemisphere.

The New Zealand International Festival of the Arts, hosted by the city of Wellington, has been staged biannually since 1986. "From its humble beginnings, the festival really began to grow in the nineties with the appointment of Carla van Zon as executive director," explained Alex Reedijk the festival's technical director. "But what tempted the Tattoo here was a number of factors - the significance of the Millennial year, the completion of a brand new stadium in Wellington and, more prosaically, a friendship between Brigadier Jameson CBE (who runs the Tattoo) and Michael Mushalla, a promoter who works on both events. But this was no small undertaking," continued Reedijk. "The Brigadier insisted that the Tattoo be performed within an exact replica of the Edinburgh castle walls."

In places over 90ft (27m) tall, the replica fortress built within the Westpac Stadium required 172 tons of water and concrete ballast. Why so much? "Because Wellington is notoriously windy," explained Greg Peacocke of audio contractors Oceania. And he knows his weather; right on cue the closing minutes of the Tattoo's final performance saw a sudden and unexpected squall with gusts up to 100kph and torrential rains. "We had the whole choir on Octava 012s, heavily windsocked," added Peacocke, "but we couldn't do much about the rain."



Despite being the last stop before the Antarctic, Oceania is no hick outfit, its crowning achievement for Wellington Festival being to persuade an opera singer to use in-ear monitors. "We worked out what the delay would be between them and the orchestra and gave them a feel of how ugly it would sound." A convincing demonstration that, a year later, persuaded Joanna Heslop to do likewise for the Tattoo. "We fitted Joanna with two Countryman Isomax mics on a discrete headband with boom that placed the mics an inch from her mouth, running signal via Shure U4D/U1 transmitters, and sending fold-back to her via a Shure 600 system."


Peacocke did similarly for the lone piper at the top of the castle ramparts, bringing radio mics to a total of 30, all run through a BSS 802 to time align vocals to the amplified system. Oceania installed 32 of their own design T12 cabinets around the field perimeter. Master control was by Peacocke from a Midas 3000 Heritage, with Paul Jeffery mixing down 50 channels of choir and radio mics. "Paul sub-mixed the radios on an Allen

The stadium and prevailing winds presented bigger problems for lighting. "Lighting designer Tony Rabbit wanted to put almost 900 Pars in two runs, 30m apart, directly over the parade ground edges." Thus Ben Cooper of lighting company Spot-Light Systems, found he had the gear, but nowhere to hang it, the nearest suspension points being the floodlight towers. At 160m apart, this looked daunting and no one in New Zealand had any experience in flying off such remote supports. Fortunately, Reedijk knew a man who did - Jon Bray of Summit Steel. Bray calculated the catenaries, no lightweight items in themselves, and took a deep breath. "Rabbit's design called for an 80m truss down each side to carry all the lamps. With the wind such a major consideration, and lifting from such a long catenary, I had eight flexible joints made for each truss run with a hoist at each join."


Bray also had two 30m tall steel masts, weighing over five tons each, built to support the northern end of the catenaries. "These took just two days to install, which allowed the 'Castle' set builders to start work quickly while we then set about tensioning the two cables." With over 500m of 22mm cable for the two runs, a 12 ton pull from a large Tirfor was required to tension each one. Once taut, Bray added over 1,000 metres of 8mm lateral guy wires to wind brace the truss."

All the Pars ran off Theatrelight dimmers, with a variety of Avolites control desks. Around the castle set and parade ground, another 300 Pars were deployed, plus 30m of Altman cyc lights, two dozen Shakespeares, 20 Mac 500s, and nine CityColors. "We also put in 14 followspots - Lycians and Selecons - to cover the principals," added Cooper.

Steve Moles



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Strand UK Launch to 300 Series

Strand Lighting's new 300 Series consoles, combining Pentium-class processing and the featureset of the flagship 500 Series, made its UK debut at last month's ABTT Show in London (see news pages 46 and 47).

The new design is based on a unique modular construction, providing a fully flexible control console layout. The seven-model series has been conceived to meet the needs of a wide range of facilities. Starting with the 24/48 and 48/96 memory manual desks, the series progresses through the 125- and 250-channel memory systems, designed to meet the needs of small to medium facilities. For larger venues, the 400- and 600-channel memory consoles offer dual high-resolution SVGA flat screen LCD displays and full ShowNet Ethernet network support as standard features. The 120-submaster model, with 600 control channels is aimed at applications requiring extensive hands-on flexibility.



The desks offer 1024 DMX outputs, extended by ShowNet into 1536 DMX outputs. All systems feature fully-integrated motion control software, with 500 preset focus groups and an extensive range of fixture libraries. Motion control access has been implemented using Strand's intelligent mouse interface and a wide range of control accessories including digitiser support.

The next generation (V2.4) of Strand's ShowNet networking software also debuted, expanding the capacity of ShowNet and updating the system with support of full 10/100BT operation.

Strand - +44 1592 652333

Witches' Technical Brew

Cameron Mackintosh's new musical *The Witches of Eastwick* opens at the Theatre Royal in July.

Howard Harrison is in the lighting designer's chair and working alongside him will be assistant lighting designer Oliver Fenwick, production electrician Alistair Grant and lighting programmer Rob Halliday. Harrison's conventional rig, supplied by White Light, will include over 200 units including ETC Source Fours, Strand SL Zooms, Par 64s and various battens, as well over 100 Rainbow scrollers and Cadenza EP effects projectors with custom disks in White Light's VSFx motor units. Control will be from a Strand 500 series console. The Moving Light Company is supplying the production with 12 Strand Alto Pirouettes, 15 DHA Digital Light Curtains, four DHA Digital Beamlight 2s, six City Theatrical AutoYokes and nine compact moving mirror units.

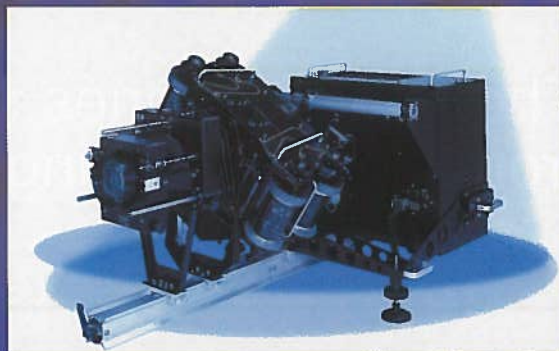
Andrew Bruce, Autograph Sound Recording's managing director and sound designer for *The Witches of Eastwick*, has been working towards this new musical comedy for many months. His design employs several firsts, including the D-Vdosc loudspeaker system from L'Acoustics.

A full review of *Witches* will run in our August issue.

PIGI - The Rotator.

The new PIGI Rotating Double Scroller slide projector from ETC UK Ltd.

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Web Five

If you're surfing the net then take a detour to the following web sites

1. This site has hit the news recently for its aerial shots of the famous Area 51 in the Nevada desert.

www.terraserver.com

2. Whatever it is you want to know, you probably can't do better than Encarta's virtual encyclopaedia on line - 16,000 articles, a new dictionary and a world atlas. Sorted.

www.encarta.msn.com

3. This site is brilliant for those who can't desert the comfort of their computers and who prefer to shop online. Visitors 'take a taxi' to shop at their favourite stores on the internet.

www.Mytaxi.com

4. Literally hundreds and hundreds of clipart images are available from this site.

www.webclipart.about.com

5. The IBM Intellectual Property Network (IPN) is a site for searching, viewing, and analysing patent documents from around the world.

www.patents.ibm.com

PIGI On The Double

Projection specialist E\T\C UK Ltd used the headquarters of Show Presentation Services (SPS) in early May to demonstrate the new PIGI Xenon Rotating Double Scroller Projector system to a number of invited lighting and presentation professionals.



Above: Visitors to the E\T\C UK demo study the two-projector set-up.

Ideal for a wide range of applications from son et lumière shows, corporate presentations, fashion shows, exhibitions and party theming, as well as film and television uses, this large format projection system enables the simultaneous scrolling of two independent films (at speeds ranging from 1mm per minute to 1m per second), while rotating through 360° at varying speeds. Up to 20m of film can be held on each scroll (40m

A user-friendly interface allows for easy access to all parameters via mouse or keyboard. Timecode connection is provided by a card inserted into the computer, supporting EBU and SMPTE formats. The projector can utilise a 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8kW lamp, and has a variety of lenses which can offer anything from 1:1 to 1:8 throw, making it suitable for both large-scale exteriors and more intimate environments.

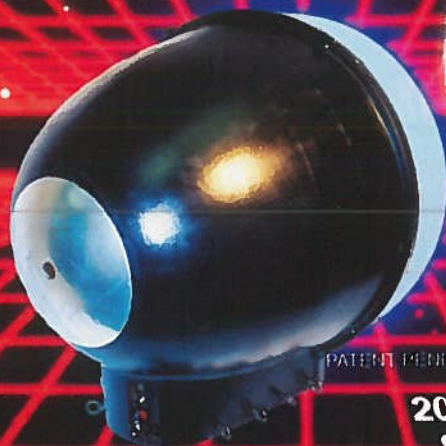
total), and the two scrolls are positioned by means of an optical encoder, offering accuracy of up to one hundredth of a millimetre. The PIGI control software allows for up to 20 projectors to be controlled at one time, allowing for a huge variety of very complex and visually stunning projection effects.

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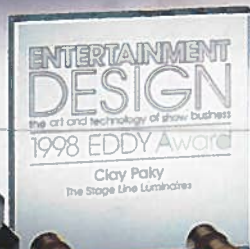


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News Round-Up



A host of industry friends and colleagues from all over the world gathered in Cambridge on Saturday 8th April

to wish Derrick Saunders, Pulsar's long-time sales and marketing director, well on his retirement.

Colleagues who paid tribute included Pulsar's managing director Paul Mardon, Clay Paky's Enrico Caironi and Lighpower's Gunther Olbricht. Derrick won't lose touch with the industry altogether, for he plans to work alongside wife Monica at Adda Super Cases.

Derrick Saunders Retires (well almost)



Paul and Sarah Mardon with Derrick and Monica Saunders

Electrovision + Altai + NJD

Electrovision, the Merseyside distribution company, has bought the Altai Group. The take-over should strengthen the Group's position, bringing together the brands of Soundlab, Eagle, Vision, ELV and NJD under one banner.

The take-over also includes branches in France, Holland, Germany and Belgium, as well as representation in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Mark Benyon of Altai told L&S: "This move will provide greater penetration of the European market and provide a more comprehensive service to all our customers."

NJD, meanwhile, has opened a new manufacturing facility in India. The new Indian-assembled products will be identical to those manufactured in the UK, carrying the same guarantees, but featuring improved packaging, user guides and point of sale 'swing tickets'.

Artistic Show-Control

Artistic Licence (UK) has launched Show-Control - a compact DMX512 controller developed specifically for use in museum, retail and architectural applications. It is suitable for use with dimmers, moving lights and colour changers such as the Artistic Licence digital lighting range.

Show-Control can operate on battery or mains power. It outputs 60 channels of DMX512 and stores a total of 250 memories, 40 sequences and 4000 timed steps. Fades and snap changes can be executed with times ranging from 0.1s to five minutes.

The system can be programmed in three distinct modes: the operator can use the keypad and LCD display to enter data directly. Received DMX512 can be recorded allowing the operator to program the show using their preferred lighting board. The third option is to program the show via a PC link. A PC software package 'Show-Edit' will be launched shortly which will provide a direct link between the PC and Show-Control. The user can then program the entire show and also make use of an extensive library of moving lamp personalities.

Show-Control provides numerous replay options including, 'on power up', contact closure and by DMX512.

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News Round-Up



The Power behind the Words

The Palace Theatre, Watford is one of the few remaining producing theatres in the country, with many of its productions touring nationally and playing in the West End.

The Grade II listed Edwardian theatre is currently undertaking a fundraising campaign to raise £1.5m for essential refurbishment and chief electrician Ian Saunders came up with the idea of projecting a fundraising message onto the safety curtain to highlight the appeal to the audience. "We felt this would be the most effective method of getting the message across without disturbing the performances - subtle yet direct," he explained.

To get the appeal off the ground, ETC Europe donated two Source Four lanterns to the theatre. ETC Europe's international business development manager Peter Ed made the presentation to Ian Saunders. Stage Technologies' Nikki Scott was instrumental in organising the donation and is thrilled that ETC Europe were able to help. "We are delighted - this donation will really get the campaign off the ground, reaching the 120,000 people who come through the theatre's doors every year and who want to see the historic theatre continue to produce work well into the future."

Numark Awarded UK Behringer Distribution

DJ Technology giant Numark has secured the distribution in the UK of Behringer's entire range of pro audio studio equipment.

Behringer will benefit from Numark's national dealer network, making the brand readily available across the country, as well as from an established technical backup and sales support team, based at Numark's UK headquarters. The deal allows Numark to cater to the growing demands from DJs for advanced studio equipment ranging from digital signal processors, compressors and limiters, through to parametric EQs and live mixing and studio consoles.

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

"With the building's Inadequate insulation, running the heaters during the performance is not an option. So it's a 20-minute heat fix during the Interval and free blankets for those with low body temperatures!"

Richard II at the Gainsborough Studios - page 52



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Sennheiser Launches Film Sound Scholarship

Sennheiser UK has started a student scholarship scheme at the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield. The scholarship is for students studying the two-year NFTS Diploma and specialising in Screen Sound.



Sennheiser NFTS Scholarship student Robert Bourke (left) with Sennheiser UK MD Paul Whiting

The first award, which covers full payment of fees and an allowance towards living and travel expenses, has been made this year to Robert Bourke, a final year student from Dublin. Sennheiser UK started a similar scheme in 1998 for students studying the BA degree in Sound technology at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts.

Court Rejects Stageline's Claim for Injunction

In late 1998, Stageline Inc launched legal proceedings against Five Corners (The Mobile Stage Co) seeking a number of injunctions to prevent Five Corners from trading.

On March 9, 2000, Stageline's claim was rejected by Quebec Superior Court Judge, Diane Marcelin. Judge Marcelin also ordered Stageline to pay \$22,500 to Five Corners, partly to cover costs and partly as exemplary damages. Roger Barrett of Star Hire, agents for Five Corners in the UK, told PLASA Publishing: "We are pleased the case has been resolved. Resorting to legal action at every twist and turn has never been our way of doing business - all four Five Corners-supplied mobile stages currently in the UK will be working on the BBC Music Live series in May."

New Premises for Futurist

Work has now started on site to construct Futurist's brand new warehouse and office complex in the heart of Wakefield's town centre in West Yorkshire. The new complex, which is being designed and built by Parkin International, will be ready for the company to occupy in late August 2000. Once complete, the company intends to open a further operation in Manchester.

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

"Hands up all those who knew the tour was over here, and visiting a venue near you? The citizens of Manchester certainly didn't. I saw more people here last month for a dead Elvis, a similar presentation - but ironically more 'Live' than this one."

Steve Moles on Puff Daddy - page 71

MiniMAC



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Dave Matthews Band

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Scenery Under Ambient Light

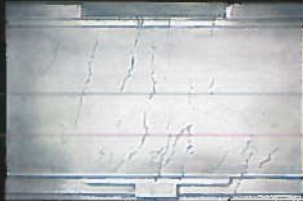
Same Scenery Under UV Light

Scenery Under Ambient Light

Same Scenery Under UV Light

Creation

Alladin's Lamp



Scenery Under Ambient Light

Same Scenery Under UV Light

Scenery Under Ambient Light

Same Scenery Under UV Light

Creed

Miller Genuine Draft



Scenery Under Ambient Light

Same Scenery Under UV Light

Scenery Under Ambient Light

Same Scenery Under UV Light

John Fogerty



Scenery Under Ambient Light

Same Scenery Under UV Light

Same Scenery Under UV Light

Nintendo

The Castle



Scenery Under Ambient Light

Same Scenery Under UV Light

Scenery Under Ambient Light

Same Scenery Under UV Light

Woman of the Dream

Texas Tech University



Scenery Under Ambient Light

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Dancer DNA

Multimedia visuals are firmly on the creative horizon for entertainment shows of all genres and budgets in the 21st century.

Notting Hill Publishing, headed by Ben Whittam Smith, is a computer graphics and software publishing house at the pioneering forefront of making graphics, computer animations and video as accessible for live performances as possible. Its products are poised to change the way the still separate disciplines of lighting, video and moving image and CGI work together.

The company is currently working on two separate, but related projects. The first is the ongoing development of real-time sound-reactive graphics applications and the second is the simultaneous project of making them - and video-controllable via any DMX desk (presently codenamed 'The Blue Box'). Notting Hill's Dancer DNA software uses music as a control system for geometric and life-like 3D shapes. With an audio



input applied, the programme does a spectrum analysis of the music and sends a series of event triggers to different frequency lines which then generate the animations in real time. At present, it can then be manipulated manually from a keyboard or left to generate its own random shapes, movements and patterns.

Dancer DNA is used to great effect on the current Pet Shop Boys Nightlife world tour, where LD Marc Brickman integrated it into the dramatic multimedia projection show, which includes moving images from film and video specially created by Notting Hill. Also used extensively on

the Pet Shop Boys is a second sound reactive programme called Geiss, written by Detroit-based Ryan Geiss. This is much more laid back than Dancer DNA and is ideal for ambient rooms. It takes an oscilloscope sample from the music and blends it back via the bass to produce smooth, soothing, two dimensional patterns.

Notting Hill's new media artist Chris Bird has been producing multimedia visual shows - including

video and computer animations - for some time, and uses their residency at The Ministry of Sound on the first Friday of each month to showcase (and test) new ideas and applications. Other recent work includes the Judge Jules Seriously Slinky tour at the end of 1999 which extensively featured Dancer DNA plus various video sources. Just tested is a third sound reactive software called Siil, currently still in prototype stage. "We're developing this to use on the Nine Inch Nails US tour," said Bird. It will also be an integral part of the 'Blue Box system which is expected to be alpha testing in the next two months.

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TOA Do It Naturally

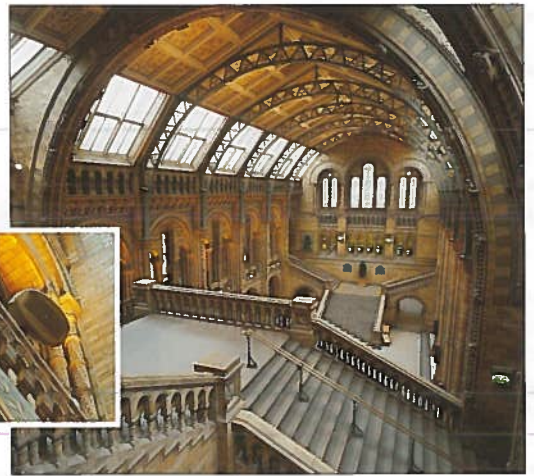
TOA voice alarm equipment features prominently in a rolling development programme at London's Natural History Museum which is currently being carried out by Static Systems Group plc. Presently the installation utilises three TOA equipment racks, plugged with V series amplification and processing.

Each fire alarm fully communicates with the voice alarm, which sends out a common PA message. Destinations can be selected and the system will link the fireman's mic and broadcast to any PA zone via a touch-screen and Static Systems' proprietary TDM (Time Division Multiplex).

The AMX front-end touch screens were supplied by TOA, to provide a visual switching and a map of the museum for paging and message broadcast purpose (messages are pre-recorded and stored using TOA's EV digital message machines). While much of the system is connected to standard loudspeakers, TOA F-777s are found in the main entrance hall, F-505s on the

stairs and F-10Bs in the alcoves and balcony, each controlled via TOA's DP-0204 digital signal processors.

Eventually, TOA expects eight racks to be commissioned, connecting areas such as the Earth Galleries, Whale Hall and Darwin Centre through the control rack in the Central Hall of the Waterhouse Building.



High End Looks for New Investment

High End Systems and its lead equity investor, Generation Partners, have hired an investment banking firm to represent High End as it seeks to find a new partner to fund the company's further growth.

Although Generation Partners made a substantial investment in High End two years ago, the company's existing management retains a major stake and plans to remain actively involved. The company's expansion plans include a broadening of the product range and a higher profile worldwide, underlined by the new sales offices in New York and London.

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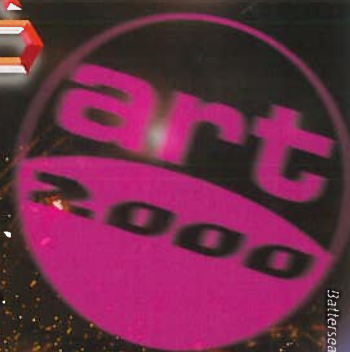
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Battersea Christmas Tent photograph courtesy of Hawthorn Theatrical



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News Round-Up



Pioneer has released the CMX-5000, an automatic-beat mixing twin-CD player for DJs. The CMX-5000 is similar to existing rack-mount CD players, but includes a number of new developments.



Pioneer's DJ CD Player

The CMX-5000 uses a computer chip which analyses the beat of the music playing, adjusts the next track to match the beats per minute (BPM) and smoothly mixes one track into another. It also gives the operator a choice of four different blends and mix effects. The CMX-5000 includes the features of the CDJ-500 series, such as Master Tempo, Fader Start/Back Cue Play, seamless looping, re-looping, digital outs, super fast track search/track scan and a large jog dial. Another new feature is the transparent jog dial, which allows for a comprehensive data display behind each dial.

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BST Change UK Operation

Following months of speculation comes the news that the distribution of BST pro audio products into the UK marketplace has been changed.

Acoustic Solutions Ltd has been awarded the exclusive distribution of the BST line for the UK and Ireland. To coincide with the move, the company has also recruited Simon Parslow, formerly the UK sales manager for Ultrak, the parent company of BST products. His role will involve developing the sales of all Acoustic Solutions products alongside BST to the independent retail sector.

Rose Theatre Rises Again

It seems that the replica of the Rose Theatre - built for the award-winning film Shakespeare In Love - is to find a new home on the site of the former Collins Music Hall in Islington Green, North London. Like most film props, the set was to have been scrapped after the completion of filming, but Dame Judi Dench felt it too good to demolish and wanted to find it a permanent home. If all goes to plan, the theatre will be ready to open by Midsummer's Eve 2002.

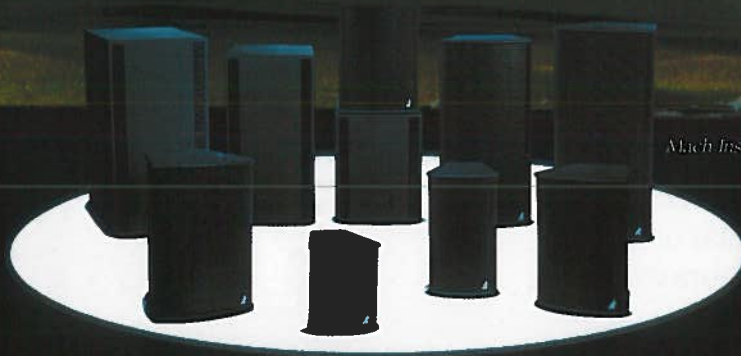
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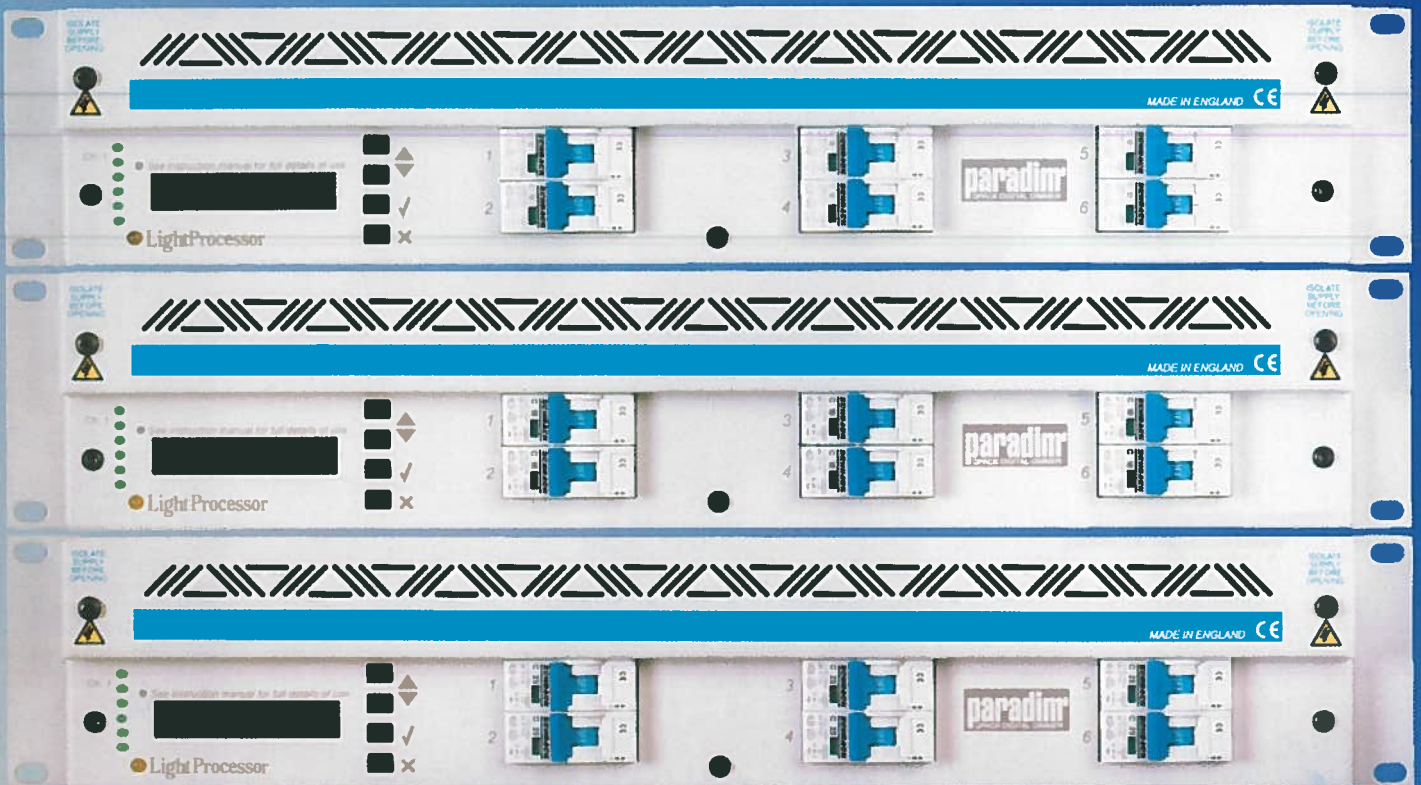
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paradigm (pàr'e-dim') noun - An example that serves as the pattern or model for the rest.

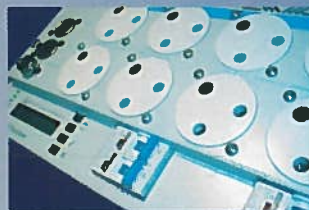
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News Round-Up



Pictured left: Jerome Brehard of Impact with Adda's Cheryl Bereznyckij, Derrick Saunders and Monica Saunders at SIB, Italy.

Adda Exclusive UK Con'dome Distribution

Cambridge-based Adda Super Cases has signed an agreement for the exclusive UK distribution of the Con'dome and Flightdome products with French manufacturer Impact Evenement.

These innovative protective products, which have become common sights at trade shows around the world in recent months, are ideal for protecting a wide range of lighting instruments in exterior applications from club opening nights, movie premieres, son et lumieres and other outdoor promotions.

Stardraw.com Arrives

Stardraw.com, a new company dedicated to the delivery of applications and services, has been launched to service the family of Stardraw products (Stardraw 2D, Stardraw Professional, Stardraw Audio and Stardraw Audio Lite).

The new company has purchased the intellectual property, assets, goodwill and distribution rights for the Stardraw product range. Meanwhile, it continues to have a strong relationship with Starlite Systems Technology Ltd and, in the first of the new company's board meetings, confirmed Starlite Systems Technology as exclusive UK distributor for Stardraw products.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

SECOND TAKE - MARCH

On behalf of all the staff of ETC, but particularly on behalf of Fred Foster, I feel I must take issue with a comment made by John Watt in the March 2000 issue. To use the words 'overdressed', 'ETC' and 'Fred Foster' in the same paragraph are inappropriate - I think John is overdue a visit to his optician. I attach a photo of Fred about as 'overdressed' as he gets. The Birkenstocks are par for the course. I rest my case.



Kind regards,

Lesley Harmer
Harmer PR

PS: And yes, Fred Foster will be giving John a personal demo of the new ETC Source Four PARNel!

(Blatant product promotions masquerading as complaints letters will not be printed in future - Ed.)

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New **FACES** at PLASA

Following a successful year, PLASA has added two new members of staff to its team of professionals working at its head office in Eastbourne.



of services offered to members, brings with her a wealth of experience in administrative support and client liaison.

Emanuela takes on the role of marketing the Association to a wider audience. Following a degree in Business

Management, she has worked in the marketing departments of several major companies, most recently as marketing project manager at XTRA Music.



Helen Kneale joins the Association as membership services administrator/PA whilst Emanuela Mills has been appointed marketing manager.

Helen, who will be working closely with membership services manager Norah Phillips on expanding the range

Top, Emanuela Mills and left, Helen Kneale.

PLASA Becomes BSI Distributor

PLASA UK Members Eligible for 25% Discount

PLASA has become an official distributor of products of the British Standards Institution (BSI). This position allows PLASA to offer BSI products to its

UK membership at a discount of 25% off BSI list prices.

A complete list of British Standards is available on the BSI website at www.bsi.org.uk. This lists non-member prices, which are subject to the agreed 25% discount for PLASA's UK membership. Once Standards have been ordered via PLASA, the BSI aims to dispatch 95% of orders received by noon on the same day. PLASA's Standards Officer, Tim Cox, said: "This arrangement provides a valuable service for PLASA's UK members, at very reasonable prices. The cost of BSI standards can range from around £20 up to more than £150, depending upon the size and complexity of the document, so this is another way by which PLASA members can gain a real material advantage for their membership fee."

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Comprehensive information will be mailed to PLASA members very soon and includes costs and instructions for setting up and using the service.

PLASA AGM/ Dinner - 2000

This year the association will be holding its Annual General Meeting at The Belfry Hotel near Birmingham. For the first time the AGM and dinner will take place on the same day - Thursday 15th June - allowing members to attend both events without taking two days out of the office.

All full members of the association will be offered one free ticket for the dinner with the option to buy further tickets. The after-dinner speakers this year are author Frances Edmonds and comedian John Martin.

PLASA @ SIB

PLASA was once again represented at the SIB exhibition in Rimini, Italy (26-29 March), the show's first event since 1998.

As in past years, PLASA organised a British Trade International-supported group of UK exhibitors, who received a contribution towards their stand and construction costs under the BTI's SESA (Support for Exhibitions and Seminars Overseas) programme. Among the UK group were Lighting Technology, Skyhigh Stage FX, DHA Lighting, MGC Lamps, Nu-Light, Futuraneon, AC Lighting, Celco, CCT Lighting and others. Despite some uncertainty about the possible effect of SIB's two-year absence, the show was a great success for all concerned, with a significantly-increased international attendance over 1998.

PLASA

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New MEMBERS

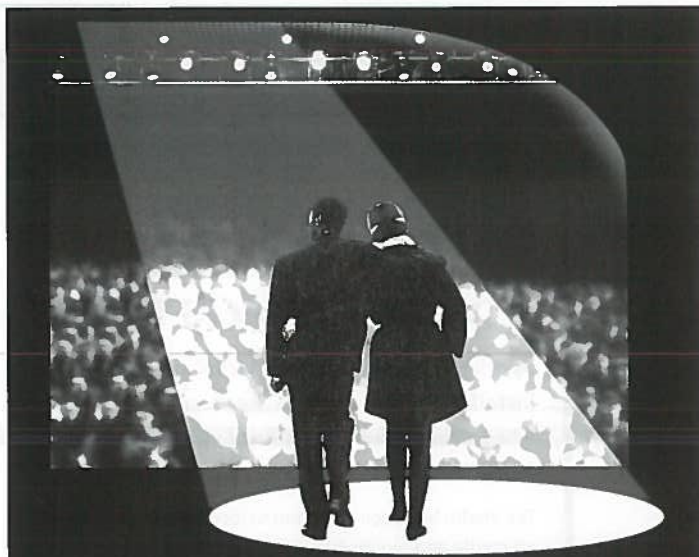
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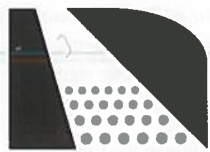
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AND KEEP A LOW PROFILE.



Strand Appoints LCA as Major TV Lighting Stockist



Richard Maskell, Nick Shapley and Graham Kerr with part of the Strand Quartzcolor range

Strand's remodelled Quartzcolor range of HMI and studio fresnels will be piloted into the film location and cinematographic markets by the recently-launched LCA (Lights Camera Action), based in Greenford.

Started by directors Nick Shapley, Graham Kerr and Richard Maskell last June, LCA has grown quickly, necessitating a move into the 10,500sq.ft warehouse and office space in the Vari-Lite building, formerly occupied by Brilliant Stages.

PAI's New Design Studio/Projects Office

Specialist sound, light and visual graphics installer, PA Installations, has recently created a new Design Studio at its head office in Llanelli, South Wales.

The studio has been designed to incorporate state-of-the-art media and multimedia design software with 2D and 3D graphics. Aimed at providing customers with a strong technical and creative support design facility, the studio will service PAI's growing client base, providing creative solutions for a broad spectrum of markets, from retail and commercial applications as well as entertainment and leisure. As well as being a centre for R&D in entertainment and related technologies, the studio will handle the conception and realisation of exterior lighting, signage system display formats and internet kiosk applications.

PAI have also added a new floor to house the rapidly growing projects department. Andy Bonehill, technical manager, said: "This development will enable us to handle major installation contracts with even greater efficiency. The projects office is an integral part of the PAI philosophy of ensuring that every project is professionally managed."

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

"I'm always on the lookout for other areas which might use the talents of a lighting designer, generally a fruitless task as about 90% of those that could really do with a bit of lighting know-how don't know they need it."

John Watt, Second Take - page 56

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Building The Matrix

For a company that only started in 1994, Matrix Audio Developments has come a long way. But then the man behind the company, founder Andy Hunt, has ties with the industry which stretch way back, formalised in the early eighties when he started a hi-fi company which was subsequently bought by B+W.



Commercial director Clive Kinton with a pre-assembly version of a Matrix amplifier

The buy-out gave Hunt a chance to pursue his interest in amplifier technology and he spent the following years handling OEM projects for several of the major amplifier manufacturers. Quite naturally, he got to the point where he felt it would be better to apply his expertise to his own ends, so took the decision in the mid-nineties to start manufacturing under the Matrix banner - the name he'd been using for his product for some time. For a partner in this fledgling venture, he turned to Clive Kinton, at the time freelancing for Magnatec, whom he had come to know better when both had worked on the development of Magnatec's lateral MOSFET amplifiers for the audio industry.

At the outset, the company consisted of just Hunt and Kinton and for the first six months every amp that left the building had been built by Hunt himself. Experience in the OEM market had taught both that the best way forward was to keep things simple and to concentrate on building product that was efficient to manufacture. Today, that ethos has translated into a range of amplifiers that are being spec'd by installers and musicians all over the world. It starts with the introductory M Series and runs through the UK Power and STR Series to the top-end 2U Series - the amplifier that started it all. The M Series is something of a welterweight but does have a useful heavyweight punch (400W) and is making a name for itself in the commercial sector, often to be found driving PA systems in retail developments and offices. By far the most popular is the next one up - the UK Power range - a favourite with mobile DJs and small gigging bands. Number three in the range is the STR series which started out as a defrilled complement to the 2U Series, but went so well in its early runs that it was quickly redesigned to a much more complex spec and now not only features in major installs, but is beginning to make headway in the touring market also. At the top of the tree sits the 2U Series; featuring a built-in crossover, it is ideal for two and three-way stage amplification, eliminating the need for a separate crossover unit. Consistent across all these is the application of advanced MOSFET techniques, which add new levels of undistorted energy with headroom to handle transients without clipping.

Parallel to the expanding product range came a growing team of people. Dave Gosley joined the company in its early days to promote sales; when he left a year later, Kinton took over the sales side of the operation - an area in which he has now been joined by sales director Tony O'Neill and area sales manager Paul Callaghan. Working alongside these three is Sue Nixon, providing the necessary admin and customer liaison support, whilst overseeing the production side is Warren Soar. He too joined in the early days and now supervises the company's team of assemblers and test bench technicians.

As you might gather, the story of Matrix has been one of steady gains, but that trend was bucked last year when the company catapulted to 80% growth, a figure which provided the springboard for a move to larger premises in January of this year. The company also pulled off another major coup when it won the contract to supply amplifiers to sound reinforcement retailer - the Wembley PA Centre, a new venture from the team behind the Wembley Drum Centre.

Both Hunt and Kinton acknowledge that there is still much more for Matrix to achieve, and whilst cautious about controlling the company's growth, are already setting their sights on gaining a foothold in the US market.

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Barco and the Gearhouse Group plc have signed an important order for the renewal of a significant part of Gearhouse's worldwide projector rental fleet. This agreement, which involves in excess of 80 LCD and DLP projectors, is probably the largest single order for projectors ever placed in the rental industry.



Gearhouse Inc's Janet Smith and Barco's Jim Crane celebrate the deal with Gary Davis of Gearhouse Group plc (centre)

Barco's Major Sales

Meanwhile, Barco has entered into a strategic partnership agreement with three leading US rental and staging companies - Alford Media (Dallas), Hi-Tech Rentals (Atlanta), and Proline Audio-Visual Rentals (Seattle). This unprecedented agreement, with a value in excess of \$5million, includes the sale of 30 Barco ELM R12 projectors. Through the agreement, the company is providing users in the rental and staging community with a new projection system for large venue applications.

PALA 2000

PALA - the international trade show for the professional audio and lighting systems, audio-visual technology and music related products - moves to the Philippines for the first time this year.

It should provide a fitting backdrop to the show as the country has a growing economy. A programme of special events has been planned to run alongside the trade show which will feature over 250 exhibitors, including both sound and lighting shoot-outs, a run of technical seminars and an outdoor concert, staged together with a Beer Party and a Millennium DJ Competition.

6-8 July 2000 - World Trade Centre Metro Manila, Philippines.

www.pala.asia.CalendarONE.com

Tannoy-Audix Win Cruise PA Contracts

Saffron Walden-based Tannoy-Audix Systems has secured the contract to supply and commission the PA system on P&O's new Grand Class cruise ships - Grand Princess III and Grand Princess IV.

The US\$1.25m contract is the latest stage in a long-standing relationship between the two companies, and follows Tannoy-Audix's recent success in winning the PA and general alarm systems contracts for two luxury cruise liners being built in Mississippi for Classic Voyages. These ships, the largest ever built in the US, will each accommodate 1 900 passengers, and will begin service in 2003 and 2004.

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News
Round-Up



ABTT Blooms in London

The ABTT Show once again blossomed at London's Horticultural Halls in April. It is now one of the few shows where its small size, rather than being a disadvantage, is a positive plus point, affording the opportunity for all those in the theatre industry to get together and wag their chins.

That said, exhibitor numbers were up this year - 80 companies took space at the show - and so too was the visitor count, at 2,300 a 15% gain on the previous year. Long-time supporters of the show - **AC Lighting, Avolites, CCT Lighting, Decoupe, DHA, Lee Filters, Lightfactor, Lighting Technology, LSI-ADB, Maltbury, Multiform, Pulsar, Rosco, Stage Technologies, White Light**, etc. were all present once again, promoting product and services that have been reviewed elsewhere. **Strand Lighting's** new 300 Series consoles (see news, page 16) made its UK debut at the Show, and specialist sound hire company **Orbital** added some buzz with a Scalextric competition on their stand.

The most convincing display of what a product can do came from French company **AMG Fechoz** who, to demonstrate the pinpoint accuracy of its powered flying system, programmed it to automatically pour wine from a bottle into a glass, and in so doing quite rightly picked up the Stand of the Year award.

Blackout Triple E launched a new track system - ChainTrack. It utilises a duplex chain - the top portion for driving and guidance and the lower section from which the curtains or scenic

objects are hung. Curtains can be attached to the chain using either a sliding carrier (on conventional straight type systems) or rings (fitting into the chain to provide a fixed distance between hanging points). It not only enables a motorised curtain to turn a 180° corner within a radius of just 30mm, it also allows operators to stack acoustic curtains in a cupboard with a series of parallel tracks. The system can also be used to construct a continuous moving background in a depth of only 100mm.

Becoming better known as suppliers of beer at ABTT, **Artistic Licence** were also talking about the revised version of the Art-Net Ethernet protocol. Art-Net is a TCP/IP protocol that provides a mechanism for transferring DMX512, triggering and console video monitor data over 10BaseT Ethernet cable. In conjunction with this, the company has also released Art-Net View which, as the name suggests, is a test and analysis program for Art-Net.

Although shown by Blacklight at the Scottish Lighting Exhibition earlier in the year, ABTT saw the 'official' UK launch of **ETC's** Source Four PARNel on the stands of the company's distributors **AJS, Lighting Technology** and **White Light**.

Northern Light also had the MotorYoke on stand, from Herman Sorger's **Lighting Innovation**. This is a very precise and lightweight DMX-controlled yoke drive (weighing just 4.2kg without the spotlight), with



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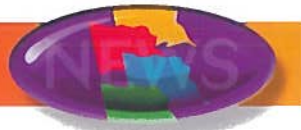
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Rope Assemblies were showing a new colour-coding system for fibre ropes. **Selecon**, meanwhile, launched two new products: the new Pacific 80v 1200W lamp brings the lower voltage tungsten halogen lamp to the theatre and studio, delivering an intense white light. The second, FineLite is a scrolling image projector which can project coloured images, graphics and effects from any standard inkjet or laser printer. The unit offers a fixed image plate and a scrolling image module. A double rotating image module is also available.

New from **Le Mark** was the self-adhesive Grid-Rule, a simple way of ensuring accurate positioning of lights on grids or trussing.

Stagetec launched the new **Compulite** Luna series of expandable motorised yokes based on newly-developed mechanical drive systems and suitable for a wide range of luminaires. Luna includes a self-locking device and automatic preset positioning with an additional closed loop servo system.

Ken Matthews (VP of sales and marketing) put in a personal appearance at the show, where **Vari*Lite** was showing its new sales products: the VL2400 Series of wash fixtures is based on the design of the VL5 family of parabolic wash luminaires, whilst the compact VL2201 spot is based on Vari-Lite's popular VL6B.

Wybron's CXI colour mixing system has gone from strength to strength since its launch in Europe last year. Offering a huge choice of colours, the CXI also enables lighting designers to adjust colours on the fly. ABTT was the



launchpad for a new 12" version, designed for use on 2kW theatrical and studio lanterns and offering all the advantages of its smaller brothers. With just two gels strings, each made up of graduated frames of cyan, yellow and magenta, the CXI allows the LD to call up virtually any colour in the spectrum.

Zero 88 showed a prototype install version of the Contour 12 touring dimmer, whilst **Lee Filters** introduced a new range of dichroic glass filters for the entertainment, leisure and architectural industries. Aimed at fixed set-ups, the range includes 37 shades chosen by professional lighting designers.

One of the most innovative products on the show floor, and the one which picked up Product of the Year, was the **CES Trolley Truss** designed by Colin Smith, head of lighting for Opera North. Essentially it makes life a whole lot easier for those who spend their days attached to truss.

More product news can be found on companies exhibiting at ABTT in our Rimini and Frankfurt reports starting on page 75

Opposite page, from top: Ken Matthews and Sam Dean from Vari-Lite; the DHA team of Julie Harper, Louise Robson-Tester, Helen Sutton, Diane Grant and Martin Salmon; Tim Burt and Chris Fenwick of Zero 88 with the Betapack 2; Siobhan Hitchen of Rope Assemblies, Tad Trylski and Roger Hennigan (HTS Lighting).

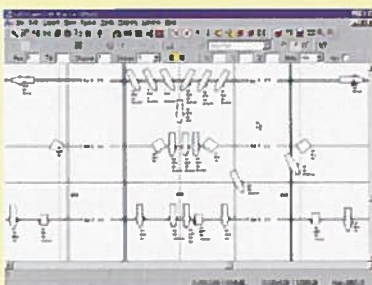
This page, from top: the MotorYoke on the Northern Light stand; Seb Williams, Adam Beaumont and PK Keiderling of AC Lighting; Frances Reid and Strand's Ivan Myles with the 300 Series; Jack Exell and Jonathan Price of Lighting Technology.



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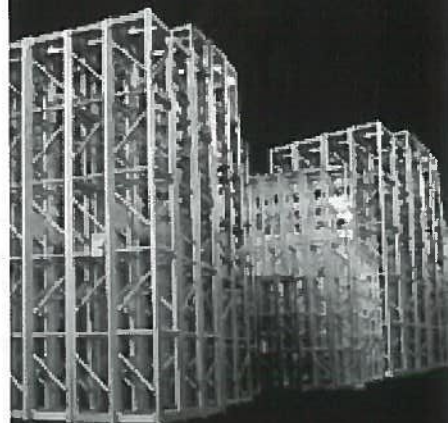
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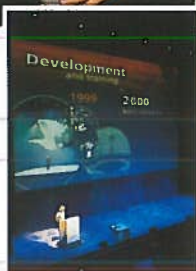
The name Blitz has become synonymous with the AV and corporate event sectors - since the company started in the late eighties it has grown into a multi-million pound operation with impressive 35,000sq.ft headquarters in Elstree, a second office in Manchester and a staff of over 100.



Left, two of the company's original founders Michael Breen and Charlie Beddow. Below, Blitz Vision crew backstage at the CIS show in January. Inset, together with production company HP:ICM, Blitz worked on the Prudential Conference at the ICC in Birmingham.

In trying to pinpoint the success of the company, one has to look first to the people behind Blitz - all talented individuals in their own right - and second to the ever-growing pool of technology it has at its disposal. Under the Blitz Communications banner sit Blitz Vision, TP Sound Services and Blitz Interactive. Blitz Vision provides equipment ranging from small LCD projectors to five-camera portable production units and wide screen video capable of producing images up to 40m wide. Blitz Interactive provides software and hardware solutions to projects ranging from elaborate automated presentations and exhibitions, incorporating data graphics, video and staging effects, to multimedia presentations, touch screens and interactive videowalls. It has also designed and developed the proprietary Suite P - a broadcast-quality presentation system that integrates Powerpoint with digital video hardware. Finally, there is the stand-alone division of TP Sound Services - the sound rental arm of Blitz.

The company has a convoluted history, beginning in 1989 when Charlie Beddow, Peter Sutton and Chris Scadding, at the time employed at Samuelson Communications, decided to go it alone and set up their own business. To do this they needed money and approached Eddie Blitz (hence the name) - a graphic designer whose talents had put him in the millionaire bracket. He agreed to bankroll the operation, but not before accountant Michael Breen had rewritten the business plan. So with £400,000



of working capital and £1m for new equipment, Blitz came to market. Its base was a 7,500 sq.ft facility in Watford and

within less than a year it had established itself as a major supplier of technology and expertise to the live and corporate events markets. Spend in this sector was rising, and Blitz reaped the rewards - within a very short time the company was providing gainful employment to over 20 people.

Following the departure of Scadding, Michael Breen moved into a more operational role, and by 1991, things were going well enough to justify a move to new 13,000sq.ft premises. The company wasn't the only one on the move - Eddie Blitz was also looking for pastures new, so the three remaining directors - Breen, Beddow and Sutton, with a little help from investment company 3i - bought him out.

Reading the changing market, the company started to invest heavily in video, consciously refocusing the core operation around this medium. The company's client base (including HP:ICM, PCI and CWA) grew, as did its internal resources and by 1995, it had purchased Interactive Television and renamed it Blitz Interactive. With the company came its MD - Alan Cox - who still directs the Blitz Interactive team.

News then came that the Samuelson Group was being reflagged as Visual Action Holdings. Identifying an opportunity to extend its range of services, Blitz made a bid for the purchase of two companies within the Group - Samuelson Communications and TP Sound Services, as it had plans to seek its own flotation. However, Visual Action Holdings turned this bid around and Blitz itself was acquired, with its management heading up the UK audio visual arm of VAH. Samuelson was integrated into Blitz, whilst TP Sound was run as a separate division.

This division is now led by Richard Rogers and co-director Dave Perry.

18 months after entering VAH, Caribiner - one of Blitz's main clients - made a bid for VAH. Clearly Blitz needed to extract itself, which was achieved by joining Telecast Communications - a new Group that had recently purchased the Cinevideo operation from Caribiner.

Under the Telecast banner the company has reasserted its pattern of growth. In 1998, the Group relocated to purpose-built premises in Elstree and now boasts the largest facilities of its kind in the UK. In the last six months it has invested in excess of £1m in new technology and expanding its product range, specifically in set design, lighting equipment and new technology. TP Sound, for instance, has invested over £250,000 in new equipment, flight casing and cabling, whilst Blitz Vision has spent £900,000 bolstering its projection fleet.

With sums like these in play, one can see that the Blitz team is serious about the company becoming the largest supplier of AV in the UK. They also have designs on Europe and are looking at a series of strategic alliances with European counterparts. Watch this space.

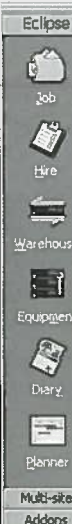
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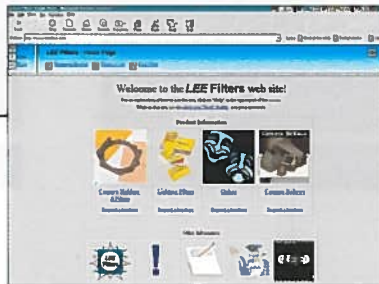
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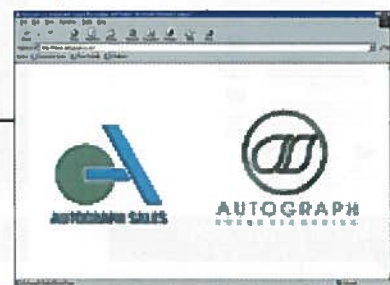
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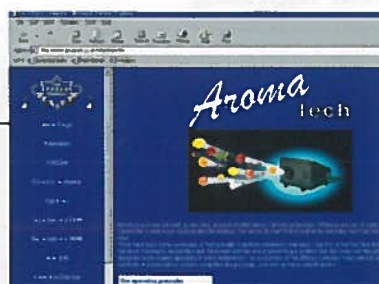
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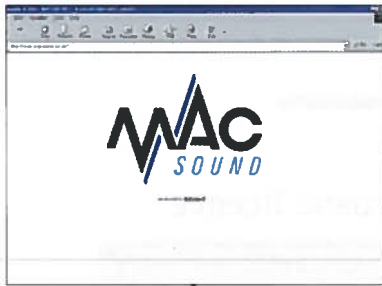
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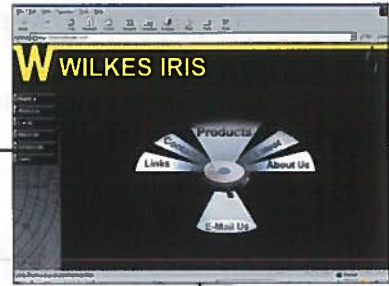
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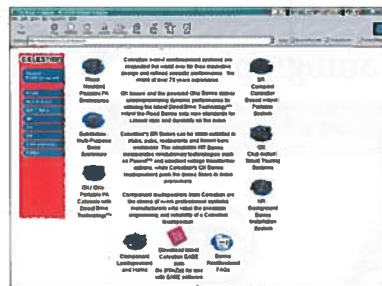
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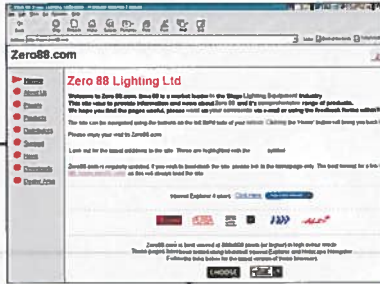
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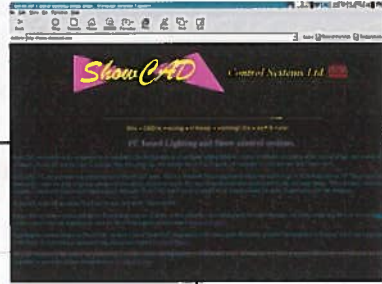
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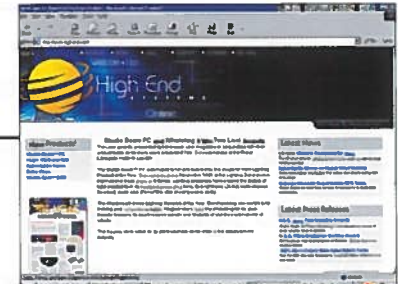
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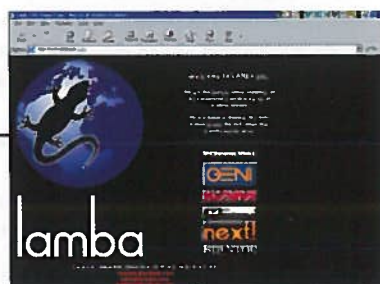
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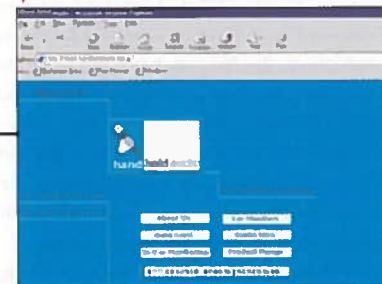
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Ralph Fiennes in the title role of the Almeida's *Richard II* - photo Ivan Kyncl

Shakespeare

The Almeida Theatre Company has taken its season of Shakespeare to the ruined shell of the historic Gainsborough Film Studios. Louise Stickland reports

One of the most potent elements of site-specific theatre is its transience. The depth and dimension added by being in a building or an environment that also has a life, history, spirit and personality of its own, is something very magical.

This momentary suspense of time - for the life of the production - is even more specifically defined for the Almeida's current Shakespeare in Shoreditch season. At the end of the run in August, everything will disappear - including the semi-derelict building which, for the most part, will be bulldozed to the

ground and transformed into a new block of luxury flats for affluent and aspiring N1'ers.

The Gainsborough Studios in Poole Street, overlooking the Grand Union Canal, started life as an electricity generating turbine in the early 1900s. In the 1920s it became the home of a young UK celluloid production house, Gainsborough Pictures, and remained a movie producing venue in various incarnations for the next 30 years. It's famous for spawning the complex visual, sonic and psychological artistry of Alfred Hitchcock, but although Hitch put the location on the map in 1926 with *The Lodger*, he only ever made one more film there, *The Lady Vanishes*, in 1938.

Known by many as 'The Hitchcock Studio', this aspect wasn't a factor in the Almeida's choice of location, explains technical director James Crout. Renowned for innovative, experimental theatre productions, the Almeida, based just along the road in Islington, had hankered after producing *Richard II* and *Coriolanus* together for some time. They wanted to do it in a larger space than their intimate 300-seater venue. It was only coincidence that the Studios should become available for a short timeslot prior to their impending redevelopment. Immediately before that they had been managed and hired out to a variety of events including corporate parties and video shoots.

Its deteriorating, atmospheric and completely natural beauty was immediately beguiling as the perfect venue in which to stage these two seminal Shakespearean political dramas. Technical manager Paul Skelton (universally known as Igor) has been part of the technical crew at the Almeida for four years. They don't heavily demark their technical team - everyone works on a cross-department basis - but this was Skelton's first project for them in a managerial context. At the Gainsborough, his remit involves everything from expelling intruding pigeons and ensuring the turfed stage for *Richard II* is kept watered and stimulated by metal halide work lights during the day, to the more conventional aspects of running a production.

The Almeida took possession of the building on the first working day of the new century and immediately set to work demolishing large parts of it. Site management was co-ordinated by Citex (who also project-managed the recent rebuild of the Royal Court and the Royal Exchange in Manchester). The main challenge for all was working to the incredibly tight deadlines of transforming the dilapidated Gainsborough into a fully-functional theatrical space in just eight weeks.

The initial onsite action involved demolition contractors, McGee, who removed the first floor of the building! Paul Brown's hardcore set design

features a large and dramatic fissure which had to be created in the original back wall of the building, looking like it's been ripped asunder, earthquake style. John Clarke of Citex recalls the bemusement when McGee's were told to gouge this carefully sculpted 30ft crack with Kangos. They were then told they could demolish as untidily as they wished, leaving the site as rough-looking as they liked! By the end of the project, they had all got thoroughly stuck into their slightly off-beat undertaking.

Skelton comments that Citex were "absolutely brilliant," musing on the mutual oddity of a theatrical team and building contractors being effectively involved the same project! From an organisational point of view, the biggest and least predictable aspect was the fact that they were heading down a completely unique and unknown road.

Once McGee's were finished, building contractor TP moved in and started building up from the rubble. The back wall of the theatre had had various lean-tos added to its exterior over the years. With the first floor removed and the interior shell exposed, these 'outside' rooms were strengthened and added to in order to provide a series of rooms behind or upstage of the wall - at all levels. The old, disused wiring and pipework is just ripped from the walls and left dangling for effect. These back rooms make highly effective lighting positions and serve as entrance and exit points onto stage for actors.

labyrinthine basement were cleared at the back of the stage for descending exits.

Front-of-house, two bars were created and another at the first floor foyer level. Premier Scaffolding constructed all the auditorium seating (which curves round in a horseshoe-shape on three levels), backstage scaffolding, FOH booms and staircases as well as work in the roof. The venue's capacity is 850 seated and 60 standing.

In order to provide lighting positions in the roof, Summit Steel, who have worked on previous Almeida projects, constructed and installed five trussing walkways with platforms and handrails, which give lighting designer Mark Henderson as much flexibility as he needs. These are surprisingly incongruous, sitting up in the musty roof void which is fully revealed throughout the stage and auditorium area. In the roof, the building's enormous original rusty orange RSJs criss-cross majestically across the space.

Power proved to be less of a headache than it could have been. The 'normal' front-of-house and backstage services are hooked into the existing building's supply. Being near to a sub-station, the



Left, technical manager Paul 'Igor' Skelton

Below, lighting designer Mark Henderson

forklifts and removed for Coriolanus. This latter will be played on a concrete stage with the middle pit covered in Perspex and under-lit. The fissure is also filled with tailor-made hollow Perspex for the second production, during which it will be filled with various coloured liquids, projected onto and have real fire effects burning behind. Skelton comments that it is bearing up well, despite not knowing whether it's coming or going with the sporadic heating of the auditorium. With all the rehearsals, it may look a bit "shagged" under work lights, but it looks fabulous under the stage lights.

Heating the space is not the problem - two huge diesel-powered Verhoevens churn away, attaining tropical temperatures very quickly - especially on level three . . . but retaining the heat is another matter. Great pockets of cold appear rapidly, especially at stage and stalls level. With the building's inadequate insulation, running the

in Shoreditch

Several bricked-up windows in the back wall are revealed, and to the stage left side of the building two enormous arched windows running down the exterior wall became part of the set. The torched-off remains of the RSJs that once held the first floor are littered around the building. The entire scene dock, backstage area, production office and dressing rooms and toilets are Portacabins, and the area (outside the building) is roofed over and enclosed in a compound for protection against the elements.



A concrete stage measuring 19m wide by 11m deep was installed with a removable section in the middle including a centre trap. Various scenic elements were added, such as a steel walkway stage left and a massive steel guillotine door stage right - all lovingly rusted with regular waterings and left to corrode! The difference between what's new and scenic, what's natural and original is almost imperceptible. Designer Paul Brown has skilfully meshed the scenic visibility with the existing distress of the space. Two stairways down to the building's

London Electricity Board were able to run in an additional 400 amp three-phase for the production lighting and sound.

All production wiring needed for the theatre - sound, lighting, communications and show relays, was installed by Stage Electrics. Although it's a temporary installation, all regular health and safety directives had to be adhered to rigorously. The space, set, lighting and sound all has to

serve for both productions. Coriolanus - which joins the repertoire in June, is a far more tricky production and also utilises more of the building's architecture. The idea was to start with Richard II, refine the space as a working environment and then add Coriolanus. Saturdays throughout June and July will be hectic with both plays being performed - Coriolanus as a matinee and Richard II in the evenings.

The turf floor - their second out of a projected 14 lawns - is provided by Palmbrokers and laid on customised palettes which can be scooped up with

heaters during the performance is not an option. So currently, it's a 20-minute heat fix during the interval and free blankets for those with low body temperatures! As the summer comes on, this anomaly should self-correct!

Lighting designer Mark Henderson has worked on many productions at the Almeida. For him it's been a very straightforward show because everything on the production side has been so well organised. With the installed grid, he has all the lighting positions he needs in the right places and everything else has been catered for by scaffolding towers and positions in the desired locations.

He's using a rig of about 200 lanterns - with some still in store to be added for Coriolanus. It's a mixture of the usual theatrical selection - profiles, fresnels, PCs and some scrollers - nothing fancy. A 5k HMI is on hire and two Pani beamlights are used as followspots, high up at the sides.

The Almeida is already in the throes of a technical refit, scheduled to start in February 2001 and complete in May 2002, using funding from the National Lottery. With the money already approved, the Arts Council allowed them to purchase a large proportion of the equipment in advance for this production - which will eventually go into the refitted Almeida. Many of the lighting fixtures here are new, much of it

Gainsborough Film Studios provides a stunning backdrop

Below, John Leonard (standing) and Scott George

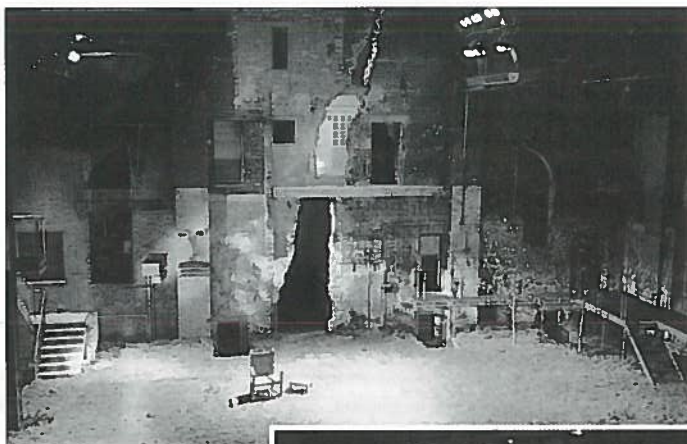
Strand lanterns supplied through White Light, plus certain loose bits of kit from Stage Electrics, including the Strand 250 console and LD 90 dimmers.

Henderson uses a lot of mood-enhancing, directional light. With 12.5m headroom between stage and balcony, the fully-exposed throw distance is dramatic. He also has plenty of side light options and a large bank of fixtures offstage for blasting in through the stage right door. He tones the fissure and the backstage rooms carefully, often using them for moody silhouettes of actors or to bring a dull, glowing three-dimensional quality to the scene. Gobo washes tinted with very pale green texture the grass beautifully.

The two enormous stage left arched windows are backlit with white neon from Syrett Neon. Being exterior windows, the neon is encased by acoustic cladding and was diffused using the high tech method of tracing paper and glue! Other newly-exposed windows on the back wall are also lit with neon.

Henderson has relished working with the architecture, although admittedly it didn't always turn out as expected, but that's one of the joys of working on an unusual project like this - the surprises! With *Richard II*, he wanted to start with conveying a glistening and golden feeling of warmth surrounding the King, an ambience that gradually degenerates into a bleaker, harsher environment as Bolingbroke and his cold and severe world permeate the plot.

Also controlled by the lighting desk is the 'rain' system in the back rooms, which Skelton describes as "Very Almeida". The team placed a water tank on the roof and customised a Gardenia micro-



irrigation system, sourced at the local garden centre, to produce pure unadulterated theatrical rain!

Sound for the season is designed by John A Leonard, who has been sound consultant to the Almeida for 10 years and is also a director of Aura Sound. His main challenge was to produce something in the timescale, and as with lighting, the decision was taken that they should buy any new equipment required for this production with the Lottery funds, which will then go on to reside at the theatre.

"We had tremendous fun spending the money on new toys!" states Leonard. "We knew exactly what we wanted for the Almeida - in fact, the kit list had been around for years." He worked on this Gainsborough project with associate Scott George, who has also worked with Aura and at the Almeida in the past.

As with lighting and set, *Richard II* is the simpler of the two shows for sound. Musical cues are minimal and it's primarily sound effects with the odd offstage chant. Nonetheless, all sounds are

extremely precise and have to sound totally natural, which of course they do!

Leonard likes to ensure the Almeida keeps abreast of technology, and they have been working with the original Richmond Sound Design Stage Manager show control software for some years already. The new replay system is a Yamaha O2R digital console, a Richmond Sound Design Audio Box, an Akai 6000 sampler and the new ShowMan (the upgraded Stage Manager) software for control, running MIDI show control protocol on a Windows NT platform. Leonard and George are both impressed with the power and flexibility of ShowMan.

Leonard also swears by the Audio Box (he had the first in the UK), a 16 x 16 digital matrix with eight analogue inputs and eight onboard hard drive playback devices. They are not using the latter for *Richard II*, but they may well do so for *Coriolanus*. Audio Box, unlike other DSP products, allows all changes to be made in real time.

The acoustics of the room are galvanising, particularly with the concrete stage and exposed walls, but the turf for *Richard II* and the audience absorb reverberation nicely. *Coriolanus* will be different! A degree of acoustic treatment has been necessary to minimise bi-directional noise pollution. This was instigated by sound consultant Paul Gillieron. *Coriolanus* is considerably noisier and more in the face, with crowd and battle scenes aplenty, and a specially composed incidental music score by Jonathan Dove featuring four percussionists and two trombones! Poole Street is basically a residential area with a large block of flats in close proximity to the stage left wall.

For the first time they have specified the new Meyer self-powered speakers. This entails some extra cabling but means the amp room is extremely small and tidy! Four UPAs serve either side of the pros and two powered USWs at the bottom of each scaff tower. High up at the rear of stage are two MSL2s for additional side audience coverage. At the rear of each audience level are two UPMs in the corners, with a further six coming in for *Coriolanus* to allow a fuller surround sound than at present. Six Tannoy T12s are secreted onstage (painted to merge with the set) for spotting sounds to specific locations.

The Almeida's new sound equipment was sourced through Jimmy Potter at Marquee Audio, with the Meyer elements coming via Autograph. Leonard comments that both Marquee and Stage Electrics have been excellent, and the whole audio trip has been achieved without a single hiccup! "We came in, positioned the gear, plugged up, and fired up - and it all worked first time!"

This is a major result in the context of the theatre's previous non-existence, and the fact that the Gainsborough Studios has progressed from building site to production stage and auditorium in just eight weeks.

So, as the season concludes with *Coriolanus*, one of the Shakespeare's most destructive, hard-edged and aggressive works, so ends the creative era of a building that has produced some vital threads in English visual expression.

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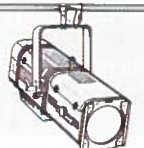


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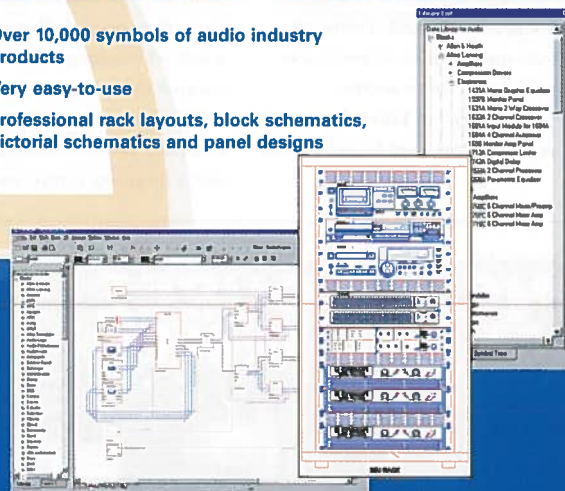
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John Watt

Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

It's a chilly walk from Victoria Station to the Horticultural Halls in early April, but well worth the effort when the ABTT stage their annual exhibition (reviewed elsewhere) if you are a lighting junky like me. The usual

array of technical wizardry really stretches the capacity of this modest hall, but I, for one, don't object to the restricted mileage between stands. Mercifully, this show doesn't feature sound equipment over much, so you can hold a conversation if anyone in the industry is still talking to you. Happily a few still do and it seems to me this is the prime reason for

going - networking, as we must now call it.

EX-PATS WERE MUCH in evidence: Richard Pilbrow only allowed me to get down on one knee for two minutes, David Taylor waived this right as the lino was a bit grubby (he's more used to marble) and Denis Irving, being Australian, doesn't expect anyone to get on their knees unless they're looking for a discount. Francis Reid nearly qualifies as an ex-pat, having travelled all the way from Norwich (home of the strange studio manned by a great crew with a sense of humour - hi guys) to spread his usual bonhomie. I'm biased, of course, but is there another business so full of characters and father figures with which to spend a few pleasant hours? I think not.

I DID THE COMPULSORY circuit of the stands, and as usual probably missed the clever new products, the exception being perhaps Strand's SL range, not quite new I know, but now featuring a few updates which improve an already excellent profile spot. Well, I call it a profile spot, though their catalogue doesn't mention the words - it's just called the SL series of 'fixtures', a bit faceless and American. It should have a name, but like them, I can't think of one.

APART FROM THAT, I was only really brought to a halt by Flint's stand, a sort of ironmongers and Aladdin's cave of bits and bobs that every show needs: paint, tools, screws and their Folding Quick Turn Podger. What? You haven't got one? Hurry now while stocks last. AJS showed their versatile Dipline range of tiny fittings (I nearly wrote *fixtures*) and even tinier bare and coloured bulbs which plug in anywhere on a conductive backing, a clever idea particularly for display work.

I CANNOT HELP MUSING on why they hold the show in the Horticultural Halls. Is there a connection between horticulture and lighting? Well, putting to one side that I would pay them to light Charlie Dimmock (Alan Titchmarsh please note), the connections are a bit tenuous to say the least. We both use bulbs, plant hire companies, and sow, reap and scatter a bit, but there the connection ends.

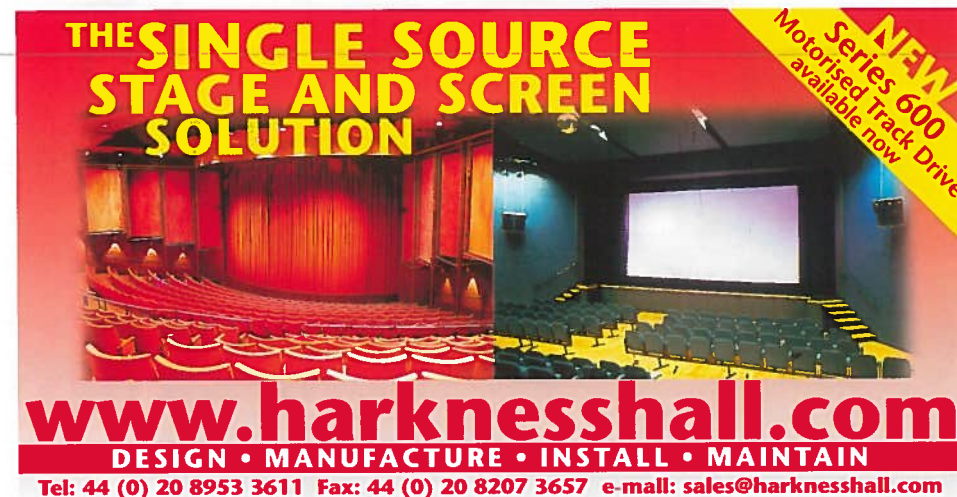
LIKE THE REST OF MY BREED I'm always on the lookout for other areas which might use the talents of a lighting designer, generally a fruitless task as about 90 percent of those that could really do with a bit of lighting know-how don't know they need it. If you don't believe me, take a look at *Shopping City* on BBC 2 - not some cheapskate commercial company, please note. This features whatever is trendy in home shopping, clothes, make-up, furnishings, etc. We visit a shopping centre and go in to the actual

shops where the stuff is sold (product placement must be the business to be in). It's not all dull - I've changed my eye shadow to a darker shade as a result of watching the make-up feature - but the point is they only use available light (if they don't, they fooled me - they can go back two more places 'cause it looks like it). What possible excuse can there be for having no production standards whatsoever? I'm not being grand - never mind good photography, you just can't see what's going on; overhead fluorescent lighting isn't the most flattering angle and funny things happen to colours too - I know that even without going to Evesham.

SO WHERE WAS I? Oh yes, looking for alternative employment as usual. Now, just between us, a writer friend of mine tells me he has just written 12 five-minute episodes for a soap destined to be seen on mobile phones! I'm not sure that the technology is quite there yet, but the scripts are. Maybe it's just your Luddite correspondent that finds this a pretty mind-blowing concept. Maybe my sharp-edged, strongly-keyed lighting style will come back into fashion when viewed on a two-inch LCD screen in broad daylight.

NOW I READ I'M OUT OF DATE already, as for the last few weeks you could have been watching a three-minute soap daily on the internet. It's interactive too, so you can join in and influence the plot and get casual references made to your family, etc. Alongside this you can become a 'friend' and find out more about the characters, their clothes, their flats and their boyfriends. Apparently, the first series was shot over five days in a Notting Hill flat for £60,000 - £100,000. The lighting budget might make interesting reading, but as I haven't seen the pictures yet I'll wait to be pleasantly surprised. Good lighting does pop up in unexpected places, being more a product of love and care than high-tech equipment.

THIS DISPLAY OF UN-COOLNESS by yours truly was finally topped on a visit to a regional news centre last week. The under-populated control room which features in the shots boasted a very impressive monitor stack. I noticed a few unfamiliar logos and test signals on some screens, particularly near the ends of the stack. Enquiries revealed the truth: half of the monitors weren't monitors at all, but merely light boxes with transparencies glued to the front. A flick of the light switch by the door brought them all on. I was particularly miffed as I had spent five minutes trying to work out when it was I worked for Central Regional Arts Productions (CRAP TV for short) and thinking how good the definition was on camera seven, particularly as they only have three cameras.



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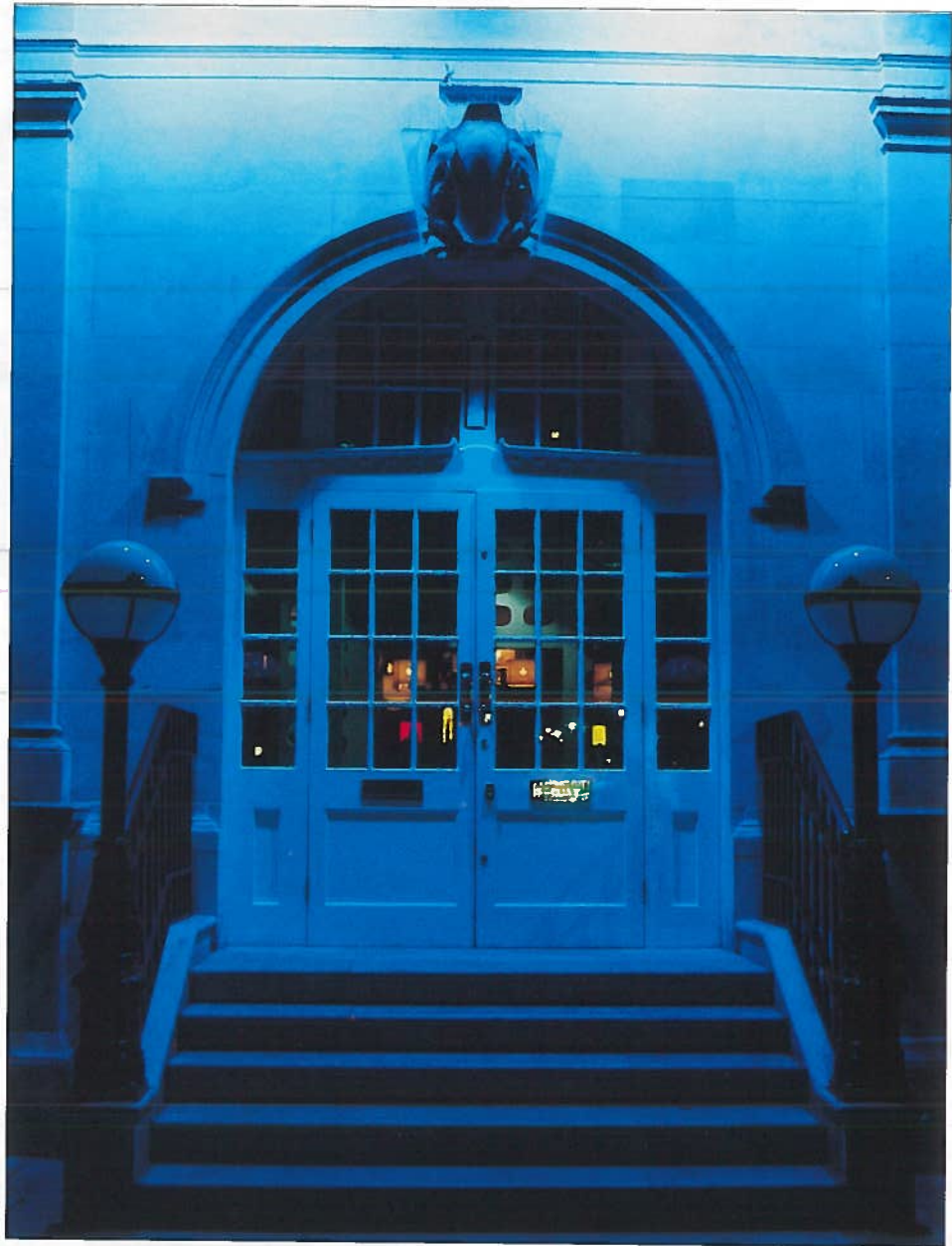
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Glam Rock



L&S! checks out the latest trend in London clubs - and discovers that the writing is on the wall. London's newest nightspot is, according to its owner Piers Adam, an antidote to the superclubs that now dominate the capital. Moreover, it represents a tongue-in-cheek return to an emphasis on exclusivity and image that characterised the nightclub scene of the late 1970s

The venue itself, located adjacent to Hungerford Bridge and Embankment station, is some distance from the heart of London's clubland - in fact, given the complete lack of any identification on the exterior of the building, Adam and his team could not be accused of drawing attention to their presence. Dickens Adam (Piers' brother and operations director at Rock) explained that the low-key visuals on the outside (limited to UV lighting over doors and windows and the occasional illuminated pavement light) was not conceived to deter passing tourist traffic. "The building is listed, so we couldn't touch the outside. Ironically," he added, "it gives the

club just the right kind of look. You wouldn't just drop in - you have to know where you want to be to end up here!" Originally built 150 years ago as a pumping station designed to keep the users of Embankment underground station safe from the tidal rise and fall of the river Thames, Hungerford House spent some of its life accommodating an exclusive clientele of a different sort - as one of Her Majesty's prisons.

If You're Not On The List

With a capacity of 750, split between the ground floor cocktail bar/restaurant and the

subterranean lounge and dancefloor, Rock can afford to be exclusive. In grand old club style, access to its opening night was by invitation only, and Adam confirmed that the club is set to continue its policy of being a guest-list driven nightspot for a more sophisticated crowd. Since its well-publicised opening, starstruck clubbers have shared the dancefloor (metaphorically speaking) with pop stars, models and the rest of the London 'A' List. Seating downstairs, although inviting, is almost always reserved - architect Giles Baker has even managed to include a 'crow's nest' mini-lounge from which the ultra-exclusive can look down on *hoi polloi*.

The club's interior combines 1970s disco glam (complete with giant mirror ball and jasmine-scented air conditioning) with a Bond-like futurism. In visual terms, this has meant a shift away from conventional light and even moving fixtures towards projection - though as Lawrence Titon of AV consultants SoundSCAPE pointed out, this is not as big a shift as it may seem. "I view projection as just another form of lighting," he

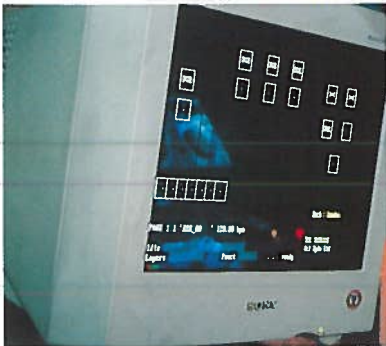




Left, the main bar area. Inset, the SoundSCAPE control system.

Below, Rock is a prime example of how images can be used to manipulate the mood.

Right, an ASS enclosure, part of the original spec.



explained. "In fact, at Rock we have used the brightness of the screens themselves to light areas of the club."

Sharp Image

Originally billed in the press as 'plasma screens', three of the four visual display systems are in fact based around Sharp XGNV6XE projectors, wide-angle lenses and custom-built screens. The fourth, situated where it is visible from every seat in the club, is also Sharp-driven, but uses a water-screen as a projection medium. The Sharps were supplied by London club regulars Tarsin and specified by SoundSCAPE following a lengthy period of comparison, and the combination of their 3,000 lumens output and close proximity to the screens adds hugely to the impact of the visual presentation. The equipment was installed by PA Installations from Wales.

Graphics, like the system itself, were designed by SoundSCAPE, and the entire presentation is coordinated by a customised Xylo Turbine Matrix show control package. This allows the integration of six DVD sources (lightly modified Pioneer DVD/V/7300s), switched to any of the four

projectors via an MX-50 mixer and Media Technologies Pro2 Image Processor, with MIDI-based low/mid/high audio triggers from the DJ console. The sophisticated system runs, surprisingly, without an operator - which, explained Titon, was one of Adam's criteria. "Rock couldn't afford someone to control the system," he said, "and in this instance that really is not necessary. The system works to a set of cues, but anyone can press a button and bring up a whole new chase sequence." Titon also emphasised the fact

that text, as well as graphics, is used to reinforce the mood at various points during a typical evening - including suggestive messages that form part of the more erotic late-night sequences.

Monthly Media

DVD players were chosen over Laser Discs because of their lower capital cost, but also to allow SoundSCAPE to generate future sequences cost-effectively. This is being done on a monthly basis, and Titon pointed out that although a remote link to the

Rock system from SoundSCAPE's London offices would be possible, he would rather rely on physical medium than telecommunications to keep the graphics content fresh. One of the original concepts was to project the newly-printed morning papers

onto the screens as the club closed each morning, which, admits Titon, would require a more immediate file transfer system.

Although the screen size is not a standard video ratio, SoundSCAPE is able to create and project in whatever format is required - as shown at a recent corporate bash where conventional analogue video was required in addition to the club's normal digital-only output.

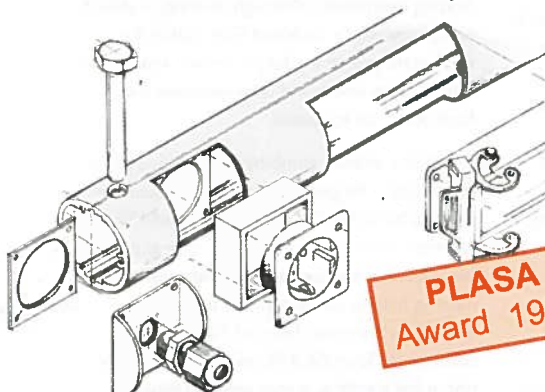
Flashing Lights

The remainder of the lighting installation is amazingly sparse - especially considering Titon's background as a Vari*Lite operator. A mere eight Martin



"As the club intends to court repeat business (whether from fan-weary pop stars who want a quiet night out, or high-spending London professionals), one of the main tasks is to re-invent the visuals on a regular basis.

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Professional Roboscans (four 918s and the same quantity of 812s) adorn the walls around the diminutive dancefloor, plus a couple of mini-spots for the mirrorball. The system is controlled by a laptop running LightJockey software. Titon is planning an upgrade in the near future, but is sceptical about the value of lighting in a modern club.

"We're trying to sell leisure - and the whole flashing light scenario was never conducive to talking to other people," he asserted. Additional fixtures will be used to enhance the unusual internal architecture of the venue, possibly using the recently-introduced multi-colour halogen dichroic reflectors.

Repeat Business

As the club intends to court repeat business (whether from fan-weary pop stars who want a quiet night out, or high-spending London professionals), one of the main tasks is to re-invent the visuals on a regular basis. Clearly the repetition of short sequences is to be avoided - and Titon's designers have addressed the problem by adding as many variables into the equation as possible. Video slips are categorised according to speed (to match BPM information from the DJ console) as well as several other criteria, and sequences are measured in terms of hours rather than minutes.

Manual manipulation is made possible via the small MIDI control keyboard provided with the system, though SoundSCAPE are understandably cagey about the exact details. Titon and his business partner Bill Curtis are banking on other clients adopting a similar visual style - the cost of designing a one-off system for Rock and of maintaining an original video library far exceeds the licence fee chargeable to the club for use of the material.

Sound Match

Unusually, the club's sound system has found itself the focus of some attention. The current system, which is based around the ASS (Acoustic Sound Systems) range of enclosures, was installed by Tarsin for the venue's opening, but SoundSCAPE is currently evaluating alternatives that, says Titon, will more closely match the atmosphere generated by the visual presentation. The audio section of the DJ booth is completely conventional, with a pair of Technics SL1210 decks and Pioneer CDJ500 Mk II players, run through a Rane DJ mixer and Klark Teknik graphic. One corner of the booth is given over to the graphics system, with a bank of seven 9" monitors providing the DJ with local feeds of the projection signals.

Crown amplification was specified throughout, and includes MA 600, 1200, 2400 and 5000VZ models. The ASS enclosures are for the most part distributed,

with eight 2P compact mid-highs in the upstairs bar/restaurant, plus a quartet of S10B subs built into the seventies décor. Eight ASS 10Ps cover the seated area of the downstairs room, while a concentration of 12Ps provide more level around the dancefloor, supplemented by no less than 10 S10B subs. BSS FDS360 crossovers are used to provide the system splits.

In The Mood

Graphics are not new to the club environment - but the Rock installation is one of the most highly-integrated and sophisticated of its kind. Where previously club owners could get away with showing MTV without the sound, the visual presentation is coming of age. Titon and the team at SoundSCAPE are clearly committed to meaningful graphics as the future of club design. Judging from the level of interest in the showcase system at Rock, the future looks very bright indeed.

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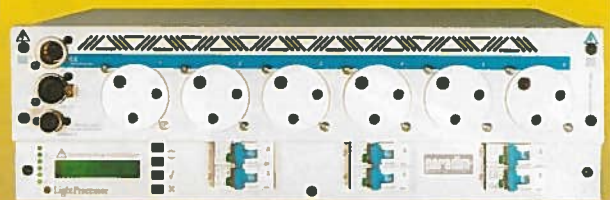
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tony Gattelior

No Comment...

Following last month's revelation that PRG had posted a US\$14.7m loss, and that its credit arrangements with its lenders are under renegotiation, I asked the Group's founder, Jere Harris, to comment on the situation, and this, with some very minor editing, is what he said -

"**THERE ARE NO SUITS** in the PRG boardroom yet, or in control. There are changes taking place to improve the business processes. The lighting business in the US, and from what I can gather in the UK, is not in the best of shape. There has been activity, but the competitiveness of the current industry has driven pricing to levels that do not support the cost structure with the need for new technology."

HARRIS THEN WENT ON to refer to the problems at

Matthews which had become public knowledge with their filing for protection at about the same time. He then continued: "We are refinancing our bank debt. This was a scheduled event. Banks move very slowly, so the time frame is not out of the ordinary."

I REFERRED TO RUMOURS that LSD's Icon-M project might be on hold in the meantime: "Icon-M is still ongoing. We have not achieved the brightness that I feel the product needs and are still in R&D on that issue. We have not abandoned this effort at all!"

I SINCERELY HOPE THAT Jere's confidence in all of this is borne out because, if not, an awful lot of suppliers are susceptible to a hit, to say nothing of the many talented individuals who will certainly suffer.

I GUESS THERE WILL BE MANY people in the industry who will be crowing over the image of Peter Johansen incarcerated in shackles and chains, though I have always rather cherished an image of him . . . [deleted in the interests of good taste - Ed]. Factually, if his three-month sentence sticks after the appeal, it is most likely to be served in a much more leisurely fashion.

SINCE THE CASE, from which he emerged ashen-faced according to observers, and which he was apparently confident of winning, he has threatened to leave Denmark for good and blamed his own success for making him a target for such accusations. To be fair, it does seem to be a fairly minor matter compared with the kind of company fraud cases here in the UK that lead to imprisonment. The Court accepted that the offending share transaction was not carried out for personal gain, but rather in a misguided attempt to manipulate the share price to fend off unwelcome predators - his sin being that the transaction was not transparent and not reported to the Copenhagen Stock Exchange.

THIS IS HOW he explains his failure to report, as he was obliged to do under the regulations, saying that he felt that the resultant exposure would jeopardise his intention to protect the business: "From one side of a crossroads I see my daughter, on the opposite side, being threatened by a rapist. I drive over, ignoring the red light, to save my daughter - but get punished for not respecting a stop light!" Johansen refutes any suggestion that he was cynically trying to recover his erstwhile position at Martin Professional.

HE DID MAKE A PROFIT on the shares when he sold them subsequently, and the Court fined him the equivalent amount on top of the prison sentence. The outcome of the appeal expected later in the year will be awaited with interest by all concerned.

SO IT SEEMS, like the Millennium, that the Sydney Olympics and the attendant ceremonies are not going to be the bonanza for the industry that everyone expected, due to lack of funds. Apparently, production houses have been asked to provide the kit solely for the prestige of being involved in the event. It seems at least three manufacturers of lighting desks have been approached. The Olympic organisers will generously contribute to the freight costs. Any takers?

IT SEEMS A LIFETIME ago since EHB (Chip) Monck, a revered figure of the old rock and roll touring days, swanned around LDI'98 sprinkling stardust in everybody's eyes over the glittering prospects for Rick Birch's grand designs for the Olympiad. Now the stars have gone out, just the dust remains, and of Monck, nothing more has been heard since.

THE RECENT APPEARANCE OF A ROGUE WEBSITE in our sector may prompt those interested in Cyber-law, and specifically those supporters of anarchy on the web, to consider the implications of such commercial terrorism. I am not going to name the offending site, as I don't want to encourage this sort of activity, but here's the gist of it.

IT CONSISTED of a complete copy, graphically, of the site of one of our leading contracting companies in the UK - same typeface, same colours, same format, virtually indistinguishable from the original and with the same address, all but a hyphen. Only the words have been changed to what I can only describe as commercial abuse, trade graffiti, and salacious spinning - highly defamatory statements about the subject company's contractual performance criteria and their alleged failures to deliver on time and to budget.

CLEARLY, THE ISP HOSTING the site was not originally aware of the content, for it has subsequently been removed, because in the light of the judgement in the Godfrey case in the UK, they could be found liable for damages should the target company care to pursue the matter through the Courts. Not so in the US, where similar judgements have gone the opposite way. I imagine, however, that the wisdom of discretion will prevail in this case and that the injured party will keep their heads down. I hope that this is the last case of this kind I am obliged to report.

NOW THAT IT'S ANNOUNCED it's perhaps a bit late, but can someone please explain the commercial rationale behind the proposed marriage between Luminar and Northern Leisure - two companies still digesting recent substantial acquisitions?

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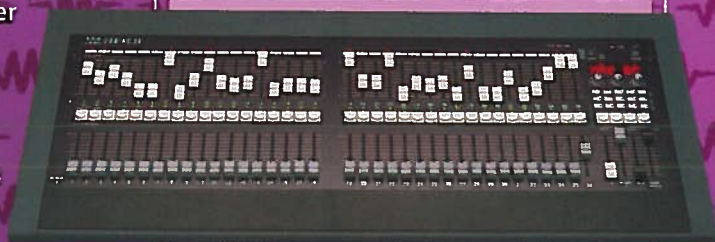


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On Anon . . .

Louise Stickland, glad rags at the ready, finds that On Anon, a multi-dimensional venue creating a touch of the unexpected in a prime location in downtown Piccadilly, is perfectly poised to tap into the bloodstream of the relentless buzz of West End fun and fantasy

On Anon is the latest venue to be opened by Chorion PLC, a leisure operator with a seemingly canny and innovative attitude to creating successful social spaces. On Anon follows hot on the heels of Chorion's inaugural foray into the multi-purpose, late night venue market with Tiger Tiger in Haymarket, opened at the end of 1998 (see L&SI February 1999). Tiger Tiger's searing success still has people queuing around the block at the weekends - over a year later.

Other recent Chorion ventures have included The Loop in Hanover Square and The Langley in Covent Garden. They seem cute to social trends - global branding is definitely uncool in Y2K, while diversity and variety is adamantly in. On Anon is not exactly radical in concept, but the 1,500-capacity venue offers variety and is interesting and stylistically chic enough to impress its core market of over-25 movers and shakers, up for a good night out and with money to burn.

Contractor-wise, Chorion remains loyal to the winning combination that has helped energise its other venues into happening nightspots. Music

Marketing Services (MMS) has installed the audio system throughout the building, and also the effects lighting on the intimate 300-person dancefloor on level four. Wiring and environmental lighting was undertaken by Torbay Electrical and the main contractors were WFC.

The creative interior design team from The Design & Build Partnership/Tibbatts was again headed by Tony Carty, resulting in a series of stunning, eye-catching environments. Each area has its own individual theming, unfolding and surprising as you wind upwards through the five floors of voluptuous, labyrinthine curves. On Anon bears a tactile 'huggy' feel and few dull moments!

The ground floor, off-street 'shop window' is inauspicious enough. The main entrance from Shaftesbury Avenue leads into an understated French neighbourhood style café/deli/croissanterie with full bar - but this is just the tip of the iceberg! At the top of the first flight of stairs is the main bar, wrapping around two smart semi-circular bar service areas. It has a touch of the oriental - wicker chairs, an eclectic collection of photos and prints, plants and an airy feel.

From there you can move into the first niche area, the Study. Modelled on an eighteenth century gentleman's club, this area has low ceilings, leather-upholstered Chesterfield-style sofas, old classic table lamps with large shades, thick carpet, low-key lighting, a relaxed ambience and a cheeky, but contemporary, sense of reverence. At a hundred and eighty degrees to the Study, the decor morphs seamlessly into the Lounge area - a hint of Cubism with squareish, comfortable high- and low-backed dusky peach chairs, modern chaise longues, large circular glass 'windows' and a bubbly blonde wood floor - a space for the movers and shakers.





"On Anon looks set to be another Chorion success story. The company's profile reflects on the mysterious side while they let the venues take centre stage - and rightly so. Perhaps the most refreshing aspect of On Anon is the absence of surveillance equipment! In an age when Big Brother seems ascendant in clubland, CCTV, screens, internet and computer graphics, et al have no place in the public spaces here . . ."

Half a floor upwards is the Booth Bar, complete with breathtaking views over Piccadilly Circus, Eros and the elegant upwards curve of Regent Street. This must be one of the prime people-watching spots in London. Various other individual bar seats and bum rests skim around the sides of the area, many with window views, and there is friendly and discreet waiter service.

Going back through the main bar and up the next staircase brings a complete shift of scene. This time, the guest is transported into the light, bright, high-ceilinged Loft Bar - a Manhattan-style top floor environment. The walls are adorned with elegant black and white film star portraits, décor is neutral and inviting chrome/leather high-stools are scattered around the tables and bar.



Up another flight from here is the 'Hunting Lodge' - somewhat visceral for vegetarians, this area again zooms back in simulated time, emulating a Canadian hunting lodge. The wood cabin effect, complete with the spoils and trinkets of hunting, includes real hides stretched across the walls and a massive moose's head, grinning sardonically down on drinkers.

Turning left, away from the Loft bar on level four is the dancefloor. The atmosphere changes to a bare, industrial unfinished concrete-cum-building-site space - vaguely reminiscent of a late eighties rave. Like all spaces in On Anon, the dancing area is small, cosy and inviting. The DJ area, bar and drink stands are fabricated from scaffolding - for the makeshift feel.

The effects lighting resembles a temporary rave rig ready for a quick dismantle in case of emergencies.

Chorion very much desired something contemporary 'without' an actual rig being in evidence - lighting with effect, but not housed in a distracting metal-tastic enclosure. As a result, they came up with the idea of using four internally-wired lighting bars on which to mount the fixtures. Again, the ceiling height is low here, enhancing the friendly, welcoming vibe - in dramatic contrast to many other West End clubs!

Once a suitably raw dancefloor aesthetic was onboard, MMS's Ed Manwaring chose his fixtures. Drawing on their success in Tiger Tiger, he again used a selection of Coemar intelligent lighting fixtures to produce an energising array of dancefloor effects, supplemented with High End fixtures.

Three Coemar Comets, eight Futurelight MH 660 moving heads and 16 Futurelight CC200 colour changers are the bulk of the rig . . . all of which were supplied by Chris Rolph at Coe-Tech, together with a UV cannon and two Technohaze generators.

The three High End Technobeam moving mirror fixtures and a LightProcessor QCommander console, used for controlling all dancefloor lighting, were supplied by Lightfactor Sales. It's a compact, sensibly sized lighting rig with plenty of impact and headroom for the space. Most importantly it fits the brief.

Manwaring comments that the Coemar products were chosen for their good track record and excellent effects. He thinks the 660s in particular are quick to programme and very cost-effective. The Technobeams were also chosen for their great effects and superb engineering.

The QCommander was specified because it is flexible, easy to programme and DJ-friendly (in the absence of a lighting operator): "It can be honed down to just a few button presses to produce amazing effects," enthuses Manwaring. The console was initially programmed by Maria Jenkins.

For audio, MMS once again went for an assortment of JBL speakers throughout the building - they have used JBL in all the Chorion venues to date. Manwaring produced a sound design which was plotted on JBL's CAD B2 acoustic modelling software to ensure no corner was left uncovered. He adds that JBL has the ability to deliver . . . "great versatility and different blends of quality audio expected of each area."

The main dancefloor features six JBL Sound Power SP222s, a pair of SP 128S direct-radiating subs and a pair of Venue Series VS 125 HS, 15" folded horn subs. The system throughout the building is all driven by JBL amplifiers and controlled by two BSS 9088 SoundWeb devices and 'Jellyfish' controllers.

The rest of the building yields Control 28s, SB2 subs, Control 25s for the smaller bars, and in the main lounge, Control 24s with ceiling-mounted Control 19 subs. This was done to ensure the visual continuity and lines of the room remained unbroken. The idea of seamless, high definition audio effect is working well throughout. With the JBL boxes all voiced the same, the overall quality remains almost identical passing between different areas utilising different speakers.

DJ equipment includes a Technics 1210 turntable, Denon DN 2000F twin-CD player, Denon cassette deck and a Formula Sound FSM 600 mixer. The Soundwebs take care of all audio processing and routing throughout On Anon, and each area has its own 'shrimp' remote selector volume control, so each bar and bar manager has volume and selection control over one of four potential background music sources. On Anon's fifth music source is the DJ. At this early stage of the club's existence, no-one could commit themselves to exactly when - and where in the building - the DJ would kick in!

The 1200 background music sources (with new tracks added monthly) are stored on two two-zone versions of the highly flexible Rolec DHD 300 hard disk players supplied by Hayden Laboratories. These devices are popular in this style of application where the various areas need optimum musical versatility and different sounds for a myriad of shifting moods throughout the night.

Tracks are categorised by style, era and BPM and play lists, fulfilling any number of single or multiple musical criteria, can be selected, run and changed at the click of a button or mouse. New filters are also easy to add, and



Facing page, the club: like all spaces in On Anon, the dancing area is small, cosy and inviting. Above, the Study and left, lounge area on level one.

the DHD 300's completely random playback process eliminates the possibility of repetitive track sequences. Hardware advantages include freedom from the mechanical anomalies of a CD-based system. The hard disk also has greater storage capacity than a multitrack CD machine - at a fraction of the price.

On Anon's opening hours are initially expected to be 8am to 5pm for the deli/bar downstairs, and 5pm to 3am upstairs. Various upper level sections can be opened up as and when a demand is discovered for lunchtime and afternoon trade - one of the many practical attributes of the design.

MMS took the project in their stride. The 28-week on-site build period was hectic, but well controlled. Since Tiger Tiger, their first Chorion project, the ongoing inter-departmental dialogue has become increasingly fluid as everyone has become familiar with one another. MMS's senior account manager Paul Woodward comments that working with Chorion is challenging but hugely rewarding.

Each project has different parameters with an overall bottom line of quality and attention to detail. "They (Chorion) encourage creative collaboration and input from everyone on the production team - designers, technical and practical. It's a very honest and productive relationship. That way we all have a clear understanding of what does and doesn't work and the most efficient way of achieving our goals," he says.

On Anon looks set to be another Chorion success story. The company's profile reflects on the mysterious side while they let the venues take centre stage - and rightly so. Perhaps the most refreshing aspect of On Anon is the absence of surveillance equipment! In an age when Big Brother seems ascendant in clubland, CCTV, screens, satellite broadcasts, internet connectivity, video, computer graphics, et al have no place in the public spaces here . . . replaced by the more natural interactive experiences of good conversation and dancing.

PHOTOS: PHIL DENT



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Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

It's been a huge pleasure these last few weeks to watch some of our top lighting men at work on shows where they have been given their head. They've lit hits and flops, in the eyes of my critical colleagues, but to me the shows I want to talk about have all brought nothing but enjoyment. In some cases that enjoyment has sprung directly from the excellence of the design, which has perhaps shielded me from the harsher thoughts that my text-

conscious chums have voiced in their reviews. Unlucky for them.

IT STARTED WITH

Nicholas Wright's *Cressida*, where Bob Crowley brought the Globe on to the stage of the Albery, and with an ingenious folding set gave us all the backstage bustle of the times. And there's Paul Pyant, fresh from a couple of busily-lit shows for the NT Ensemble, putting the third dimension into Crowley's sets with what looked like

a fairly traditional rig - apart from some birdies perched on the brass columns of the orchestra pit. Come to think of it, there was a healthy dose of up-lighting and side-lighting, too. *Cressida* is one of those ain't-theatre-wonderful shows that appeals to insiders and outsiders alike; I'd reckon Pyant and friends had a great deal of fun putting it together.

FIRST SIGHT OF *The Graduate* gave us a very square Rob Howell set of louvred screens, efficient but unexciting, that gave no hint of the wonders to come. It didn't reveal too much of

Kathleen Turner, either, as Hugh Vanstone gave her plenty of discreet back-lighting when she whipped off her towel. The play's subsequent revelations were more concerned with set and lighting than mere flesh, with Rob Howell getting constant surprises out of his screens, and Mr Vanstone finding ever neater ways to slant light through the slats, or add in some sharp neon signage. The peak came just before the interval, I guess, with a blue lightbox all along the front edge of the stage: hey presto, a swimming pool.

LAUTREC HAS HAD A PRETTY terrible press. It comes as no surprise really - here's a show about a painter (remember *Leonardo?*) with tunes by some uppity foreigner. Yet I'd have thought the critics might have paused over the creative team, which includes director Rob (*Buddy*) Bettinson, designer Rob (*Henry VIII*) Howell and lighting man Peter (say no more) Mumford. And believe me (not the idiots who wouldn't like *Show Boat* if they hadn't had it sung to them by their nannies) this is a terrific show in almost every respect, from its opening to the very last moment. Howell uses some astonishing drapes, which are often a significant part of the action, cushioning the performance in velvet gorgeousness. They give Mumford the freedom to make many of the show's effects with the sheer panache of his lighting, using a gaudy palette to match his subject. Gobos float across those drapes to give them added body, and the eye is forever drawn to the next wild splash of colour on stage. Those who know their Lautrec (obviously not the critics) will be delighted at the way in which his great posters and paintings are hinted at in costumes and poses, all enriched by Mumford's big, coloured spots and powerful multi-beam moving lights. The work of a superb production team, including Martin Levan's finely-balanced sound, goes unnoticed by most critics, too busy looking for the next jibe about short painters or French songwriters.

AND THEY WERE AT IT AGAIN the following week at the National, with the latest of the

brilliantly-staged musicals which have distinguished the Trevor Nunn regime, the Nick Darke/Stephen Warbeck *Villains' Opera*. Tim Supple brought his Young Vic/RSC team of Robert Innes Hopkins and Paule Constable to the Olivier and made the leap to big-budget with ease. It was a surprise to see Paule Constable going for a Mumford-type palette of gaudy primary colours, too, but they brought the necessary splash to Hopkins' often urban-grim sets, a series of splendid creations that trucked smoothly on and off to create wildly varied acting environments for a big cast. Backing them, in a continuation of the new low-level eyeline of the revamped Olivier stage, Hopkins' slatted screens, a metallic version of Rob Howell's *Graduate* walls, could reveal a cyc that wittily shadowed the action with silhouettes of the Dome, St Paul's and other landmarks. The show's final woodland shoot-out, an *SM's* nightmare with guns due to go off all over the stage, was a suitable riot of (white) light and sound. Add a frighteningly topical story update (think Kenneth Noye) and some great gags, top-class actor-singers like Clive Rowe or Alexander Hanson and you have a recipe for total success. The critics thought otherwise.

AT LEAST THE TECHNICAL SIDE of Ralph Fiennes's *Richard II* at the Gainsborough Studios (see feature page 52) stole all the critical plaudits. Paul Brown's huge grassed end-stage, split by a fissure in the brick back wall, made an immediate statement, and as Jonathan Kent's production progressed we were treated to a series of new uses of different corners of the acting area, its balconies, ledges, underground and overground entrances, which meant that you could play a whole sequence of very different scenes with barely a stick of furniture, as Shakespeare would wish. And throughout, we had the big lighting effects of Mark Henderson, in his element with magnificent shafts bursting through that gap in the back wall, mottled gobos telling us which patch of grass to watch next and carefully notched levels that took us from the outdoor pomp of the tournament field to the gloom of prison. The look of this production, once again, is magnificent - and incidentally, the acoustic of the old studios is so good that Jonathan Dove's recorded music seemed too, well, recorded.

AFTER ALL THESE VERY VISIBLE lighting triumphs it was a healthy contrast to sit in the Cottesloe for Joe Penhall's tense psychological three-hander, *Blue Orange*. Bill Dudley simply gives the actors a square platform with three chairs on which to fight, with only a water-cooler for visual effect. Rick Fisher lights the play with, naturally enough, a lot of blue and a fair dash of orange. I didn't notice a single cue throughout the evening, though I'll bet there were dozens. That's great lighting, too.

"Rick Fisher lights the play with, naturally enough, a lot of blue and a fair dash of orange. I didn't notice a single cue throughout the evening, though I'll bet there were dozens. That's great lighting, too."

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If you think all these Boy and Girl bands are so much smoke and mirrors, then Puff Daddy is the bonfire of the vanities and it's a very damp autumn morning. Self-regarding, arrogant, and ultimately a confused bundle of hypocrisy (or is that Hip Hop Crassy), this is a live - and I use that word loosely - presentation with few redeeming features. Call me old, call me passed it, call me what you like, this is not art.

"It's the biggest karaoke you'll ever see," said lighting crew boss Andy Gibb, and that's as uncoloured an assessment as you're likely to hear from any member of this production team (that's excluding the six bus-loads of 'Puffy's Family' that accompany the tour). Seel I told you there were a few redeeming features - my old friends at Phoenix Coaches must be very happy indeed.

That's a partial truth too for the rest of the logistical side of the tour. March and April have been notoriously patchy when it comes to touring work, so even a brief spin around Europe like this one is gratefully received. But it's not all easy money. Puffy is a more substantial artist in the US (and in fact this tour seems merely to be a grudging fulfilment of an old commitment) and he commands a fair discount for lengthy tours. What with the strong Pound to Dollar rate, that made it easily worthwhile shipping over Showco's Prism system, even for this brief visit. For LSD it was somewhat easier, with matched gear on both sides of the Atlantic, but that also meant matching US touring prices - a double-edged sword if ever there was one.

Some may be aware that this tour saw all the trucks embargoed one night at Transam's yard until bills were paid to one and all. In fairness to Puffy and his reputation, I have it on good authority that he, Puffy, paid his 50% of tour costs right up front, before he even came over from the US, and it was the promoter who held tight his purse strings. And there's the rub: promotion. Hands up all those who knew the tour was over here, and visiting a venue near you? The citizens of Manchester certainly didn't - I saw more people at the MEN Arena last month for a dead

Elvis, a similar presentation - but ironically more 'Live' than this one. Even more ironically, B.I.G. Biggie Smalls (now dead) duets with his old mate Puffy for a couple of numbers courtesy of video. Hmmm.

SOUND

"The fidelity is good, and the low end is punchy and hard. Just what I need for this act. But you need to know how to handle it, go for accuracy first and the dynamics comes out of it." Having engineered for Steel Pulse, Horace Granville Ward knows all about handling low end. "EQ for the room is slight, just the odd frequency," (he hit 100Hz and 8kHz pretty hard) "but most is pretty flat. It's a very natural sound." Natural that is to the style. In the absence of any musicians, other than a percussionist (part-time), there's not much natural going on here apart from vocals. All the music comes from a bunch of hard disks operated back stage by Marc Pfafin

"I'm up there in level," admitted Ward, "but I'm not going to be blowing anything." Even during 'Come Wit Me' Puffy's raucous rendition of Zeppelin's Kashmir, I only saw 110dBA peaks on Ward's Klark Teknik analyser, but it felt loud because the low end was so saturated. For example, the analyser revealed an almost flat line at peak reading from 100Hz downwards, with every frequency above sitting on a similarly flat line 8dB-10dB under. Despite which, vocal clarity was good, if back in the mix, but then there wasn't a single instrument to compete against - all the samples were nicely balanced.

That doesn't mean Ward has an easy time of it, he busily moves about his Midas XL4 constantly balancing vocal levels from a variety of seven different voices, plus four BVs. And the singers do fluctuate wildly, from low-level sex-croon, to bilious screech - it's a lot to follow. "Everyone's on B58 (UHF wireless)," he said, "mics are not really a problem" thanks largely to a benign stage sound. "I do get asked to turn it down," said Jerrell Evans on monitors. He provides just four mixes from a Harrison to a cluster of Showco wedges downstage centre, a pair of wedges each for Percs and the DJ, but



most stage information comes off a small Prism PA flown each side as fills. It cooks along at 105dBA on stage apparently. Like Ward, Evans just tracks the vocals and gives a natural mix. In the house everything is compressed - Summit on Puffy, DBX160 for the other 'guest' vocalists, and a DBX900 rack for everything else. Noticeable, but OK.

LIGHTING & VIDEO

Michael Keller and Peter Morse co-designed this show. "We were given a video from the last tour, told to watch it, and then prepare for two days rehearsal." The only trouble was the video was of the handheld, close-up only variety. "There was no vision of the show at all." Which left the two men a little at sea, but they came up with a bright, effulgent show, lustrous and filmic in quality, which seemed to be where the artiste was coming from.



"Unfortunately, he hates pink," which, as you've no doubt guessed, was the colour key of their show. At the heart of the rig is High End's Studio Color. "The High End stuff is great, the software in the lamps is really user-friendly and reliable. They're like Chevy or Ford. Might not be the flashiest car on the lot, but they always get you there." Which is no small thing in the world of moving lights.

Just like the whole process of compression, much of the detailed information is cut, to enable delivery of a more powerful sensation. Less is more, but not the way we know it.

In the absence of pink, Keller and Morse resorted to a lot of blue, yellow and green. "It's a big, in-your-face kind of show," said Keller. "Pyrotechnics are a large part of it, and the video too [from Chris Mounsor's Nocturne Europe]." The colours are lush, but even so, a lot of the beam stuff gets lost in the brightness of the screen, even with the profusion of smoke. George Elizondo (the video director) is aware, but his directive is clear, and besides the screen is throttled back. "He [Puffy] is conscious of what's up there," said Elizondo, "there are key elements he always wants. Excitement is essential, and he likes that movie gloss." As such, Elizondo uses a mix of live and recorded material, some grainy effects from his Magic Dave, but largely that hyper-real image that makes much of what's on the screen look more like a trailer at the movies."

The screen, it has to be said, is not fantastic. Bright yes, but you can easily discern every

rectangular module in it. But that doesn't matter; the image is easy to see. That's axiomatic of the show, highly compressed vocals for the MP3 generation, compromised video quality, and lights with banished colours. Just like the whole process of compression, much of the detailed information is cut, to enable delivery of a more powerful sensation. Less is more, but not the way we know it.

Paddy McAloon paints slightly surreal pictures of very ordinary situations. That's the charm of his band Prefab Sprout; it's a bit like watching Play for Today - for those of you who can remember. It's the sad, shabby interiors of our lives writ large, and exposed for the little humanities they contain.

Sad then that this is the first outing in 10 years for a universally acclaimed songwriter. Sadder too that few in Leeds thought it worth coming. Strange, too for the T&C is a venue without equal for this kind of act. It's intimate - almost every punter can virtually reach out and touch the artist. That's probably what inspired a visitor from Minnesota to enter into a dialogue with Paddy, pursuing an unknown corner of his canon, a song with the unlikely title of 'I'm a Plumber'. To which the grey-bearded songster replied: "That was a terrible song. I stole the melody for something else and then abandoned it." We could have been in his front room chatting for he made everyone present feel part of the discussion. Charming, like his songs.

SOUND

"It's a strange tour," said house engineer Dick Rabel. "It's more like a recital. I think Paddy is using it to try out his new songs. He wants to see how people react." Rabel occupied the same seat on their last tour. Back then, his company Tour Tech had a very different

Tap dancing in sneakers is bad enough, but when the best lyric of the night is "Put your hands in the air. Say Oh Oooh," maybe another career beckons . . .

inventory of equipment. Now, after four years of steady investment, they are the largest stockists of L-Acoustics Arc speakers in the country. "We're not a V-dosc partner, but we are major users, stocking not just the Arcs, but many of L-Acoustics other products, SV115 wedges for example."

This is the first time I've heard Arcs as the primary PA system, and very sweet they are too. Rabel confirmed that similar performance characteristics to their big brothers make them exacting taskmasters, but great performers. "You do get extended throw out of them because of how they couple, and the fall-off outside their 22.5 degree horizontal dispersion is acute," something he was able to demonstrate clearly.

The Sprouts have a musical style filled with detail, and Rabel keeps levels down to make ample room for the content: "Except for the odd rocky song, that is. I do use the VCAs on the desk (a Yamaha PM4000) and group the whole band onto one as a band grand master, so when the opportunity arises I can ride the band up." This is only possible where McAloon isn't singing. Rabel captures that breathy, dreamy vocal sound so distinctive of the Sprouts, with an SM87, taking full advantage of its ability to bring out lively sibilance. "But everything over about 2kHz spills into it, so it has to be ridden all the time. It can be tiring, but it's very satisfying when you get it right."

Rabel's partner on monitors, Jon Burton, has, by his own admission, been swotting. "Basically I'm putting tiny delays on different wedges, so the sound is perceived as coming from different places." The band require little level on stage (compared to what most live acts demand) and thus Burton has a good opportunity to exploit the Haas effect, using level and delay to fool the brain, blurring the distinction between what

the musicians hear on stage, and what they're getting back from the room.

Presumably for the artist, this must make for a more comfortable stage experience where general levels are reduced without loss of necessary information. I also assume that the image they experience onstage is more generally up around their ears, rather than emanating from the wedge at their feet, because the arrival time from both house and wedge is matched, and house having the stronger level will position the image up. Unfortunately, the band was not available to comment whether this added to their comfort zone.

Burton has a Midas XL250 and uses XTA200 for his delay work, with XTA graphics and DBX160X compressor for the vocals, a situation mimicked by Rabel out front, but using the slightly more upmarket XTA226 and, as Rabel himself said: "The slightly smoother DBX160." Arguably his most vital tool is the H3000 which he's using to compensate for the lack of female harmonies (she's off having a baby). "The frequency-conscious part of it is set an octave above Paddy's voice," which he teases in with a very light touch, just providing a ghosting of higher gloss to those already dreamy vocals. Reverb is virtually non-existent on stage or in the room, Burton just using a TC M2000 for drums: "A great tool, I'd love to try the new 6000 model." (Anyone from TC out there?). All in all a gentle experience, lyrical, pastoral and delightful.

CATERING

Rabel asked that special mention be made of the tour caterers and no doubt there's a Sprout pun in there somewhere. "We always ask specifically for Susan Coll and Mary Shelly from Eat to the Beat," said Rabel. (Shelly is newly married to Jon, LD for Ladysmith Black Mombaso - see last month's issue.) "Ask any member of production



The Sprouts have a musical style filled with detail painting slightly surreal pictures of very ordinary situations

what they like most about this tour," which I did, "and they'll say 'FOOD'."

LIGHTING

While sound and catering might all be old faithfuls to the Sprout camp, for LD Andy Liddle this is the first time that he's ever worked for the band. "The connection came from Lighthouse Family - they use the same management." Faith must have been strong for there was no pre-tour meeting, no presentation of ideas, just an agreed budget and Liddle showed up at rehearsals with his rig from Neg Earth. "I just built the show in rehearsals, started with the basics and went from there." But actually it was not quite that simple: Liddle had done his homework and discovered that McAloon has an eye problem: "He had detached retinas some time ago, from some disease or other. Although they've been fixed, his vision is sensitive so there's no front light in this show at all." Shrewd move.

His rig is a simple V-shaped truss at the back, giving a large 60ft surface of cyclorama backdrop, to what is otherwise a very sparse design. "Just eight Studio Colors, a dozen Pars (most with changers), eight Source Fours, and 12 four-cell ground rows." What gives him most latitude for variance is use of all 240volt bulbs for the entire

rig. The Pars and ETC profiles might all be on trees downstage left and right (when did you last see a Manfrotto stand on a rock tour?), but they do a lot of work.

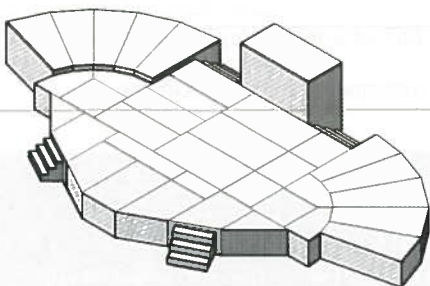
Liddle uses thematic development to keep things interesting. A classic example comes in 'Machine Gun Ibiza' where a simple combination of red

and green across the cyc' is constantly blended (through the natural intermediate spectral colours 'twixt the two primaries) and repositioned by surreptitious use of the High End washlights, and the individual cells of the groundrows. "I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about," said a self-effacing Liddle during the intermission, "I just do what I think works." A naturalist then, Mr Liddle - which accounts for his timing - but his gut feeling for colour sometimes lets him down. Repeated use of saturated hues was a bit too r'n'r for my tastes in what is essentially a show of mainly ballads. But then I never made the transition to LD.

One element of Liddle's rig cannot pass unmentioned. Always a fan of Lee Filters, he was recently invited down to its factory in Andover. Given the chance he named a new Blue to their range, 713, to which he's given the title J Winter Blue. This is for Julian Winter, who readers may recall was a highly regarded young lighting technician who passed away last year, at a very early age. Maudlin? I don't think so, I'm sure Julian would have been pleased. Ever the lighting man, it's heard in late night bus conversations that he was still berating Terry Lee at LSD about possible improvements to the Icon M, even as he lay on his death bed.



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Rimini Returns Renewed & Refreshed

ITALY

Tony Gottelier and Lee Baldock report from SIB, Rimini . . .

There was much speculation in the UK prior to this event as to whether a biennial SIB Show would see a diminution of the previous standing of this infamous exhibition and, indeed, of the gala atmosphere for which it is renowned. This was evidenced both by the tentative approach taken by many British visitors who just went for a short time to check it out, and by the notable absence of the major leisure groups who previously held court in Rimini for the duration.

There were certainly moves among some Italian exhibitors - **Clay Paky**, **Coemar** and **Space Cannon** to name but a few - to reposition SIB as a national Show, so that they could downgrade their participation which had previously got seriously out of hand. Furthermore, by diluting the element of hubris normally attached to the Pan (sic) handle of any Show, these companies need not feel the same pressure to launch a whole raft of new products to coincide with SIB. Many of the majors took this view, with the notable exception of **Coemar** and **Studio Due**. **Clay Paky** also pulled out of its traditional Rimini junket, preferring to entertain its distributors in its own hometown later in the year, but inevitably **Pio Nahum** stepped in with a **Martin Professional** banquet on the same night.

Another element in this composition is the apparent collapse of the Italian discotheque market, a highly idiosyncratic and alternative culture in that country which involves huge sites holding several thousand people, many of whom travel long distances to their current fave. The consequent lethal brew of intoxicants and the Latin driving imperative, caused such carnage on the roads at weekends that the Government felt obliged to deliver health warnings, so forcibly, in fact, that the gloss has gone from the glamour and the sparkle from the glitterball. Thus, the main component in the stimulus department at SIB has lost its chutzpah, at least until it reinvents itself, as it surely will. Yet, despite this caveat, the bizarre events and freak-show aspects continued unabated across the road, though most obviously on the Sunday afternoon.

However, if the intent was to re-brand SIB as a solely national expo, it didn't entirely succeed for reasons of geography - Northern Italy is a convenient channel for travellers from Eastern Europe and apparently there was a large contingent from the EU-aspirant countries of the



region. Many exhibitors praised the very high level of international visitors, notably from Eastern Europe and South America, and the post-show visitor breakdown shows a significant increase in international visitors over 1998.

Within the Show structure itself, for those who remember the configuration of the past, both **Clay Paky** and **Martin Professional** had crossed the divide between mayhem and sanity by placing themselves on the other side of the bridge of sighs, where the majority of lighting companies coexist in reasonable harmony. The effect of this move was dramatic - the hall which had previously housed the **MAGIS** exhibition, devoted more or less to theatre equipment, previously so sparsely attended as to be described by one wag as like 'a cathedral without a congregation', was bustling with traffic this time. This area also afforded the first public sighting of **Mike Lowe** in his new role as managing director of **ETC Europe**, as he brushed up his diplomatic act on distributor **DeSisti's** stand.

In its new location, the **Clay Paky** presence seemed far less intimidating than in previous years, and they certainly offered the best espresso on the site. Nor did the absence of new product seem to dampen the enthusiasm of the crowds attending their well-choreographed presentation light shows, at which the Stage Line range of automated yokes were the headline feature. An atmosphere of serene calm replaced the frenetic activity of previous years and one would suggest that the facility to do business was the better for it. Here **Pulsar** launched their new Masterpiece Replay Unit 216, which can control up to 512 DMX channels or 216 Pulsar Multiplex (PMX) channels. The 1U rack-mounting unit will replay shows programmed by Masterpiece 48, 108 and 216 desks, and can store up to eight selectable shows in its memory. Control is by the simple, front-panel push-button interface or remotely using MIDI, RS-232, contact closures or 0-10V inputs.



TRADE SHOW

Never a company willing to stand still, **Bruno Dedoro's Coemar** announced two significant new products at SIB, both demonstrating some radical new thinking inside their trademark, carbon-fibre

mouldings. Indeed, some so radical that confidentiality, in the wake of patent process, prevents us from revealing full details - some indication of the deep paranoia that has set in at the outbreak of World Patent War III, in which the Italians, as an alliance, have made a pre-emptive strike against **Vari-Lite** in New York following the sighting of American missiles in the Gulf of Genoa. Never mind, none of this prevents us from telling you what these new lights can do, only how some of the attributes are achieved.

The **Philips MSR Short Arc (SA)** lamp technology, previously identified with High End Systems since it fuels their **Studio Beam** and, in a higher power version, the **Cyberlight Turbo**, is also the crux of the flux for **Coemar's** new duo. In this case the 700W version is used in efficient combination with a cold glass reflector and superior optics, for which a very high light output is claimed from both models, **CF7 Hard Edge** and **CF7 Wash Zoom**. Both are motorised yoke luminaires. Both units also offer significant improvements in the quality and consistency of the **CMY** colour mixing which has apparently been achieved by placing **Coemar's** 'flag' system differently in the optical axis. Changes are also rendered more efficient due to the synchronicity of the colours through the use of two motors. In combination, this set-up also provides a couple of extra effects-toys on the **Hard Edge** model, which also has a huge number of other attributes, too numerous to mention. However, one big feature is the **DMX-controlled zoom** facility that delivers 14° to 36.5° of auto-zoom and a massive 7° to 69° of programmable zoom.

Top to bottom: SGM's Daniele Manelli with the Giotto Spot 250.

Pulsar's Paul Mardon (left) and Derrick Saunders (right) are visited by the British Consul General in Italy, Charles de Chassiron (centre), PLASA's Anna Pillow and the British Consulate's Giuseppe Caruso.



The CF7 Wash Zoom dispenses with conventional fresnel optics and instead uses Coemar's own anti-halo, plano-convex lens to squeeze the last drop of luminous intensity from the system. The result is peaky, but it is also very bright and there is a diffusion filter to smooth out the creases. Coemar's new CMY colour system adds a high-speed, colour-scrolling effect to both models.

So, it seems that if Coemar stole High End's clothes on the lamp front, they also did so with the PC optics, which the guys from Austin had previously used in their new Studio Beam, announced at LDI in November, also now showing its paces at SIB. The Studio Beam, which got a best new product citation at the Live Awards, delivers an unbelievable 20,000 plus Total Field Lumens output (a measurement Mike Wood of HES is encouraging all manufacturers to adopt for true comparative purposes), and a field zoom angle from 14° to 30°. The Studio Spot, which uses the 575W MSR, now has CMY colour mixing added, and the Cyberlight comes in a Turbo-charged version with new optics and the MSR/SA 1200 lamp.

Flying Pig Systems, now an HES company, showed their own-brand versions of the cut-down Hogs originally made under their licence to Jands, now called Hog 500 and 1000. The new ColorPro, also launched at LDI, was shown at SIB as the lead product in a stable of architectural products now grouped under the **Lightwave Research** banner, another HES in-house brand.

Martin Professional came to Rimini with a far more mature attitude than in previous years, when their urge to dominate tended to overcome commercial reality, and consequently provided an exhibit which was functional and effective in putting across its case. This seemed to match the mood of the move across the bridge and away from the mayhem of yesteryear. Of course, there was the inevitable light show for a seated audience in a closed-off area under the theme: 'Let the rhythm be your guiding light' which, tortuous English aside, was as impressive as ever.

New from Martin were the Raptor (a new 250W disco effect with 70 constantly moving lights) and the King Dome (Martin's version of the inflatable outdoor protection dome). Otherwise, Martin's exhibit was dominated by the new, stylish MiniMacs, their new automated, architectural fittings clothed in a range of smart colour finishes and mounted in front of a gallery on the

structure. Aside from functionality for the purpose, which earned the MiniMac an award at LDI, we were most impressed by the organic movement that the motorised, single arm suspension generates. In itself, quite riveting to watch.



ETC Europe's sales & marketing director Tim Stokholm with managing director Mike Lowe.

A couple of other items which caught the eye were **Teclumen's** Varicolor - the RGB, three-lamp trick in a flood using 800W linears and with in-built dimmers to facilitate the mixing. The same is available in a Parcan using three HPL 575W lamps.

The other was Light-Pad, which looked like it might be a practical system for doing something feasible with electro-luminescence, the only problem being getting the appropriate information to prove it.

A few years ago, SIB seemed like the breeding ground of the wobbly mirror, with battalions of scanner units lined up on almost every stand; now, it seems similarly over-run with nodding buckets. Just about every Italian player introduced its own variation on the moving head theme: the major product launch of the show for **SGM** was the new Giotto 250 Spot, which combines a Philips MSD 250/2 discharge lamp and a quality dichroic reflector to achieve what SGM claim is an output comparable to that of a 600W lamp. A scaled-down version of the

Giotto 1200, the unit includes eight indexable rotary gobos and three fixed, all of which can be easily changed: the two gobo wheels can be superimposed to create a large combination of images.

COEF, meanwhile, who always seem to create one of the most striking stand displays at SIB, were showing the latest additions to the

MP family of moving head luminaires: the new MP 700 Zoom (MSR 700 SA lamp) is the biggest of the range, featuring six metal and two dichroic gobos, 540° pan x 270° tilt, 33 colour combinations, rainbow effect, blacklight filter, mechanical shutter, etc. COEF's MP 250 Zoom and Fresnel models, meanwhile, have been redesigned to give a far more attractive look, and these were also on show.



Celco's Colin Whittaker (right) with CCT Lighting's Pat Brogan.

Griven celebrated its 10th anniversary with a theatrical stand display and the launch of several new products. Four new exterior colour-changers, including the ultra-long-throw 4kW Xenon Kolorjet, add to the company's architectural lighting portfolio. Literally highlighting their growth in this market, the company spectacularly lit the facades of one of

the town's newest hotels for the duration of the exhibition with their new Kolorado MK2 2500 wide angle colour-changers. Also new was the Kolorstream, a narrow-beam version (12 - 33°) which can light surfaces up to 150m high. Griven also introduced a new dedicated architectural catalogue - available in the UK from distributor Ambient Lighting. Finally, Griven was not without its own moving head launch, showing a prototype MSR 700 version of its Acrobat fixture.

Fal's Three-Sixty and Three-Sixty2 moving yoke fixtures have now been joined by the 575W Three-Sixty3 - which is the first of the family to feature the *de rigueur* sleek plastic-moulded body. In the architectural field, Fal launched the Night Colour colour-changer/gobo projector. Features of this 1200W (MSR or HSR) unit include a 24-40° zoom and ellipsoidal cold light reflector. The two colour wheels provide up to 56 colour combinations, while the frost filter allows for wide and evenly diffused coverage. To its range of theatre luminaires, Fal has added two new followspots - the Opera MCC and Opera MMD (1200 and 2500 respectively in very old Italian). Another addition is the Voyager followspot, which takes the Starlight 1200 a step further by making the control panel on the rear of the unit detachable.

Fal's new Night Colour is an exterior architectural colour changer with 24 - 40° zoom, offering 56 colour combinations and frost filter, as well as an M size gobo holder, manual iris and four-blade beam shaper. Fal also introduced a number of 250W disco lighting effects - Gobostar, Acrobat, Colour-Spot and Colour-Dance, as well as a new range of lighting products for television studios - well received by a good element of TV market visitors, according to Paul Dodd.

Sagitter brought its own incarnation of the moving head to the show. Its 250W MSD/MSD wash and spot fixtures are respectively named Moving Wash and Moving Spot (it does exactly what it says on the box). Moving Spot's effects include six indexable and interchangeable gobos on a rotating wheel (four metal, one dichro, one glass), rotating prism, 12 colours, rainbow effect and strobe. The Moving Wash features CMY colour-mixing, correction filters, black light filter and strobe. Both units feature intelligent cooling, remote lamp on/off and auto-diagnostic analyzer.

Sagitter is also addressing the architectural market, with the IP65-rated Wall Color (250W or 150W).



Martin Professional's CEO Kristian Kolding (left) and DJ & Club product manager Morten Gjetz.



Lighting Technology's Richard Hartwell, Rob Williamson, Garry Nelsson, Dave Cartwright and Ron Knell.



Jan de Jonge of IES with Andy Collier and examples of the company's range of IGBT dimming products.



Tomcat UK's laundry and morale officer Gary Massey with Rachel McGill from Tomcat's Tennessee branch.

This CYM colour-changing wash light can operate stand-alone or in banks without the need for a controller, having over 100 memory presets and master/slave function. An interior version is the Shop Color, which can also be controlled via DMX 512.



Coemar's Bruno Dedoro with the impressive new CF 7 HE.

For the stage and studio market, meanwhile, Saggitter showed the 575W Hypercolor.

Following the success of the CityColor exterior colour-changer, Studio Due have introduced the CityColor 2500, with a newly-developed cooling system and improved waterproofing to increase its IP rating. Other developments include a new hour counter for the lamp and another (which cannot be restarted) for the fixture. These enhancements will now be

implemented in the 1800W CityColor, as well as a new touring version with separate ballast that will shortly be available.

The other attraction on the Studio Due stand was the



Steve Boreham (Rope Assemblies) with Steve Gray (Musical Box), Siobhan Hitchen (Rope Assemblies) and 'the best rigger in Italy' Mirko Boschetto.

new 'Shark', so named because of its 'sinuous design and silent motion'. This is an impressively compact and lightweight moving yoke fixture which can run on its stored pre-sets as a stand-alone unit or in synchronised multiples. When more flexibility is required, the Shark can be driven by any DMX controller in either 8-bit or 16-bit resolution.

Luci Della Ribalta (LDR) has developed a strong and successful range of theatre lighting products in three short years, under the stylish LDR banner. Products include the Suono range of pebble-convex and fresnel luminaires and profiles, the Tempo range for small theatres, the Aria range for medium-sized applications and the Nota and Tono ranges for professional use in large theatres (the latest additions to the range are the Tono 8-22 and the 18-36° 2000W profile zooms). The Canto range of followspots includes 250, 575, 700 and 1200W discharge versions, along with the 1200 TH version. A range of floods and accessories is also available. LDR are also the Italian distributor for Dutch manufacturer IES's sophisticated range of digital IGBT dimming systems, which were on show, and which have been enjoying increasing success across Europe.

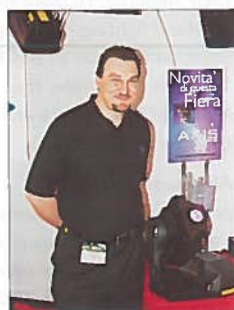
Spanish manufacturer Strong was showing its new Nocturne 256-channel DMX 512 lighting desk, which displays data via an LCD display of four rows and 40 columns, with the capacity for up to 500 memories. A VGA monitor interface is also included, as are RS232, MIDI and SMPTE interfaces. Also new from Strong were a number of new DMX accessories - the Splitter 1-8 (one input and eight outputs opto-isolated), Booster 4-4 (four inputs and four outputs opto-isolated), Demultiplexer 60 (60-channel) and the Mixer 2-1 DMX merger.

ETC was providing the first major European showing of the new Source Four PARNel luminaire, which is based on the Source Four PAR body, and features rotating lenses controlled by a single knob and offers a smooth, variable beam width. ETC were also giving the 750W HPL lamp its Italian debut, offering an even more efficient output for the Source Four.

As well as High End Systems and Lightwave Research, distributor Ianiro also had Artistic Licence on stand (represented by Graham Thomas) and showing their range of digital lighting fixtures and DMX gadgets. Mad Lighting was also represented and Scott Callis was showing the company's new Axis 250MR single-arm moving head (MSD 250/2 lamp), which features five indexable rotating gobos, six dichroic colours plus white, shutter and selectable fresnel lens. The unit has an injection-moulded body similar to that of Mad's more familiar scanner fixtures. While it's not the prettiest moving head on the market, Callis points out that beauty is only skin deep.

Rope Assemblies was among the companies joining forces on the Musical Box stand.

The company's Siobhan Hitchen enjoyed a very successful show, picking up both potentially important orders and potential new distributors through their Musical Box stablemates, ATC and Indu-Electric Gerber.



Mad Lighting's Scott Callis with the Axis 250 MR.

PLASA once again organised a group of UK exhibitors part-funded under the DTI's SESA programme. Among the group were DHA Lighting, Lighting Technology Group, CCT Lighting, Celco, Nu-Light, Skyhigh Stage FX and MGC Lamps. SIB is always a busy show for MGC Lamps, according to export sales manager Phil Bullock, and this year's show was if anything stronger than previous years in terms of international visitors. The PLASA group also included Futuraneon, whose range of 'dancing

neon' effects continue to draw large crowds as they did at PLASA 99.

Skyhigh Stage FX were showing two new pyro firing systems - the two-channel PDS-2 and the four-channel PDS-4. Both systems operate from either 12 volt battery or mains and both arrive with stainless steel pods. Skyhigh claim their new systems are probably (with a nod to Carlsberg) the safest in the world,

including indicator lights on the pods to show when a system is about to fire, and also when a system is armed, providing protection for performers and technicians alike.



LDR's Marco Baietta, Lisa Papi, Rossano Baietta and Fabiano Besio.

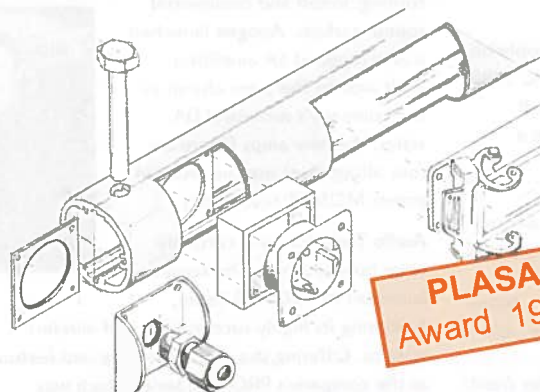
Among Nu-Light's range of budget laser effects was the new DMX Graphic Scan, aimed at high impact signage displays and venues requiring greater flexibility from laser projections. Using eight DMX channels, the unit features 26 customisable graphics patterns, six banks of scrolling text with up to 250 characters per message, full pan and tilt movement, strobing, graphic spinning, modulation and graphic size control.

Celco's Colin Whittaker was giving the first public showing of its full range of lighting control desks in their smart new livery, all of which are now being manufactured at the company's new production facility. Celco was also showing the Fusion DMX splitter 1.5.2, which features the very impressive 'self-healing' chip technology. All five outputs feature individual isolation and protection, as well as self-protection in the event of accidental mains-to-DMX connection. Within 10 seconds of the mains being disconnected, the chip resets itself, using technology developed for the aviation industry.



Studio Due's Roberto Fraioli with the Shark moving head fixture.

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TRADE SHOW

Ruth Rossington rounds up all that's new in audio from the Frankfurt Musik Messe

2,146 exhibitors from 48 countries - that's a lot of product and a lot of ground to cover - thank God for the moving walkways and the shuttle buses (I kid you not) that take you between the halls. Can this show really grow much more without it passing from manageable to downright pain-in-the-arse territory? Certainly, the increasing trend towards sectorisation has improved things, but the knock on is that certain sections of the show see very little signs of visitor life until after lunch and by the weekend there is a noticeable tail off in numbers in the Pro Light + Sound sectors.

But scale has its advantages, for Frankfurt throws up a mirror to the audio world and reflected in it are some clear trends - amplifier technology, for instance, is undergoing major changes, driven by the development of digital technologies. Audio, computer and software have grown together to such an extent that separation no longer has any real point; tape-based recording systems are losing the fight against computers and hard disks; DVD has now asserted itself in the market and the long-held ambition to create a complete sound studio in a computer is now well within reach.

So to the floor . . .

Adam Hall previewed the new 'face-lift' range of Palmer amplifiers. Included in these are two new four-channel models - 1500LX-4 and the 2200LX-4. The new four-channel amplifiers have all the same features that make the Palmer range good value for money, including sophisticated protection circuit and built-in crossovers.

The C2000 B is the latest condenser microphone from AKG - a hybrid of its C 4000 B and C 3000 B microphones. The newly-developed small diaphragm transducer capsule comes from a

Alexander Fritz of AKG with part of the company's new range of products.

Bob Mundy of Adam Hall with the new Palmer range of amplifiers.

Allen & Heath's latest recruit Simon Priestley (right) with Andy Rigby-Jones in front of the ML5000 desk.

unique manufacturing process (on the strength of which AKG have applied for a patent) that ensures high sensitivity, low inherent noise and good bass response. AmpliLux were using all of their amplifiers to drive the on-stand lighting - proving a point on the issue of power. The Serie M includes the M300, M800, M1400 and the powerful M3200.

ARX had a host of new products, but most interesting was the new E-pre - a microphone pre-amp, which utilises studio level microphone pre-amp circuitry and is intended for use with hard disk recording. The unit can either slot into a spare 5" slot in the PC or can work as a stand-alone unit. Also new from ARX was the Mix 8 stereo line mixer, designed to act as an interface for eight-track performance playback.

The first batch of Allen & Heath's ML5000 live mixing consoles were shipped to North America at the end of April. The ML5000, which was launched at PLASA, is a dual function FOH/monitor console whose natural habitat will be large-scale live performances. Allen & Heath US, at Harman Music Group at Sandy in Utah, have reportedly had an overwhelming response to the new product.

To offer a wider choice to the touring, install and commercial sound markets, Apogee launched a new range of SA amplifiers. Built around the same chassis as the company's successful DA series, the new amps (there are four altogether) use the latest in power MOSFET technology.

Audio Technica have certainly been busy recently. The company launched its PRO 400 Series, bolstering its highly successful line of wireless systems. Offering the same flexibility and features as the company's PRO 100 Series which was released earlier this year, the PRO 400 benefits

from true diversity reception and UHF operation and should deliver 'wired' sound without the wire.

Autograph Sales, European distributor of ATM Fly-Ware loudspeaker rigging systems, showed several examples of the Californian company's range of truss systems and rigging, including the new Encore range of rigging systems.

From beyerdynamic came a new series of microphones - its first major development targeted at the MI and project studio market since the launch of the Tour Group range. Drawing on over 75 years of transducer design and technology, the new Opus series includes a full range of microphone types, including dynamic,

condenser and wireless. Early feedback from beta-test users has been very positive - expect to see them in May.

Spanish manufacturer Beyma launched several new products, including two new sound reinforcement loudspeakers and a new high frequency compression driver - the 102Nd and 122Nd are 10 and 12" mid bass frequency loudspeakers respectively and the CP 385/Nd 1" compression driver.

Visitors to the BSS Audio stand had a chance to test the company's latest Soundweb networked DSP system. If they were looking for proof of how useful the Soundweb is, they could do no better than visit the Millennium Dome where over 800 units (at the last count it was 804) are the backbone of the audio networking system. Same goes for C Audio, whose Pulse amplifiers are powering virtually all the sound systems at the Dome.

Canford Audio not only had a batch of new products but a new face also, in the form of one Mike Reay, previously with EMO, and now with Canford who have taken on the range (see

people news this issue). Within the new products came two MIDI products, a MIDI mains switcher and a MIDI distribution amplifier. Also new from Canford was the CSM41 condenser microphone and a new range of studio headphones.

Since the launch of its successful CXi Series, Celestion has been back to the drawing board to add new speakers, including a



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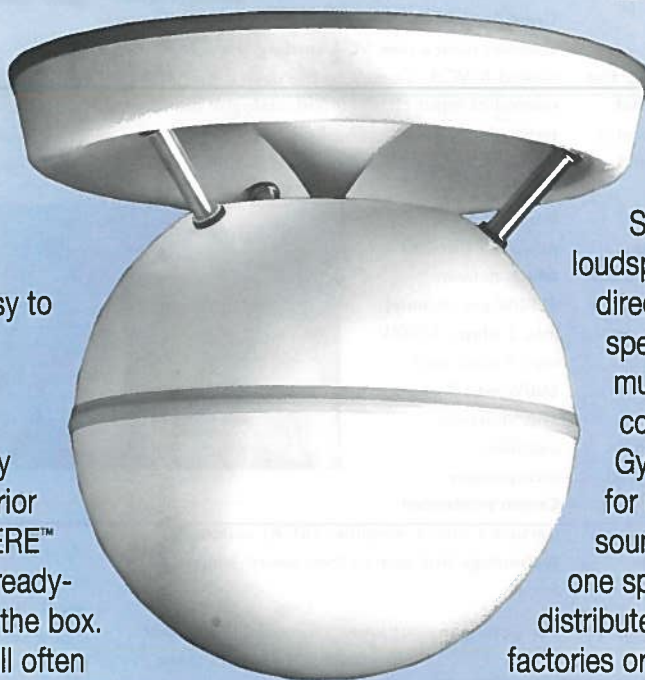
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magnetically-shielded compact speaker for installation opportunities. The CXi 1531 is a three-way full-range loudspeaker, the largest in the CXi range, designed for high-power sound



reinforcement applications. At the other end of the spectrum is the new CXi 521. This two-way passive loudspeaker is a compact trapezoidal system offering full-range high-definition performance. Finally, there is the upgrade of the CXi 1022HP, a dedicated mid/high cabinet.

Chameleon Audio's new ultra-compact D777 power amplifier delivers 777W per channel into 4 ohms. Designed by Paul Houlden, the unit features a lightweight linear power supply, which means that even switch mode-based amplifiers will have trouble keeping up with the size/performance ratio from Chameleon's package.

headphone outlets with up to eight stereo line level music sources or programmes, plus voice-over, alarm or microphone override. For larger venues the system is expandable, using the Sub Station 8.

Community introduced the R6-51 a high output full range system for venues where long-throw projection is needed. **Court Acoustics**, meanwhile, has recently released a batch of new products including the C2 - the latest addition to the C-systems range, the LX4, a recent member of the LX installation range, and the FRS8 which comes with a dedicated bass enclosure - the FRS Sub.



Crest Audio's popular X-Series consoles have a new VCA version, the aptly named X-VCA. Central to the desk is the VCA control of input channels and analogue sub groups plus linked (stereo) dynamics on all sub groups. Adding to its successful CE range of

sound - at less cost! The range includes the 200W Force 15" two-way speaker system, the 300W Force Sub and the 150W Force Monitor. There's also a dedicated 800W power amp.

Eminence launched a number of new products, including additions to the Legend range and the Beta CX - a cost-effective solution to nearfield monitoring, full-range and ceiling speaker applications. **Fane**, fresh from scoring its largest single contract at the Dome where it supplied components via Funktion One, released the new

Crescendo 8MB dedicated bass-mid driver intended for small background systems. **Focusrite** introduced a new name to its award-winning Platinum Range - the Platinum MixMaster - designed principally as a high-spec analogue mastering solution.

Formula Sound launched the new FSM-400 mixer - intended for the professional DJ or for small installations where a four-channel mixer with each channel switchable to two inputs can be

utilised. I won't go into too much detail on **Matrix** since we've profiled the company in this issue (see news p.41), but new products are in the pipeline, including a 1U range of mixer amps for the install market.



Citronic make the bold claim that the CS-3 mixer is the lowest end-user priced professional scratch mixer available. Despite the price point, there's been no skimping on performance for the CS-3 uses VCA Pro-Crossfade and industrial grade 'long life' Alps input faders for durability and smooth action. Also new from Citronic was Station 9 - designed to enable professional DJs to take better advantage of the increased use of outboard signal processing and the CDM5:2k - an enhanced version of the company's successful CDM5:2.

Roy Millington of Cloud has his sights set firmly on the fitness market with his new multi-source audio distribution system. Basically, this should ensure that the poor sods who spend tedious hours in gyms can at least enjoy a little music as they cycle all the way to Blackpool and back in less than an hour. At its heart lies the Cloud Pump Station 16, which has the capacity to connect up to 16 remotely-controlled stereo

Following the liquidation of **Metro Audio** at the end of last year, the PMZ 88 - a joint development by **Hacousto** and **Metro**, was

relaunched by the former under the new name of **Magic 88**. To promote this, the company has set up a new division - **Matrics Pro Sound**. **Metro's** Nigel Cunningham has also made the transfer and is now working out of Hacousto's Dutch offices in Berkel en Rodenrijs. Also launched was the **Accent ACE 2.200** contractor amplifier.

Frankfurt was the venue at which **Helicon Vocal Technologies Inc** was ushered in - a joint venture between Canadian company **IVL** and Denmark's **TC Electronics**. **Fred Speckeen**, VP of sales and marketing at **IVL** since 1992, will head the new operation and it seems likely that we will see new product in the latter part of the year. **TC**, meanwhile, is now shipping its **System 6000** audio processing system.

German manufacturer **HK Audio**, distributed in the UK by **John Hornby Skewes**, who had a stand in the music side of the halls, also introduced a range of new products. On stand was a prototype of a completely horn-loaded system consisting of four 18" subwoofers and two 12"/12" mid/highs, as well as new models from the company's Installation Line.

In the few months since its debut last year at **PLASA**, **Innova Son** has updated the **Sentry** digital mixing console, re-releasing it in three different formats. The **Sensory Live Series** is, as the name



For a company not known for making frequent changes to its product range, **d8b audiotechnik** introduced no fewer than six new products. Of chief interest is the M2 - an active two-way high performance monitor which produces a remarkable peak sound pressure level of 145dB making it the highest output powered d8b system to date (earplugs required). Also new is the **MAX 12** stage monitor, a 'shrunk in the wash' version of d8b's familiar **MAX** monitor systems.

The popular pf series from **DAS Audio** has been expanded with the addition of a new three-way passive system boasting a power handling capacity of 700W program. **DNH** had new **CAS** column loudspeakers, of which three versions are available - the **CAS-6**, **CAS-15** and **CAS-30** respectively 6, 15 and 30W speakers.

When **Electro-Voice** set about designing their new **Force** speaker system the approach was simple: the famous **EV**

Roy Millington of **Cloud** has his sights set firmly on the fitness market with his new multi-source audio distribution system. Basically, this should ensure that the poor sods who spend tedious hours in gyms can at least enjoy a little music as they cycle all the way to Blackpool and back in less than an hour. At its heart lies the **Cloud Pump Station 16**, which has the capacity to connect up to 16 remotely-controlled stereo



Apogee's Ken de Loria (left) and Barry Grzebik with the company's range of amplifiers.

Arthur and Mark Barnes of Eminence with the Delta 12 range.

Peter Tongue and Iris Mann of d8b audiotechnik with the M2.

Andy Blackwell of Dial tests out Cloud's audio distribution system. Roy Millington laughs on.

Citronic's Marc Wilson, Elaine Dinnage and Tony Allen with the company's new DJ mixers.

Hacousto's Nigel Cunningham with the Magic 88.

suggests, intended for live mixing. The base model is now named the Sensory Essential Live with two further options in the form of the Sensory Grand Live and the Sensory Digital Live. The Grand Live version now features an extra 'stretch time' fader (if somebody could invent a stretch time facility for magazines, we'd pay good money) along with Innova Son's automation

software - the Sensoft V6.0.

Launched in late 1998 as part of Inter-M's development in to the MI market, the M Series has proved to be one of its fastest-growing

and most popular product ranges. At Frankfurt, two new high-end amplifiers were added to the line-up - the M1500 and M2000 - 'bigger brothers' to the successful M500/700/1000 Series. JBL introduced the new Control 25AV shielded monitor loudspeaker, designed specifically for commercial applications. This replaces the discontinued Control 1AW and is an expansion of the hugely successful Control 25.

Following the recent launches of the DN1414 multiple DI module and the DN1248 active splitter system, Klark Teknik released updated versions of both devices. The modifications should widen their appeal by making their input and output interfaces more flexible, courtesy of a rear blank panel covering a cut-out where users can retrofit their multipin connector of choice. KT also had two new delay units - the DN7454, the successor to the DN7204 and the DN7453 which supersedes the DN7103. Also new was the DN2360 digital graphic equaliser, the first in a new range of products for audio contractors, and the DN9824 digital loudspeaker processor, a repackaged version of the DN9848.

L'Acoustics showed the new 115FM floor monitor, at the heart of which is coaxial technology, first pioneered by L'Acoustics on its MTD line. This being the century in which product design has moved out of the industrial age and into the cosmetic age, LA Audio came to Frankfurt with its range of signal processors in new robes of metallic green and gold, leaving the characteristic grey livery by the wayside. There's also another surprise in store for LA customers - the legend on the units is screened using fluorescing dyes, which glow electric blue under UV blacklight. Nice. The IS24 and IS26 are the latest additions to the

Logic System IS series of installation cabinets. Intended as compact, sub-bass options for use in conjunction with the IS mid/top cabinets, these enclosures have been designed to fit neatly into small spaces. Also new at Frankfurt was the CM20 monitor enclosure. Mach is building up its touring presence, adding five new touring models to its portfolio. Within the family are two full-range boxes - the M12T and M15T - and a top box - the M30T. All feature customised drive units and a new horn design. The M182T is a double 18" subwoofer designed for large indoor or short-to medium-throw outdoor applications.

With the RCF range well established under the Mackie banner and EAW more recently added to it, Mackie is building quite a stable of products for itself. Mackie had the new 1642-VLZ Pro digital mixer - two years in the making apparently and \$250,000 in R&D so they're pretty serious about this new development. This is a 16x4x2 mixer with 10 XDR mic preamps. RCF, meanwhile, has extended its Vision series with the addition of the compact PA 151. This offers 300W RMS power handling, can be operated in passive or bi-amp mode, and can be run full-range, or actively crossed-over with the Vision PA 180 SW subwoofer.

EAW's recently-introduced

FRz speakers, based on the FR Series, were in Frankfurt, as was a new SB750 subwoofer designed to work with flown arrays of EAW's KF700 series concert speakers.

Continuing their penetration into the cinema market, Martin Audio were showing two new products tailored for the silver screen sector. The Screen 2/2P cinema system accommodates various digital formats and can be run either

active or passive, whilst the Effect 3R is a two-way passive cinema surround system. Other products unveiled included a series of switch-mode power supply amplifiers and the DX1 compact DSP-based audio processing unit.

At the Meyer Sound stand, visitors were introduced to a host of new products, ranging from the new USM-1P/100P self-powered monitors and LD-2 line drivers to

Meyer Sound's new yokes and rigging hardware for the UPM-1P, CQ-1/2 and UPA-1P/2P. Still enjoying the flush of its official AES launch, Midas took its Heritage 1000 to Frankfurt. This is a compact frame live performance console and features include a high number of outputs and comprehensive monitoring facilities.

French manufacturer Nexo launched the latest addition to the PS Series - the PS-8. This is a scaled-down version of the PS10 and 15 and incorporates all the benefits of these in a more streamlined format. The Neumann sound can now

finds its way onto the live stage thanks to the company's new KMS 105 microphone.

Next Two launched the new Sound 20T ceiling speaker. This 20W 100v line speaker is ideal for any installation where something more than a

coaxial speaker is required. It has a mid-range and tweeter crossover to provide excellent frequency response.

The success of Ohm's Moon series, a cabinet with tremendous output despite its small frame, has led the company to develop a

subwoofer cabinet with the same design criteria. Enter Moon Sub Bass Bin which features an expanded frequency envelope and dynamic high output all packaged in a small frame.

Peavey launched the Global Power Series of amplifiers - GPS 900, GPS 1500 and GPS 3500W - designed to meet the full range of performance demands. The company has also extended its Impulse range with the introduction of the Impulse 100 - a two-way, full-range speaker system. Designed specifically to provide powerful bass and sub-bass frequencies, Precision Devices launched the new PD.2450 high power 24" cone transducer.

Two QSC products made their European debut at the show. The new PowerLight 2 amps incorporate the same PowerWave switching technology found in the original PowerLight Series. Renkus Heinz had the new CT Series on show, which includes full-range, mid/high and low frequency/subwoofer designs.

Sennheiser launched the new Digital 1000 Series. This RF wireless system achieves a dynamic of 120 dB without a compander and for the first time, demanding signals from rhythm or bass guitars, for example, can be wirelessly transmitted without distortion. Other new products included the e 865 - the first condenser microphone in the evolution series, the MKH 800 studio condenser microphone, a development of the MKH 80 with an extended frequency range of up to 50,000 Hz, and the 3000 and 5000 Series RF Wireless Systems.



Mick Anderson of Nexo with the PS8 speaker.

JBL's Guy Hawley, Michael McDonald and Doug Daniel with the LSR range.

Dave Wiggins of Klark Teknik with KT kit and (just in picture) the new PalmPilot Handi Q system which the company are now promoting.

Thomas Zullich of Meyer with the USM1P.

Martin Audio's Bill Webb and Peter Child with Wolfgang Garcon of Atlantic Audio.

Shure has just celebrated its 75th anniversary and in recent months has introduced a number of new products. Developed for use with personal in-ear monitor systems, the compact P4M is a small two-bus mixer equipped with four XLR mic/line inputs (each with its own level and pan controls), four XLR split outputs, and a pair of 1/4-inch auxiliary inputs.

Spirit by Soundcraft took the 324 digital mixer and its award-winning sibling, Digital 328 to Frankfurt. The key to the 324's simple operation is the E-strip, the row of encoders and illuminated switches which run through the centre of the console. Pressing SEL(ect) on any input channel immediately turns the E-strip into a horizontal version of a 'conventional' channel strip, giving instant access to all EQ, aux and pan parameters via the row of 16 encoders.

Stonewood Audio, the name behind the Metro Audio range of intercom products, and who subsequently bought the trading title of Metro when it went into liquidation last November, have released a range of products to complement the Metro range. On show at Frankfurt was a prototype of a wireless duplex belt pack system which MD Steve Gunn hopes will be ready in July. Also on stand was a new four-channel processor-controlled intercom master station.



Steve Gunn of Stonewood with his new duplex belt pack system.

Studiomaster launched the Powerhouse Focus - a worthy successor to the company's Powerhouse 300. The inputs are capable of taking just about anything and there's an effects system with hundreds of different reverbs, delays, flangers - you name it. Also new from Studiomaster was the Powerpack range of mixers.

Tannoy had something of a new product fest at Frankfurt with new PA/sound reinforcement

Thomas Wotzasek and Karl Heinz Wondra with the new Wondra AudioPack system.

Andy Simmons of XTA, who launched the DP224.

products on their own stand and new studio monitor products on the TEAC Deutschland stand. The i5AW is the latest addition to Tannoy's all-weather loudspeaker range, whilst the CMS 110BC is a new corner-mounting active sub-woofer. Tannoy also introduced a new architectural loudspeaker to its range - the iP5 Mirage - featuring NXT flat panel speaker technology. Frankfurt was also the first continental European showing for Tannoy's CMS110B ceiling-mounted active sub-woofer and the i7 Contour slim-line infinite baffle installation loudspeaker. On the TEAC Deutschland stand, was the PS110B 10" active sub-woofer.

TOA launched the DP-0206 Digital Audio Control system. This is a computer-based digital processor which facilitates simple signal flow configurations containing multiple signal processing functions, each with a vast array of parameter controls. It also showed the new H-Series of loudspeakers and its latest line of UHF wireless microphone systems.

Having launched 17 new products last year, Turbosound are pretty turbo-charged at the moment, with yet further

new products now coming on line. The QLight series of loudspeakers encompasses both self-powered and non-powered full-range enclosures and features the TQ-440 (bi-amped full-range enclosure), TQ-440SP (self-powered full range), TQ-425 (front-loaded sub-bass), and the TQ-425SP (sub-bass).

Fred Heuves and Karel de Piere of Synco announced the latest international signing to the Synco Europe Rental Network - with a brand new company which expands the Synco network into fresh territory for this relatively new concept in live sound PA rentals, first unveiled at Frankfurt a year ago. All Synco network members use the Renkus-Heinz Synco Touring System (RH-ST5) PA system.

Wharfedale exhibited its most comprehensive range of professional audio products yet. The Focus series combines elements of both the EVP and LiX ranges and with seven models to choose from should suit most budgets and applications. Relaunched in September 1999, Wharfedale were also showing the recently-extended range of LiX cabinets. Designed for PA and club installations, the LiX now has 10 models, each with unique drive units designed and manufactured by Wharfedale. Also new is the 90 Series, a range of

compact installation speakers. There were also additions to the company's EVP range - the EVP 1208, a three-way cabinet comprising a 12" LF driver, 8" mid-range



horn and horn-loaded piezo transducer and the EVP 155B - a smaller alternative to the EVP 2155B.

One of the neatest ideas on the show floor came from Wondra in the shape of the AudioPack which is a portable box with a speaker, amplifier, CD/minidisc player and four-channel mixer all in one - and what's more it comes in its own flightcase. There is a smaller version - the AudioBaby - which has a three-channel mixer, and the AudioBase, a new system which can be custom-built according to customer specification. Plans for the future include the addition of an echo and reverb unit.

Building on the success of the DP226, the DP224 from XTA continues its reputation for sound quality in a product aimed squarely at the live sound market. The DP224 is a powerful DSP based audio-processing unit,



ideally suited for live applications, where it combines the functions of multiple conventional products in a compact 1U high unit.

Yamaha have underscored their reputation in the digital signal processing field with the release of the DME32 digital mixing engine - a powerful user-programmable DSP system which, courtesy of its 32-input, 32-output, 32-bit DSP engine, is capable of controlling an entire installed sound system using EQ, dynamics, delay, crossover, multi-effects, matrix, routing and surround panning components. Yamaha's recently-launched PM1D digital live mixing consoles are now in production.

Next year, things change again and Frankfurt returns to its March slot at the Messe. However, those who can't make it for whatever reason will be presented with a second opportunity, for the organisers are also launching a MusikMesse Pro Light+Sound in St Petersburg which will run in late June 2001.

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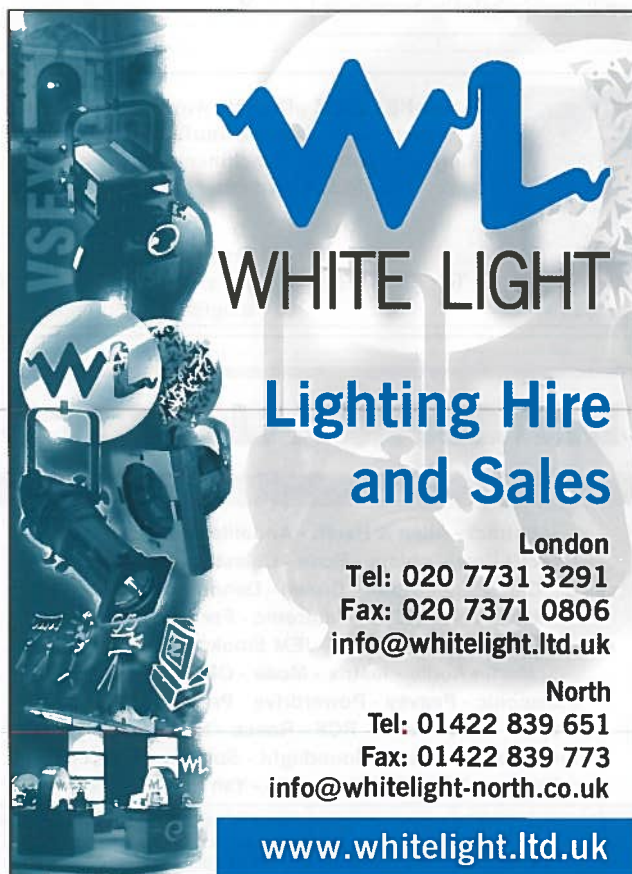
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Thank you to all of you who replied to the April edition of L&SI. Unfortunately Taylor-Phillips did not receive any of your applications as a result of being gazumped at the 11th hour on new premises after the magazine had gone to print. These positions are still current at time of going to press.

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System Design Engineer

Location: Nottingham • Salary £17-25K • Job Ref: 019/1

Applicants will have five years experience of sound system installation work and the ability to liaise with clients, consultants and contractors. Candidates must be willing to learn and explore new ways of achieving satisfactory solutions, be computer literate (including CAD) and have an understanding of sound/PA systems. Additionally, candidates must be able to read architects drawings.

Technician

Location: Berkshire • Salary £13K • Job ref: 1145/1

A fast growing production company is looking for an enthusiastic technician, to prep, repair and generally look after its hire stock which includes Martin Lighting and Electro-Voice audio products, plus a variety of other brands. Candidates will also be required to monitor lead times, undertake PAT testing and make site visits.

Project Engineer

Location: Worcestershire • Salary £22-25K • Job Ref: 101/3

This position requires education to degree level in electronics/software and at least two years audio experience. The successful candidate will design and develop new products within timescales and budgets, help build and test prototypes and prepare product specifications whilst keeping up-to-date with relevant technologies.

European Salesperson

Office Base: Hants • Salary £30-35K + bonuses • Job Ref: 100/1

This position would suit an energetic, self-motivated, international, multi-lingual salesperson with a proven sales record in dealing with blue chip companies. Experience at board level is essential.

For more up-to-date positions, check out our Web Site: www.taylor-phillips.co.uk

All applicants should send a CV, along with a hand-written covering letter, explaining why you would suit the position, along with latest salary package information.

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

Nineteen grand pianos might prove a bit of a challenge to any sound engineer. Add in a 250-piece orchestra, 550 choristers and 200 children's voices and we're really talking big. So imagine Nigel Luby's incredulity when the sting in the tail came - 'Oh, by the way, the concert will be in China.'

But seemingly these types of concert are grist to the mill to Luby. "In 1996 I did this 'October 6th Celebration' concert for Hosnee Mubarak, with Yasser Arafat as a guest. In scale the same sort of show as the Chinese one - two orchestras, two choirs, an oriental percussion section and 15,000 extras from the Egyptian Army for a big display.

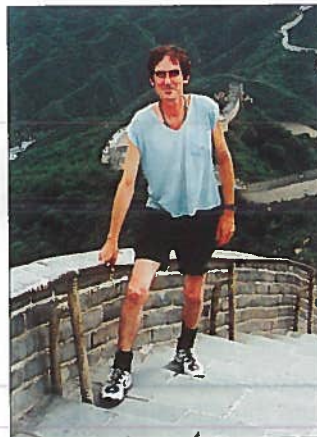
**Steve Moles
meets with
sound designer
Nigel Luby**

Trouble was the main guests, Mubarak and Arafat, had to sit in box of 8cm thick bullet-proof glass." Sorting this minor conundrum with a set of KFK9000 studio monitors might seem obvious, but imagine you'd taken on both

these monumental projects without so much as an opportunity to draw up a sound plot, mic chart or equipment specification - and you begin to get a measure of the man.

Luby's entrée to the music world is classic for a man of his generation. Born in London in 1954, he led a quite ordinary life until adulthood. "My dad was a design project engineer. An industrial architect really, with a specialisation in building paper mills. My mum was a regular housewife. There was nothing in my upbringing that gave even a hint of what I was later to do." He did confess a tendency towards the visual arts and music at school; he learned the piano, and spent many teenage evenings under the pillow listening to Radio Caroline. "And I did enrol at Hornsey College for a two-year Diploma in Art & Design," which he completed, though to little avail. "I was

a typical poor student. Like many of my contemporaries at the time, I found work with a construction company to make a bit of extra money." But it was no ordinary firm. "They had found a niche building recording studios. The first I handled was for Chris Squire of Yes." It was to be his only one. Barely a month into the job and Squire and Luby had become firm friends.



The nascent rock star, barely older than his new friend, asked him to run the new studio when it was complete. However, this was the early seventies and building projects didn't run to quite such tight schedules as they do today. By the time the studio was finished, the band had already recorded its next album and was about to tour the globe. "Do you want to come on tour instead?" asked Squire. "Funny really, all I knew was how to turn on an amp, and get a reasonable sound out of Bass guitar." But it was enough for Squire, and even if Luby didn't realise it himself, his fate was sealed. "In those days the band toured extensively, especially in the US. After some time the need arose for an assistant to the front-of-house engineer. I wanted to move on and so I applied."

Wanting to move on is one thing - having the legs to cover the ground quite another, but Luby proved an athlete. So adept, in fact, that when long-time sound man John Timperly decided to move on in '76, Luby was the natural choice to replace him. "It was an interesting time to be in that position. The band had already forged strong ties with Clair Brothers Audio in the US, and for some reason they always seemed to choose us as guinea pigs for their new developments." So it was that although the legendary S4 cabinet was

already on the horizon, Luby didn't get to use them until 1984. "We experimented with all sorts of other stuff though. I did the first in-the-round shows for Yes with a PA rig we [he and CBA] designed between us." Arguably the first rock band to attempt this presentation format on the emerging Arena circuit, it was also the first outing for CBA's famous fold-up house console.

Yes kept him busy until 1986, with just one lull in 82/83 when

Wakeman and Anderson left the band. But he wasn't idle for long; Yes gave him a fair reputation and he was quickly snapped up by the likes of 'Quo, Joni Mitchell and Mike Oldfield. It was enough to whet his appetite - although he returned to Yes for two more years, he'd begun to yearn for diversity, and when free once again, set to it with vigour. In the years since, he has worked in recording, continued to do live mixing - not least the big orchestral spectaculars, but now finds his challenge in the conference world. "I recently designed a surround sound system with Dolby 5.1, matched to a digital animation on VT. That's the kind of thing that excites me now, getting the audio dynamics to be as stimulating as the presentation."

The China concert, by the way, was to start a 100-day countdown for the return of Macau to China. In much the same way that Hong Kong's release from colonisation was celebrated three years ago, so too the Chinese have now discovered that they have as much ability to make a big hoo-ha as the West. Finding an engineer of Luby's calibre, from within their own ranks, is another matter. ■

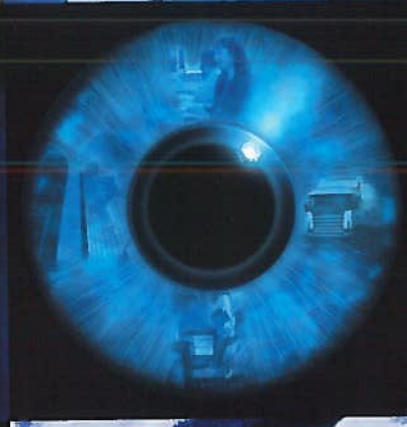
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