

LIGHTING+SOUND

International



QUEEN AT THE OPERA IN JOHANNESBURG - SEE NEWS THIS MONTH

- A canon of popular classics fire off at the Royal Albert Hall
- Company profile: London-based M&M
- Miami Lights: report and pictures from LDI 95
- Oasis at Earls Court - a new chapter in rock history
- Putting on the West End style for the BBC's 'Showstoppers'
- Paris Match: new sound for L'Elysee Montmartre

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DECEMBER 1995

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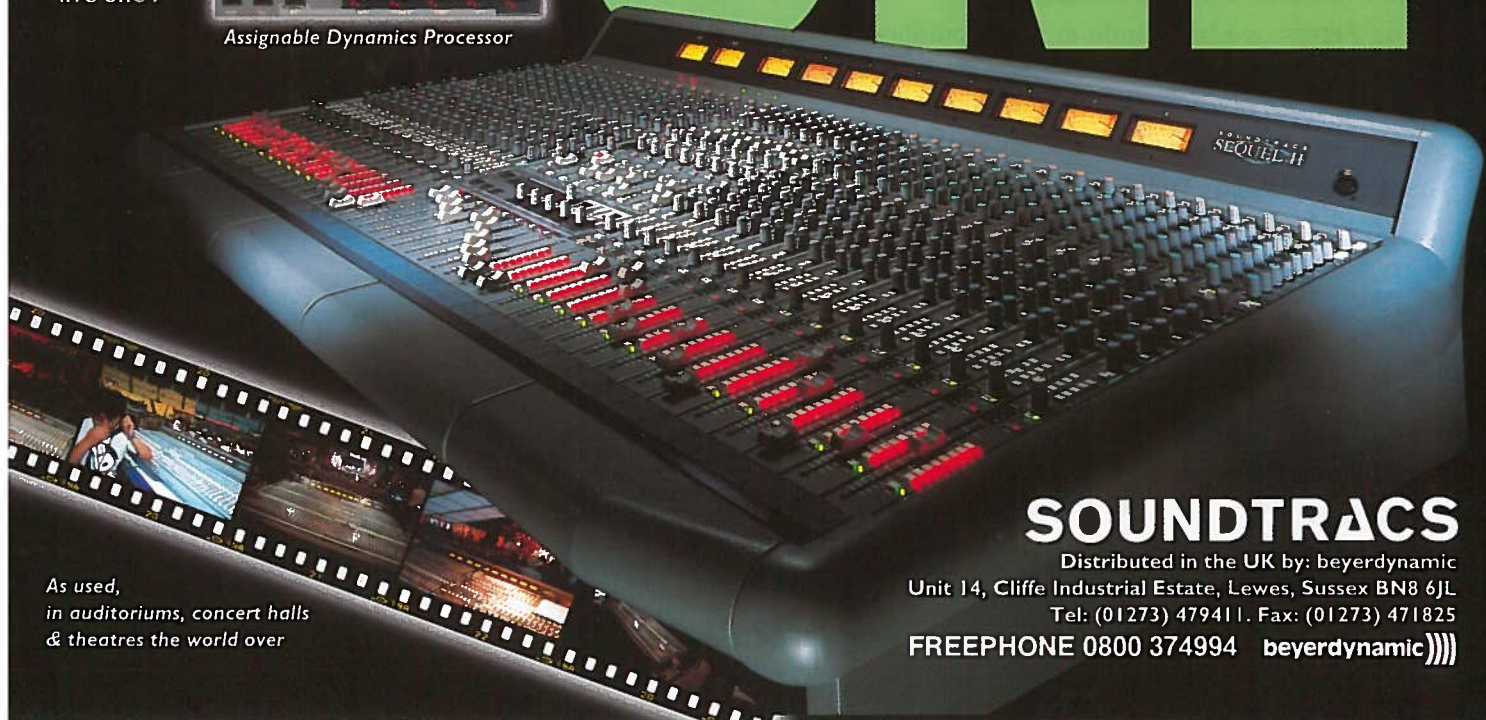
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DECEMBER 1995

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 12

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ABC Membership has been approved pending first audit for the period July 1995 - December 1995

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

LIGHTING+ SOUND *International*

published monthly by the Professional Lighting and Sound Association
© Copyright Professional Lighting and Sound Association ISSN 0268-7429

Editor: John Offord
Deputy Editor: Ruth Rossington
Associate Editor: Tony Gottelier
Assistant Editor: Lee Baldock
Advertisement Manager: Barry Howse
Production Manager: Nicola Evenden
Production/subscriptions: Sheila Bartholomew
Advertising assistant: Jane Cockburn

Published from the PLASA Office: 7 Highlight House, St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3UH England
Telephone: (01323) 642639 Fax: (01323) 646905 Internet: <http://www.plasa.org.uk/plasa/> E-mail: info@plasa.org.uk
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The magazine is available on annual subscription
UK £45.00 Europe and rest of world £60.00 Airmail £85.00. Single copy price £3.50 plus postage

Editorial Advisors: Peter Brooks, Wyatt Enever, Mike Gerrish, Derek Gilbert, David Hopkins, Matthew Griffiths, John Lethbridge, Ian de la Vingne, Iain Price-Smith, Neil Rice, Sue Webb.

Lighting + Sound International is published monthly for \$90.00 per year by The Professional Lighting and Sound Association, 7 Highlight House, St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3UH. Second class postage paid at Rahway, N.J. Postmaster: Send USA address corrections to Lighting & Sound International, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Inc, 2323 Randolph Avenue, Avenel, New Jersey N.J. 07001

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United Kingdom Design Reg. No. 2029499; 2033108.
German Utility Model Reg. No. G9312884 3 and G9314158.5.
All other worldwide patents granted or pending.

WETF Miami Meeting



The WETF meets in Miami: Tom Young and Paul Vincent (ESTA), Matthew Griffiths (PLASA), Lori Rubinstein (ESTA) Florian von Hofen (VPLT) and Paul Adams (PLASA vice-chairman).

The World Entertainment Technology Federation held a meeting at the LDI Show in Miami. In attendance were Paul Adams and Matthew Griffiths representing PLASA, Florian von Hofen representing VPLT and Paul Vincent, Tom Young and Lori Rubinstein representing ESTA.

It was agreed to use the resources and presence of the Federation at upcoming trade shows to more effectively promote common interests. Plans were made for Pro Light & Sound/Musikmesse in Frankfurt, PLASA in London and LDI in Orlando. It was also agreed to establish a presence on the Internet for the Federation.

The WETF is a federation of entertainment technology associations that provides a forum for the discussion of common issues. These include technical standards, trading methods, training and education, and the enhancement of the prospects for industry growth internationally. The members of the federation hold regular meetings in conjunction with major industry trade shows.

For Further information contact PLASA in Eastbourne, telephone (01323) 410335.

Seasonal Offerings

The team of L+SI would like to thank all the generous readers who have sent Christmas gifts. Really, you shouldn't. However, we're still a little light on good bottles of red wine, but please, no more Teddy Bears for John. We would like to make it clear that gifts will not affect editorial content. Best Wishes for the season - we'll see you in 1996!

Audio Finds a New Home at PLASA

PLASA and P&O Events have announced exciting new plans for pro-audio, installation and recording companies. The combined need for more space, coupled with the special requirements of major audio companies, has seen the opening up of 'Super Quiet Area' on the second floor of Earls Court 1. The move followed consultation with leading pro-audio exhibitors, both existing and prospective.

Taking place between 8-11 September 1996, the PLASA Show has already surpassed the total area taken in 1995. Most of this growth has come directly from pro-audio companies who see PLASA as the lead UK show with an international visitor count that passed the 3,000-mark this year.

Paul Adams, PLASA vice-chairman, stated that: "Many companies have said to us that they would like a quiet area away from the main floor where they could talk to their specialist clients. As the PLASA event becomes more business-like and international, it was only right that we responded to this demand and formed a new area."

Show organisers P&O Events have reported a substantial amount of interest from companies involved in installation, pro-audio and recording. The area will also benefit from the fact that it is right next door to the British Music Fair, which will be running alongside the PLASA exhibition.

Many sound companies see the Show as the leading UK event. Robin Whittaker of Outboard Electronics said: "We made the mistake of not exhibiting. We'll take our first PLASA stand next year."

Mark Burgin of Shuttlesound, an exhibitor at the 1995 Show, said: "We are pleased with the quality and volume of visitors to our stand and we signed contracts to the value approaching £5m. Maybe it's because we organised a little better this year. However, a lot is to do with the quality of visitors PLASA is now attracting."

Show director James Brooks-Ward told L+SI: "PLASA now serves a very widely-based audio market sector and puts as a priority its need to attract a buying audience for all sound-based companies."

For further information on available PLASA Show exhibition space contact Nicola Rowland or Marcus Bernie on 0171-370 8179 (fax 0171-370 8143).

Production Arts UK



Steve Terry (left), VP of Production Arts, congratulates Glen Wade on his appointment.

New York-based Production Arts are poised to open their new UK offices in the New Year. Based in Acton, the new operation will carry the largest inventory of Pani projection equipment in the UK, and has no plans to extend the operation to cover lighting products and systems. Glen Wade will relocate from the States to run the UK office and will quickly look to establish a core resource of freelance technicians offering full automation and computer software support.

Pani's Hermann Sorger is delighted with the new facility: "Through Production Arts UK, the complete Pani range of 1.2, 2.5, 4 and 6kW projectors, plus accessories, will be fully available for the first time in the UK."

Production Arts UK plan to offer the complete service, from production of artwork, through supply of equipment, to 24-hour support.

Wybron/TP Exclusive

Wybron's Autopilot is to become available to lighting professionals in the UK without any requirement to purchase. This is thanks to an agreement between Wybron and the twin-pronged Theatre Projects lighting Services/Concert Production Lighting duo who are to add the Autopilot to their vast inventory of lighting equipment for rental.

TP has acquired the exclusive UK rental rights to the system, which the company's managing director, Alan Thomson describes as "a major step forward in professional lighting which reflects our commitment to offering our rental clients the most innovative lighting products available".

Wybron Inc's Keny Whitright told L+SI: "I cannot think of any company better than Theatre Projects with their vast experience to offer this unique system to the UK's lighting professionals."

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Rosco Dealer Visits



Rosco continued its tradition of dealer incentive programmes in 1995 with an 'exchange programme' between Europe and North America. A party of European dealers visited New York in October, enjoying a programme of backstage theatre visits, with a return party of 50 dealers from North America visiting London in early November. The trip culminated in a banquet at the Gloucester Hotel on November 5th, where the dealers were introduced to the delights of Victorian Music Hall.

The trio pictured above have put in more than 80 years between them in the service of Rosco: Stan Schwarz (left) of Rosco US (25 years), Michael Hall (centre) of Rosco UK (20 years) and Stan Miller of Rosco US (37 years). The focus of their attention is none other than L+S editor John Offord, but unfortunately his camera let him down, so we are grateful to George Jacobstein of Rose Brand for the photograph.

THE OFFICES OF L+S WILL CLOSE ON FRIDAY DECEMBER 22 AND REOPEN ON TUESDAY JANUARY 2, 1996

Harman Buy C-Audio

C-Audio Limited and Harman International Industries Incorporated have agreed terms under which Harman will immediately acquire a 100% holding in C-Audio Limited.

Phil Hildrow, managing director of C-Audio, told L+S: "We have built up a very good relationship with Harman over the years, through our successful distribution agreements in the UK and France. Although strong in Europe and the Far East, C-Audio could not compete with the cost benefits brought about by the economies of scale enjoyed by the bigger American amplifier manufacturers, by virtue of their enormous home market. It was, therefore, a logical step forward to combine forces with Harman to build our worldwide market share."

Philip Hart, president of the Harman Professional Group, added: "This acquisition enables the professional group to provide all of the links in the sound reinforcement chain."

Omega in Action

Following the launch of the 'Omega' automated light from Genius (a 270 degree pan and tilt lamp) at the PLASA show in September, Batmink have been able to announce its rapid acceptance in the professional market. Batmink MD David Churches told L+S: "The Omega has recently seen action on the Honda stand at the Motor show and was also used by Smith Kline Beecham on the Lucozade stand at the Fast Foods Fair."

Coupled with brisk sales of the latest Centrepiece from Lampo, the PLASA show has proved to be Batmink's busiest to date and, said David Churches, "will make this our most successful year ever."

Celine Dion Tour



Celine Dion is a French Canadian singer/songwriter who has gained worldwide popularity over the last three years and is currently enjoying chart success.

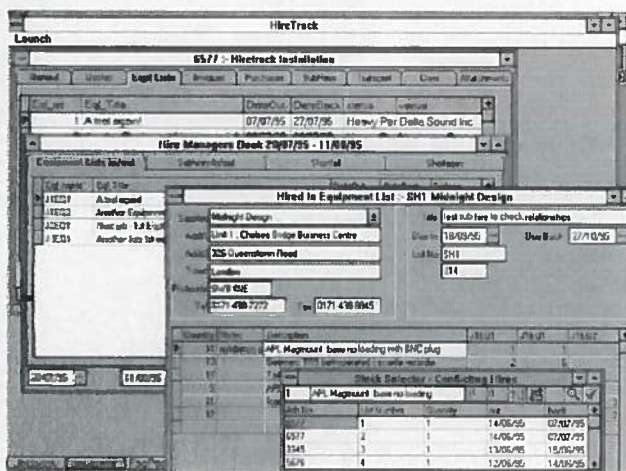
An impressive line-up of sound and lighting technology will accompany the singer on her latest world tour with the main lighting honours going to 24 Clay Paky Super Scan Zooms. Designed and operated by Yves Aucoin, the Scans provide a powerful beam-orientated colour washed show to complement her dramatic performance. The equipment was supplied by Solotech of Montreal, Canada.

Wallplanner Update

Please note the following changes to our 1996 wallplanner: the Live! Show will now take place on the 15 and 16th January at a new venue, the Novotel, Hammersmith and the SIEL Show in Paris runs from the 11-14th February.

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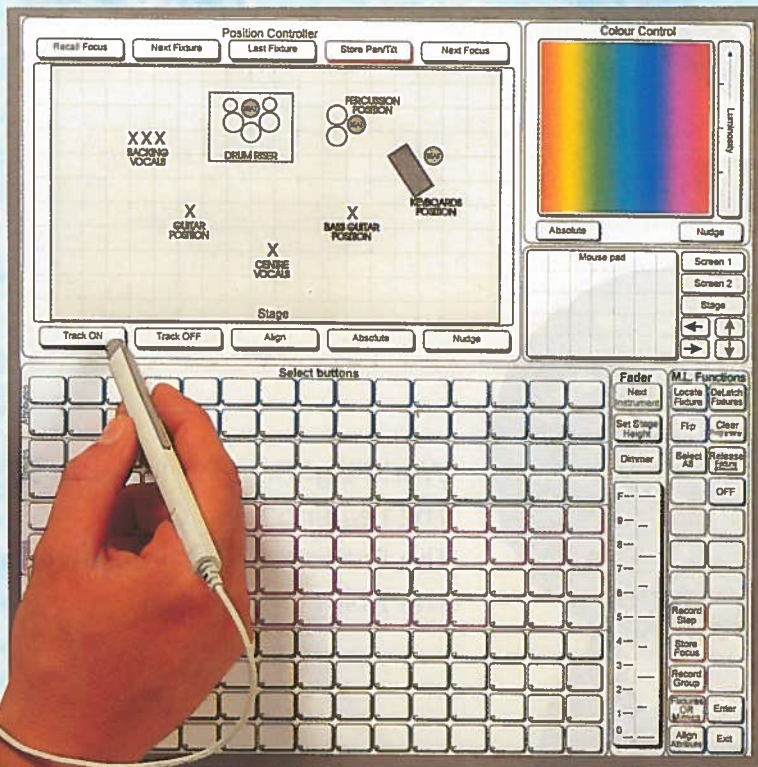
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The XY tracking allows you to move as many lights as you wish as one - representing huge time savings when it comes to preset focuses.

More importantly, you can now 'follow-spot' performers ...it has already been used successfully to track ice skaters, and it's only a question of time before this function becomes a commonplace 'live' requirement in all types of performance.

Now, when a performer moves off the target position, you use the 4D Track in 'nudge' mode to move the beams and pull the moving light memory back into focus on the artist.

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Experimenting with colour becomes a pleasure rather than tedium!

All the lighting designers who have worked with the Avolites 4D Track estimate that it is at least 30 times faster than using previous technology.

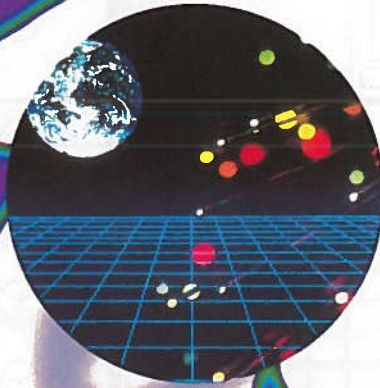


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Las Vegas in Lights

Production Arts of New York are involved in a project that is intended to rejuvenate downtown Las Vegas.

The project, known as 'the Fremont Street Experience', involves the construction of a permanent canopy over the length of Fremont Street, featuring regular sound and light shows.

The canopy is four blocks long, 120ft wide and 100ft high. The underside is covered by a graphic display system made up of no less than 2.4 million tiny coloured bulbs. A speaker system with 56 clusters, each with individual audio channels, allows sound to pan up and down the length of the street accompanied by video projection and lighting. The lighting equipment includes 68 Irideon AR500 fixtures and 16 Skytracker 7,000W Xenon searchlights, the beams of which will be animated by Robo mirror fixtures from Japan.

The different elements of the show are synchronised using SMPTE time code. For example, in part of the show, a video-screen eagle flies along the length of the canopy, while its screeching is heard moving along through the sound system. The bird is followed by white lighting with washes of blue and indigo. The same type of effects produce the image and sound of a jet plane roaring along Fremont Street. Production Arts supplied the show control and lighting control systems, while the lighting equipment was supplied by Cinema Services of Las Vegas.

Selecon's Connections

Following the PLASA Light & Sound Show 95, ETTC sa have been appointed the exclusive distributor for Selecon products in France. Bernard Bouchet, former MD with Strand France, heads the company, whose first success was the supply of 70 Acclaim Condensor profiles to Euro Disney's extension of the Space Mountain attraction. ETTC are taking a stand at Siel in February to introduce the full Selecon range including the new 1200 Condensors.

The complete Selecon range of stage and display luminaires including all accessories are detailed on a new A1 wall chart. As well as product details, the chart includes notes and illustrations of the various beam characteristics and applications. The charts are available free from Selecon NZ, fax +64 9 360 1719 or Selecon UK, fax (01425) 471398.

Martin's Music

Two of Camden's popular nightspots have refurbished their sound systems with Martin Audio enclosures.

The Electric Ballroom has just had its system upgraded by DB Audio of Milton Keynes. The club has installed Martin Audio's new Wavefront 8 system. Two full-range Wavefront 8 cabinets, complete with Wavefront 8S sub-bass, are stacked on each side of the stage.

DB Audio has also installed a new foreground music system for the HQ Club in Camden Lock. The multi-purpose restaurant/bar/club wanted additional sound power for the live bands that play in the long, narrow room. Martin Audio's new ICT Series loudspeakers were selected and, in fact, the HQ Club took the first four cabinets straight off the production line.

Nationwide Club Tour

Futuristic, computer-generated visuals, blip-verts and spectacular lighting effects will combine with British and American DJs, in a nationwide club tour, celebrating the last decade of House.

The tour will be visiting some of the leading dance club venues in the country. Clubbers will be treated to a spectacular, visual display using state-of-the-art technology, including the first use in the UK of the Clay Paky HPE Golden Scan lighting system. Each act will also be accompanied by a futuristic display of computer generated video projections and some stunning special effects. The first event kicked off in November and the Tour will continue throughout December.

Prakash 95: Delhi

Delhi, like most capital cities, is a series of villages which over the years has merged together. The latest 'village' was designed and built by Lutyens in 1911 to create a garden city of outstanding grandeur and beauty.

Dividing the old and new parts of Delhi is the Yamuna river and close to its banks, near the zoological gardens and the museum of the Archaeological Survey, is the 'Pragati Maida' Trade Fair Complex. Built in 1972, its sprawling acres house several permanent exhibitions and also hosts thematic shows throughout the year.

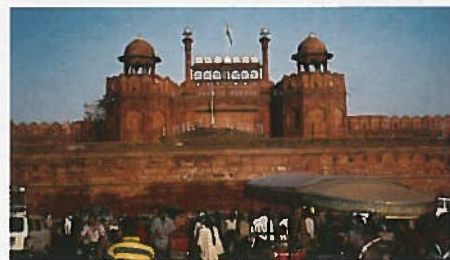
The International Lighting Show (Oct 29-Nov 3rd) concentrated more on industrial and power-saving exhibits than entertainment technology. However, there were two Indian companies exhibiting product which may be of interest to readers of L+SI.



Darbari manufacture a range of idiot-proof dimmer packs aimed at the TV and film markets, which can be preset and offer automatic operation. The company also distribute a range of lighting from Selecon, whose Asian marketing manager, Graham Eales was ever-present on their stand (pictured above).

Canara manufacture specialised dimmer packs, power supplies and voltage stabilising equipment, along with a range of spot lights and trussing systems, almost exclusively for TV and film use.

During my brief visit to Delhi, I was introduced to several manufacturers who specialise in all forms of 'metal-work' and electronics for our industry - both sound and lighting and who export parts to the UK, Europe and the USA.



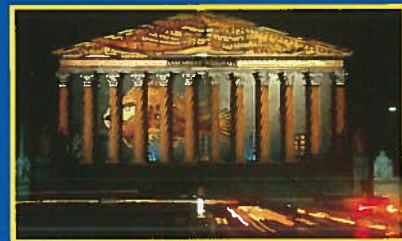
My last day was spent in Old Delhi at the fabulous Red Fort (shown above). This vast complex hosts a sound and light show every night which brings alive Delhi's Murghal and British past - an experience not to be missed!

Paul MacCallum

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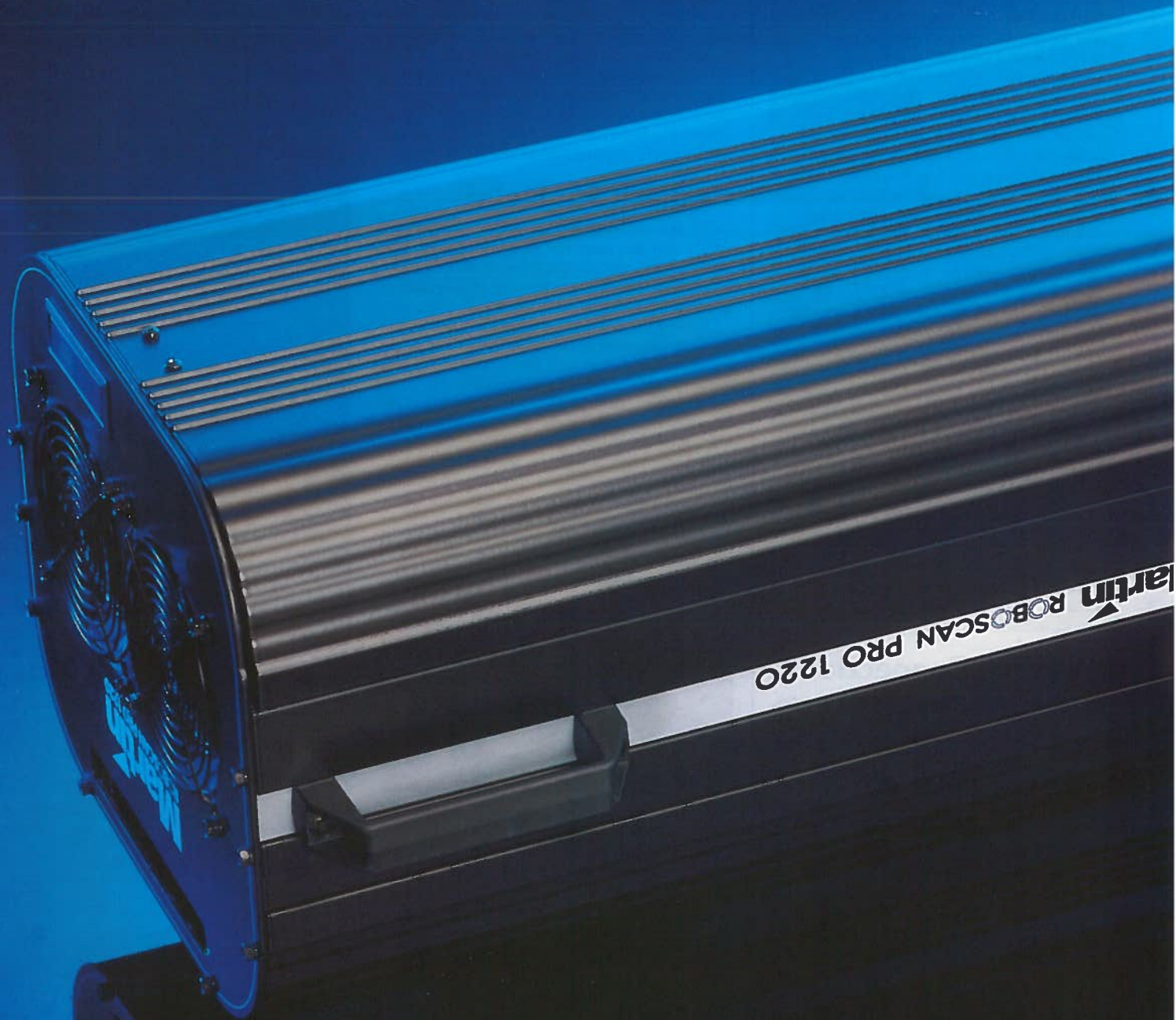
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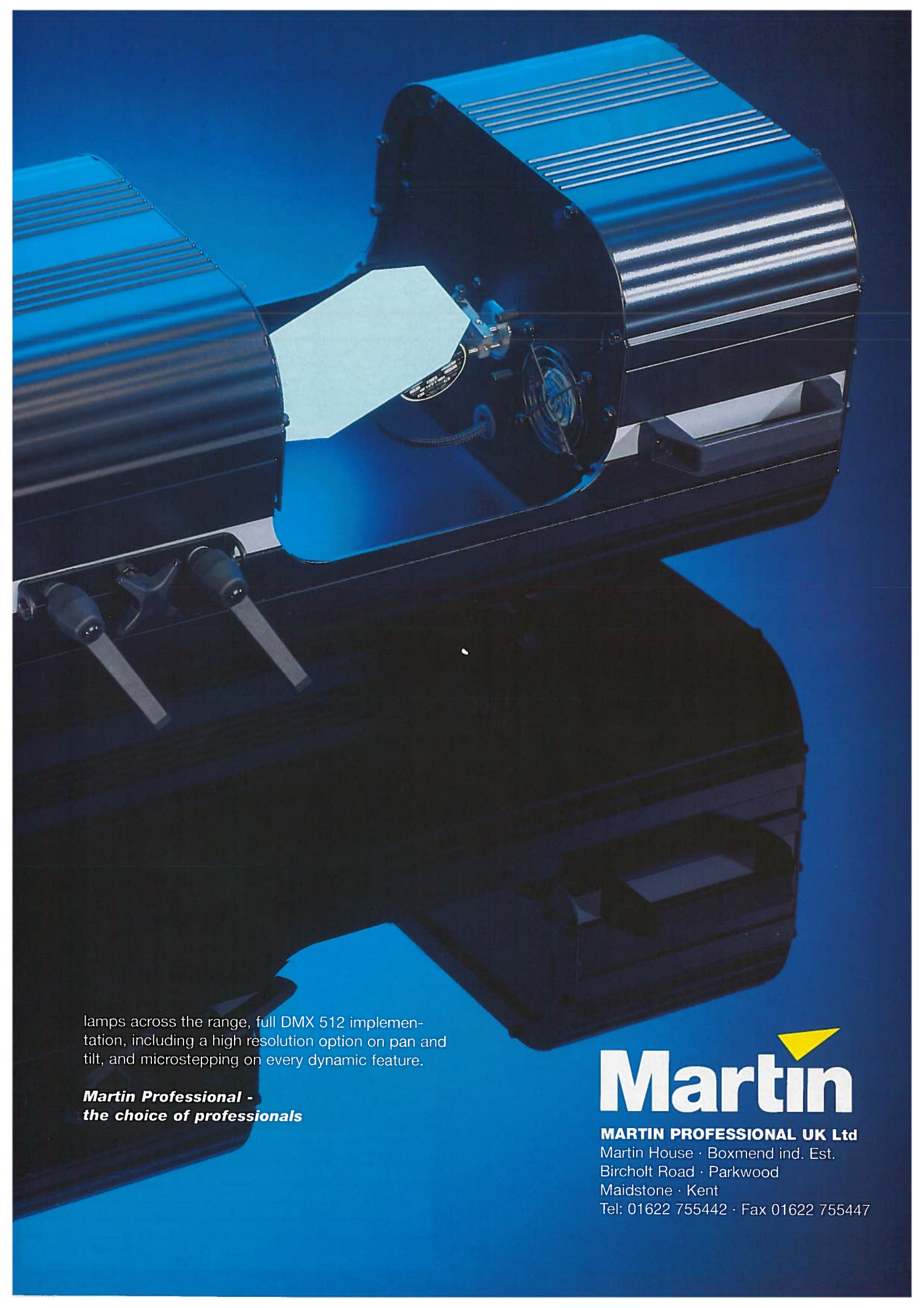


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DAS System in Waxy O'Connor's



Lightfactor Sales report a massive interest in the supply of DAS audio systems over the past few months, with installations being carried out in live music clubs, discotheques, restaurants and bars.

These installations include the much-touted Waxy O'Connor's Irish pub, which recently opened in Rupert Street in the heart of London's West End. The cavernous site features five differently themed rooms serviced by four bars.

The audio section of the project was undertaken by Colin Pattenden's company, CP Sound, who have a long and active alliance with Lightfactor. Waxy's has 12 separate zones of sound, all serviced with DAS speakers.

CP Sound used DAS Factor 5s, Factor 8s, MI 8s and folded horn bass bins containing DAS 15 inch bass drivers for the installation - all supplied by Lightfactor. These zones are electronically crossed over in two areas, with each zone able to receive live music from the staged area, pre-recorded sounds from the CD and cassette players or audio from the Irish satellite receiver.

Aerobic Antics

The latest live demonstration of GAE loudspeakers, together with Shure microphones and QSC and Camco amplifiers, took place recently at the National Hall, Olympia. A 12kW GAE loudspeaker system, ably supported by Shure, QSC and Camco, was used by DMC for this year's Health and Fitness Show. The newly introduced Shure WH 10 dynamic headworn microphone was in use, giving aerobic instructors freedom to perform the most agile of manoeuvres in their repertoire without hindrance.

HELL Christmas Countdown

Howard Eaton Lighting Limited has experienced a flurry of orders in the run up to Christmas, the most significant of which has come from the Coliseum, home of the English National Opera.

Having seen the company's new radio control system at PLASA, the Coliseum's Jeff Salmon purchased one for the venue. The system, which includes a customised six-way transmitter, is to be installed and controlled by the existing Galaxy desk. An order for 20 fluorescent battens was also made.

Other recent sales include two sets of nine light curtains and a radio control system for 'Phantom' tours in America, a number of Ripples to Lighting Technology destined for the Gatwick Airport 'Theatre', a SoftCue to the Victoria Palace in London, six fluorescent battens to the Welsh National Opera, and six dry ice machines to Neg Earth Lights for use on the Pocahontas Road-show.

Marquee Double Act

Marquee Audio designed and installed the sound system for what is claimed to be one of London's hottest venues - 'The Rocket' - at the University of North London in Holloway.

As part of a £700,000 refurbishment, Marquee installed a 17k, JBL-led sound system in the main theatre/live area. In the 'multi-purpose area' they completely refurbished the Martin bin and horn system using C-Audio amps, BSS crossovers, Yamaha graphics and a Soundcraft Spirit Live console.

The company have also completed a £70,000 installation at the newly refurbished multi-purpose 'Alban Arena' in St Albans. The installation debuts the Turbosound TCS and one of the first theatrical installations of BSS's Varicurve and Omnidrive system control devices. Marquee also specified a Soundcraft sound desk and the system is driven by C-Audio RA series amps. The installation also includes Sennheiser Stethosets for those with sight or hearing problems who wish to receive a running audio commentary.

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A New Century

There doesn't seem to be a month go by without Glantre announcing that it has secured another major cruise shipping contract, and December, naturally, is no exception. Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri has awarded the company the contract for the supply, supervision and commissioning of the complete entertainment systems on Carnival Cruise Lines' ms Carnival Destiny. Due to come into service in the autumn of 1996, Carnival Destiny will enter the record books as the world's first 100,000 ton cruise ship.

Glantre's contract covers lighting, sound, video and rigging for all public rooms, including the 1,300 seat main show room. Designed by architect Joe Farcus, the room also has a place in the record books, as it will be the world's first onboard theatre to feature a three deck height, two-tier auditorium and a four deck height stage with full flying.

The fly tower will incorporate a substantial rigging system, with 21 variable and eight fixed speed motorised hoists, traveller tracks, an orchestra lift and an 8m diameter turntable, all under computer control. The stage lighting includes two high specification consoles, 384 dimmers, 48 automated luminaires, over 300 conventional luminaires and 100 scrollers.

Effects include three high power lasers, an LN2 fog system, pyrotechnics, strobes and confetti cannons, whilst the audio mixing system is based on a 56-channel mixing console with proscenium loudspeaker arrays, full surround-sound, image shifting, monitors and 16 radio microphones.

Carnival's principal technical consultant is London-based Technical and Marine Planning, supported by the Tetlow Company of California (stage lighting and rigging) and MAVCO of Florida (audio and video).

Glantre was also one of only three British companies under sub-contract to Fincantieri for Princess Cruise line's Sun Princess. The company is working on several of the nine ships currently on the yard's books, three of them for Princess Cruises, a P&O subsidiary. Glantre was awarded the £1.1million, year-long contract for the supply and installation of the rigging and stage equipment for the main Theatre and the aft Vista Lounge. The 1,950 passenger Sun Princess will be the line's first cruise ship to feature a show-lounge with



traditional theatre-style seating. It has a 12m wide proscenium arch and boasts new, state-of-the-art equipment, with all stage machinery, curtain tracks and screens being computer-controlled. A major feature on the stage of the Princess Theatre is a set of three motorised wagons which will provide the flexibility for a variety of scenic effects. Glantre's sub contract also included the supply of audio-visual equipment for Cyberspace, the vessel's teen centre, this being carried out in association with consultants Wynne Willson Gottelier.

The beginning of this month also saw the 1,750 passenger, 70,000 ton Celebrity Century (pictured above) enter service. Glantre was the sub-contractor to Funa GmbH for the stage and effects lighting for the 800 seat Celebrity Theatre Lounge and the Crystal Room nightclub. The Theatre includes fly towers, a revolving stage, hydraulic orchestra pit, interactive equipment and sophisticated special effects, sound and lighting systems. Included in Glantre's contract was the installation of a 1536 channel ETC Obsession console, a ShowCAD control system, 480 ETC L86 digital dimmers, 32 High End Cyberlights and over 250 ETC and Thomas luminaires, plus HMI followspots and effects equipment. Glantre's installations for the Crystal Room, an elegant nightclub with a signature Art Deco motif, include Pulsar Masterpiece controls, ETC dimmers and Mini-Scan automated luminaires.

ETC Move

Electronic Theatre Controls Ltd have moved premises. They can now be found at Unit 5, Victoria Industrial Estate, Victoria Road, London, W3 6UU. The new contact numbers are telephone: 0181-896 1000 fax: 0181-896 2000.

You Can't Lick it



A letter bearing an unusual pair of stamps recently arrived at the offices of L+SI. Designed and printed by PLASA international members Gøgler-Lys of Denmark, the stamps are part of a limited edition set of 35 issued by the company every year. In addition to ones which illustrate Gøgler Lys's involvement with Copenhagen 96, further stamps portray the wide range of equipment handled by the company. If anybody would like a set they should telephone Gøgler Lys on +45 86 12 19 66.

Harris Buy Vanco

New York-based Harris Production Services have bought Vanco Lighting Services of Orlando. An announcement on the new initiative was made by Jere Harris of Harris Production Services and Teddy Van Bommel Jr of Vanco Lighting Services.

Harris Production Services is a technical services company with offices in Cornwall, New York and Las Vegas, Nevada, whilst Vanco Lighting Services is a full service entertainment lighting company based in Florida. Jere Harris, chairman of Harris Production Services, will continue to head up the operations, while Teddy Van Bommel will assume the role of senior vice president of North American operations.

"The fit between the two companies is perfect," Harris told L+SI. "Teddy and I have grown up together in the industry, and we have known each other since childhood." Van Bommel added: "I am honoured to be in business with Jere. I have long admired his organisation and feel the alliance of the two companies is right for the industry."

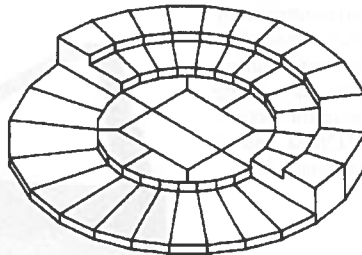
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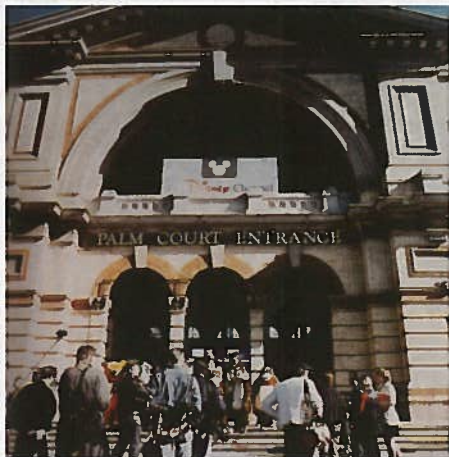
BBC Lighting Exhibition

BBC Resources Scotland is to host a lighting exhibition and seminars on the 11th and 12th of February 1996 at its studios in Glasgow in association with Scottish Broadcast and Film Training Ltd and PLASA. Visitors to the exhibition can expect to see and try the latest lighting equipment available. In addition, the seminars will cover many lighting techniques including theatre, concert, television and film, each hosted by a leading participant in the respective field.

The exhibition is being organised by Joe Breslin, lighting and vision supervisor at BBC Resources Scotland. Support from companies and lighting organisations has been overwhelming and there will be a wide range of equipment on view. This, coupled with the opportunity to meet with others of similar background, and to hear via the seminars about the work of some of the most experienced lighting people in the UK make this exhibition an exciting prospect for all involved in lighting.

Entrance fee to the exhibition and seminars is £10 for one day and £15 for both days. For further information, contact Joe Breslin, Room G109, BBC Resources Scotland, Glasgow G12 8DG. telephone 0141-338 2269.

A Whole New World



A whole new Disney experience arrived in the UK when The Disney Channel went on air for the first time amid celebrations at Alexandra Palace. Significantly, it was at Alexandra Palace that the BBC made the world's first public television transmission in 1936 and, on 1st September 1939, the broadcast of Mickey Mouse's Gala Premiere was halted as the BBC stopped transmitting for the War years.

Over half a century later, The Disney Channel UK chose the Palace's West Hall and Palm Court to introduce a range of high quality television viewing for all the family.

Sensible and Sedaka

Sensible Music supplied the PA system for the recent UK tour of Neil Sedaka and the Philharmonic Orchestra. The fully flown PA consisted of Clair Brothers R4 III full range speaker systems, P4 piston cabinets, and 12AM floor monitors, with Crest and Carver amp racks, a Yamaha PM4000 mixing console and a Soundcraft monitor desk.

In addition to the PA system, the company supplied a selection of backline equipment including Accusound mics for the 40-piece orchestra, all of which were accompanied by Sensible Music personnel throughout the tour.

The Lillehammer Experience

Sarner International has completed a major £1.3m project in Norway - The Lillehammer Olympic Experience.

This attraction has been designed and built to give visitors a sense of what it is like to attend a Winter Olympics. Based on the 1994 games, the project was designed to keep alive the magic of the event, as well as to provide an entertaining and informative focus for visitors.

The story is told using a wide variety of multi-sensory and theatrical techniques together with sound, light, images and special effects. The project necessitated a huge amount of work to be accomplished in a short time-scale. Sarner divided the project into four key elements: scenery and sets, technical systems, production of the entertainment programme, and the mechanical items.

The installation of the theatrical set phase began with preparations and modifications to the building, after which scenics and the motion platform were installed; at the same time, the technical systems were built and installed. Sarner's London studios created and tested the automated programme which was moved to site two weeks before completion.

The 'event' is fully automated using recently developed technology to control everything seen, heard and felt. Technically, the installation includes a vast battery of presentation devices including 28 slide projectors, motion picture and video projectors, a six channel surround sound system, 3,000W of amplification, motorised scenery and more than 100 theatre lighting circuits.

Wildfire Link to UK

Wildfire Corporation have announced the formation of a strategic alliance with Express Services for the purpose of distributing its line of long throw ultra-violet lighting fixtures and fluorescent creative materials in the UK.

Wildfire, established in 1989, develops, manufactures and markets long-throw ultra-violet fixtures. In recent years, the company have provided visual effects at Universal Studios, Sea World and Disney attractions on three continents.

Wonderwest Warship

Pro-Sound Services of Glasgow supplied a 6kW sound system for the first Scottish Pentecostal Christian Convention, held in 'Wonderwest World' in Ayr, Scotland, in early November.

The venue had a 2,000 capacity with a raised stage, low ceiling and a rear seated area with various balconies - a difficult format to cover evenly, as the programme ranged from preachers on stage using radio mics, to the house rock band rocking them in the aisles with Christian songs!

The PA comprised of four Turbosound T.S.E bass bins and tops at the stage, whilst the audience was covered by eight Meyer UPA1s. A Soundcraft Delta 24/4/2 fed the Meyers on matrix outputs via a pair of BSS Audio TCS 804 delay units. An induction loop system for the hard of hearing was also supplied via the desk matrix outputs.

All amps used were C-Audio, monitors comprised Turbosound TMW212 and Bose 802s and radio mics were Sennheiser diversity mics.

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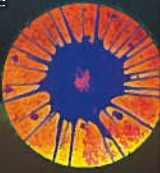
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Avolites Controlling Major Pop Tours

Avolites' desks have been controlling lights on three major Brit-pop tours this autumn - Pulp, Blur and Oasis. Pulp and Blur have both been designed by Dave Byars, with Pulp being operated by Phydeaux using a Sapphire, while Dave has been out with Blur using a Diamond II. Oasis is operated by Mikey Howard using a Sapphire.

Meanwhile, not quite so trendy, but almost as entertaining, was a lightshow designed and programmed

by Avolites' Steve Warren. Steve dusted off his LD'ing gloves for the first time in two years to light the various incantations of the bands of Frank Collins - the most famous being Kokomo.

The lighting rig included 10 Cyberlights, strobes and Pars galore - supplied by The Spot Co - whose



Avolites light the Kokomo reunion gig.

photo: Paul Port

Ben Sullivan joined in the junketing. Rigged by the redoubtable Billy Potts, other Avolites crew include May Yam, Chris Steel, Garry Lodge and Dilip Patel on follow-spots, and Tony Shembish, who shared the operating and programming responsibilities with Steve.

Golden Scan Success

Clay Paky's Golden Scan range has won three prestigious awards in 1995. The first, at the British Entertainments and Dance Association (BEDA) awards in June went to the Golden Scan 3.

The second and third awards came during the PLASA Show in September when two awards were given to Clay Paky at the annual Disco International Awards at London's Hippodrome. The Golden Scan 3 won the prize for best projector of the year, while the new Golden Scan HPE, launched in Rimini in March, won the prize for most innovative product of the year.

NJD Copyright Victory

NJD has informed L+SI that it has succeeded in defending the copyright of its material against the Belgium company 'Beglec NVSA' (trading as J.B. Systems).

Beglec has used two 'action shot' photographs from the NJD product guide, which depicted the effects produced by the IQ500 Intelligent scanner and the Chroma 250 Intelligent colour changer and had superimposed photographs of two Taiwanese Geni lighting effects on top of them, to imply that the effects shown on the action shots were produced by the Geni products. They were then reproduced on the front cover of their J.B. Systems product guide and circulated to the public.

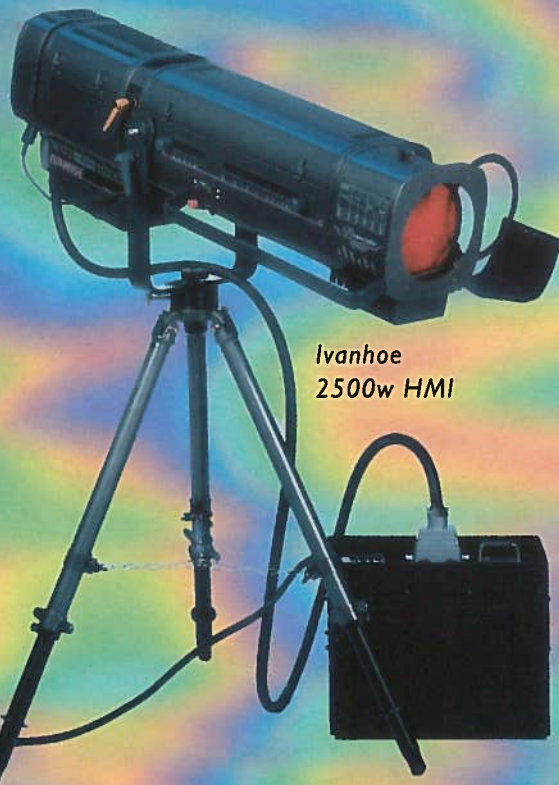
In March 1995 NJD challenged Beglec and instructed their solicitors to proceed with legal action for breach of copyright. This claim has now been settled in a payment, from Beglec to NJD, of £7,500, plus the withdrawal of all of the offending material and an undertaking given by Beglec that they will not copy photographs or other NJD copyright material or re-print or continue to circulate the brochure that contains that material.

GBS at Canalot

Bell Lighting's successful dry hire facility, GBS Lighting, have moved to central London and will now operate from a specially redesigned unit in the prestigious Canalot Production Studios in Paddington.

As well as continuing to expand the dry hire side of the business, GBS will now be providing London's first dedicated lighting consumable and accessory sales outlet.

Followspots



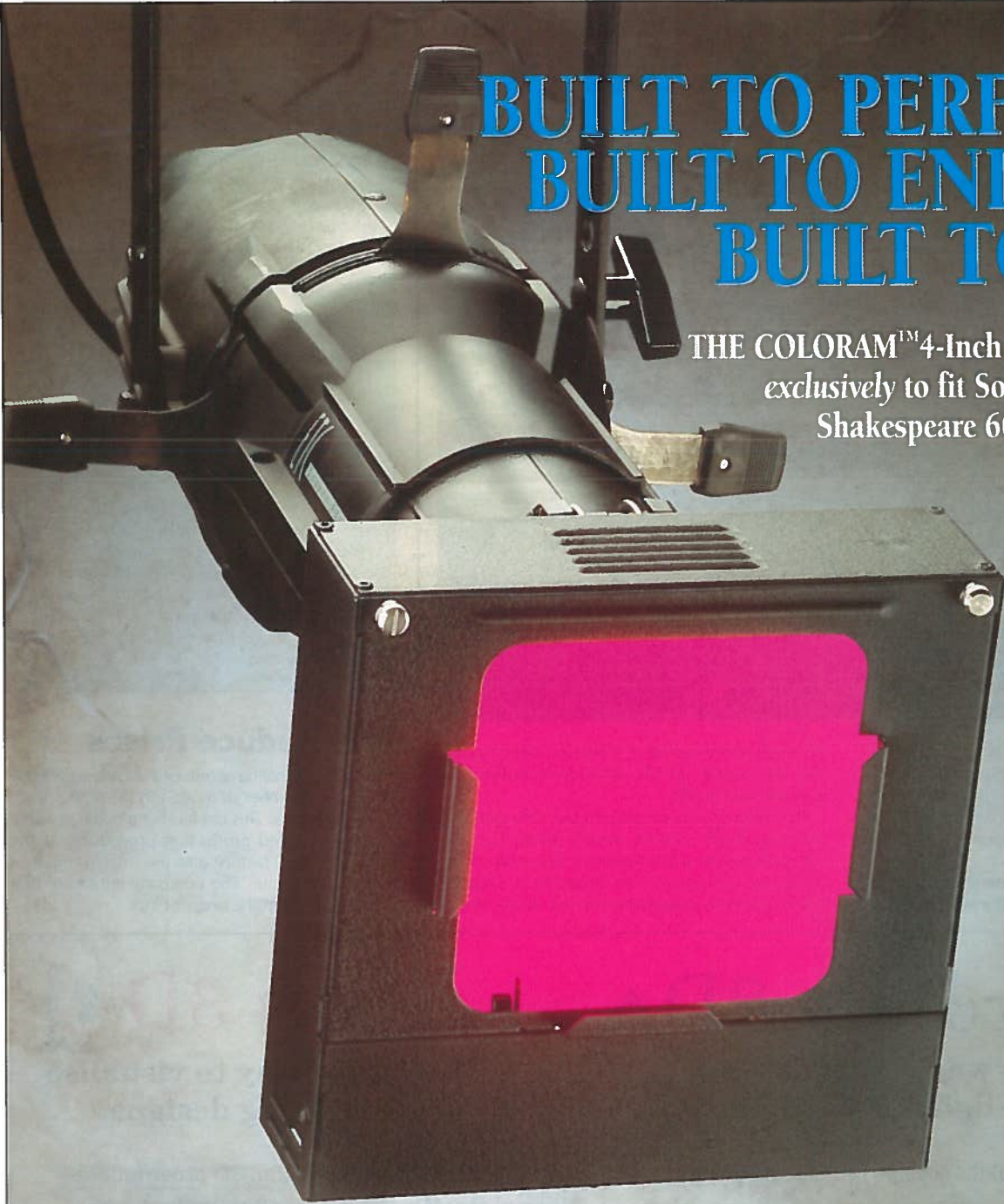
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ARX Boost for Malaysian Concert Circuit



In a major development for the South East Asian concert industry, Gerard Yeo at Cahaya Sdn Bhd, Malaysia's largest audio and lighting production company, has recently taken delivery of a further 24 Arx 925 low frequency loudspeakers for their new stadium concert system.

The additional equipment completes the system (pictured above), which now features 48 Arx 212

mid high packs and 48 925 low frequency packs, plus an optional 48 922 full-range loudspeakers for delay and in-fills.

The system has been put into use with shows at the Shah Alam stadium outside Kuala Lumpur, with Indonesian artiste Rhoma Irama, and shows across the Causeway from Singapore at Dataran Johor Baru with Singaporean artiste Ramli Sarip.

SPS Expansion

Audio-visual rental company, Show Presentation Services (SPS) of Brentford, is further developing the audio end of its operations. Head of sound Colin Duncan has been joined by chief engineer Mark Boden to enable the company to give the same level of expertise currently enjoyed by SPS's video and data rental clients.

Equipment stocks are strengthened with the acquisition of Denon 1100R mini disc players, BSS FCS 926 Varicurves, FCS960 graphic equalisers and TCS804 delay lines, as well as Soundcraft K3 desks from Marquee Audio.

d&b audiotechnik has supplied 902 and E3 loudspeakers, with Zylis speaker multicore systems provided by VDC, and Trantec S5000 UHF radio microphone systems now fully assimilated into the hire stock.

Brand new multicore systems have also been commissioned, based around 24-way Star Quad cable with custom designed stage boxes manufactured by VDC of London.

HW Reduce Prices

HW International have reduced substantially their prices on a number of models in the Shure range of microphones. This cut has been made possible by the enhanced production procedures at the Shure Brothers factory and the improvement in the exchange rate. The company anticipate that savings will be in the order of 16%.

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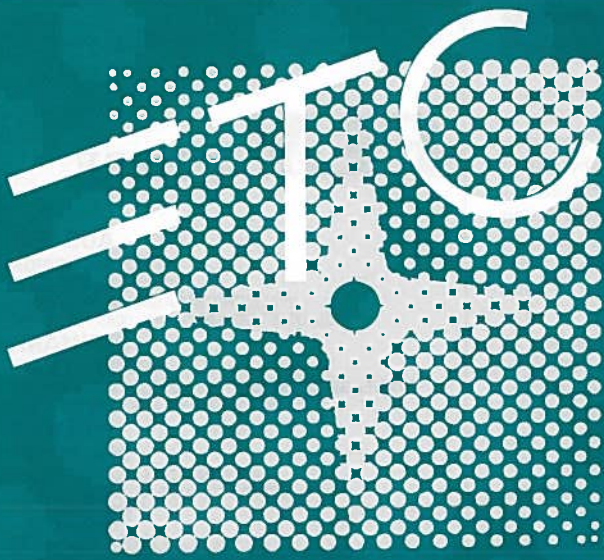


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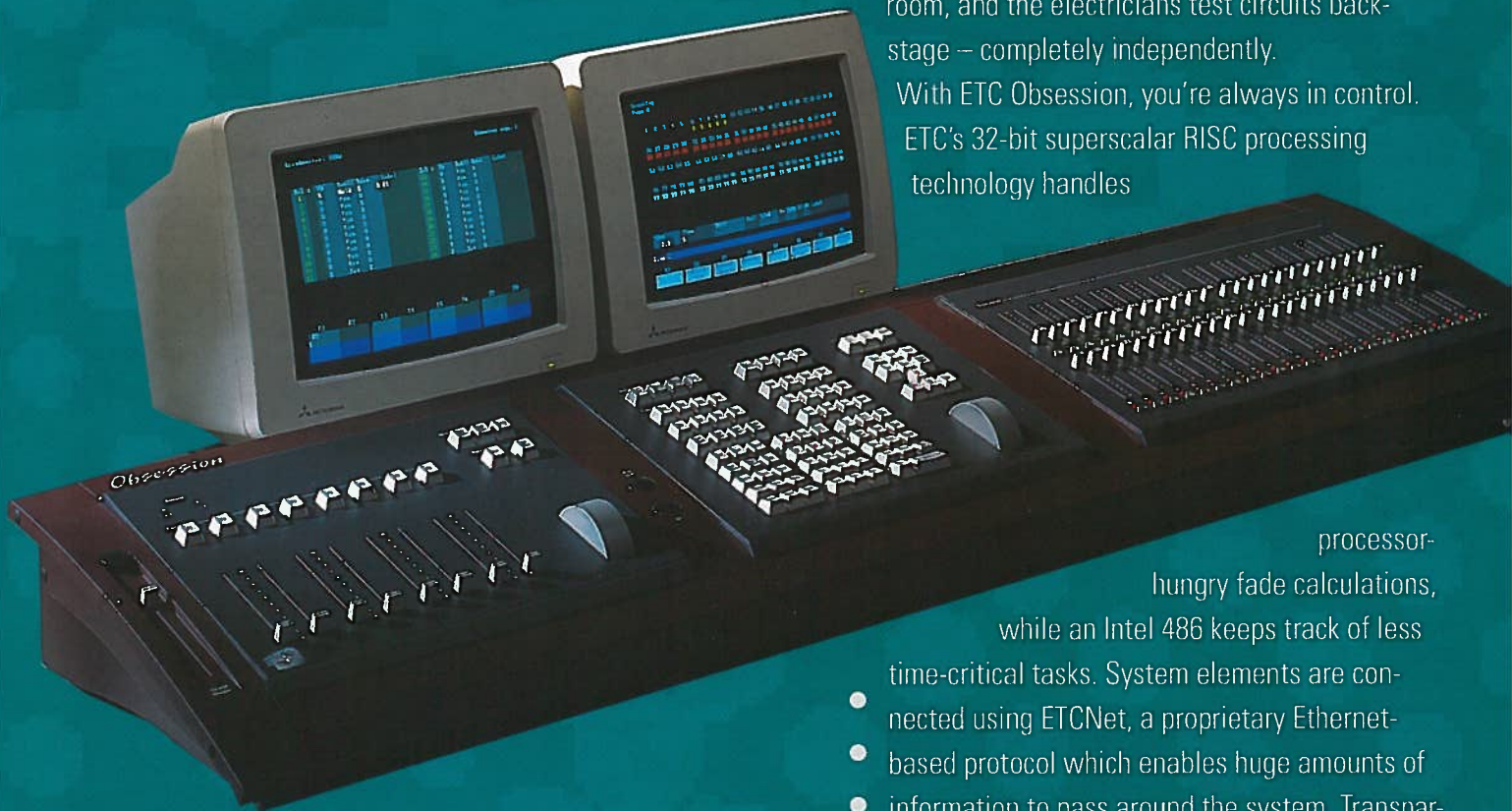


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Ten and Counting

Lee Baldock visits Romford-based JYG.

November 28th this year saw the 10th anniversary of the formation of JYG, the Romford-based suppliers and distributors of sound and lighting equipment. However, the story behind JYG, and the story behind the man behind JYG, Garry Clark, seems more suited to a sensational soap opera plot than a real company. The fact is, very few people have had to struggle to keep a business alive in the way he has had to struggle with JYG.

In 1975, when Garry was working as a DJ, he was seriously injured in a car crash which left him hospitalised for two years and registered disabled to this day. After four years of recuperation, he began DJ'ing again, and spent the years between 1979 and 1984 playing the top clubs of Bangkok, Cairo and Casablanca, among other places, where he became something of a celebrity. So much in demand was he in Thailand during that country's disco boom that he employed his own press officer. He once went out with a Thai Princess ("and about 20 bodyguards!" he adds) and he could count Saudi Princes among his friends, one of whom once flew him to Paris in a private jet to buy a video recorder. On top of all this, he probably holds the curious distinction of having introduced Reggae to Norway - or is it Norway to Reggae?

Everything in the garden was roses, which, as any soap opera viewer knows, is highly ominous. Indeed it proved so for Garry: while in Blackpool during a return to England in 1984, both of his lungs collapsed. There followed another long period in hospital, during which his bodyweight fell to just five-and-a-half stones. Eventually, he was moved by ambulance to his native Essex, in order that he could spend his 'final days' near his family.

But Garry didn't give in; instead he made a slow, but painful recovery. His mother, June Clark, was at that time persuaded by an Egyptian friend to form a company for Garry so that he would have something to focus on when he finally left hospital. This was done: a loan of £10,000 was taken in his mother's name, and JYG was born. When Garry came out of hospital, however, the plot took another twist. The Egyptian friend had helped himself to the £10,000, passed any business to his brother's company in Switzerland, and disappeared.

So it was that, after having the 'friend' legally severed from the company, Garry and his mother, with no business knowledge and a lot less money, began to run JYG.



JYG, 1995. Left to right: despatch manager Derek Potter, managing director Garry Clark and sales manager Mark Joseph.

The first five years of the company's existence were punctuated with almost constant returns to hospital for Garry, in fact 75% of his time was spent there. The business ticked over by selling record libraries to the many DJs and clubs around the globe that Garry had made contact with during his time on the international circuit, as well as dabbling in the sale of entertainment equipment, but his health situation meant that it was impossible to do more.

Running the company from a Telex machine in his bedroom, and with JYG's name listed as importers and exporters at various consulates around the world, Garry received some very unusual requests. One of these, from the Argentinian Ministry of Agriculture, gave him the confidence he needed to push JYG into bigger and better things. No, they were not after records or turntables, but 5,000 tonnes of beef. Not easily deterred, Garry actually had a go, only coming unstuck when needing £30,000 to pay for veterinary certification of the animals involved. Still, it had been an enlightening exercise: "I got so much further with that than I would ever have thought possible. It made me realise that, if you put your mind to it, you can do anything."



Garry at work in Bangkok, 1981.

The disappointment at finding himself out of his league was also tempered by the fact that, six months later, the Argentinian Minister for Agriculture asked Garry for his assessment of the world beef market. JYG now had a budding entrepreneur at the helm.

The new phase of JYG's existence, between 1991-94, saw a steady growth, with the company's first business premises being purchased in April 91. As soon as the doors were open, sales were on the increase. By the end of 1993, JYG had taken on another two premises. In 1994, which, as Garry points out, was only the third complete year of committed trading, JYG's turnover exceeded £1m.

That milestone came about remarkably quickly, but 1995 has seen developments that will, hopefully, dwarf the present state of JYG's fortunes. In August, Garry went to Manila on holiday, and noticed the lack of nightclubs in the city. The top hotels, the Sheraton and Shangri-La, had their own exclusive nightspots, but there was little for the wider public. To him, the Philippines appeared to be in the same state as he had seen Thailand 15 years before. Having been at the forefront of the discotheque explosion there, he could see the potential for the country and was naturally keen to get involved.

Enter Stagecraft International, a Manila-based PLASA Member specialising in equipping the islands' concert circuit. A partnership was agreed almost immediately and things have continued to move quickly. On December 22nd, the first of a series of major dance events will take place in Manila, with the second being held at the same 12,000 capacity venue on New Year's Eve. The events are being supported by three television networks and 10 radio stations throughout the Philippines, and none other than the mighty Coca-Cola has stepped in as sponsor. Already, the venue owners have requested that these events be held every two weeks thereafter. Judging by Garry's past record, I expect he'll give it a go. Happy Birthday!

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PCM Two-Day Training Course



A two-day training course for users of Columbus McKinnon Lodestar chain motors was held in September at the premises of UK distributors PCM, a division of Pfaff Silverblue Mechanical Handling Ltd.

The training covered disassembly, repairs, servicing and trouble-shooting for the range of CM Lodestar Chain Motors that are used for rigging in entertainment applications. The course was restricted to 21 participants to ensure that it was possible to provide a 'hands-on' approach with

maximum individual attention. Each person attending the course was given free manuals, materials and instruction. The presentation was carried out by Wally Blount of Columbus McKinnon, Buffalo, USA and supported by John Jones and Denis Bramhall of PCM.

Four Lodestar courses have now been held in the UK, with over 70 participants being trained to date. Anyone interested in attending the next presentation should contact John Jones at PCM in Cheshire, telephone 0151-609 0101.

TP Expertise Called on by Oman

Theatre Projects Lighting Services were awarded the coveted contract to provide lighting for the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Education Show, which took place in mid November at the Sultan Qaboos Stadium, Bauscher, Muscat. The event, which also involved British sound company Britannia Row, was part of the Sultanate's 25th National Day celebrations.

A major production, performed in the presence of HM Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, ruler of Oman, the show involved some 25,000 youngsters and called for theatrical-style lighting. For this, lighting designer Durham Marengi specified 22 Sky Arts, 18 Megalites with Gargantuan colour scrollers, 12 Gladiators 3kW searchlights, 500 Par cans (including 100 with scrollers) and 12 HMI Fresnels.

With temperatures in the Sultanate running at between 35 and 47 degrees centigrade, rigging for the show was scheduled to take place overnight, with the 12-strong team led by crew chief John Trehwella, assisted by Andy Cave, also facing a punishing rehearsal schedule.

The logistics of the show included flying more than 44 tons of lighting equipment to Oman, special security clearance for equipment and crew and the use of 900 buses each day to ferry performers to the Sultan Qaboos Stadium.

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SS School Refit

A major lighting and tracking contract for a London school has been undertaken by specialist contractor Stage Services. The installation had to meet strict design and fitting standards to comply with the architect's specifications for the refurbishment of the Victorian main hall.

Prendergast School in the London Borough of Lewisham, recently moved from its original site in Catford to a new location in Ladywell. Loughborough-based Stage Services was given the £26,000 contract to install 12 ADB 1kW lanterns, lighting bars with patch system, a full set of blue P&G drapes and Foy tracking, plus a specially-designed sound system comprising Bose, Soundcraft, C-Audio and Denon products.

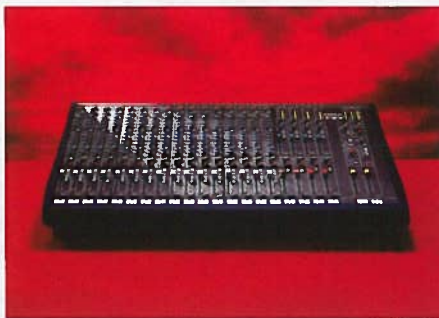
To avoid obtrusive black wiring and fittings detracting from the hall's architectural features, Stage Services powder-coated all the lighting bars and sockets in white and blended the cable trunking with the coving. Because of its heritage, the company also concealed the tracking and took care with the fabric of the building, which includes rare 1930's murals.

Smithfield with Depro

Smithfield Electronics have announced an exclusive distribution agreement with Depro of Germany. The company will be importing a wide range of UV products ranging from basic rope and rods to finished UV active bodies and shapes.

A range of paints, varnishes, inks and plastics that react to UV light will shortly be added to stock. These will be in addition to the other products supplied by Depro which include a powerful aluminium truss cleaner.

PAG Link with DDA



PAG Direct of Mitcham have announced that they are to distribute the new CS3 range of consoles from DDA. Specifically designed for live installations, theatre and concert applications, the desks are available in 16, 24, 32 and 40 input frames at highly competitive prices.

Key Contacts

Yorkshire-based Lite Structures supported The Hacienda on their Sound Education Tour, which appeared throughout November, mainly at University venues.

The trussing company designed a central lighting pod in Astralite to support a host of lighting and audio equipment. The touring schedule, rigging and de-rigging of the structure needed to be accomplished quickly, and Astralite's new connection system, The Key, was debuted on the tour, helping to keep construction and dismantling time to a minimum.

MOS Install BSS

London's Ministry of Sound club has revamped its sound system with the installation of new equipment including BSS Omnidrive and Varicurve systems, supplied by Marquee Audio. The upgrade was part of a £400,000 refurbishment.

The redesign uses the Omnidrive Loudspeaker Management System to provide digital processing for the club's proprietary speaker designs that utilise JBL components, and according to Nik Clarke, sound engineer for the Ministry, "it has made the system sound incredible".

The Ministry have also installed BSS's Varicurve equaliser/analyser system, for EQ on the main system, the bar area, and the VIP suite. Control of any of these is accomplished from the FPC-900 remote, which normally resides at the DJ console. This area has a pair of three-way JBL monitors, which are EQ'd by a Varicurve FCS-920 slave. It is here where the Varicurve Remote comes into its own, as each DJ is able to store his preferred EQ settings on a PCM card, and download it into the system as needed. The DJs, supplied PCM cards by the Ministry, have also found that being able to make EQ effects while wandering onto the dance floor has increased the impact of their performances.

Many other BSS devices were installed, including TCS-804 delays, DPR-402 compressor/de-esser/limiters, FCS-960 Graphic EQs and FDS-360 crossovers.







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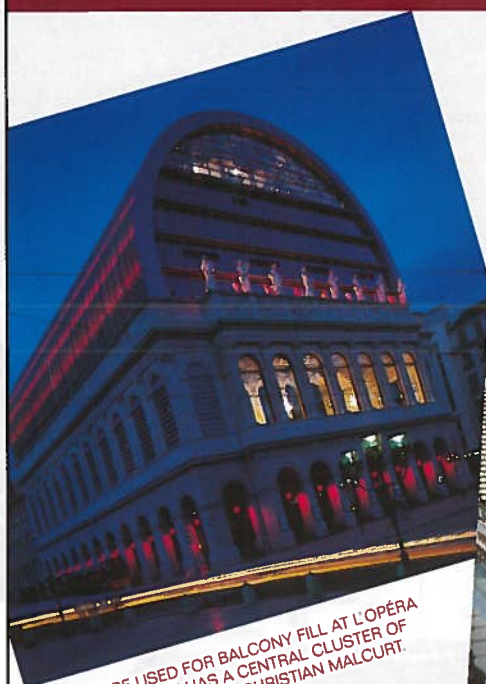
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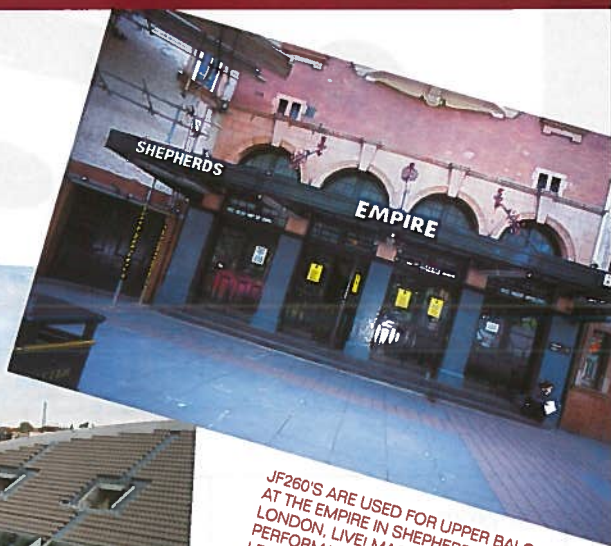
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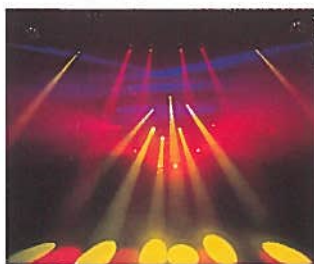
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tm 2500

nat range main features

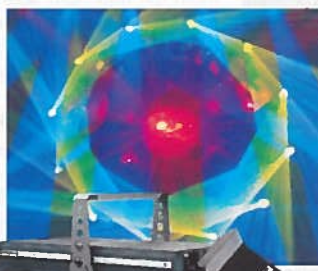
	tm 1200 DX	tm 1200	tm 2500	pc 1000 0/14/28	pc 1000 0/28/45	pc 1200 HMI 0/14/28	pc 1200 HMI 0/28/45
total movement 360°	●	●	●				
full magenta/cyan/yellow colour mixing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
colour wheel	●	●	●				
rotocolour effect	●	●	●				
rotating colour effects		2/5	2/5				
indexable gobos	5	5	5				
rotating gobos	5	10	10				
superimposing gobos	●	●	●				
multiplying rotating prisms		3/5	3/5				
motorized iris with variable speed pulse facilities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
totally variable frost			●	●	●	●	●
variable speed flash frost effect			●	●	●	●	●
variable speed strobing shutter	●	●	●				
black-out	●	●	●				
dimmer 0/100%		mech.	mech.	elect.	elect.	mech.	mech.
motorized high speed focus	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
motorized zoom lens				●	●	●	●
light beam angle [degrees]	10.5	10.5	10.5	0-14-28	0-28-45	0-14-28	0-28-45
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lamp on/off remote control	●	●	●			●	●
coemar digital multicontrol control panel		●	●				
electronic hour meter		●	●				
sixteen bit resolution	●	●	●				
DMX 512 controllable	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
manual shutter blades				●	●		
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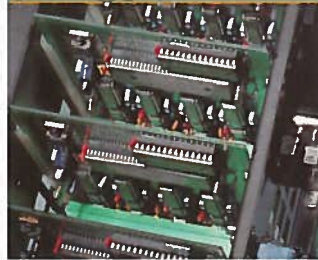


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South Africa's Rock Opera Success

South Africa's musical scene has been given a very colourful boost of late by a show that has been consistently beating the box office takings of more well-known productions. The production in question, which has completed very successful runs in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg, is 'Queen at the Opera', and is based on the music of British rock group Queen, combining the differing musical styles of rock and classical opera with the extravagant, flamboyant visual style of the band. The mix is a very rich one, both aurally and visually, and has made Queen at the Opera one of the most successful shows ever to appear in South Africa.

Initially conceived in 1990, the project was the brainchild of director/choreographer Geoffrey Sutherland and designer Andrew Botha, who were aiming to utilise the resources of a major performing arts centre in Durban, the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC), since re-named the Playhouse Company. Other leading South African talents were drawn into the production team - top musical director Graham Scott, arrangers Michael Hankinson and John James, sound designer Robin Shuttleworth and lighting designer Nic Michaletos, whose company Production Projects became co-producer of Queen at the Opera.

The runaway success of the initial show led to a sequel - Queen II: The Show Must Go On - which expanded on the themes of the first show and also became a great success, despite the death of co-creator Geoffrey Sutherland, and enjoyed a run at the Standard Bank Arena in Johannesburg in 1992. The present form of the show, which ended its most recent run in Durban last month, is a revival of the first concept, strengthened with further material from Queen II. Nic Michaletos has been highly praised for the power of his lighting design in the new show, although he modestly claims that he "just plays with wonderful toys".

The show has come a long way in the few short years since its arrival on the musical circuit. The original NAPAC show marked South Africa's first use of moving lights by a theatre company. Nic explains the development of the show: "Our prime concern has been to keep as true as possible to Geoffrey Sutherland's original input, although the show has inevitably changed in terms of the equipment that technology has brought our way."

Queen's reputation for spectacular lightshows is carried over to the operatic stage in powerful style. The show is characterised by grand operatic proportions, with all the spectacular camp spice that Queen were renowned for. Nic uses a varying range of lighting equipment, as most venues have extensive house rigs. The Johannesburg Civic Theatre stage rig included 66 spots, 38 profiles and 108 Fresnels, all from ADB, a 7W Argon laser with twin scanners, 130 Par cans and six Pani projectors. The 17 moving lights in the rig were made up of Martin Professional Roboscans and SGM Galileo IIs, while the front-of-house position held a further 109 ADB profiles and 16 Par cans. Conventional control was through an RS Pallet 90, with moving lights and some dimmers (the show uses around 500 dimmer channels in all) controlled through Axon's ShowCAD.



Killer Queen: Johannesburg's Civic Theatre plays host to Queen at the Opera.



Sound designer Robin Shuttleworth's brief for the show was that it should be in the form of 'a giant pop video'. "The show combines a range of styles and elements, from classical dance to heavy rock, so the sound system obviously needed to be

able to produce light, articulated SPLs, as well as the 'rock concert sound', with its accentuated low end," he explained. "I wanted to achieve a wrap-around effect, with the system covering the auditorium mostly from a main left and right source, with mid positions left and right, and sub-bass units and rear effects speakers added."

The system, from Eighth Avenue Sound, was based around Turbosound Floodlight speakers, with a separate Electro-Voice MTL2 sub bass system, all of which are EQ'd with BSS's Varicurve. The show

features a four-piece rock band, accompanied by a pre-recorded backtrack of a full orchestra and backing chorus.

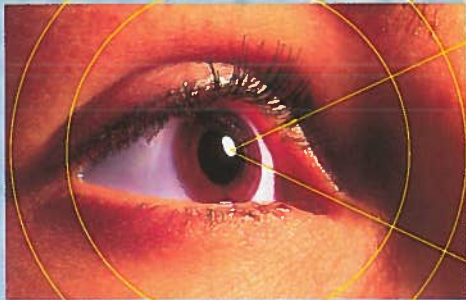
"The orchestra playback went through a MIDI Concorde level mixing console, with the 'click' added after recording to allow the band on the stage to play with the track via in-ear monitoring," said Robin. "I left the show tape in its 24-track state, which allowed me the freedom to place the orchestra around the auditorium - violins left and right in the mid-auditorium positions, violas and cellos main left and right, flutes and oboes mid left and right and so on - giving a wonderful, full sound. Having a tape running all the time enabled me to have everything 'locked' to the tape."

The show is made up of a series of operatic performances which present a string of popular Queen tracks, each with its own staging concept. For example, Bicycle Race, with its obsessive lyrics, is presented as a psychiatrist's couch scene; Killer Queen becomes a way-out fringe of a gay pride parade, with a succession of violent, femme fatale drag queens. Bohemian Rhapsody, Radio Ga Ga and Play The Game are all given their own highly individual treatment, with a real-life diva appearing for the climactic version of Barcelona.

Nic Michaletos is keen to continue the success that the production has so far enjoyed across South Africa. He says: "The audiences have been completely blown away by the show, everywhere we've gone - I'd certainly be confident in taking the show anywhere in the world."



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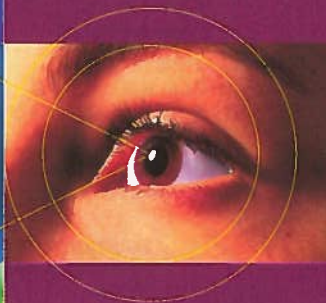
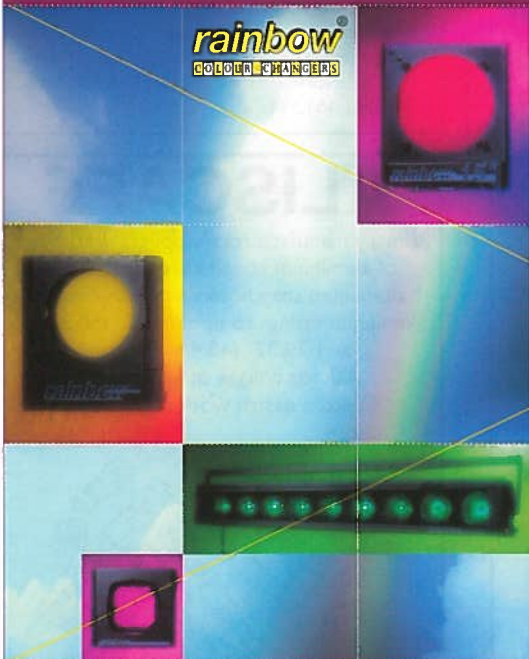
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Drawmer Germany

Drawmer have appointed Beyerdynamic as their exclusive distributor in Germany. Ken Giles, sales principal at Drawmer, told L+S: "Beyerdynamic are well established in the broadcast, studio and sound reinforcement markets, which is where the majority of Drawmer sales occur. Our products fit in perfectly with Beyerdynamic's own product range, as well as the additional lines they distribute, such as Soundtracs mixing consoles and Martin Audio loudspeaker systems."

Scratch Music

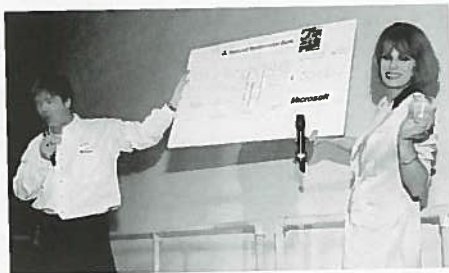
Scratch Music & Install have recently installed sound systems in London's Waldorf Hotel and at Sheffield's Meadowhall Centre shopping mall.

The Waldorf installation featured eight Jamo Compact speakers, a pair of Next Two speakers and Peavey amplification.

In the Chocolate Factory, a themed food outlet at Sheffield's famous shopping centre, the company installed a system consisting of a Cloud zoner/mixer (linked to the fire alarm system) and an A6 six channel amplifier, 12 Peavey speakers, three Next Two ceiling speakers and a Denon multi CD player.

In the English Tea Garden, also in the Meadowhall Centre, the system included a Peavey UMA 150 amplifier, six Jamo SAT500 speakers, three Audio Design Services ceiling speakers and a Denon DCM340 multi CD player.

Sennheiser Live



Sennheiser UK supported both the 95.8 Capitol FM/Microsoft Live Stage and Billboard's National Battle of the Bands Competition at this year's Live 95 consumer electronics show at Earls Court, supplying its latest radio microphones and a full complement of live stage mics.

The Capitol FM stage was equipped entirely with Sennheiser SKM5000 UHF radio mics, fitted with the latest interchangeable capsules. A host of celebrities, including Kim Wilde, Ultimate Kaos, Shaggy and China Black, were joined by Capitol DJs, Pat Sharpe, Mick Brown and Martin Collins, to provide nine hours of non-stop music a day; much of it on-air. Joanna Lumley (pictured above) turned up to accept a £50,000 cheque for The Prince's Trust, donated by Microsoft.

On the lower floor of the hall, 16 bands from all over the country, battled it out for a place in the final on the Saturday. The stage used a combination of Sennheiser 521s, MKH20 condenser mics and the new MD735 dynamic. The winner of the event were Pure Passion from Broadland FM, who walked off with a gold disc, free studio time and a host of other prizes.

HZ New Business

HZ International Ltd has secured business from their new distributors Cube Corporation, based in Japan, worth over £100,000. This will effectively double shortly when an existing American arm of Cube Corporation commences its own operation with HZ. Cube Corporation president Toshi F Shirogama recently spent a week in the UK with HZ discussing his proposals and viewing the manufacturing processes, after which he concluded the visit by confirming his first order.

HZ have also delivered a new sound system to Brian Kent for installation in a new nightclub in Dorchester.

Tour Update

Lighting designer Durham Marengi, fresh from a spell at the Queens, lighting Lily Savage in 'Prisoner Cell Block H', is off to Oman. The regular National Day celebrations of that country are now being added to with a show for the Ministry of Education. British Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Shepard should have Durham's budget: four articles full of lighting gear, plus he has specified every SkyTracker in Theatre Projects' inventory, just to add a little punch to this late November show.

Steve Nolan has designed this year's Gary Glitter show during a few idle moments whilst production managing Classical Spectacular at the RAH (see feature this issue). Gary's annual Christmas outing will feature a circular truss-based spaceship above stage with 'trees' of lights beneath. LSD are the main contractors for the show, and Rebecca Hughes will be operating, as Steve is also production manager for this one.

A system of Starlights was recently spotted on the current Joan Armatrading tour. What at first looked to be a rarity, ultimately revealed business activity greater than the low profile would have us believe. Starlights are currently being used on Chippendale tours, worldwide for the aforementioned Armatrading tour and for the forthcoming Chicago and Chris Isaac tours in the United States. Lamps are available not just out of England but also America (courtesy of shared facilities with A1 Audio) and in Japan through a most unusual deal with Yamaha. Talk about selling Teflon to a Tory! The Japanese electronics giant has bought British technology through a five-year franchise deal with Starlight, and currently owns a two-system, 48 lamp inventory of the MKIII Starlight, with more on the way. Yamaha get first dibs on any Starlight tour passing through Japan and also use the lamps extensively for their own music foundation activities. Is this the pre-cursor to moving lights in the consumer market?

Steve Moles

British Film Award

British Film Commissioner, Sir Sydney Samuelson, CBE, has been given a rare Honorary Life Fellowship from The Moving Image Society (BKSTS) for his commitment to the British film industry. It is only the second time this honour has been given by the industry's senior technical society, the first being presented to three-time Oscar winning cinematographer, Freddie Young, OBE, last year.

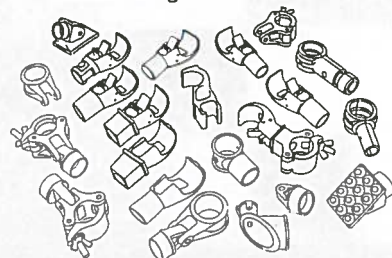
Television presenter Floella Benjamin presented Sir Sydney with the Fellowship at the Society's Awards event at the Hurlingham Club in London.

Peavey Relocate

Peavey have relocated their European headquarters. The company can now be contacted at Great Folds Road, Oakley Hay, Corby, Northants NN18 9ET, telephone (01536) 461234.

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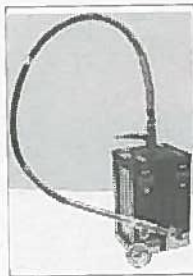
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Rising Talent

This year's Leisure Industry Week exhibition at Birmingham's NEC featured the talents of one of the youngest lighting designers in the country - 17 year-old Scott Taylor. Scott's design could be seen on the stand of fitness equipment manufacturer Trotter UK.

Scott, who is still studying for his A-Levels, first became interested in lighting at school, and while visiting LIW '94 with his father, managing director of Trotter's UK distributor, he mentioned that more could be made of the lighting scheme to enhance the appearance of the exhibit. The following year, he was allowed to present his case to the stand's designers, who were impressed enough with his ideas to let him light their stand.

Scott attended Vari-Lite's headquarters in Greenford, Middlesex, for a day's training and to hire the lights used in his design. As far as he knows, he is the youngest person ever to attend a VL training course and hire lights from them. He used 10 luminaires - five VL5 washlights and five VL6s to throw the Trotter company logos on the backdrop. Control was by an MA Scan Commander.



Scott Taylor on the Trotter stand.

Industry People on the Move

Further to the recent formation of PAG Direct, who take on responsibility for the sales of Klark Teknik equipment in the UK, the following appointments have been made to the board of directors: **Mark Burgin** (chairman) and **Graham Allen** (managing director). **Dave Webster**, **Bill Woods**, **Hugo Roche** and **Jasper Whittaker** also occupy positions on the board.

Richard Farthing is leaving Strand after seven years as a designer. He has worked on the MX control desk, the LD90 and DE90 dimmers and, more recently, the EC90sv and CD80sv reporting dimmer systems. Richard will be joining Lithonia Lighting in Atlanta, Georgia, early in the new year.

John Hornby Skewes and Co Ltd have appointed **Adrian Daff** as area sales manager to cover the southern/central territory. Although he currently resides in Suffolk, he will be relocating to the area in the near future.

Tom Back was recently appointed franchise manager at Stage Accompany, Benelux. The vacancy resulted from manager **Jos Peters'** decision to start his own Stage Accompany franchise in the region around The Hague and Rotterdam, Holland. Back's background includes managing of the marketing department at JVC in Holland.

Soundtracs plc have announced the secondment of **John Carroll**, currently their sales and marketing director, to the position of managing director of their subsidiary company, Spondor Audio Systems Ltd. **Todd Wells**, chairman and managing director, will now assume responsibility for the sales and marketing of the Soundtracs brand, although John Carroll will continue to influence the marketing through his position on the board of Soundtracs.

Brilliant Stages have announced that **Tom Kinnersley** has joined the company to take over the rental side of their activities. Tom's main sphere of interest until now has been video, having worked freelance for clients such as Imagination, Metro Video, Piccadilly AV and Take One Promotions.

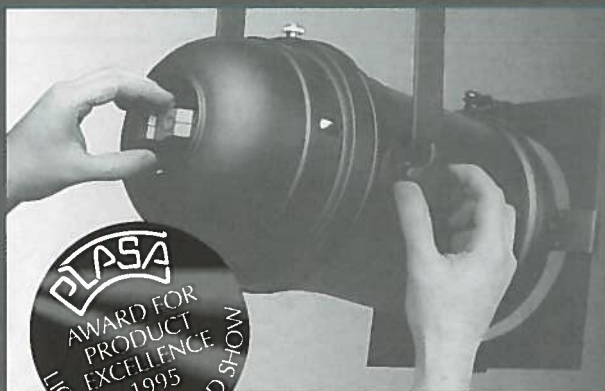
Vari-Lite Group on the Road

Concert Productions Ltd (CPL) have equipment currently being used on the following tours: Radiohead UK tour (LD Andi Wilson), Hank Marvin UK tour (LD Mick Healy), Status Quo European tour (Pat Marks), M-People European tour (LD Patrick Woodroffe), Human League UK tour (LD Jonathan Smeeton). Vari-Lite equipment can be seen in action on tour with Oasis (LD Mikey Howard), Simply Red (LD Patrick Woodroffe, set designer Mark Fisher) and David Bowie (LD Roy Bennett), while Brilliant Stages are currently on the road with Status Quo, Zucchero, Simply Red, The Cure and AC/DC.

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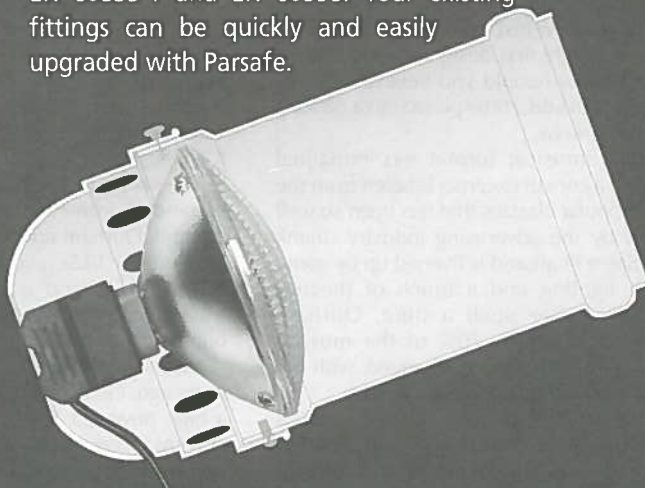
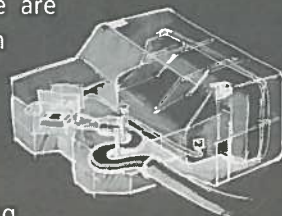
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CLASSICS FOR THE MASSES

Steve Moles reports on the *Classical Spectacular* performances at the Royal Albert Hall



With lasers supplied by Definitive Lasers and a considerably expanded Vari*Lite rig, the *Classical Spectacular* has maintained its stunning visual impact.

The recent short run of *Classical Spectacular* marks the end of this production's current outing in the UK. The five nights, plus two matinées at the weekend, giving a total of seven performances, only failed to sell out on the first night - even then by only a few hundred tickets - underlining the show's enduring popularity. It's now just over six years since Durham Marengi first designed a modest rig for this show (would you believe eight VL Mk 1 lamps?) to add a little pizzazz to a concert of classical cameos.

The basic musical format has remained unchanged: a core of excerpts is taken from the canon of popular classics that has been so well plundered by the advertising industry (thank you Old Spice et al) and is livened up by some evocative lighting and a touch of theatre. Remarkably, after such a time, Durham maintains that almost 70% of the musical passages featured remain unchanged, with the other 30% rotated through each season.

That the show's popularity has endured (easily competing with rock shows for attendance) says much about the general conservatism of the English music-loving public. Like the cries for 'Honky Tonk Woman' at every Rolling Stones show, these people want their 'Ode to Joy' and 'Mars the bringer of

***"Although the music is scored,
it seems that the orchestra
do not always stick religiously
to the tadpoles on the
telegraph wires."***

War', despite the fact that Ludwig van Beethoven left the band years ago to join the celestial orchestra and Gustav Holst is as old as Mick Jagger. Well, almost.

The scope of the production, however, has expanded immeasurably compared to the content. Durham now has a far bigger Vari*Lite system: 90 VL5s and 26 VL2Cs, plus half a dozen VLMs and a substantial footage of trussing from LSD hanging like a flight of stealth bombers above the orchestra's head.

Lasers were added to the inventory just three years ago. Gerry Leitch of Definitive Laser used a high powered 15W mixed gas laser on the current production. The ability to produce seven distinct colours from this one machine is a real boon at the Royal Albert Hall, where finding secure positions for such equipment is always a tough job with a packed stage. Some compromises were, however, inevitable.

Normally, actuating mirrors are placed across the front stage perimeter to produce some dynamic geometric shapes above the orchestra, but these were considered too vulnerable to displacement by musicians. In an interesting observation Gerry also pointed out how audiences at this London venue miss out compared with audiences at the more usual arena concerts: "In the Arena, the performance hall is almost totally dark; the RAH, because of its shape and decoration, is very light. Not only do we have to lose some of the technical effects because of safety considerations, but the impact of many of the effects - both laser and automated lighting - is diminished by the ambient brightness of the hall."

RG Jones supplied a modest (by RAH rock concert standards), but essential Renkus-Heinz sound reinforcement system, engineered by Simon Honywill from a 40-channel Yamaha PM3000. As with any show visiting the RAH, the hall forces a very different approach to sound than elsewhere. In the more usual arenas visited by *Classical Spectacular*, the full orchestra will be closely mic'd, plus choir and military bands, with perhaps two desks out front handling 60 or 70 inputs.

In the RAH a looser microphone arrangement is used (mainly AKG 414s and

Neumann U87 and 88s) because of the hall's lively dynamic. Finding the high pressure levels demanded of such a show in this environment is never easy, least of all with over 100 musicians on stage, but more than four years of service to the Spectacular has brought the experience that can cope. The woolliest instrument of the evening was the organ, and that's entirely due to its own shortcomings.

This year has seen a new direction for the production: excursions abroad have been arranged, with performances already given in Brussels (the Foret National), Stockholm (the Globe) and Oslo (the Spectrum), not insubstantial venues by any measure, and a return visit to Oslo is scheduled before this present run closes. The current fashion for taking successful West End musicals to Germany is also being mimicked, with tentative plans afoot to tour that nation in the New Year. Plans are also well underway for a visit to South Africa with the new production next year.

By a strange quirk of fate, Durham is having to contend with a new Vari*Lite operator for these last few shows at the Albert Hall and Oslo. Strange, because for several years now he has used the sure and certain hands of John Sinden, who at the eleventh hour has been summoned by M People for their imminent tour. The irony is that the designer for M People is the ubiquitous Patrick Woodroffe, and it is his regular Vari*Lite specialist Dave Hill who has taken over John's role, not as a convenient swap of positions, but through a desire on his part to do something different and refreshing after almost two years with the Rolling Stones.

During the intermission of the first show at the Albert Hall, Dave gave an insight to the differences of the two genres: "What surprised me most about this production is how essential it is to have a lighting director like Durham calling the show. Although the music is scored, it seems that the orchestra do not always stick religiously to the tadpoles on the telegraph wires." (This erraticism is not through any ineptitude, but because orchestras are sourced locally at most venues, to avoid huge touring costs, and are rehearsed over a very compressed schedule).

"Durham watches the conductor (Anthony Inglis) like a hawk and cues me on the unexpected departures from the score. No matter how conversant an operator becomes with the music it just would not be possible to keep your eyes permanently off the board and on the conductor."

The other big problem is the repetition of content from season to season. The music is generally highly

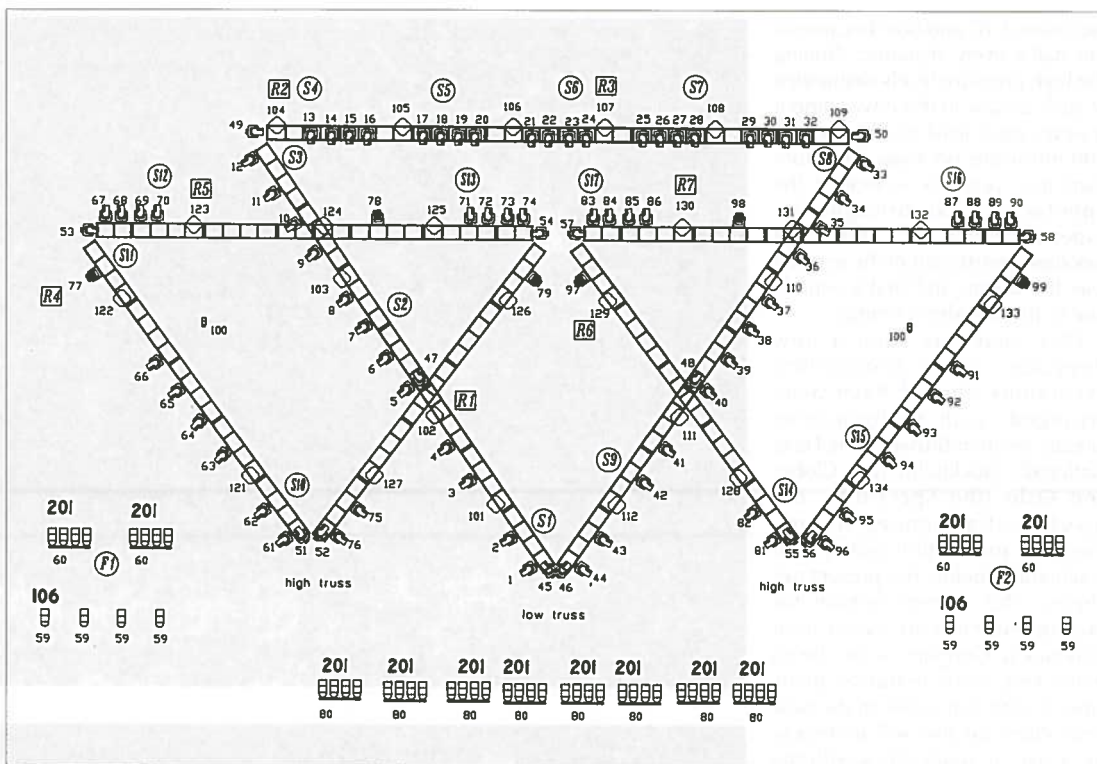


evocative - Moussorgsky's 'Great Gates at Kiev' for example, is obviously redolent of richness and splendour and cries out for lavish reds and golds, but Durham cannot light these pieces in the same palette year after year, at least, not without thought given to adding some new visual enhancement. After all, the audiences are, as with rock bands, largely the same fans returning for their favourites each year.

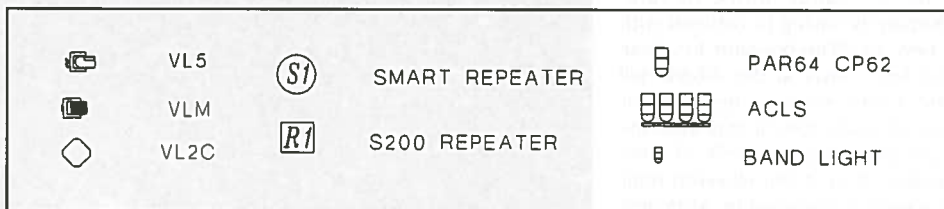
The combination of pop classics with top line rock and roll production techniques is a formula that brings the crowds back again and again. Both Gerry and Durham commented that many fans, "especially little old ladies", come and ask each year: "What are you going to do next year to make the 1812 even better?"

The additional embellishments of members from The Sealed Knot Society (the English Civil War re-enactment enthusiasts) replete with cannon and musket for Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture are obvious but no less entertaining for all that, and make for a truly invigorating finale.

If you are tempted to see something different and aren't afraid of the occasional raindrop, try one of the outdoor specials slated for next summer. Some of those Sealed Knot boys with their bloody great cannons are as mad as hatters and not to be missed!



CAD visualisation of Durham Marengi's lighting plan featuring a much enhanced Vari-Lite system.



SCOTTISH LIGHTING EXHIBITION

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The Scottish Lighting Exhibition, organised by BBC Resources Scotland in association with Scottish Broadcast and Film Training LTD and PLASA will be held on Sunday 11th and Monday 12th February 1996 in Studio A, Broadcasting House, Glasgow.

The exhibition has been established to enable anyone with an interest in lighting not only to view the latest equipment available, but also to gain hands on experience of using it.

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Among the confirmed exhibitors are Strand Lighting, Northern Light, Vari-Lite, Cirrolite, M & M Group, Blacklight, Total Quality Lighting, I-Light and Lee Lighting.

Put the 11th and 12th February in you diary now - the opportunity is too good to miss!

Entrance fee to the exhibition and seminars is £10 for one day or £15 for both days.

For further information on the Scottish Lighting Exhibition contact

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John Offord talks to Michael Goldberg, managing director of the M&M Group



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Michael Goldberg ended up doing what he

does today by a route that took him through the world of photographic hardware and on to film and eventually stage supplies. He joined a professional stills sales and hire operation immediately upon leaving school. "There were three people when I joined and 120 by the time I left four years later," he explained. "I learned there that service was 'king'."

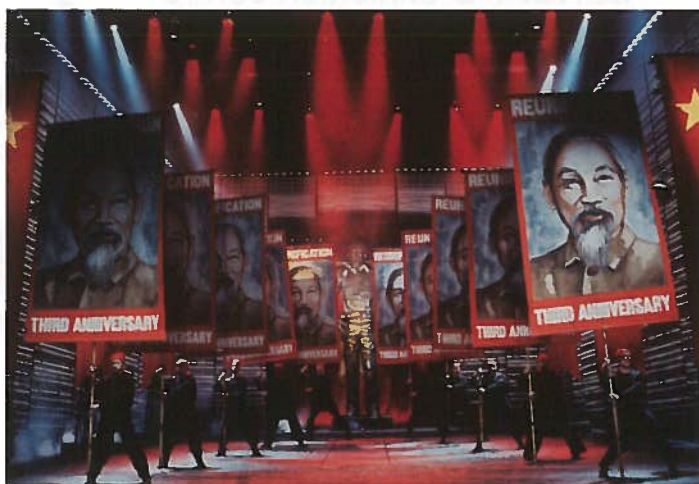
He moved to Samuelson Film Services in Soho and within a few years became managing director of their Rentacamera operation which was where Michael Hall of Rosco 'spotted' him and dangled the charms of theatre and their fledgeling office on London's South Bank. He

spent nine years with Rosco where his responsibilities involved sales development in Europe and particularly Scandinavia. "With the Rosco operation, once again, service was at a very high level," he emphasised, a recurrent Goldberg theme throughout the M&M story.

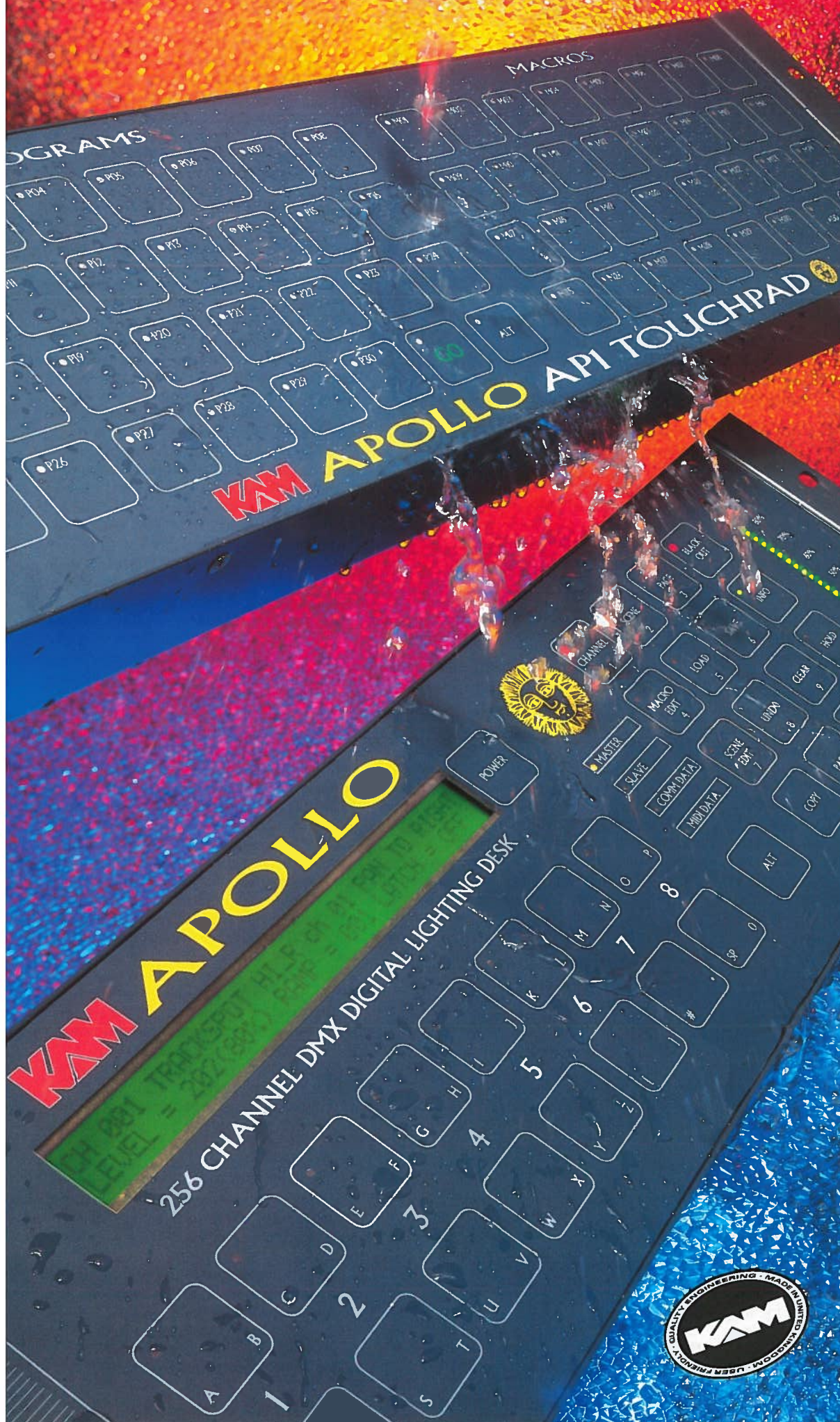
Visits to Sweden for Rosco led him to the Royal Opera House in Stockholm and into contact with Magnus Anuell. "I'd been travelling extensively in Scandinavia and had made a lot of friends there. One of these was Magnus, who was a dab hand at designing all sorts of weird and wonderful things for special effects used on Opera House productions. He felt that the



Above left, *M Butterfly* (lighting designer: Andy Phillips), which saw the first ever use of Rainbows on a West End production, followed swiftly by their appearance on *Miss Saigon* (lighting designer: David Hersey).



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colour changers then available on the market were poor, both in quality and design and in what they offered the customer, and had gone on to design one for use at the Opera House. It was subsequently called the Rainbow, and with two partners he then formed the company Camelont***, to manufacture the product.

"He showed it to me on one of my visits to Stockholm, but as a consumables sales person at that time I have to admit I became extremely bored when looking at this piece of metalwork. It wasn't of any interest to me until Magnus mentioned the fact that it would use lots of Rosco filter and at this point I started taking the product more seriously! He asked if I would present it to Rosco to see if they would be interested in marketing it worldwide under their banner."

Prototype Rainbows came into public view for the first time on the Rosco stand at the 1988 ABTT Trade Show at the Riverside Studios in London. "The reaction from visitors was outstanding," continued Michael Goldberg. "It sounds somewhat naive to say it now in the light of the rapid development of technology in the industry, but then, to have a colour changer that was silent, moved from colour to colour without you even noticing and daisy-chained with DMX was a revolutionary concept.

"From that point we started to receive enquiries and orders and Rosco took some time to decide that hardware of this type was something they didn't want to get involved with. So we said 'thank-you, but no thank-you' to the Swedes and continued on our way selling filters. A few months later Magnus came back to me again and suggested that I set up a company to distribute the product."

In June 1988 Michael Goldberg decided to do just that, gave notice to Rosco, and with partner Michael Pharey set up M&M Ltd. Rainbow products were officially launched under the M&M banner at the PLASA Light & Sound Show at Olympia 2 in September 1988 in a noisy area of the exhibition hall and to the continual accompaniment of rap music. Although they could have proved how quiet the Rainbows were in operation, it would have been extremely difficult to judge. Nevertheless, they were taken at their word and numerous orders were placed - in writing. It was impossible to hear customers placing orders!

Despite the immediate success of Rainbow - orders were literally flooding in - Mike Goldberg realised that M&M shouldn't stay as a one-product, one-person company. "Like many small operations you can be successful with one product, but in many ways it can also be a dangerous position to be in. Accepting that I could bring other people into the company with skills that I didn't have, and trusting them totally, was for me the hardest point since making the decision to actually start the company."

Business had grown from £55,000 in 1988 to almost £3m in 1992 and the need for an accountant-come-business manager was essential. "Guiding the business seemed to be beyond me at that stage. I was finding it difficult



Those were the days! A younger Michael Goldberg, together with Magnus Anuell, designer of Rainbow Colour Changers.

and had reached the limit of my skills, a distinctly worrying situation.

"After finding the right man in Ash Varma (now financial director) we then started looking to diversify and to spread out to a more even product range. Smoke Factory products out of Hanover were soon on board, and my experience with Rosco smoke machines made

"The M&M operation is now solidly based around relatively few very high calibre products, and the Group aim to take on more in the next couple of years with the staff and skills now at their disposal."

this area a straightforward one to cover. However, by this stage we'd been offered the MA Lighting range of control products, but as we didn't have appropriate skills to cope, it was necessary to find someone who did. Adrian Hicks was chosen for this reason, and he brought with him experience acquired at Arri which had encompassed working for them for



The new 4" Stage 1 scroller and dedicated distribution box.

three years on installations at the new ICC in Birmingham. "We saw immediately that with Adrian in the team we could look very confidently at bringing in other products, and this eventually led towards our recently agreed arrangements with ETC."

1995 has been a year of frantic activity. In February, M&M became the new owner of The Case Plant Ltd. Mike Goldberg reckoned he'd got a good eye for quality flight cases and had been buying them, in one capacity or another, for 22 years. Having worked with the company's Martin White for two years, most particularly on the concept and design of the Gobomaker case, it was a natural move to bring the operation under the M&M banner. "Around 90 per cent of the products we are selling require cases," he explained, "and it's a product that fits in with our customer base."

In May, The Lighting Department, a lighting design service for the retail market, was added to the group. The idea of Richard Rafter, lighting designer for Liberty's of Regent Street for the past five years, the service has been set up to offer clients the benefits of an in-house lighting designer, but without the overheads. This is going well with nine West End stores using their services this Christmas.

One of the business highlights of the industry year has been the rapid expansion and ever-higher profile of Electronic Theatre Controls (ETC) of the USA, a company featured in this magazine in our August issue. Their move onto the international scene came with their decision to open a European base in London and then to announce that, as from July 1, the M&M group had been appointed as its exclusive UK distributor. As a result, a new company, M&M Light Solutions, headed by Adrian Hicks, was formed to handle all sales and back-up technical support for the complete range of products.

Michael Goldberg takes up the story. "ETC have invested a lot of money into establishing a base in Europe and their prerequisite for coming here is that they have to be able to offer the same degree of service as they do in the States, which is the method by which they gained their excellent reputation.

"M&M fits neatly into this situation. We have the customer base that requires the products and over the coming years there will be a very wide range of new products coming out of ETC, both for this and other markets which we are beginning to look at, such as the educational sector. The initial reaction since we set up M&M Light Solutions in July has been phenomenal and sales to date have well exceeded our sales forecast. I can only assume that's how it's going to continue!"

Michael Goldberg is convinced that service is the most vital of all the elements in supplier-customer relationship. "Having worked in three companies before starting M&M I saw very easily that those offering service and expanding rapidly at the same time can't do both. They lose the service aspect. My goal has therefore always been to keep a very tight ship here, and to have the best people in appropriate positions, be it in accounts, sales or service.

"As such, the service aspect is, to me, more important than the sale. If someone has decided to spend their budget with us they can be assured that they are going to get just as good a service after they bought it than they had during the sale and pre-sale period."

And then there is the matter of taking all sales and enquiries seriously. "It may be just a one-off sale of a smoke machine, and you think you won't hear from them again, but you never actually know where that person is going to end up later in his career. Most of the people we are dealing with in this industry, which is a small niche industry, go from place to place and build up their careers. I've done it myself."

The M&M operation is now solidly based around relatively few very high calibre products, and the group aim is to take on more in the next couple of years with the staff and skills now at their disposal. Each member of the sales team has direct responsibility for a product range. Adrian Hicks takes care of ETC, Nigel Sadler Smoke Factory, Blakes Fireworks and Gobomakers, Coral Cooper MA Lighting, Richard Rafter retail lighting and Michael Goldberg the Rainbow range.

M&M operate a system of immediate replacement of products if something goes wrong, and it's never a case of leaving a customer without cover. "The fact that we're only 15 minutes by cab into the West End of London is a bonus. We've had instances where theatres have rung us at 6.45pm with a call for help. Most recently, and as reported in L+SI, an Arri Mirage lighting console was stolen from the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith and we were able to arrange immediate delivery of a replacement board in time for the show."

Rainbow products are handled on a global basis, but the service and after-sales element is treated in the same way as in the UK. "We've appointed distribution and maintenance service centres in many parts of the world and the prerequisite for these is that we can have a service centre in operation before sales commence. Magnus or Adrian will go and set them up and provide the appropriate training, and this will be followed by the delivery of necessary stock and spare parts. We then go into the sales aspect and distribution points - which may not necessarily be one and the same - offering the same ethos in sales that we offer in the UK. So far this policy has been very successful and we now have 26 international distribution points connected with 14 service centres."

With the advent of so many different lighting



Michael Goldberg with Martin White, MD of The Case Plant, and Scratch, who insisted on getting in on the act again!

fixtures being used in the current theatrical and television environment, Michael Goldberg is well aware that they can't stand still with the Rainbow range. "We are still gaining ground with the products, but we've established that there are different markets for scrollers, and at this year's PLASA and LDI shows we launched a range of 4" scrollers. This is a product which we've perceived an obvious need for in the market, investigated it, and will be leading it. There are two forms: a professional unit and one for schools and the smaller budget market. The professional unit is ideal for products like ETC's Source 4 and the new Altman unit.

"However, the guiding light for the product

has been to open up new markets such as the educational area where there is a whole range of customers who have never used scrollers before. They are the semaphore or colour-wheel users and the introduction of this new unit should lead to significant customer benefits and really open up their imaginations to the use of colour."

Work has continued apace on up-grading the standard Rainbow product range with new software and motor technology, and at the same time the facility to include more colours is now available. "Designers seem to be specifying more colours than they'll actually use, which is based upon the fact that they now have less time to plan for a show within the overall scale of a production and the need for extra colours is there as an insurance policy. Our new scroller will have in excess of 30 colours in it and very quick access and response times. It will also be priced at least 25 per cent lower than any scroller we've produced over the previous eight years."

If the people in Sweden had missed just one other letter out when they did the name badging eight years ago M&M might well have struck it rich with the British National Lottery. However, aside from all the other developments discussed in this article, and with the growing use of colour changers in architectural and outdoor situations (what better place for a Rainbow?) the M&M group look set to continue collecting their pots of industry gold!

THE NAME GAME

* Mars and Murray

** Michael (Goldberg) and Michael (Pharey)

*** Camelont was originally meant to be Cameleont, the Swedish for Chameleon. However, the screen printer left out an 'E' and they were stuck.

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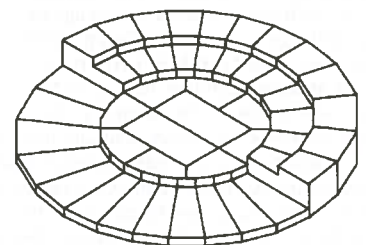
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ON TOUR

by STEVE MOLES

AND PRODUCTION NEWS



Big Country - mining away at their musical seam at Sheffield City Hall.

Big Country

Sheffield City Hall

LD: Peter Aynsley

SD: Alan Morrison

If the sight of Mel Gibson in a plaid skirt has recently stirred the warrior in you, or you're just a sucker for the skirl of the pipes, then Big Country are the rock band for you. They have found themselves a particular musical seam and have mined it exhaustively for the last 15 years or more. The trouble is, it's a rather *thin* seam, and having once risen to prominence in it, they have remained steadfastly stuck in this, their own peculiar niche.

I was expecting the formulated style of swooping anthemic songs, harmonised vocals and their distinctive enormous guitar sound as each note is passed through the bagpipe-o-flanger. I was not disappointed. Through their almost two-hour performance, it became apparent that they may be victims of their own success. The audience are a complete cross-section: young and old, hairy and shaven, a few Goths, the odd Guardian reader replete in corduroy trousers and tweed jacket, and of course, some heavy metal extras from the cast of *This is Spinal Tap*. Despite this variety, they had all come to sway to the anthems.

When the band did break the mould (two careful ballads from their latest album stood out particularly in the first hour), their reception was polite and indulgent, but impatient: "Let's get back to the real stuff," was the underlying atmosphere. Thus, despite their best efforts, they appear condemned - hoisted by their own petard, as William Wallace would never have said.

SOUND

The upper balcony at Sheffield City Hall had not been sold on this occasion and with the Grand Circle barely 15 feet above stage level (at its lower

edge at least), it was not essential to fly the PA. Other reasons, such as sound engineer Alan Morrison and monitor man Steve 'Gonzo' Smith being the only two members of the sound crew, might have something to do with it. It is faster and often easier to stack in a hall like this. That said, the arrangement of a column of three MT2s each side of a four-square block of MT4s with two MT2s laid horizontally across the top, to each side of stage, might be a little unconventional, but generally did the job.

The City Hall has some strange acoustical properties: when empty, its oval walls bring the slightest backstage whisper to any seat in the stalls. When full, its plush upholstery, coupled

"The audience are a complete cross-section: young and old, hairy and shaven, a few goths, the odd guardian reader . . . and of course, some heavy metal extras from the cast of This is Spinal Tap."

with a crowd determined to stand throughout the performance, can swallow the higher frequencies. The floor of the stalls is concave - that is, mid-way between front and rear of the hall, your seat is at the lowest point in the house. The arrangement makes for great sightlines - only Meadowlark Lemon sat in front of you could obscure the stage, but the sound is baffled. Maybe that's why two-thirds of the downstairs audience packed to the front of stage and the rest stayed resolutely planted at the rear beneath the deep over-hang of the Grand Circle. Neither position was perfect and Alan had to mix the system from the rear. The sweetest sound in the house was upstairs, where the guitars and vocals were at their brightest.

The system is supplied by SSE, Alan and the band having used their services for some seven years now. He mixes from a Midas XL3 ('Gonzo' has a TAC Scorpion for monitors) and spills onto an Allen & Heath GL4 which also has four channels

devoted to Simon Townsend, the supporting act. Effects wise, he is using the new Roland 330 "for some flange on the mandolin and guitars", he said, "but I still swear by the Roland 3000. The Playmate is just great, as quick as that and you are up or down a couple of milliseconds. Easy."

LIGHTING

The stage is dominated by two main features. A projection screen hangs just left of centre, while stage right are four pale grey rectangular panels mounted nearly two metres above stage on floor stands. There is also a Greenpeace banner stretched across the front of the drum riser. LD Peter Aynsley's lighting rig is sparse to say the least: the rear mini-beam truss serves only to support the screen, whilst each of the panel floor stands has a pair of High End Systems' Trackspots mounted at the top. The front truss has two six-lamp bars, 10 Trackspots and four Par 36 audience blinders. There are also two UV floods and four floor Pars. The system is supplied by DBN of Manchester, with some help from LSD.

The drummer and bass player live beneath the screen, while the two guitarists play in front of the panels. Despite this off-centre placing, the stage looks remarkably balanced. Projection is Peter's main weapon - it's what let's him get away with so little light (as ever, a budget/truck-space consideration, not choice). He embellishes the four panels with constantly changing gobos from the Trackspots, a lamp he's pleased to tour with having recently worked them to death for Nitzer Ebb: "I like the T-Spot. In this size venue they're easily bright enough and, really, they're only two gobos and two colours short of an Intellabeam."

Projection on the screen is from an Epson 3000 LCD projector, which is supplied by a new company, 421 Network Ltd, based in Rochdale. The Epson is very bright; powerful enough to compete with the stage lights and at a comparable size to a Kodak Carousel, for example, is small and light enough to fit on any truss. The images are fed from a laptop PC, mainly abstracts and some quirky, but well-made animation, and are again supplied by 421. (There are also some stills from Greenpeace providing a photo history of their work in the South Pacific to accompany the song 'Post Nuclear Talking Blues'. The Greenpeace presence, plus local collectors at each venue, is a mutually agreed arrangement and is lightly and comfortably handled). The tour was just five shows old when it arrived at Sheffield; Peter had barely built his show (he has an LCD desk for the Trackspots linked through a Zero 88 XLS 24 channel console), having gone straight in with no rehearsal whatsoever, which seems to be the fashion of late.

Thus, he can be forgiven for keeping one simple projection loop for each song. Although this worked well for some songs, it became merely adequate as we became used to the formula - film loop, wash, gobos on the back panels. Like the band, he was in danger of becoming stuck in one style.

Peter's luckier than the band though as he will be able to evolve his show without fear of losing his audience. For the band, the only way they can move on is to make a radical change, something that will give them a bit of room.

Peter Frampton

Shepherds Bush Empire

LD: Jim Chapman

SD: Oris Henry

The last time Peter Frampton played in England was in 1977. He was then coasting down to a stop after touring with what was, at the time, the most successful album ever sold. 'Frampton Comes Alive', released in 1975, was the first of the truly mega-albums, selling extensively in markets all across the globe. It made Peter Frampton a very rich man, rich enough to never have to work again so long as he wasn't stupid. He has diddled around in the interim: in recent years he has been appearing at selected venues around the US, but this show, scheduled to coincide with the release of the inevitably titled 'Comes Alive 2', is his first heavily-publicised outing since '77.

In truth, he did play a great many hits from the earlier album, but then he had to and as we haven't heard them in a long time, they still sound good today. His new material appeared to be cast in much the same mould: he is an accomplished guitarist and, as ever, it's this instrument that predominates. For a man who'd not strode the stage in England for such a long time he was assured and relaxed; affectionate and humorous audience banter came quickly and easily. It was a bravura performance.

LIGHTING

The show was performed under the house lighting rig of the Shepherd's Bush Empire, a simple three-truss system with a couple of side spans upstage of the proscenium. Thirty-one bars of Par 64s occupy just about every available inch of the trussing, with six Clay Paky Golden Scan 3s tucked in across the back and two more on the mid. When tour lighting designer Jim Chapman walked into the venue two days before the show, he had a pleasant surprise: "When I came in on Monday I saw most of the colours were pretty much what I was using anyway, so I left it." (Needless to say, house lighting man Chris Clow was even more pleased, a back-to-back run of 11 visiting shows can make gel changes somewhat tiresome).

The colours were mostly rich, 101, 181 - the saturated end of the range, so ironically Frampton was playing beneath a similar palette to that he would have done years ago. The Pars are



A simple and well-scaled show, devoid of grand strokes of lighting.

controlled from an Avolites Sapphire with the GS3s running off the recently launched Avolites Pearl. Jim used the house electrician to run some simple cues for the Golden Scans and did the lion's share of the show with the Pars and house spots (Pani 1200W). Using house rigs is the norm on this tour and is not a problem for veteran Jim: "Not all the rigs on this tour are as big as this, but hey, I started in 1976 with eight lamps. Using house rigs presents a challenge but it's not really harder, just different."

Considerable modesty and understatement from the man who lit the huge Jackson's 'Victory' tour in the early eighties. Generally, Jim called up the Golden Scans for effect or limited their use to a wash across the black backdrop to reinforce that which he was using on stage. For several songs he carried the mood exclusively with the Pars; in fact, he had devoted 80% of programming time to the Sapphire and had already predetermined certain distinct cues for the Scans which were quickly programmed. When used, the Scans' effects were well chosen.

For the song 'Lines on my Face' the stage was lit in a red/lavender/green combo (hard to imagine, but well-balanced), with gobos of scattered white lines which rippled through colour changes for the closing few bars. Despite Frampton's witty aside that the gobos looked like the Ebola virus, the effect was simple and well scaled in a show devoid of grand strokes of lighting.

SOUND

A house PA (an EAW KF Series system under long-term lease from Cane Green) was in use. It's probably just as well this is a permanent

installation, as the Empire has three balconies and is an extremely vertical gig with little actual throw distance from stage to back wall. The house system is neatly stacked into the vertical walls of the proscenium, giving it as much space as possible between speakers and the room to allow for resolution, something that just could not be achieved by a touring system, as flying points would put the upper speakers well downstage, almost on top of the balcony's leading edge.

The upper circle, a nose bleed by any standards, is also augmented by half a dozen KF560s deployed in an arc across the ceiling. More of these cabinets are to be found dotted about the room to provide near fill in awkward positions such as front stage centre.

I ventured an ascent of the upper circle during sound check. At the time the 560s were turned off and appeared somewhat superfluous as there are, believe it or not, two cabinets of the main PA at this level each side. A certain amount of fluid ballast prevented my second ascent of the Empire's labyrinthine stairways during the show when the 560s were then in use to compensate the acoustic damping of the audience. Nice for the sound engineer to have the option and for the owners to be prepared to spend the money.

Oris Henry is Frampton's front of house engineer, happy with the house desk, the inevitable Yamaha PM4000. However, he did have a rather harassed afternoon as the house DAT machine ate his Intro' tape during the previous afternoon's rehearsal. The tape was easily replaced, but getting into the racks and switching the DAT machine proved an altogether more challenging task: four hours, not a little sweat and a few profanities got it done.

The mix is, of course, guitar-heavy: Frampton is one of those guitarists who has a separate instrument for each song, perhaps a might pretentious, self-indulgent certainly, but at least there was a discernible difference between many of them, especially in the more melodic numbers. He also has a very pleasant voice, reminiscent of Steve Winwood's, bluesy and very English, despite residing in the States for the last 20 years.

These two factors dominated the mix, sometimes at the expense of the rest of the band - a shame for them, as they proved very accomplished during the sound check, but he was a one man phenomena, so that's inevitably the way it has to be.



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ASLEEP IN THE STALLS

One of the most serious questions facing the theatre critic is when to see a show. We don't always have a choice in the matter: the big national critics are expected to be there on the official First Night, while folk a little further down the pecking order like myself, who might not own a smart suit, aren't always wanted on such big occasions. Yet, in an ideal world, when, I wonder, is the best moment to give one's view of a production that may look and sound very different from night to night, and may not be at all ready when the press are first invited to react to it?

Whatever the look of the show, it's certainly unwise to assume that the reactions around you at a West End opening are the genuine view of the Great British Public. The smaller the theatre, the less likely this is to be true. Around you will be the backers, the cast's relatives, and a fair crowd of vaguely familiar faces, possibly celebrities, usually Christopher Biggins, who've been invited to the party afterwards. The producers will be expecting this section of the audience to go wild at curtain time regardless of what has gone on in front of them. A less known quantity is the rest of the house, who will probably be either critics or rival producers.

Because of these rather doubtful circumstances, I don't always go to West End first nights - even on the occasions when I am asked - but I couldn't resist the invitation to *Jolson*, which even mentioned a party. The producers, canny lads, had opened the show in Plymouth like their previous *Buddy*, and worked it up in runs at Birmingham and Southampton. Plenty of previews at the Victoria Palace should mean that the technical side would be well in place by opening night, and the sheer size of the theatre - it's a 1,500-seater - meant that there had to be some members of the audience who genuinely wanted to see the show and might even have paid to do so.

I'm glad I went. As well as a production which worked smoothly from start to finish, all 1,500 of us had the pleasure of Brian Conley as Jolson coming to the footlights after the curtain calls to invite us to that party. At which point, fireworks went off all round the proscenium, a forest of party poppers exploded, and uniformed waiters appeared at every exit door carrying trays of champagne. A brilliant piece of staging in itself.

So what kind of unbiased review does one write after a few glasses of free champers? With a show like this one, it's not difficult, because it works so well with or without alcoholic pressure. *Jolson* is really a play rather than a musical. It recalls those wonderful pre-war Hollywood films about showbiz, and Jenny Cane's lighting does a lot to recreate that feeling. Even more important are Rob Jones' beautifully elaborated sets. They truck and fly fast and well, and we are never kept waiting for action

"Because of these rather doubtful circumstances, I don't always go to West End first nights - even on the occasions when I am asked - but I couldn't resist the invitation to Jolson, which even mentioned a party."

just because a particularly smashing set-up hasn't arrived. The pièce de résistance comes surprisingly late. Underlit arches descend to create a fair impression of Radio City Music Hall, then what seems like an entire 30-piece band drops out of the flies, on their stands and playing fit to bust. Want more? Then how about dropping a step-lit staircase through them centrestage, down which the star can sashay?

This is the moment when story gives way to celebration, one of those feel-good finales which characterise the compilation shows that have conjured so much audience pleasure from so little content in the last few years. The difference with *Jolson* is that the finale comes as a perfectly logical topping to what has been a very well made play, staged with the skill and budget that a big musical can demand. The only time in the whole show when I reached for my biro was when a stand mic started to feed back alarmingly. I noticed a worried techie in the wings - then twigged rather late that the techie was a cast member, the feedback part of the show.

The second night, when the cast would be recovering from their party and the first, not too friendly notices, was almost certainly the last night to see *Mack and Mabel*, but that's when I was invited to the Piccadilly, so that's when I went. This is a small-cast, low-budget Leicester Haymarket show trying to pretend that it's a megamusical, and even designer Martin (*Me and My Girl*) Johns' usual ingenuity seems, for once, to have failed him. Like *Jolson*, there's a big band here, too, probably the biggest part of the budget, but for most of the evening they are kept in the pit, where, from my seat way out on the edge, they might just as well have been pre-recorded, since they came straight out of the proscenium speakers. Some better balancing might have been in order here, since one of the show's alleged

strengths is its big-band score - it even goes back to the good old tradition of an overture and entr'acte which give you a chance to memorise - or recall - the show's greatest hits. Another serious question mark over Rick Clarke's sound design is its effect on the voice of Caroline O'Connor, who has, I must admit, been much praised as Mabel. It's a voice which would probably cut aluminium even without amplification, but when it goes through the Piccadilly's system it comes out at the other end only inches away from sounding like Pinky, or maybe Perky, or probably both. Those Johns sets? Pretty basic, mostly hung from a rather ugly grid and tracked up and down it. A few nice backdrops against the cyc have to replace any luxury scenery - the Hollywood one looks like the sleeve for Hotel California. And I fear Chris Ellis's lighting is no more imaginative than any other feature of this desperately ordinary production. I've called it a low-budget show, because it looks that way, yet according to the publicity it cost half a million pounds more than *Jolson*. Where did the money go, I wonder?

It's perfectly safe to go to a National Theatre first night - there won't be any backers or bimbos in the way, so you can expect a fairly knowledgeable audience, and you should be able to expect the technical side to have been well run in, even if the NT doesn't have the luxury of pre-London tours. Sure enough, Jonathan Kent's production of *Mother Courage*, which used all the resources of the Olivier, from drum revolve to scene-dock panels, was smooth as silk on opening night. Those who like their Brecht a bit on the rough side would probably find it too smooth, for with Jonathan Dove's music played by a large band, this was Brecht Goes to Broadway; but since he did, why not?

After an ominous bird of prey has swept round the stage, the first of the back panels goes up to reveal *Mother Courage* (Diana Rigg - magnificent) and her crew striding towards us with the famous cart, singing lustily, and suggesting either some very subtle mic'ing or a better



Mack and Mabel at the Piccadilly. Where did the money go?

Photo: Mike Martin



Caroline O'Connor as 'Mabel'.

Photo: Mike Martin

acoustic for the old Olivier than we've come to expect. In any case, their song comes over loud and clear. In subsequent scenes the revolve is used sparingly, usually to get rid of the cart (or carts - there are at least four of them, including a natty little half-scale one that appears in one of the increasing number of tableaux Paul Bond sets behind the upstage panels). One of these upstage scenes is almost unbelievably kitsch, a field of waving corn in which merry peasants sing a welcome to Spring that might almost have come from *Sound of Music*. But this is no hallucination, it's in the original text, and if anyone's taking the piss it's Brecht, not his NT production team. Bond's delicious designs waver only towards the end, where some ugly telegraph-pole trees and very flat flown flats suggest that someone has told him to lay off the charm and get back to making Brecht as boring as English audiences expect - an unfortunate loss of nerve - but overall the show looks and works very well, even managing to produce the final sense of desolation Brecht found so difficult to create, as *Courage*, the heroine he didn't intend, heaves herself off alone between the shafts of the cart, having lost everything in the pursuit of business.

Curiously, Paul Andrews seemed to have been drawing from the same stock of telegraph-pole trees for the blasted heath in Jude Kelly's West Yorks production of *King Lear*, which opened a London run at the Hackney Empire the very next night. First night is an iffy night to choose for a show which uses a lot of scenery and has had to convert from the Olivier-like space of the Quarry to Matcham's high, wide and handsome Empire. Still, it had had a week of previews, and, in fact, went off with no noticeable hitches. What was noticeable was a lot of inaudibility, but this is something which has to be put squarely down to the actors - anyone with voice training who can't be heard in a Matcham theatre, however large, should be sent back for more classes pronto. Andrews seemed to be revelling in a relatively large budget, not on a *Mother Courage* scale but generous all the same, so that some of his effects had the flavour of the child who has been let loose in the sweet shop: sure, use a rain-bar for one of the most famous storms in stage history, but was the line of (slightly shaky) flames really necessary? I wonder what kind of hell Mark Pritchard went through to convert his Leeds lighting plot to a proscenium stage? The effort was certainly worthwhile, for the lighting did a lot of the show's best work - useful sound score from Mic Pool, too.

Ian Herbert

Ian Herbert is the editor and publisher of the critical journal, *Theatre Record*.

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MIAMI LIGHTS

Tony Gottelier and Rob Halliday report from LDI 95



Martin Professional's award-winning lightshow.



LDI 95 at Miami Beach Convention Centre.



Fred Foster of ETC (left) with Mike Goldberg of UK distributors, M&M.

Now that you have all seen the photographic evidence, in the anniversary edition, of the physical damage inflicted by the ravages of a decade of writing for L+SI, you will certainly understand why I felt entitled to an all-expenses paid break in the Miami sunshine. Having also acquired the sobriquet Mystic Meg en route, I packed my crystal ball into a carpet bag and, it being shortly after Halloween, pointed my broomstick in a Westerly direction.

Of course, Miami is the cruise capital of the universe, so the Show this year was redolent with marine connotations. **Glantre's** 'Cruise Industry' dinner was another famous occasion at which Derek Gilbert managed to bemuse his competitors by inviting them all to join in the celebrations. I suppose most of this was like water of a duck's back to the majority of delegates who, sensibly, keep their feet firmly on dry land.

Others may have been surfing the Net at Pat McKay's Cybercoastal Cafe, a novel means of promotion for ETEC, now reinvented as an industry-dedicated port on the World Wide Web, or at **Wybron's** highly imaginative Surf Shop or with **ETC**, whose stand featured an expressive array of sails in Sydney Opera House formation, used as projection surfaces for their, now, dual range of luminaires.

Enough of the wet refs, and we'll let the dogs go for now, though hot dogs, tired dogs and Bulldogs were all to be found at the Show. So, to share my personal highlights.

On the automated luminaire front, the three big stories were **Irideon's** exquisitely miniaturised version of the sister company's VL5, aimed at the display and interior architectural lighting market and to be called the AR5. The transparent demonstrators on Irideon's booth were delightful hands-on toys-for-the-boys.

High End Systems' final cut of the Studio Color, their first automated, moving yoke, full-colour mixing, wash luminaire, also

made a big impression with its new, more powerful 575W MSR light source, giving twice the output, at half the consumption, of a 1000W halogen lamp. A new feature, which may have been missed if you didn't get a personal demonstration, is beam-shaping which is a by-product of the variable beam angle system on the light. While this combined lens and frost system empowers you to vary the profile from 8 to 22 degrees, it also enables the creation of soft rectangular shapes, which can be very useful when subtly highlighting objects which are rarely circular in reality. For scenic lighting this is also a useful feature when used in combination with the variable frost facility. So, High End won't be developing automated barn-doors just yet. They promise first deliveries of Studio Color in January and I would guess that they are already looking at a bulging order book for a product of this sort which you can actually buy, rather than rent.

HES have also been doing some curious work with the lamps for the Cyberlight. To improve the colour field of the MSR 1200 lamp, they have changed the doping so that they can now also claim a 20% increase in average beam lumens over a typical lamp of a similar sort, a flatter field and improved colour stability throughout the life of the lamp. Even more extraordinary is their joint development with Philips of a 1200W MSD lamp inside an MSR envelope so that this can be offered as a much extended lamp-life alternative to the standard bubble.

But the product which carried off LDI's 'Lighting Product of the Year' award, finessing the competition, was **Martin Professional's** PAL which goes a giant step further, with fully programmable remote framing. This facility was beautifully demonstrated in the Tracoman/Martin, Peter Morse-designed lighting performance, which was something really special and a complete departure

from previous presentations by the Danish giant-busting company. I have called it a performance, because that is what it was, not just 'a wham, bam, thank you ma'am' lighting extravaganza. One had the feeling that this year they had come to Miami in a giant invasion fleet of longboats intent on showing their muscle to the US market - first with their behemoth Trojan Horse of a stand, second with the biggest array of luminaires ever dedicated to a lighting demo ever, and thirdly with the biggest, wildest beach party culminating in the most massive display of pyrotechnics many jaundiced industry watchers had ever seen. It was a great shame that they suffered from power problems for the first two days of the Show, but, they pulled it off despite that handicap and even walked away with the richly deserved 'Best Lightshow of the Year' award to add to 'Best Lighting Product', the former for the third time in a row. And richly deserved.

The PAL 1200 was extensively covered in our PLASA Show report, though it was perhaps too early to make as big an impact on judges and visitors alike. Now that it can be seen in all its awesome power and multi-function attributes, we know we have a concert/theatre standard, mirror-driven luminaire to rival the rental goliaths, and again it can be bought. To my mind, one of the PAL's biggest assets is the chunky beam its profile lens system produces, a big departure for Martin luminaires based on this new profile system over the coming months.

In addition to remote control framing, the PAL 1200 offers full CMY colour mixing in combination with a dedicated diffusion technique, which gives a much more even colour field by smoothing out the normal, central hot-spot. Add to this D-size rotating gobos, zoom, focus, variable frost, pan,



Bob Schacherl and Mike Wood of High End Systems with the recently launched Studio Color and inset, its beam-shaping capabilities.



The colourful Wybron team of John Harvey, Brandon James, Daryl Vaughan, Dan Martino, Craig Schertz, Michael Whitright and Scott Penner.



TMB's Marshall Bissett (centre) with Scott Devos of The Obie Company (left) and Doug Pope of Douglas L. Pope.

tilt, dimming, 5,600 - 3,200 degs K colour temperature correction filter and full DMX implementation, including 16-bit, and you have quite a battery of facilities.

A company whose products are visible at Rimini each year, but to which I have not previously paid sufficient attention, probably because there are so many whizzing and whirring things going on that it's sometimes hard to focus one's attention on all of them, are **Studio Due**. At LDI, they concentrated on showing subtle imagery so that you could readily see what the products were capable of. This was, in fact, a clear demonstration of the quality of their optics which was what made me sit up and pay attention. Since their little Stratos Hi-Res 12 product (700W MSR, pan, tilt, two colour wheels, six fixed/six rotating gobos, remote focus, iris, dimmer and strobe), is also a moving yoke device, it has a lot going for it. The company also makes a complete range of other products, including sky effects, which could certainly be of interest in clubland.

There was movement also (if you'll excuse the pun) on the automated followspot front where people obviously perceive a big market as the competitors pile in following **Wybron's** lead. Next in were Athens-based **SLS** with their 'Follow Me' system launched at SIB in May, but not shown at LDI 95. So it was a bit of a surprise to find **AVAB** with an identically titled product in Miami, though interestingly using an entirely different approach based on camera tracking technology. But for ingenuity you couldn't beat the system shown by **Towards 2000** which uses a reverse-engineered radio mic system to keep track of the performer. A brilliant piece of lateral 'why re-invent the wheel' thinking.

Keeping one jump ahead, the reason for the mixed-metaphor appearance of a Bulldog (and



Stephen Surratt, Stephen Philips and Robert Dungan of Irideon with the AR5.

they were giving away chocolate 'bones' also), amidst the surfing paraphernalia on the **Wybron** stand became apparent. As a by-product of their plan to develop Copilot to enable the Autopilot to be used in reverse, as it were, for live focus and storage of the cues thus developed, Keny Whitright's boys are also developing Watchdog, to be lighting man's best friend in the feedback department. And it will be a friendly fellow, which sits on the DMX line between the desk and appropriately equipped external devices, such as Coloram II scrollers, IPS dimmers or the Autopilot itself, using the two spare wires in the DMX link to deliver, by the open standard IDS talk-back protocol, status information on the devices. But not by numbers, by friendly graphics on a PC screen or laptop (which makes it a lap dog!) which real people can understand. Numbers are definitely out of fashion this year.

A couple of British companies which also impressed were **Total Fabrications**, who, following the enthusiastic reception of their folding catwalk at PLASA, did the logical thing and gave us the folding truss, which was what we were after in the first place, anyway. **Optikinetics** also deserve an honourable mention, for in bringing their brilliant new K series projectors to LDI, they used a refined version of their PLASA 95 stand design turning it into an even more successful eye catcher. **TG**

Two major international trade shows covering the same subject area little more than a month apart - is that wise? Well, the exuberance of this year's PLASA show certainly caused some exhibitors to question that, to the extent that there is talk of LDI moving to a Spring slot in a couple of years time.

Despite their similar international status, the experience of visiting LDI is completely different



Hermann Sorger of Pani (centre) with Joe Falzetta (left) and Jim Mulder of Walt Disney Imagineering.

from the feel of PLASA. I don't know how many visitors passed through the show, only that LDI felt much, much quieter - especially on the first of the four days (supposedly a 'VIP Only' day), and the last, which was practically deserted.

But on with the show itself. Belle of the ball was almost certainly **ETC**, whose large, colourful stand (sorry, 'booth' - this is the US!) was ablaze with products and full of people even during the show's quieter moments. It is remarkable that their Source 4 ellipsoidal spot can still attract huge amounts of enthusiastic attention given that it is now, incredibly, three years old. It was joined on the stand by the Source Par, launched at PLASA and appearing in the States for the first time - to universal acclaim. But this wasn't the only new product: one end of the stand featured a slew of architectural lighting and control, the other, a series of new lighting consoles. The low-cost Express range offers most of the power of the Expression 2x range in a desk that looks set to upset the currently established price points in the low end of the market. It features an interesting touch pad for level control - or for pan/tilt control of moving lights, which can literally be dragged around with a fingertip.

The same touchpad features in the Obsession ML, a new version of the successful Obsession console designed to deal with the increasing use of moving lights. An example of the 'month is a long time' motto, ML has gone from nothing to excellent in ten weeks of hard work - though it will not actually be available until the early months of 1996. With six large rotary controls, each with its own LCD display, and a built-in colour touchscreen giving access to parameters or colour and position libraries, the desk seems like a hybrid of the old Obsession, the Artisan and the WholeHog II. Operation isn't as radically new as



Richard Pilbrow presents LDI 95's 'Wally' Award to legendary lighting designer Tharon Musser.



Bruce Adams, Michael Strickland, Richard Willis, Dizzy Goswell and Jim Smerbeck of Bandit Lites.



Paul Tepper (left) and Jamie Costello of Dedotec with the Dedolight low-voltage light.



Don Stern, Marc Malamud, Russ Morris and Ron Fogel of BASH Theatrical.



An Altman trio of Lou Farina, Bob Kliegl and Ellie Altman.



GE Lighting's Barry Price, Clive Salmon, Gerry Schuh and Scott Mangum with Joel Drobos of CBS.



Home comforts: Vanco's Jeff Turner (left) and Martee Nuruddin catch up with the news in L+S.I.



Strand Lighting VPs Peter Rogers (left) and Tom Folsom (right) with president Phil O'Donoghue.



Tracoman's Gerald Cohen (left) and Peter Johansen of Martin Professional (right) with lighting designer Peter Morse.



Mitch Clark of Tomcat (left) with Barry Farley of Ringling Bros, licensees for Walt Disney.



Robert Bell of CAST Lighting (left) demonstrates the 'point and click' version of WYSIWYG.



David Catterall of Zero 88 (left) shows the XL to LDs Richard Pilbrow (centre) and Rick Fisher.

on the Hog, but this actually means that existing users of Obsession (or other ETC desks) should be able to get up-and-running very quickly.

Of course, ETC aren't the only company moving into this area - like the PLASA show, few desk manufacturers dared to be without a desk sporting at least four 'parameter controllers', though the software in some were, less complete than others, shall we say. **Strand** have been leading the way with their 430 range, and have had the software right for a while - but are continually improving it. Version 1.4 was on show, and adds a host of new features including a useful 'auto-pre-focus' mode that tries to ensure that lights are pointing in the right direction before they fade up. The tussle between this range and Obsession ML is going to be fascinating - at the moment they both have their plus and minus points with the 430 slightly ahead overall, in my opinion. But, of course, ML isn't quite finished yet.

The rest? Most familiar to European users were probably the **Compulite** Animator range, which was on show along with their Photon baby desk, and **MA Lighting's** ScanCommander. Not familiar at all is the **NSI Corporation**, with the TC600 being their moving light desk. The ability to move any display to any monitor very quickly was excellent; the fact that the bank of monitors required (five) is wider than the desk itself is slightly scary! Familiar, but still attracting many admiring glances was the WholeHog II. Perhaps the most useful development in moving light control was not part of the Hog itself, but was sitting next to it on the **AC Lighting** stand: a month ago I raved about WYSIWYG, which shows moving light beams 'live' on a PC screen. There is now a new version which allows you to select one or more lights and click the point you want to focus them to. WYSIWYG calculates the necessary DMX values and feeds them back into the lighting desk,

which still actually controls everything. More impressive still, if there are several beams overlapping, you can grab a beam and move it - the programme will figure out which light is generating that beam and move it accordingly. At the moment this only works with the Hog II, but **CAST Lighting** spent the show talking to other desk manufacturers. Of course this made the Richard Pilbrow 'moving light control' seminar, repeated after its success at PLASA, slightly dated - a month IS a long time in the moving light market. But the talk still showed the many benefits obtainable from AutoPilot, which was also on show on the **Wybron** stand following a remote-controlled lobster around the stage.

In addition to the American contingent covered earlier, there were also some British representatives in the moving light posse: **LSD** had a swarm of their Washlights and their new Icon-Mini console; **DHA** had two digital light curtains running on DMX control through their adapter box (and it was interesting to see that even Vari-Lite were running bits of their stand on DMX, from an ETC desk), while **Lighting Technology** had what is still the cutest of any moving light, the Caterpillar.

For all of the visitors talking about moving lights, though, there is still a huge market for lanterns which need a bit of manual assistance to point in the right direction, and for control of those lights. The show had plenty to cater for that market, though there was one notable absence: **Colortran**, who entered chapter 11 protection shortly before the show and chose not to use the stand they'd booked given the uncertainty about their future. Plenty of rivals were happily selling lanterns, dimming and control in their absence, of course. **Altman** had the full range of Shakespeare ellipsoidals, including a zoom lens (something still missing from the Source 4 range) and two very

narrow fixed beam tubes with plastic lenses. But it was good to see them introduce a replacement back end for the familiar 360Q Leko, based on that developed for the Shakespeare. Their answer to the Source Par was also interesting - a mirror plus holder for the HP600 lamp that replaces the standard bulb in any Par can. Movement of the lamp within the mirror, plus an optional clip in wide angle lens, offers a wide range of beam width variation from existing fixtures. It will be interesting to see how the market reacts to this.

Altman's stand also featured their ranges of battens, including a new compact version taking the tiny M11 lamps. **L&E** had also added an M11 batten to their familiar range of M16 battens, and had introduced a new range of standard and micro-floods that seemed to combine the two virtues of high build quality and low cost. Elsewhere, **Strand** had also spotted the zoom gap in the Source 4 range, and launched the Zoom Leko. This is a peculiar looking hybrid, resembling the back-end of their current Leko range forced into the familiar rectangular lenstube of the European Prelude range. It does offer some useful refinements, such as the click-stop focusing system which will allow lantern-to-lantern focus matching by just counting the number of clicks the lens moves. Strand weren't clear whether it would appear in the UK market. As might be expected though, the **Robert Juliat** range blew everything else away, drawing people to the stand just on the strength of the clean, crisp, bright gobo image projected on a nearby wall. People from **AVAB** were also on the stand, though they seemed to have chosen not to show Panther, their entry in the theatre/moving light desk competition.

One noticeable absentee from the show, from a British viewpoint, was **CCT** with their new Freedom range. This was a shame, since a major preoccupation at the show seemed to be the move



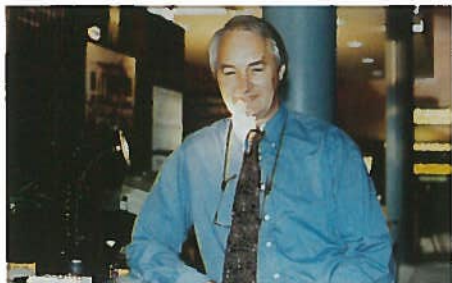
British line-up of Tad Trylski of DHA, Matthew Griffiths of TSL, Chris Toulmin of Modelbox and Bryan Raven of White Light.



The LSD team of Dave Keighley, Mark Coleman, Tim Murch, John Orchard Nick Jackson, John Lobel and Stephen Llorens.



John McGraw of Production Arts (left) with Tom Mannings of DeCoupe (centre) and Patrice Bouquenaux of Robert Juliat.



Bev Bigham of Lighting Technology caught by the Caterpillar.



Michael Hall (left) and Peter Edwards of Rosco.



Steve Warren (Avolites), Rick Wilson (Le Maitre) and Anna Pillow (PLASA) with Rob Hoffman of the British Consulate in Miami.



Enrico Caironi of Clay Paky (left) with Derrick Saunders of Pulsar.



Stéphane Colin of RVE and Mario DeSisti of DeSisti Lighting with RVE's new HDX-P dimmer for integration into DeSisti's hoist.



Lawrence Port of LMP Systems Brooklyn (left) with Michael Friedman of Wildfire.

to 'dimmer strips' and the like - dimmers that can be rigged on the bar with just power and control fed in. Rosco had the IPS strips they now market, and Electronics Diversified had a similar system with one neat (hey, American again!) touch: if you turn a lamp on using the dimmer's 'on' switch (itself a useful facility), it will turn off after a couple of minutes. Someone, somewhere is going to appreciate that when they've just packed a ladder away and notice a lamp still on! CCT's approach takes local dimming one stage further, with the dimmer actually in the lantern, and it would have been interesting to see America's reaction to it.

Of course, LDI also features all of the 'extras' that lighting designers and electricians need - indeed, there seemed to be far more stands selling all manner of plugs, sockets and cables than there are at the PLASA show, probably because the US market seems to be much more precise about specifying cables and connectors. A variety of effects were also on show: from the UK, DHA had their double-spin gobo rotators sitting in Source 4s, one doing duty as a remarkably accurate clock which only lost its time when the stand lost power overnight. Next door White Light were running their familiar VSFx animation units with a wide variety of disks (including DHA's new cloud range) in an assortment of projectors, including the RDS unit most familiar in the US. DHA's US rival, GAM, were showing their enlarged range of effects controllers, together with a double animation disk which was producing some interesting ripple effects. One useful looking accessory that clearly demonstrated the peculiarities of international trade was the ColourCover range, or condoms for light bulbs as they became known. These re-usable, coloured covers are available to fit a wide range of bulbs and are actually made in London, but seem to receive less promotion there than they were getting from US distributors ColourCover!

Britain was also represented in the 'interesting widget' category of the show, with Artistic

Licence attracting attention with their PLASA Show-commended DMX-dongle that allows any PC to send and receive DMX. The software supplied is particularly useful, especially the package that allows the rig to be drawn on-screen and it's activity to be monitored. They also showed their hand-held Scroll Control, which now has timed sequence playback. American widget-kings Goddard Design were showing their familiar range of test tools, but Bob Goddard's running commentary was reserved for his Wireless DMX, which was transmitting lighting control across the hall. DMX splitters and patch bays featured on many other stands: love it or loathe it, this standard is here to stay. During the show, DMX could be seen controlling just about any kind of device imaginable, including a huge variety of scrollers; the one that will probably be of most interest to British users being the first prototype of the next generation of Rainbow: all of the features of the top current model, easier to set up, lower cost. Can't wait!

Despite the 'lighting' in its name, LDI covers the rest of the backstage world as well, even spilling across to sound, hidden behind some heavy black masking at the far end of one hall (though the masking wasn't entirely successful as an acoustic shield, and the 'free gift' earplugs sitting on the counter of Lighting Dimensions magazine's booth perhaps told a story of their own). Other areas included effects, led by City Theatrical who showed their new Aquafog high-capacity dry ice machine: while the standard large-scale machine in the UK resembles an old oil drum, this one looks exactly like a converted wheely-bin. It did pick up the award for 'atmospheric effects machine', though. Le Maitre, hiding in the noisy area, had a revised version of their LSX low-smoke machine on show for those who prefer not to use dry ice. 'Useful hardware' was led by Doughty, at LDI for the first time, with their familiar range of clamps and stands. The Custom Rigging Company had a useful looking counterweight rope-lock that will

not release if the set is too far out of balance. Scenic Technologies had a large stand running videos of the many successfully productions they have created the scenery for; Britain's similarly named Stage Technologies had a smaller stand with the baby Juggler! control desk and Tow Track track drive system taking pride of place.

Services company Production Arts had some hardware on show, including the E/T/C PIGI projectors they now handle, alongside the familiar Panis, but were also concentrating just on meeting people - in particular to tell Europeans about the London projection office they are currently establishing (see page 6). Every 'people' stand at the show was bettered by hire company Vanco, though, who took the non-technical approach to stand design to an extreme and essentially recreated a living room, complete with comfortable chairs, television and aquarium. Vanco actually had much to celebrate by the end of the show, any uncertainty about their future having being quashed as they were taken over by Harris Production Services (see news this month).

Amongst the American exhibitors, WWW addresses seemed to be becoming as common as telephone numbers; UK suppliers should make sure they don't get left behind, since it allows potential customers to make contact when they need to, rather than just when the office is open, though PLASA are setting a good example in this area. And, of course, other uses for computers were also on show: LuxArt Conception was showing the MicroLux range of lighting design software for PCs, sold in the UK by XTBA, and round the corner Design and Drafting were showing their LD Assistant to MiniCAD for Macintosh users.

LDI keeps its autumn slot next year, the dates for your diary being November 21-24th, the location being Orlando and the theme, strangely, being the entertainment technology behind theme parks: it'll be interesting to see how the exhibitors compete with the appeal of Disney! RH



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21 SECOND TAKES

John Watt's special report on the 21st Anniversary of the STLD

The Society of Lighting Directors held its 21st year celebrations in Bournemouth last month and, to those of us involved in this niche 'art' or 'craft' (I am never sure which), it wasn't without significance. I am biased of course, now serving my second term as chairman, but to see the Society come of age in spite of the vast changes within the business - some good, some bad - is more than a little satisfying.

When the Society was formed in 1974 its membership was almost entirely comprised of people who were salaried employees of the big broadcasters, safe in secure jobs and over-protected by strong unions. The founding principles were to do with the sharing of knowledge and experience and the opportunity to meet fellow professionals from other companies. This it did and still does, although this sharing of knowledge is now a touch more circumspect, with the natural competition amongst freelancers who now form probably 90 per cent of the membership.

Part of the funding of the Society has always come from the commercial side of the industry - manufacturers, suppliers and hire companies - whose generous sponsorship has enabled the STLD to run on a sound business footing and maintain a high profile. It's a two-way process of course, and the Society has, over the years, offered a great deal of feedback which can only usefully come from us, the end users.

People will have different views as to the most significant technical changes, but my guess is that the development of CCD cameras has changed our lives most significantly. The coming of colour changed mine more, but it's a sobering thought that that was a lot more than 21 years ago. Gone are long line-ups, restricted contrast ratios and unstable electronics. Still with us are the same oversharp pictures and an engineer's perception of colour. But no matter, you don't often use paint straight from the tube, and given a bit of love and care, the video camera can now produce stunning photography.

Those in our trade with delusions of grandeur talk endlessly about the 'film look'. They would prefer, I guess, to be sitting in a canvas chair with a green eyeshade. I'd better not speak for the STLD membership, who are nothing if not a mixed bag of individuals, but personally I still get a buzz from lighting multi-camera



A life-jacketed John Watt addresses the guests.

productions which don't depend too much on the instant fix in the edit.

The luminaires themselves have changed a great deal and yet at the same time, not much. The workhorse is still the Fresnel and a set of barn doors. Yes, the lamps have become more efficient with tungsten halogen, and the discharge HMI has revolutionised location lighting in particular - lighter and smaller in every respect and the right colour if you're lucky. The Par can, stolen from rock and roll, now provides a cheap answer to many problems, but sometimes 'cheap' seems to win over 'appropriate'.

The intelligent moving light arrived well into the life of the Society, again via the concert world. It's the greatest thing since sliced bread (what was the greatest thing before sliced bread?) that we have all learned to live with and some have embraced as their complete *raison d'être*. I love the possibilities of solid moving light that doesn't have to wait until it hits a surface, given of course that the smoke machine, cracker or whatever, is working. But

(there is always a 'but' with me) do they need to move all the time to justify the budget and are they needed at all for a lyrical number when maybe the lighting can subtly support without shouting its own brash presence?

As always with this column, the significant developments are personal choices: life without a magic arm, blackwrap and light hamburger now seems unthinkable. The sash and gaffer, with us since the beginnings of time are, if anything, more valuable than ever.

So, 200 people gathered in Bournemouth to celebrate our 21 years of survival as if we needed an excuse for a party! If the good citizens of Bournemouth were unaware that a special night was in progress at the Royal Bath Hotel, then they didn't remain so for long, as we kicked off with a fireworks display which was both spectacular and loud. The force six onshore wind prevented the use of the biggest rockets in deference to the High Street shops; we didn't want to burn down the Bournemouth Centre either, as at least one of our members makes a good living lighting 'Come Dancing' there!

Champagne was served, then dinner and the odd bottle of wine. One of our sponsors supplied throw-away cameras for every table and so it's hoped some budding David Baileys will emerge once Boots have developed the results. The simple method of operation of these cameras seemed to completely baffle most people: no white balance, no filter wheels, no focus and - worst of all - built in lighting, though only in 1/1000 second bursts.

The traditional speeches followed, a fascinating look-back by John Treays, the original chairman who had launched the whole thing 21 years ago, ending with a toast to the Society. This was followed by the current chairman's address (me). I am too closely involved for sensible comment, suffice to say that the sponsors somehow got their legs pulled and yet we still seem to be on speaking terms. Another toast and then an award to Clive Gulliver, a very long-standing committee member. Following this we presented the original committee and John Treays with our STLD award which is given from time to time for the promotion of, or excellence in, TV lighting. Fay Presto provided the cabaret whilst King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys played into the night with gusto and we proved once again that we have some of the oldest swingers in the business, as well as the newer fellas.

But now into year 22 for the Society and nearly into a new one for all of us. Where has the year gone? In the run up to Christmas it's a good time to remind working lighting designers of the hazards that lurk around every show as



Smart suits for STLD members Clive Salmon (GE Lighting), John Edwards (Primarc), Clive Connor (GE Lighting), Graham Thomas (James Thomas Engineering) and Andy Trevett (Doughty Engineering).



First and present chairman: John Treays and John Watt.



John Treays and John Watt with Peter Edwards from the STLD in Canada, together with his wife.



A statesman-like John Watt delivers his post-prandial ponderings.



It was a night of surprises: first the microphone played up, then Clive Gulliver was called up to accept an award, as was Dave Lock, who organised the evening.

the festive season approaches. Still leading the field are fairy lights - which are mandatory on every highly flammable Christmas Tree which will appear on every programme to be transmitted during December. Series wiring is still common and since the prop' buyer will have surpassed himself by buying 70-bulb sets, you can write off two sparks for the entire show just substituting lamps to find the blown one. Pre-Christmas gloom can be lifted by clapping them heartily on the back with a seasonal greeting as they always hold the spare in their mouth and will probably swallow the red one. If the blue one goes too, you get extra points and can get out of jail free next time round.

The Internet is fast making paper redundant, but this technology has not yet reached snow machines that are supposed to gently flutter those flakes past the shining cheeks of happy children singing Jingle Bells upstage in that game show in a pathetic attempt to cobble together a special Christmas edition. Actually, 90 per cent of the snow piles up on top of the lamps, where it smoulders or melts, while five per cent (though it seems more), sticks to the back of the colour filters and produces an unplanned dappled effect which will pass for art on the floor, but takes a bit of explaining on the presenter's face.

Glitter dust abounds everywhere; a bit like crumbs in bed, it can take the romance out of life - it embeds itself in camera dolly wheels, gets in the ventilation louvres of lamps and then pours out when you 'tip it down a bit'. You discover too late a solitary twinkly piece under your nose when you have spent the last 10 minutes unsuccessfully trying to persuade your favourite make-up lady to come for a festive drink in your office. Yes, freelancers don't have offices, but she doesn't know that.

In the true spirit of the season you will be expected to light the kids' party. This has got a lot easier, as in most studios there aren't that many staff of child-bearing age that haven't been made redundant. In fact, most of the kids that would formerly have qualified for some jelly, a balloon and a funny hat are now line producers or production managers.

Nonetheless, there will be a residue who will turn up - the seven year old daughter of the MD wearing a basque, tights and Doc Martens (didn't he use to make dog pills?); boys brought up on 'Gladiators' who will ignore Uncle Rupert, the children's entertainer who can do anything with a balloon, but instead climb the tallescope and swing from hand to hand across the grid, re-focusing more lamps in two minutes than the average crew on a minimum

six hour call. There will be one with thick glasses who will quietly reconfigure the software on the Galaxy III! so that all fades will go down to three then back up to seven before going out, whilst the mimic reads Zero 88 Virus.

But it's not all bad being a lighting designer at this time of year: from a contact made at PLASA you may get a free diary from Finland which is unintelligible, but just assume the week starts on Monday. However, it does contain recipes for salting fish and Yak steak. You can swipe a short nose Par can, one of those with the double yoke for floor mounting, and this is perfect for putting your tree in once you have tamped some wet earth into it.

A passable lighting punch can be knocked up with a gallon of Rosco fog fluid and a dash of flash powder; it should have a couple of cinnamon sticks too, but if you don't happen to have these in your tool kit, throw in a 246 for that authentic woody taste. Mix in a well-ventilated room and strain through an old sock which you will find draped over the camera lens on the nearest drama shoot.

Have a happy Christmas, sure in the knowledge that without lights and lighting directors, those multi-million pound productions would make poor radio.

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OASIS'S EVENING GLORY

Two balmy nights at Earls Court were all it took for Oasis to win the Britpop battle - Mark Cunningham braved the seismic vibrations

Step down, Blur . . . Oasis's November shows at Earls Court broke box office records and contributed a new chapter to the rock history books. That these five young Mancunians were playing there at all, only a few weeks after the release of their second album, was an unprecedented achievement in itself. But it was the way in which they raised the roof of this often 'difficult' venue that proved their rapidly escalating popularity was not, after all, an invention of the media. Reports of Earls Court tube station being temporarily closed after the vibrations of Oasis's frenzied audience caused a minor seismic quake in nearby Fulham, came as no surprise. Three days afterwards, my head was still throbbing as I sat down to write.

At one time, this would have been termed a 'happening', for it was not so much a large gig as a major milestone in contemporary live rock. Self-confessed Fab Four fans (who isn't these days?) the Gallaghers and co pulled an early masterstroke by inviting The Bootleg Beatles to open both shows with a Sgt Pepper period set that was frighteningly accurate in both sound and visual appearance. Filling this sprawling venue with the evocative sounds of the psychedelic sixties provided a perfect background for Oasis's entrance.

Despite the enormity of the event, frontman Liam Gallagher and guitarist/song-writer brother Noel, oozed brash confidence as they led the band through a set drawn from their two albums - 'Definitely Maybe' and 'What's The Story? (Morning Glory)'. A three-song acoustic set, which included the soaring 'Wonderwall', was sweet relief to the ears before a brass and string section was wheeled in for the final onslaught of 'Don't Look Back In Anger, Whatever' and a cover of 'I Am The Walrus' which, on the second night, saw no less than 23 musicians on stage, including (at Oasis's specific request) The Bootleg Beatles. As I said, this really was an event . . . unlike Blur's Mile End Stadium gig in the summer.

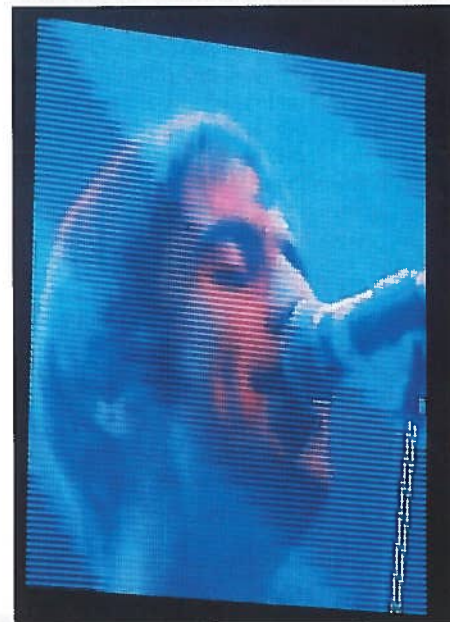
FRONT OF HOUSE SOUND

Of course, moving from club tours to Earls Court within the space of a year has been a massive challenge on the part of not only the band, but also the production crew. Not least engineer Huw Richards, who was back behind the front of house console after Robbie McGrath took over for a recent Japanese tour. "It's been a brave move on Oasis's part to come here and they've dealt with the shock factor of actually performing on that stage very well. They're just treating it like a big party. We haven't done any gigs of this size before but the band became massive so quickly that arenas had to be added to the itinerary along the way, because the original venues turned out to be far too small for the demand. We've been doing clubs and arenas back to back, and now we find ourselves in this place!"

Load-in and set-up of the entire sound and lighting systems was completed in less than two days, much to everyone's surprise. "It could have been done in just one day," said Richards, "but it was nice to relax a little more than usual and the guys from Britannia Row



Oasis at Earls Court, November '95. "Not so much a large gig as a contemporary milestone in live rock."



One of Screenco's 5x3 Sony Jumbotron screens, each of which was flown via four motors from the roof of the venue by Unusual Rigging.

deserve a lot of credit for helping to make it happen. The band has been rehearsing quite heavily in the studio because of the addition of horns and strings, but there haven't been any production rehearsals for this particular show as such."

New to Richards was a special Turbosound version of the BSS Omnidrive loudspeaker management system that has components matched specifically to Turbosound PA systems. Although it is programmable for any PA, in this instance it was controlling the Flashlight system. "It has taken over from the previous control system, the LMS-780, as a far superior piece of machinery because it does so

much more. The low end frequency response of the Omnidrive is one of the qualities I first noticed. Turbosound development engineer, Danny Cooklin, came down to set up and adjust the whole system for us and demonstrated what was possible through programming the delays and EQ curves. There's a mini-Varicurve built into it, which is fine if you want to use the EQ settings, but for Oasis we're using BSS FCS-960 graphics and a Klark Teknik DN60 spectrum analyser and everything tends to be very simple, straightforward and slightly old fashioned."

With a hard, driving band such as Oasis, it was important to keep EQ settings as flat as possible to allow maximum, non-problematic gain. Being an honest-to-goodness rock and roll act, few effects were required, although the bulk of Richards' work lay in maintaining a disciplined mix. "Obviously we are using quite a few compressors," he explained. The Summit DCL-200 two channel tube compressor is excellent for vocals. It keeps control of the sound all night and being tube it sounds a lot smoother than solid state."

Among the more standard outboard effects within Richards' reach were a tc electronic 2290 delay, Yamaha SPX-990s and a Rev 5, Roland SDE 3000s and Eventide H3000 harmonisers which he describes as "great for vocal thickening". But taking up most of the rack space was a veritable battery of BSS and Drawmer equipment, including DPR-402 compressors and DS 201 dual gates. "The compressors are very good for general band sounds, although I much prefer the tube sound for vocals. The Drawmer DS 201 is the best gate in the world - it's incredibly straightforward and it doesn't colour."

The end result of Richards' efforts was a giant wall of sound with pre-determined dynamics, where the vocals were set into the general mix

rather than being forced upfront. Richards was using a Yamaha PM4000, while at his right hand side was a PM3000, reserved exclusively for The Bootleg Beatles' engineer, Alan Lynch. He told me: "Although I would have preferred a Midas desk, the PM4000 is a great festival tool and I've had great results, but we receive such a high input feed from Oasis and the input stage and EQ need to perform as smoothly as possible. On these gigs, we have added strings, horns and a harmonica player which means a lot more channels - 45, in fact - and that's without the returns."

In order for Oasis to provide the best spread of sound at Earls Court since Pink Floyd's memorable shows last year, a total of 110 stacks of Flashlight and Floodlight cabinets were required in flown arrays, at the front of the stage and in nine separate delay positions throughout the hall, driven by BSS 780 and 760 amplifiers.

Richards explained further: "On the floor we have Flashlight 21" subs, an outfill which is built from underhung cabinets and an infill in the centre of the room. There is a main Flashlight delay above the mixing platform and we have Floodlight on the first two outer delays to cover the bleachers. You have to put these extra boxes in or the room will just take off! You also have to keep the main PA reasonably low and control it down towards the floor area. So we have the wide angle Floodlight on the first delay because the bleacher there is quite wide. Then, as we go around the room we use Flashlight, which we can control better because the dispersion rate is narrower."

WACKO JACKO'S MONITORS

Previously on the road with Primal Scream, John 'Jacko' Jackson joined the Oasis crew as monitor engineer in March 1995 and has hardly had a day off since. The five lads - who warmed up for the gig by riding around the vast backstage expanse on brand new scooters - are "absolutely wonderful to work for," he insists. "You can tell by the levels they play at on stage that they love the live atmosphere. It's raw, it's fresh and different every night, so I have to stay on top of it all. Earls Court has been very experimental and I've had to rethink everything because of the size of the place, the different stage and the addition of brass, strings and a harmonica player."

Even though Jacko has attempted to change



Oasis front-man Liam Gallagher.

"Reports of Earls Court tube station being temporarily closed after the vibrations of Oasis's frenzied audience caused a minor seismic quake in nearby Fulham, came as no surprise. Three days afterwards, my head was still throbbing..."

their way of thinking, it looks highly unlikely that Oasis will join the growing ranks of bands taking up the in-ear monitoring (IEM) option. "They think IEM is very anti rock and roll and I defy anyone to persuade them that it's a good idea. They refused to even give it a try. When I suggested it, the answer was 'We're not wearing any bloody hearing aids!', so I quickly dropped the subject. The vibe they want is sheer volume and they want the whole stage to be full of sound and feel a full frequency spectrum. Personally, I would love them to go over to IEM because it would solve a lot of problems, but I've resigned myself to the fact that it's not what they want."

Apart from the Japanese dates when a Clair Brothers rig was in use, Britannia Row has provided the PA system for the entire world tour. "For Earls Court, the wedges have been an extremely complicated affair. Normally, we would have only seven mixes, but for this we are up to 15 because of the additional musicians involved," Jacko explained.

"We're using a full complement of Turbosound TFM-350 2 x 15" wedges, and on each side of the stage we have flown side-fills, four stacks of Flashlight narrows and four bass cabinets on the floor. The bass cabinets have been time delayed a little with the Turbosound processors because we've pushed them out to the edge of the stage. They have their own EQ programmes with a built-in delay which you can move around in terms of seconds, feet or inches. There are also two MSI 2 x 12" wedges for the harmonica player who appears on a couple of numbers."

Jacko was using two linked Midas XL3 consoles, and employed 45 channels during the main part of the show. These channels rose significantly during 'I Am The Walrus' when The Bootleg Beatles joined Oasis on stage. Like colleague Huw Richards, Jacko is in love with the Midas touch. "Sonically, I love the XL3 for monitors because you get out exactly what you put in. The headroom and EQ are stunning."

Strangely, The Bootlegs decided against having drums in their monitors during their set, but this allowed Jacko to include their monitoring on Oasis's desk. "Maybe they are trying to recreate what it used to be like in the sixties when the big bands couldn't hear themselves on stage," he added.

To EQ the Gallagher brothers' vocals, Jacko used two BSS Varicurves for speed and simplicity.

"I'm aware of the Varicurve's creative applications, but they don't really apply to Oasis. We're just using straight EQ with the analyser facility which is excellent. I have BSS graphics on everything else, along with BSS DPR-502 gates and DPR-402 compressors, which are used on the bass drum and the DI bass guitar channel.

BSS gear seems to be faster and smoother and it doesn't pop. "There is very little dynamic range about the Oasis show really, and at most gigs, it's full-pelt until the end and it can be murder because the band won't compromise on the volume whatsoever. You can make it breathe a little more in a venue like this, which is a luxury for me."

Until recently, it appeared that Shure had the monopoly over Oasis's mic'ing, but it finally seems that other brands are getting a look in! At Earls Court an M88 was used on Alan White's bass drum after a 91 surprisingly failed the audition. An SM57 was put on the top and bottom snare heads, 98s on all the toms and



Oasis's front of house engineer, Huw Richards.



Monitor engineer 'Jacko' Jackson at the controls of the linked Midas XL3s.

451s as overheads and on the hi-hat. The bass cabinet was mic'ed with an RE20, while 405s replaced SM57s on the guitar cabinets, with 88s used on the brass section and small Countryman mics positioned on the bridges of stringed instruments. The harmonica player has an SM57. "He has a DI for a clean sound and Fender Champ and Twin Reverb amps for a dirtier sound. It's his concept and it sounds fantastic. I'll probably nick the idea and use it somewhere else!" Jacko added.

Shure SM58s remain the vocal mic choice because, as he says, "they are virtually indestructible. But even Liam sometimes bottoms them out - which we've never known before - because he has such a loud voice."

LIGHTING

Oasis concerts have generally been no-nonsense rock and roll affairs, and LD Mikey Howard saw Earls Court as an opportunity to escape from run-of-the-mill looks and design a light show that gave a new dimension to the band. From the moment the black drape fell to the floor to signal the start of the show, it was bright looks all the way.

"It's the first time I've ever designed anything this big on my own," Howard explained. "I've worked on big gigs before where I've co-designed for Happy Mondays at Elland Road and Rock In Rio. But this has given me one or two sleepless nights! I didn't have a great deal of time to put the design together. We've been touring constantly all year, so I was sending little drawings to LSD and getting them up on the computer at their end. It was designed over the telephone, basically!"

The rig included a stunning 88 Light & Sound Design (LSD) Icons, 50 Vari-Lite VL5s, 12 Clay Paky Golden Scan HPEs, 32 LSD Colormags (used as truss toners) and 10 Megastar strobes driven by an Orion 24-channel strobe controller. As the show climaxed with 'I Am The Walrus', 60 eight-lamp molefays in two blocks exploded with extreme brightness, spelling the word 'Oasis'. "We have eight bars of six Par 64s at the back and 12 bars at the front, which isn't a great deal for a gig of this size. The VL5s are providing a nice base for the Icons with big colour washes. The Icons are also projecting multiple Oasis logos at various points during the show. I wanted to use video projections on the backdrop, but we didn't have the time to put the material together," Howard commented.

"There are four followspots, which is a first for the band because they don't like spots. My main worry was whether they would be sufficiently lit on a stage like this, but it was fine



LD Mikey Howard (left), Vari*Lite operator Pete Mackay (centre) and Tony Shembish of Avolites.

and we probably could have got away without the spots."

Controlling the Golden Scans was an Avolites Rolacue Sapphire console, which features an on-board graphics tablet to enable 3D tracking and colour mix control. Those facilities are very useful when Howard's team run VL5s from the Sapphire on other tour dates. But when more VL5s were required for Earls Court, all the Vari*Lites were moved over to the Artisan desk, adjacent to the Icon controller and Colormag desk. "Everything was supplied by Light & Sound Design who have been really very helpful," said Howard. "The crew has been amazing. They got everything up in five and a half hours."

VIDEO

Freelance video director Dick Carruthers has spent the last few years developing his considerable craft in the growing area of vision screens. George Benson, Michelle Gayle, Gary Glitter, UB40, D:Ream, East 17, Chaka Demus & Pliers, Dina Carroll and Take That represent just a small cross section of the artistes he has worked with, and his attitude towards the use of screens in the concert arena is clear: "If they add nothing to the show, they shouldn't be there."

Oasis saw the obvious value of screens at Earls Court and approached Screenco's sister company, Creative Technology, to put together a suitable package for the November shows, including two 3 x 5 Jumbotron screens hung in portrait. "Everything that I suggested we use to shoot this concert has been supplied," said

Carruthers. "We couldn't ask for more in terms of video equipment spec, and that's quite rare."

The pictures seen by the audience were 'strobed' - an effect which Carruthers knows through experience to be 'pleasing to the eye'. He added: "We repeat one field of each video frame (25 per second) to give the images a filmic effect which adds more depth. It's a simple, but abnormal effect because it elongates the face but it's very easy to watch."

Camera signals were sent via a Grass Valley console to a Sony DFS-500 production console where the images were horizontally compressed to fit the portrait shape. "We don't compress the image to fill the screen exactly, or it would look too extreme. It's just pushed in a little to give it a slightly anamorphic look and it really suits what we're shooting. Being outdoor screens, the Jumbotrons are incredibly bright in this venue. In fact, they are set at a level of 1 out of a possible 12 and they are still quite dazzling."

As Oasis's show appears to rely less on dancing than attitude, the four cameramen had their work cut out to keep a lively array of images on the screens. Vision engineer Matt Lewnes, of Creative Technology, explained: "We have one guy operating the Jimmy Jib, two cameras on a track and one hand-held, and they are moving all the time. Our hand-held cameraman, John Clarke is jumping up and down at the side of the stage. Because of the way the stage is laid out, with a white backdrop and the drum kit near the front, there is no room for a conventional hand-held position, so we have to shoot it all from the front. We've ended up with a very dynamic show on the video screens from what is a fairly static bunch of musicians. The music's dynamic and we give it a look to match. We're approaching it in a raw manner, like the music, so we use quite a lot of crowd shots which contribute a huge amount to the atmosphere."

On several occasions in the past, Carruthers has had to tolerate the negative attitudes of some lighting designers towards the use of vision screens, but the relationship between the LD and the video director seems to have come a long way forward, very quickly. Carruthers summed it up nicely: "We're all working towards the same goal, so there should be some positive rapport. My relationship here with Mikey Howard is really good and the colours he is using are very video-friendly, but it isn't always the case. We didn't get much beyond a conversation because they were mid-tour when all this was starting to be planned. But lighting the crowd from a box truss with 16 Icons was very thoughtful of him!"

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PUTTING ON THE STYLE

Ruth Rossington visits the BBC's new West End-style musical show - Showstoppers

Given that Sunday night is usually the one night of the week that most people plan to spend at home in readiness for work the following morning, it comes as no surprise that the ratings battle between the BBC and the independent channels has become nothing short of full frontal warfare. The prize on offer is the lion's share of the audience in the prime viewing slot between 7.00pm and 10.00pm, and the war of attrition reached epic proportions recently when the BBC's much praised and much publicised adaptation of Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice' was screened head-to-head with the return of ITV's award-winning 'Cracker'. Ms Austen won on points and, indeed, went on to win over a whole new generation of readers.

Every viewer knows that part of the battle is fought by the programmes preceding, and so the early evening preliminaries for the main contest have been fought with equal determination, with ITV fielding guaranteed ratings-winner Nick Berry in 'Heartbeat' against the BBC's 'Showstoppers', a programme which rides neatly on the back of our seemingly insatiable appetite for musicals. Perhaps, on the surface, Heartbeat offers the greater attractions, but Showstoppers certainly has its own charms and has gone from strength to strength with each passing week.

Transferring stage to television has not been without its problems in the past, and plays that have received rave reviews in the theatre, have sunk without trace when adapted for television, mainly because of a myopic insistence on the part of the directors to adhere rigidly to the traditional one-dimensional theatrical format. When it comes to musicals, the rules of the game are different, and fortunately, the BBC has been careful to avoid a literal translation of the West End formula, opting instead for a distilled version which makes no attempt to recreate the scale and setting of West End favourites such as Les Miserables and Miss Saigon. As a result, what we have with Showstoppers is a much more intimate interpretation of the form: the staging is simple, the set minimal and the ambitions scaled accordingly.

Hosted by Gary Wilmot, perhaps better known for his comedic talents than his singing ability (nonetheless he disparts an excellent voice), the programme strings together a medley of well known songs from hit musicals, the bulk of which are performed by Gary and the 16-strong company, punctuated only by



anecdotal links delivered straight to camera by Gary and the appearance of guest performers such as Sarah Brightman, Cliff Richard and Beverley Craven.

Now, alas, coming to the end of its run, though I'm certain more will follow, the show, produced and directed by Kevin Bishop, is recorded in TC1, the largest studio within BBC Television Centre. Artist rehearsals begin in earnest on the Monday and run throughout the week. By Thursday, the technical crew arrive at outside rehearsal rooms in Acton to fine-tune the routines, followed by a full weekend of further rehearsal, with some sequences laid to tape, in preparation for a live condensed performance in front of an invited audience on Sunday evening.

The responsibility of creating the theatrical backdrop to the show falls to lighting director Mark Kenyon. Tucked away in a small control room, overlooking the studio from a gallery balcony, he works with a team of three: vision supervisor Dave Gibson, vision controller Andy Clark and automated lighting programmer Andy Dobbs.

Despite the complicated nature of the show, the set and lighting rig is relatively simple and is deliberately kept so. Although TC1 is the largest of the studios at television centre, set

designer Paul Sudlow was allotted only a small area to work with, a large slice of the studio being given over to the full BBC orchestra, numbering upwards of 70 on occasion. Nobody's complaining though as it's relatively rare these days that a programme should be recorded with the full orchestra in attendance. The main stage sits centre left. To its left, a small stage, dressed to look like a backstage area, links as a satellite to the main stage.

To illustrate the theme of the programme, Sudlow's main set is a very simple, split proscenium arch structure, the framework of which is covered with a very fine gauze material. Painted onto this is just a ghost of an image to give the whole a more solid feel that the lighting can strengthen or weaken according to whim. In effect, it's an empty canvas and, to his credit, Mark Kenyon has seized the challenge with both hands.

To help him with the brush strokes is a fully automated rig (which doesn't actually move) featuring 20 VL5s, 12 of which hang above centre-stage, with the remaining eight behind the orchestra. Six Golden Scan HPEs service downstage, whilst the main stage cyc is lit by 12 of the new Cyberlight SV automated luminaires, specially adapted for studio use. This new generation was designed in direct



response to requests from both theatre and TV for a quieter fixture, and the noise output has been whittled down to just one quarter of its original level - a benefit further enhanced by the trim height of the rig, which is a good 10 feet higher than usual at 30 feet. A pair of 1k Strand Solos provide the necessary followspotting for the principals.

In the control room, the automated lights are at the dictate of Andy Dobbs using a Compulite Animator 72-way, specifically chosen by the lighting department. Around the edge of the stage are 20 footlights, which are, in essence, standard domestic bubbles. Through careful colour mixing and expert use of gobos, not to mention the omnipresent star-cloth (provided by PW Enterprises), the lighting transforms a hitherto two-dimensional set into a full three-dimensional tableau.

Though the lighting team have full access to the resident lighting in the studio, they are free to hire in additional equipment, and it is the budget of £5,000 per show that allows for the automated lighting and Animator control equipment, supplied by Richard Martin Lighting, to be added to the inventory, along with a host of customised gobos from DHA Lighting. If the level of supplementary lighting equipment supplied to the BBC by Richard Martin Lighting is anything to go by, the company appear to have consolidated their position as one of the leading moving light rental companies to the television industry. RML have dramatically increased their stocks of Clay Paky Golden Scans and Superscans and High End Cyberlights to meet the growing demand and, in addition to equipment for Showstoppers, have also supplied equipment to the Generation Game, the Entertainers, Tomorrow's World and Top of the Pops.

As the set remains constant throughout, the burden of constantly creating new looks falls squarely on the shoulders of the automated system. As the camera has a tendency to distort both colour and perspective, Kenyon and team have opted for very rich colours and hues, with striking gobo patterns projected onto the rear cyc creating the highly textured backdrops that dominate the overall look of the show.

Assisting the control room-based crew is a studio-based crew consisting of a chargehand and four electricians, of which two are operating the spots, with the remaining two on the floor trouble-shooting.

Sound-wise, one of the greatest challenges of the programme was accommodating the large BBC orchestra - a challenge which was further complicated by Musician's Union regulations which insist on regular breaks for the orchestra, occasionally causing frustrating delays for the technical crew. This aside, their presence did present some technical challenges for the sound team, at the helm of which sits Tony Revell. The 70-piece orchestra are all individually mic'd with a cross-breed of AKG, Neumann, Shure and Sony mics numbering 140 in total. Howard Hopkins, deputy sound supervisor, is responsible for sub-mixing the orchestra. The violins are mixed from a Glen sound mixer, whilst the rest of the strings are mixed through a Soundcraft 600 desk, which is also used to carry the sub-mix for the percussion.

A second Glen Sound mixer is brought in for additional instruments, in this instance, a saxophone. The sub-mixes are then channelled onto a Calrec 96-channel desk and mixed with the rest of the orchestra. Tony Revell handles the main mix, including vocals. This is then



Lighting director Mark Kenyon on the set of Showstoppers.





Vision controller Andy Clark (left) and vision supervisor Dave Gibson (right), flank Mark Kenyon at the main controls.

recorded onto videotape and 24-track analogue, with a pair of Tascam DA-88 eight tracks handling the artistes mics. The show is actually recorded 'live' in the sense that each number is actually shot in one take, so Gary Wilmot, together with the eight main company members, are all on individual radio mics, with a further eight backing vocalists (normally out of vision) kitted out with radio mics should they be required to appear on stage. Unusually for television, but far more common in the theatre, the radio mics are hidden in the hairlines of the performers. The foldback on the studio floor is provided by EAW KF300i's, four serving the audience and two acting as stage foldback. There are five sound crew working on the studio floor, two in charge of the 20 radio mics, a further pair looking after the orchestra and

Mark Nicholl perched behind the audience mixing the PA and foldback using a Yamaha PM2800 desk.

One of the main problems has been containing the sound level of the orchestra, whilst compensating for its right-of-centre position, and the 17 radio mics of the vocalists have had to work very hard to compete with the 100dBA of the orchestra.

Any crew working on a TV production, be they sound or lighting, will tell you of the extraordinary nature of the work which can be, like the man once said about war, 'long periods of boredom, punctuated by short periods of extreme fright'. But Mark Kenyon wouldn't have it any other way, and actually feels that the relatively short turnaround time and limited commitment to any one production brings out



Andy Dobbs, programming the scans on a Comulite Animator.

the very best in the technical team. Despite the intense nature of the work, there are plenty of jokes shared between the sound and lighting teams as witness a quiet moment in the control room when the lighting team, waiting for the return of the orchestra, and watching on the monitors a pre-recorded performance of Gary Wilmot singing 'Wilkommen' from Cabaret, were horrified to discover that it was not, in fact, Gary's voice on tape, but Mark's captured in an off-guard moment from the week before. What the sound team have got saved on tape for another day is anybody's guess. With luck, Mark will never find out!

As it was not possible to use a camera during the recording of the programme, the photographs accompanying this article were lifted direct from video-tape.

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TECHNOLOGY RULES OK!

Graham Threader of Gradav offers L+SI readers an insight into just some of the unique innovations being channelled through R&D

Technology Rules OK! Unless you are in stage management, that is. Having just attended a seminar on innovation techniques - three dimensional modelling, right brain versus left brain, mesmerism, etc - I decided it was time to put matters to rights! I assembled the Gradav sales team around me. "What we need is some serious R&D," I announced. Sadly, I was mis-heard, for the next day, three John Mayall albums appeared on my desk.

Our first venture was to use MIDI for scene changes, with the control to be via the keyboard player in the band. Speed, accuracy and the non-interruption of the philosophy discussion in the crew room were all seen as benefits. The show chosen for the debut was a musical version of 'The Crucible' called 'Tropic of Pisces'. The production company were looking for a 'racy' title to boost poor houses, and had confused Arthur Miller with Henry Miller. The show was all discord and gloom, with great bouts of incomprehensibility.

The changes worked brilliantly, until Thursday night, when it came as quite a shock to discover that musicians never play a full week's show. Apparently, it is extremely unlucky, so they enlist others to perform in their place on certain nights. It may be of interest to readers of L+SI that it is considered bad form to use someone who knows the music.

The cue for the first change and the stage weights began to whirl, like giant dominoes being shuffled by an unseen hand. Faster and faster they went before disappearing into the wings to the accompaniment of bangs, crashes and curses. The braces took off like Tomahawk Missiles, and arched over the stalls before embedding themselves in the balcony. Nobody was hurt, although we did get reports of an out-of-body experience from someone seated in the stalls. There was a stunned silence, followed by rapturous applause. The critics, who didn't understand what was happening, but who know a stunning effect when they see one, gave the show a rave review. As a result, the stage manager has been nominated for ABTT Technician of the Year, and we had to pay for the repair of the seats.

We were filled with Much Trepidation (a potent brew named after a village in Suffolk) as we approached our next project - fire safety. We had developed a system for putting out cigarettes as crew entered the stage area. An induction loop around the stage area activated special cigarette holders that extinguished the offending cigarettes. Pre-show trials had gone well, and we felt confident.

On the opening night, the stage manager was missing. He had tripped over a pile of abandoned Health and Safety Manuals and fallen on a hard hat, bruising his ego. Needless to say, he was rushed to the bar to be revived with brandy. Over-revived, he was left in a costume skip to complete his recovery.

The deputy stage manager now in charge had matters well in hand - nearly. He forgot to activate the loop system until after the overture



had started. Immediately all cigarettes on stage went out. So did six people wearing hearing aids. For our own part, we couldn't understand what all the fuss was about - nobody was seriously hurt. Only two fell in the river, and they were rescued within an hour. I'm sure that complaints about the helicopter noises and sirens were exaggerated. We didn't hear them in the control room, only gales of laughter over the headset.

Undeterred by this setback, development continues apace. We are presently looking for another theatre prepared to push back the frontiers of fire safety, as the last one has become strangely unco-operative. It is well known that an area of difficulty for most stage managers is drink. In the middle of a strike someone kicks over a glass of beer - yours!

Aware of the dangers, and not least the cost of replacing the drink, we decided to design and build a non-spill metric beer container. Doughty Engineering were approached, and although Andy Trevett was full of apprehension (a deadly local ale) he agreed to help. Andy is most helpful. Every weekend he drives the length and breadth of the country trying to buy metric beer. No success so far, but he remains undeterred, arriving home tired and emotional but ever prepared to continue the search - and all in the cause of perfection. At present, we have a working model of the container, code name 'non-spill metric beer container', but it takes two men to lift it. It is generally agreed that we need to reduce the weight a touch before production begins, when we also plan to have a pewter version available for the traditionalists.

As you may know, there is never enough mirror space in dressing rooms. Our next project was to use 'wobbly mirror' technology to allow several people to share a single mirror. With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to see that three men shaving at the same time was not the best of test runs. Nobody went to hospital, but we ran out of plasters and the stains in the carpet refused to disappear.

Actors lose handprops. Nobody knows why, they just have to. Using the well-established 'clap and burble' technology so familiar in key rings to locate lost props seemed the obvious solution. Not so. Trials showed that any loud noise would trigger them. Something more sophisticated was needed. Voice activation was the answer. We soon had a working prototype responding to the words 'dozy actors', and we popped down to our local church hall to try the system 'under fire'. By now the theatre grapevine had begun to work and venues prepared to help us were mostly in parts of the world that a fax cannot reach.

Curtain up and all was going well - for nearly two minutes. Then the first burble started, to be replaced by another almost immediately, and then another. We could tell the audience had begun to notice. You just don't get strange phone-like noises in a Restoration Comedy, and the dialogue had been swamped. The lessons learned were: never use a phrase likely to be spoken frequently, and use different phrases for each prop.

Word of our invention and prowess is now spreading on the amateur grapevine, reducing still further our chances of developing 'a winner' in the theatre. However, we do have one more idea that may just succeed.

Being a major supplier of radio microphones, we often receive calls from stage managers who have been instructed to use them for a production, despite the lack of need and/or budget. We no longer heed the sobbing at the other end of the phone as price is discussed. Our hearts are not made of stone, however, and to improve the lot of these pitiful wretches, we have developed the Gradav Radio Interference Mimic (or GRIMbox for short).

The GRIMbox can be inserted between mixer and amplifier, or fed via an auxiliary mix like any other outboard effect. In operation, it produces hisses, crackles and pops on a random basis. Short breaks in the signal are also induced using a separate algo-rhythm (cha-cha-cha). This is the standard model. The deluxe version has 12 different mini cab messages that can be triggered randomly, by MIDI, or by pushing a button on the panel (known during development as the 'spite' button). We are presently developing the UHF version. It is exactly the same, but twice the price. The sales team believed that lesser parts of the disco market could also use the GRIMbox - until they realised that the poor and unserviced equipment in use was already producing the same effects.

While we have not been wholly successful with our ventures to date, our determination to improve the stage manager's lot remains undiminished. L+SI's editor is convinced that we're opening up a new area of technological endeavour and is anxious to hear from anyone with equally worthy notions.

Graham Threader is the managing director of Gradav who stock a comprehensive range of theatre supplies for both hire and sale.

L'ELYSEE MONTMARTRE

Paris's most 'happening' live music venue L'Elysée Montmartre has found a solution to previously obstructive Health & Safety SPL regulations - Mark Cunningham discovered how the latest sound reinforcement products from BSS Audio and Turbosound provided the answers

It used to play host to the Can Can, wrestling bouts and traditional music hall shows, but today, L'Elysée Montmartre is more likely to reverberate to the sounds of Black Sabbath, Aswad and Bjork, as Paris's premier venue for live rock and dance music... And the site for some of the best audio technology in France.

Designed by Gustave Eiffel in 1889 and now a listed building, L'Elysée Montmartre has been recognised as a major force on the live circuit for more than 10 years - Paris's equivalent of London's Shepherd's Bush Empire or Astoria - and holds more than 120 gigs a year with a one-level audience capacity of 1200. But its versatility is regularly demonstrated by the wide range of non-musical events it holds every year - from TV shows to conferences and corporate dinners. Owned by leading promoter, Garance Productions, its success as a fashion show venue, hosting presentations by Yoji Yamamoto, Agnes B, Martine Sitbon, Marite and François Girbaud, is further evidence of the 22.5 x 23.5 metre hall's modular abilities.

Throughout its early existence as a live music venue, a 12kW Turbosound Festival system was in place at L'Elysée Montmartre, as a result of a collaboration with sound reinforcement hire company, Scenic Sound. But by the middle of 1995, it was agreed to upgrade the audio installation with the very latest loudspeakers, amplification and processing equipment from Turbosound and BSS Audio, supplied through the companies' French distributor, Edge Technology.

Franck Bessol of Edge Technology explains: "We designed the equipment specification and Didier 'Lulu' Lubin of Scenic Sound directed the installation, having become acquainted with Turbosound through working with the previous system. The installation took around three weeks to complete and we were ready for business by the beginning of September."

DISTRIBUTED SOUND

In the United States there was recently a move to legislate controlled sound distribution around a venue, rather than have too high an SPL at fixed points. At L'Elysée Montmartre, a key factor in the system design was a similar local Health & Safety directive that the SPL reading of the hall must not exceed 104dB. This led to L'Elysée becoming one of the first live venues in Europe to install a distributed PA system. This involved installing a larger than normal amount of speakers (34) in front of and around the audience, and positioned in



Inside L'Elysée Montmartre - a major force on the live circuit in Paris.

photo: Nik Milner

alternate left and right clusters, in order to create a stereo image at all points throughout the hall, while maintaining optimum sound pressure.

Bessol adds: "The Health & Safety people are very strict when it comes to noise heard outside of the building. Usually, one would increase the volume to provide more sound pressure in certain parts of a hall, and generate forceful

vibrations. But in a hall set up with a distributed system, an audience can hear a similarly powerful sound, yet it sounds much clearer because the speakers are closer (one every six metres) and producing the same power, without having to be driven as hard. That's why we are so pleased with the outcome of this installation. We believe that in the future, all live venues will take this approach."

True, a distributed system provides comfort for the audience, while keeping venue owners on friendly terms with noise abatement societies. But it also means that a sound engineer working at places such as L'Elysée for the first time, will need to approach his job differently, since there is more of a surrounding sound than a unique sound source.

To simplify matters, the BSS Omnidrive Loudspeaker Management System automates the whole process. (With five Omnidrive FDS-388 systems running simultaneously, L'Elysée boasts the single largest Omnidrive installation in the world.) Bessol expands: "We have a limiter set on the Omnidrive for each point around the room. When the Health & Safety inspectors come to measure the SPL, they measure the whole room from the console position, not individual points, and they have been satisfied every time. Even when heavy metal bands have performed here! After the delay measurements between speakers were taken manually with tape measures, the Omnidrive was also used to provide the 16 point-by-point delays and adjust the phase during installation."



L'Elysée Montmartre in the centre of Paris.

PROGRAMMED PERFECTION

Situated high above the audience's heads is a meteorological probe which automatically measures the temperature and humidity of the hall, so that its effect on the high frequency curve can be calculated.

Guy Vergnol of Scenic Sound says: "In an empty hall it may be 20 degrees C, but at night when there is a full audience capacity, it is maybe 35 degrees C, so the delay between speakers and the frequency response curve will change. The Omnidrive is linked to the probe via MIDI and will automatically respond to the information it is receiving and change the parameters of the system to suit. It makes life so easy for us, because there is normally a different FOH engineer at every gig, so they don't have to spend most of the afternoon prior to the performance assessing how the system is going to respond in the evening."

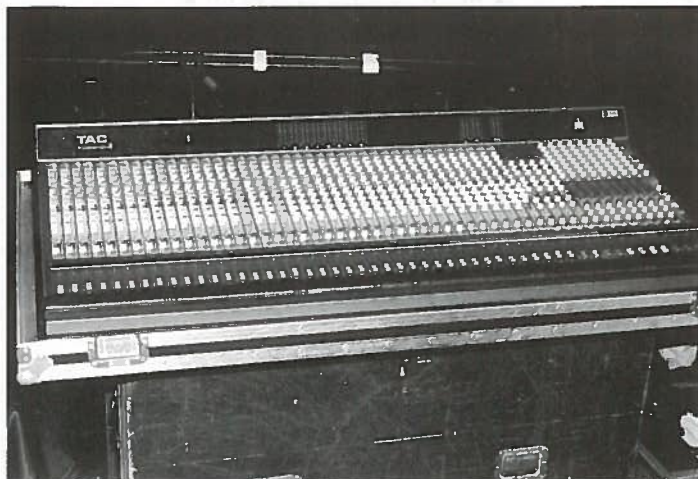
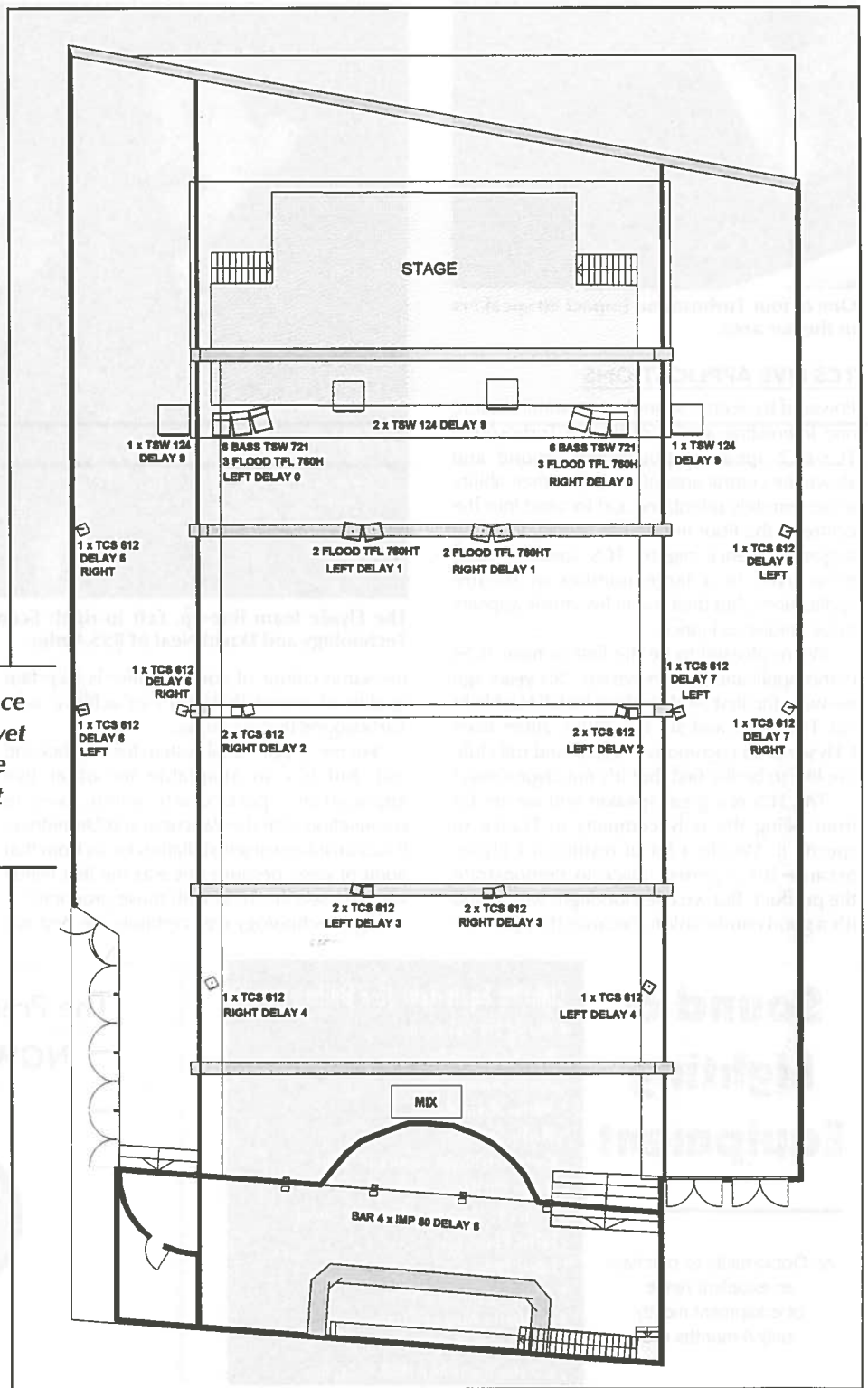
The Varicurve equaliser/analyser remote controller has a memory into which is programmed five different configurations. It allows the system to perform differently for, say, a dance or a rock 'n' roll gig. The Varicurve

"With a distributed system, an audience can hear a similarly powerful sound, yet it's clearer because the speakers are producing the same power, without being driven as hard."

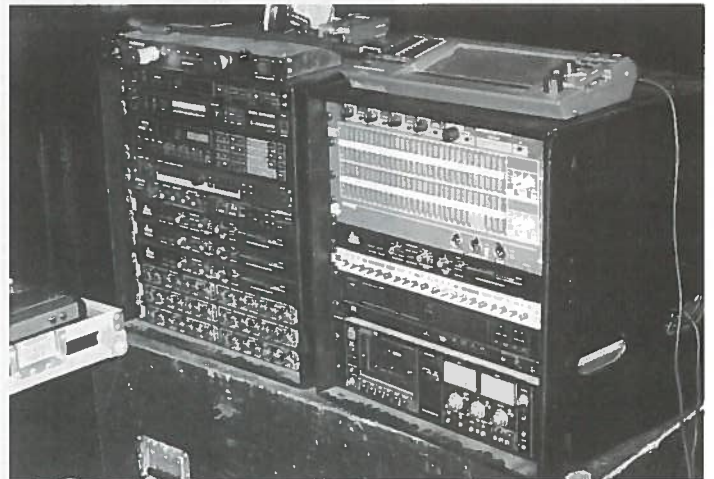
and Omnidrive communicate to provide the optimum result.

"We initially spent a whole week setting up these programmes at the express request of Garance," adds Bessol. "At dances, engineers will want to reduce the sound level at the outer edges of the hall so that people can comfortably converse, so they will turn down the band gains on the outside via a programme change. It removes the need to go to the console and change the levels manually. By recalling that particular memory, all the parameters and the gain structure is shaped to fit the occasion, while retaining the concentration of sound required for the dance floor."

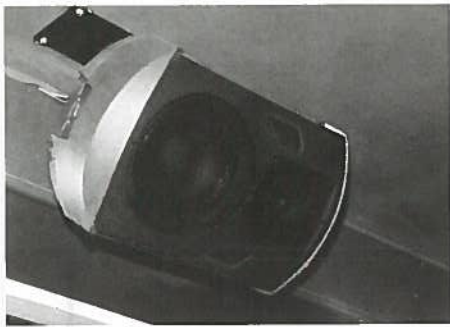
BSS's presence at L'Elysée is extended by the use of 12 EPC-760 and 780 amplifiers which drive six Turbosound Floodlight TFL-760H cabinets, four TFL-760T, 12 TSW-721 basses and four TSW-724 sub-basses.



A TAC Scorpion II 40/8/2 console is at the heart of Scenic Sound's front-of-house mixing platform.



The outboard rack sees Varicurve alongside standard kit such as Yamaha digital multi-effects, dbx, Klark Teknik, Drawmer and Furman.



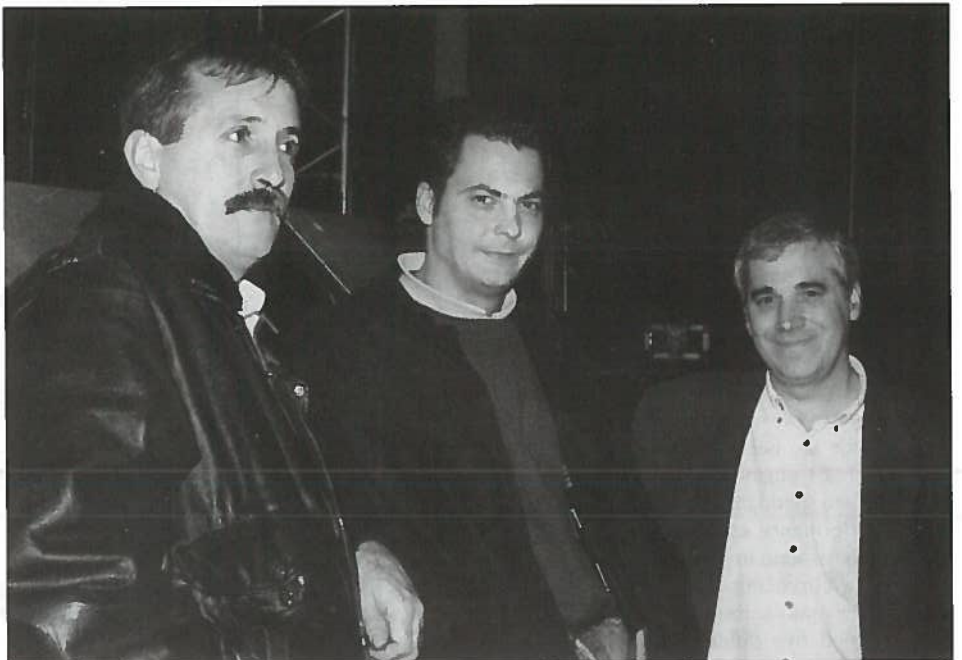
One of four TurboSound Impact 80 speakers in the bar area.

TCS LIVE APPLICATIONS

Powered by Scenic Sound's own amplification, one interesting aspect of the 16 TurboSound TCS-612 speakers positioned around and above the central area of the hall is their ability to be remotely orientated and focused into the centre of the floor in order to modify listening angles on dance nights. TCS speakers have been used in a large number of theatre applications, but their use in live music appears to be unique to France.

"We're pleased to be the first to have TCSs in this application," says Bessol. "Six years ago we were the first worldwide to install Flashlight (six TFS-780H and six TFS-780L), 200m from L'Elysée at La Locomotive, a rock and roll club. We like to be the first, but it's not always easy!

"The TCS is a great speaker and we are far from being the only company in France to specify it. We do a lot of testing at L'Elysée because it's a perfect place to demonstrate the product. But we use Floodlight with it and it's a good combination, because they provide



The Elysée team line-up. Left to right: Scenic Sound's Guy Vergnol, Franck Bessol of Edge Technology and David Neal of BSS Audio.

the same colour of sound. There is a certain quality of sound that you can achieve with TurboSound that is unique.

"For me, it's the ideal system for live rock and roll, but it's so adaptable for other live applications, particularly when used in conjunction with the Varicurve and Omnidrive. It was an interesting installation for us from that point of view, because this was the first venue we had used the TCSs with those products."

Edge Technology was certainly the first out

of the starting gate to use TurboSound's new Impact 80 speakers in the bar area at L'Elysée. Bessol comments: "On the first night, everybody was raving about how crisp and clean the sound was near the bar, so I think that shows that our specification was just right. We are receiving enquiries about the availability of Impact every day - it's incredible.

"It was very important for TurboSound to produce this kind of small, passive speaker at an attractive price."

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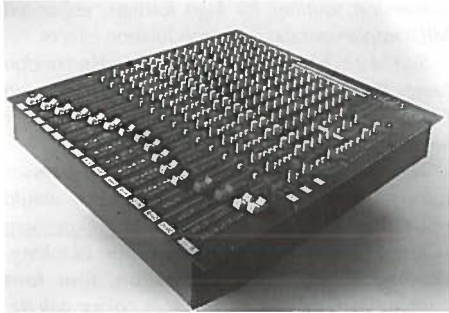
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EQUIPMENT NEWS

Allen & Heath



Allen & Heath has introduced the GL2 stereo (GL2S), a high quality stereo sub mixer derived from the GL2.

The GL2S has been designed to manage a variety of stereo applications and is ideal for sub-mixing keyboards, drums, BVs, and effects, as well as club installation DJ work, and stereo PA applications.

The key feature of the GL2S design is the three independent stereo mix busses, while other features include six auxiliary sends in blocks of one to four, switchable pre or post fader, with aux five and six also switchable pre or post fade, 22 inputs on mixdown, four band EQ with two mid sweeps; rack mountability and Sys-Link compatibility, which allows two or more GL2S consoles to be linked together.

The GL2S has 22 mix channels from a maximum of 34 inputs. The format comes as six mono balanced XLR mic/line inputs, six stereo inputs with RIAA option, three stereo mix buss outputs, and two stereo FX returns. Phantom power is available on each mic channel, as are insert points, group assignable switches and PFL.

For further information contact Harman Audio in Borehamwood, telephone 0181-207 5050.

Feedback Filter



The ADF Workstation is an adaptive digital signal processor that includes Sabine's patented automatic feedback detection algorithm. Using this algorithm, the ADF detects feedback and instantly places one of 12 digital filters (per channel) directly on the ringing frequency. The filters are similar to those used on the ground-breaking FBX Feedback Exterminators, but the ADF allows the user to adjust all filter parameters and to see the precise values of the filters in either a tabular or graphic format.

The new ADF-1201 and 2402 allow filter editing in graphic display screens. They also include an improved RTA feature, automatic filter tracking, a new 'lock fixed' filter option, a pink noise generator and a bright LCD screen.

The user can select how wide the ADF filters will be. Filter depths can be as deep as -80dB. In parametric mode, filters are controlled manually by the user, giving engineers the flexibility to utilise several digital parametric filters for shaping sound and several adaptive filters for feedback control.

For further details contact Fuzion in Walton-On-Thames, telephone (01932) 882222.

BSS Remote Control for Varicurve EQ System

BSS Audio's popular remote control for the Varicurve EQ system has been expanded to provide further system control for both Omnidrive and Varicurve systems simultaneously. New software allows the FPC-900 to control delay times, band gains and mutes on any of the Omnidrive band outputs.

This provides users with the ability to set up house EQ and loudspeaker install parameters from various locations in a venue, via the remote's standard wireless or cable link. Omnidrive units are looped into the same MIDI system used on the Varicurves, and the data is transferred from the remote's interface unit, normally located in the rack. Identifying an Omnidrive unit is a matter of MIDI channel programming, and the device is

recognised by the FPC-900 as an Omnidrive.

This expansion of the FPC-900 system now provides an integrated EQ, loudspeaker management and MIDI system. The FPC-900 remote has an integral RTA and SPL meter. This simple analyser can be used to measure the response at up to six locations in a room and produces an automatic EQ correction to meet a target room response. Additionally, any of up to 16 Varicurves (or combination of Varicurve Omnidrive devices) can be manually controlled from the FPC-900. During the performance, the SPL meter can be used to ensure the sound levels meet local regulations.

For further details contact BSS Audio in Potters Bar, telephone (01707) 660667.

GAM Colour Up

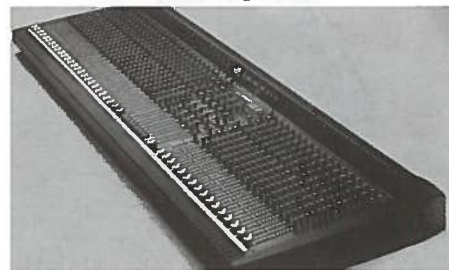
The Great American Market has responded to requests for additional colours by adding 21 new colours to their GamColor and CineFilter lines. The new deep-dyed polyester filters include 18 theatrical and three correction colours. The broad range of new additions includes four magentas five orange/ambers, two yellow/greens, one blue and two violets.

GAM product manager, Tim Buck, states that three new colours, including a 3/4 minus green, have been added to the CineFilter line. This further facilitates the colour and colour temperature control available to the designer. Each GamColor filter is rated for the change in Kelvin and f stop it will produce.

GamColor is optically clear and deep-dyed and the colour will not scratch off the surface. The polyester base and dyes are especially formulated to resist deterioration in high heat applications. GamColor is available through professional dealers, worldwide.

For further information contact GAM in Hollywood, telephone +1 (213) 461 0200.

Christmas Spirit



Spirit have introduced a new eight bus console, the Spirit 8. The console is available in 16, 24, 32 and 40-channel frame sizes, with mono and stereo inputs offering a maximum of 64 inputs (40 channel frame).

A fully specified meter bridge is standard, together with eight group busses, four mute groups and a 10 x 2 matrix section. Each channel strip is designed using individual PCBs, making service or replacement a simple affair.

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

CS3 from DDA

The new CS3 console from DDA has been specifically designed for live installations and theatre or concert applications and is available in 16, 24, 32 and 40 input frames.

Features include LCR (left/centre/right) output signal panning, flexible discrete group buss assignment, Solo-in-Place system, three-band input EQ with fully parametric mid-band, six aux sends, four stereo inputs, direct outputs for multi-track recording and group output and stereo master modules.

A combination of precision controls, distributed decoupling and gold-plated connectors improve noise, RF immunity and crosstalk.

For further information contact Mark IV in Kidderminster, telephone (01562) 741515.

New Horizons

Following the success of its predecessor Vision, the latest addition to the Studiomaster Powerhouse range - the Horizon - is now shipping.

Based on the Vision 8, its features include assignable dual seven band graphics, programmable stereo digital effects processor with MIDI and alphanumeric display, three-band EQ with mid sweep on the six mono channels, two stereo line/mono mic channels and stereo subgroup.

The Horizon has 1200W power output (600W per channel into four ohms), full AMCS protection, inserts on mono input channels, four aux sends and a listen (PFL) bus.

For further details contact Studiomaster in Luton, telephone (01582) 570370.

Bag End Enter High Output Market

Bag End Loudspeakers Systems has introduced the Sapphire - an all-new, time-aligned high-output loudspeaker system.

With built-in flying hardware, stand adapter, and angle-cut wedge shape, the Sapphire is adaptable to a multitude of applications. It is loaded with a 1.5" high compression driver with a 40 x 50 degree high frequency wave guide and single 12" high efficiency cone driver to provide high output and fidelity in a compact enclosure.

For more information contact Bag End in Barrington, Illinois, telephone +1 (708) 382 4550.

New Audio Playback Software

At the LDI exhibition in Miami, Stage Research Inc introduced its line of audio playback software.

SFX is a software application designed specifically for theatrical playback of sound effects and music. On-Screen, SFX provides the user with a number of windows. The Cues window contains the cue list for the currently loaded show. Here, fully descriptive sound effects are displayed in cue list form. Other windows on the desktop provide the user with act, scene, page information, cue notes and cue execution status. By hitting the Go Button window, the operator executes each cue immediately and in sequence: no cueing, no fast forwarding, no uncertainties. Other features, including MIDI triggering and special cues such as Wait and Autofollow, contribute to make SFX a robust playback system for even the most demanding of situations.

Built upon the SFX playback engine, the Sound Array system provides users with an alternate user-interface. Four banks of a virtually unlimited number of buttons in each bank can be loaded with up to four SFX created 'shows'. Each bank can then be optionally overridden to playback a specific sound card. Four compatible sound cards can offer up to four stereo outputs, or eight channels. Sound Array is designed for live entertainment where a sequential playback of cues cannot be guaranteed, and its visual nature allows users to operate it by simply pressing an on-screen button for cue execution.

SFX Time-Code is a stand-alone application that reads MIDI and SMPTE Time Code, as well as real computer time, and feeds it to SFX whose cues can be set to trigger from time code.

For further details contact Stage Research in Cleveland, Ohio, telephone +1 (216) 888 8295.

Futurelight Update

German company Steinigke Showtechnic have extended their Futurelight range of lighting effects. 'Brilliant Flower' is one of the smallest lights in the range, equipped with a 24V 250W lamp and, like the 'Gobofly' and 800W 'Circle', is intended for permanent installation in small discotheques.

Centrepiece effects in the range include the 'CrossBeam' and the 'Spider', whilst the scanner market is served by the 'DMX-Scan H-250' featuring six gobos and seven dichroic colours, plus white, with several effects options. Also new is the 'D-200' featuring seven dichroic colour filters, plus white and multicolour and six gobos. Further effects in the range include the 'Dominador', a six-way multi-scanner featuring eight gobos, five dichroic colours, plus white, variable rate control of all functions, colour and gobo mixing. The 'Duke' is a multi-function scanner which features a standard colourwheel with eight dichroic filters, 24 colours, integrated UV filter, rainbow effect, nine high-resolution stepper motors, four rotating gobos and a host of prism, frost and strobe effects.

For further details contact Steinigke Showtechnic in Waldbuttelbrunn, telephone +49 931 406 1510.

LIGHT OPERA

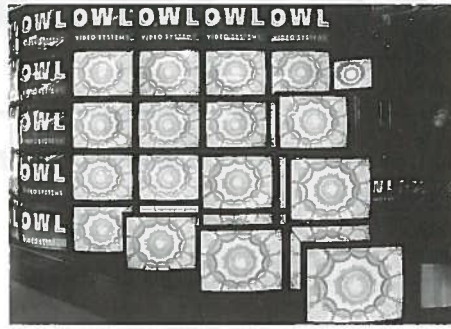
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Sound-Light Graphics



Owl Video Systems is now shipping the upgraded Kaleidolight graphics controller. The sound-to-light graphics system enables users to utilise their audio-visual investment far more effectively than before, allowing video systems to be used to communicate directly with customers.

The Kaleidoscript function allows text messages to be keyed in and displayed instantly and gives the Kaleidolight greater flexibility, allowing a wide range of display material, including text, graphics and video images to be used.

A library of videographics is included and is updated every four months - a service which is free for the first year. Graphics themes that are available include Pop Art, Indie, Flower Power, Hip Hop, Techno and Ragga. Company logos and specially designed graphics can also be provided.

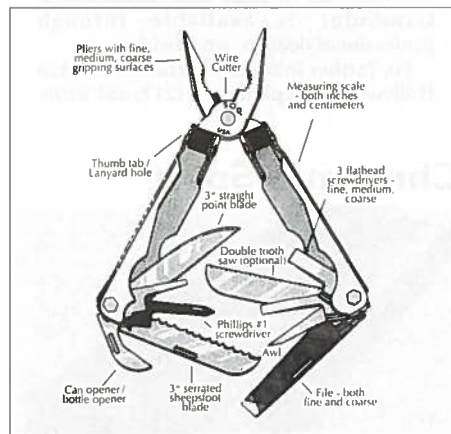
For further information contact Owl Video Systems in Uckfield, telephone (01825) 766123.

CE Le Mark

Le Mark TVS are in the process of producing a range of self-adhesive, ultra high-temperature resistant 'CE' labels for use by manufacturers. During development, the company discovered a Kapton-based material that they can utilise for clients who wish to mark their lighting equipment with bar codes.

For further information contact Le Mark in Huntingdon on (01480) 494540.

Stocking Filler!



AJS are now distributing both SOG and Gerber multi-tools. A simple 'flick of the wrist' is all that is needed to lock the Gerber pliers into position.

An advantage of the SOG is the folding plier head, which enables reaching into those awkward corners! Both models feature handles incorporating a variety of blades, screwdrivers, wire cutter, can and bottle openers, file, lanyard ring and scale, and each tool is supplied in a high quality belt pouch. The Gerber tool is also available with an optional 1/4" hex bit tool kit.

For further information contact AJS Theatre Lighting and Stage Supplies in Ringwood on (01425) 470425.

PM22 Controller

Chameleon Technology launched its latest PM 22 laser controller just four months ago, and signs already indicate that it will be following in the footsteps of its predecessors, the PM 19, 20 and 21.

The latest PM 22 software, version 3, has added a host of new features to the desk. There is also a larger flash memory option, comprehensive conversion routines for logo formats, enhanced MIDI implementation and modulation effects.

Six PM 22s have now been purchased by London Lasers. Two of these are installed in clubs - one in China and the other in Tibet - while the remainder are in constant use as part of their hire stock.

The PM 22 uses the latest microprocessor technology to incorporate functions you would normally expect to find on more expensive systems. These include full colour blanking, analogue-like pattern generation, four font scrolling text, fully programmable colour palette, 16 channel beam table control, MIDI interface, pan and tilt, 360 degree scanning head control and the ability to store up to 5,000 images with the expanded memory version.

The PM 22 is designed for use with white lasers that utilise the latest high speed galvos and polychromatic acoustic-optic modulators for blanking and colour control. It has also been constructed with the practical considerations of robustness and reliability to the fore.

For more information contact Chameleon Technology, telephone (01932) 880519.

Wet, Wet, Wet



Technomad Inc have introduced their WeatherTech high-performance, weather and water-resistant loudspeakers. The new range is designed to be used in many abusive real-world situations, year-round, indoors or out, without fear of water, sand, temperature, mould, mildew, insect and other damage, according to the company.

Combining rugged, US Armed Forces road-case technology, Technomad cabinets are impact, UV light, fire and shotgun-blast resistant splinter-proof, as well as water-tight when the protective lid is attached. The company uses ferrofluidded Radian high-frequency and mid range drivers and Electro-Voice DL 15X and EVX150-A bass drivers. They also build their own crossovers using Solen capacitors and unusually large inductors for low insertion-loss and DC-tolerant performance. All internal wiring is done with 12-gauge multi-braided copper cable, with connectors being the Swiss-made Neutrik Speak-Ons. Internal tuning is done with precision-density, weather resistant polyurethane foam.

The company are seeking UK distributors for the product. For further details contact Technomad in USA, tel +1 (707) 766 9548.



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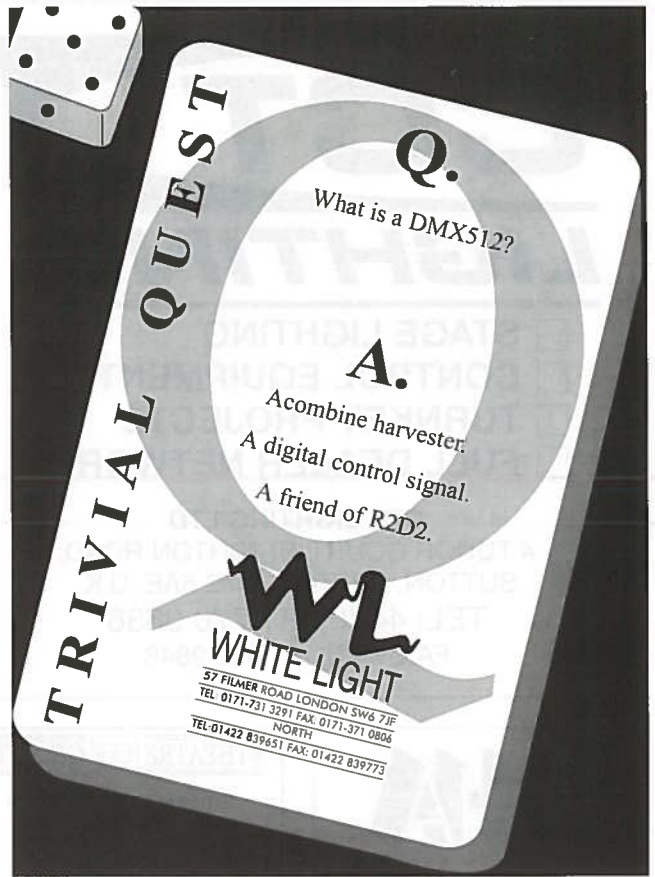
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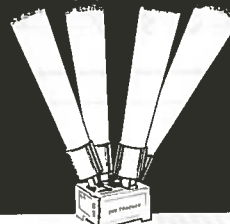


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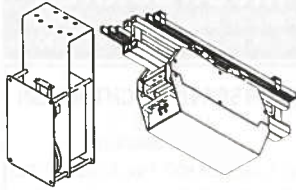
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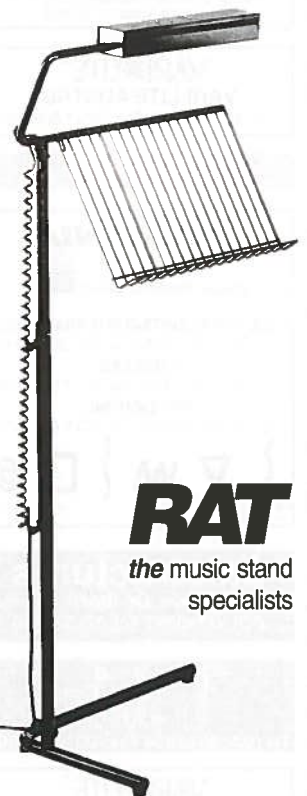
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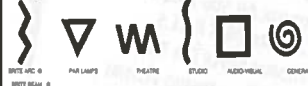
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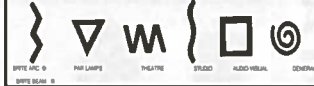


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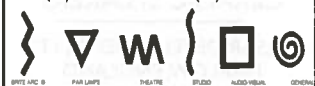


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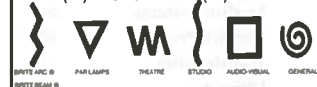
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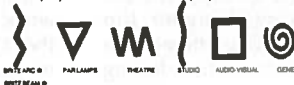


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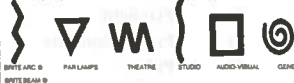
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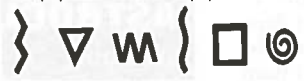
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VIEWPOINT

Ray French looks at The Good, the Bad and the Mediocre

The benefits of renting lighting equipment are obvious: it is the most cost-effective option in a large number of instances, you can select from a wide range of the latest equipment rather than being restricted to what you can afford, the equipment is always in good working order and if something should break you simply - and quickly - get a replacement. In other words, it's the cost and convenience factors that make rental such an attractive option. But how do you choose between a good rental company and a mediocre one?

A short while ago, Starlite Systems Technology conducted some brief research into what lighting designers and production companies really look for in a lighting rental company. Whilst we undertook the research as a marketing exercise to ensure that we were meeting those needs, the responses we received may well prove useful to other lighting designers in selecting a rental company, as well as in knowing what to expect from them.

Whilst the rental companies used by lighting designers and production companies we spoke to are varied, the response to the questions we posed has actually been remarkably similar - if not a little unexpected. I say 'unexpected', because we had always believed that price would be the key factor in choosing a lighting rental company - certainly not the only factor, but the largest consideration. Not so! Nearly all of those questioned in our survey considered a good service and well-maintained equipment to be the most important aspects. Take the view of stage lighting designer James Dann, for instance, who believes: "Service and equipment is just as important as pricing, although it's also necessary to get the right package at the right price."

However, that is not to say that cost isn't a big consideration - I've yet to meet someone who isn't restricted by a budget! But by developing a long-term relationship with a rental company, you should be able to negotiate prices, as lighting designer Jon Pope commented: "As I often work to tight budgets, I want to be able to negotiate and I don't want to go without certain bits of equipment just to keep the price down."

A good service and equipment are the two most important things that make a lighting rental company worth a closer look. But what constitutes good service and equipment?

As far as the latter is concerned, a company should be able to offer you a comprehensive range of equipment that is well-maintained and, therefore, reliable. Judging the equipment is probably the easiest part of selecting a rental company as it is something that you can see immediately by visiting the premises. However, judging the service isn't quite so easy. The LDs



Ray French is a director of Starlite Systems Technology, a company specialising in the design and manufacture of robotic luminaires and lighting design software packages. He trained in electronics at the telecoms division of the Post Office, later becoming a technical director of a sound and lighting hire company. In 1993, with his business partner David Snipp, he bought Starlite Systems Technology, which now has divisions throughout Europe, Japan and the USA on a franchise basis.

in our survey considered a good service to constitute a helpful staff attitude (e.g. offering advice on product selection, getting things done quickly and without a fuss), meeting delivery deadlines and back-up support from well-trained staff. Lighting designer Jim Chapman believes that the advice offered by a company is extremely important when dealing with new products: "If there's new equipment involved, then it is very important that the equipment is properly demonstrated and literature made available, etc. A good lighting rental company will offer this automatically."

Jim, as with most people in our survey, was also keen to point out that back-up support and

the crew are also important aspects. "The quality and condition of the equipment supplied is important when I choose a lighting rental company," explained Jon Pope. "Plus, the back-up - it must be on a 24-hour basis."

Jon also understands the importance of a well-trained crew, especially when operating DMX-controlled systems: "I've found in the past that quite often the crews are trained in how to use the systems, but not in what to do if something goes wrong."

Indeed, much of the focus appears to be placed on the need to have well-trained operators and amenable staff. This was something that was mentioned again and again. James Dann really summed it up: "This industry's not just about equipment, it's also about people. They must be trained well and know how to get the best out of the equipment."

So it's important that a rental company does more than simply supply you with equipment at a reasonable cost; just as vital is the support and service offered by that company after the equipment has left the building. This sets the good companies apart from the mediocre ones.

Obviously, it is difficult to judge the service of a company that you have never used before, but the best (and least painful!) way to go about this is by relying on word of mouth, based on the experience colleagues have had with individual rental companies. If you do not personally know anyone who has used a particular company, ask the company directly for references or look out for stories in the press.

And one final word. Don't automatically assume that the bigger the company, the better the service. As Jon Pope states: "The bigger the company, the bigger the chance of missing attention to detail, especially in the quality of the equipment being supplied. Also, bigger companies can sometimes be less flexible."

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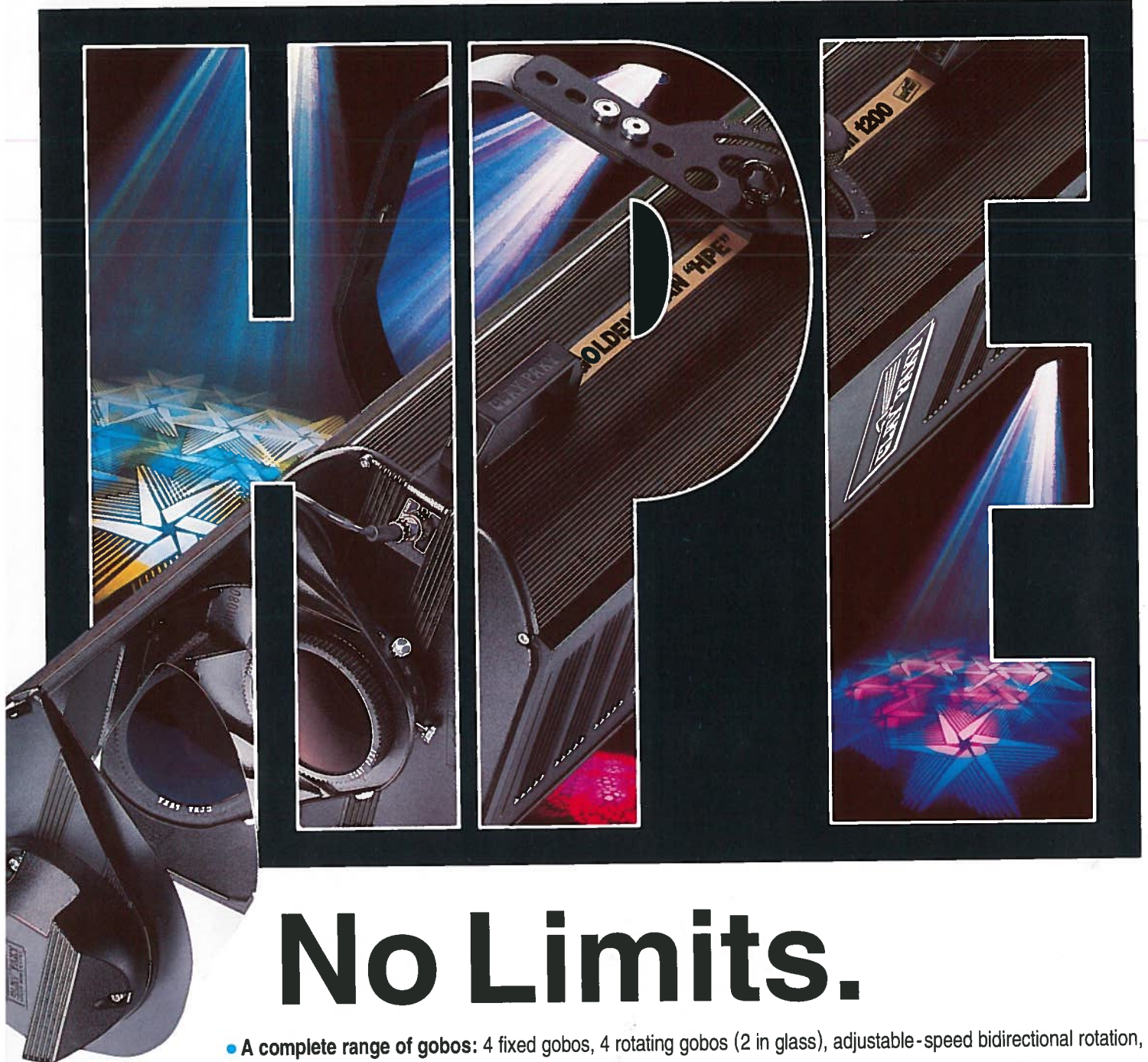
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