

# LIGHTING+SOUND *International*

THE ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY MONTHLY



TORVILL AND DEAN'S ICE ADVENTURES

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- Bradford's Playhouse re-emerges as the Priestley Arts Centre
- Vari\*Lites in Their Eyes at Granada Studios
- Spectacular Projection Effects for Torvill & Dean
- Lottery Funding: the Future of the Arts?
- Getting Sirius with Lighting Control Manufacturer Zero 88
- On Tour with Supergrass and Barry Manilow

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**FEBRUARY 1998**

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FEBRUARY 1998

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**Editor:** Ruth Rossington  
**Deputy Editor:** Lee Baldock  
**Associate Editor:** Tony Gottelier  
**Advertisement Manager:** Barry Howse  
**Production Manager:** Nicola Evenden  
**Internet/Editorial:** Jo Boyd  
**Production/Subscriptions:** Sheila Bartholomew  
**Advertising Co-ordinator:** Jane Cockburn

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Telephone: (01323) 642639 Fax: (01323) 646905 Internet: <http://www.plasa.org.uk/> E-Mail: [info@plasa.org.uk](mailto:info@plasa.org.uk)  
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# LIGHTING+SOUND International News

## Heads Roll at Martin Professional HQ, Denmark

Surprise changes in the senior management at Martin Professional last month saw both the sales director, Karl Kristian Bro, and the founder of the Martin Group, Peter Johansen, resign from the company in quick succession.

Only a few days previous to the developments, it had become known that Poul Dalsgaard, the marketing manager and two of his staff were also to leave, though this decision has subsequently been reversed following the changed circumstances.

Johansen, who had built up the company from scratch with spectacular success, eventually taking it public in 1995, had been under considerable pressure in recent months from the Danish media about his management style and over what was seen as less than definitive information given to shareholders. (See also No Comment L+SI Oct 1997 and Jan 1998).

A recent profits warning from Martin USA only served to make matters worse. Apparently, this culminated in an exposé about the Group on Danish television over the weekend immediately following Bro's resignation, though these two events seem to be unconnected. The reason for Bro's departure was given officially as "disagreements on the management policies of the Martin Group".

Consequently, and following a prior succession of top level departures from the Group, it was apparently felt by ex-Danish Premier and Martin chairman, Poul Schlüter, that it was in the shareholder's best interests to recommend to Peter Johansen that he move away from the spotlight. His involvement with the company will continue, however, in a new capacity as consultant.

The day-to-day management of the Group will now be provided by Lars Dige, the finance director, and Torben Johansen, the production

director, who are appointed joint chief executive directors. Torben Johansen is Peter's younger brother who, in the past six years, has been instrumental in creating Martin's state-of-the-art factory in Friederikshaven. Pio Nahum, well known when he was previously marketing director of Clay Paky, will assume the full responsibilities of sales director, and Finn Kallestrup who has been in charge of R&D at Martin from its inception, is recognised as director of R&D.

In a formal statement, Poul Schlüter told L+SI: "No one with the least bit of insight can doubt Peter Johansen's fundamental importance to the Group. He is its founder and has played an absolutely key role in its development to date. I am very impressed with the fact that he now acknowledges that a new management style is needed."

Meanwhile, Peter Johansen has issued the following response to the move: "Of course it was a difficult decision to make, but I accept that there was no other solution. I had become synonymous with the Martin Group, no one was taking any notice of our highly competent employees or of our fantastic products. Moreover, I now realise that I am hardly the best man to apply the style of management required to run a large, modern business."

The above announcement, however, did not put an end to developments at Martin. Within days it was also announced that Harvey Hazlewood, who appeared as recently as the PLASA Show in September 97 as the new CEO of Martin USA, had left the subsidiary.

For the time being, his former role will be shared by Troels Volver, an old Martin hand recently appointed vice-president after moving from the Singapore affiliate, and by Woody Smith, chief operating officer and Karsten Petersen, chief financial officer.

## Pilbrow Platform



Richard Pilbrow is joined by lighting designers Mark Jonathan (left) and Rick Fisher (right).

The last meeting of the Association of Lighting Designers' was held at the Royal National Theatre to run alongside Richard Pilbrow's Platform performance to launch his new book, *Stage Lighting Design: The Art, The Craft, The Life*.

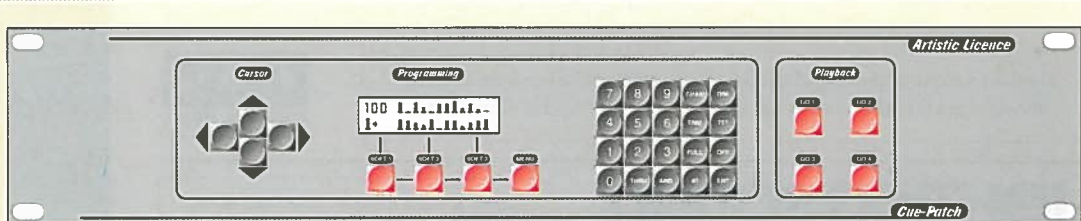
In an informal setting and with a large audience from all sectors of the industry, head of lighting at the National Theatre, Mark Jonathan, talked with Pilbrow about his life in this industry, before moving on to invite questions from the audience.

Following the Platform, the ALD then hosted a reception for its members where Pilbrow signed copies of his book. The event was sponsored by Vari-Lite and Theatre Projects.

## W-ETF Web Calendar

PLASA, ESTA and the VPLT, members of the World Entertainment Technology Federation (World-ETF), have announced the arrival of the World-ETF Trade Show Calendar on the World Wide Web. Hosted on the PLASA Web site, the World-ETF pages provide a fast and easy reference for the premier trade events taking place around the world over the forthcoming year. The new Web site can be accessed on <http://www.plasa.org.uk/worldetf.htm>.

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## Vertigo Transform Royal Festival Hall

Vertigo Rigging were instrumental in the radical transformation of the Royal Festival Hall to stage the Royal Ballet's Christmas season.

The RFH has staged successful summer and Christmas ballet seasons for the last 40 years, particularly the English National Ballet. However this year, the currently itinerant Royal Ballet plumped for the Royal Festival Hall as the ideal venue in which to stage their mercurial productions of *Les Patineurs*, *The Tales of Beatrix Potter*, *Peter and The Wolf* and *Cinderella*.

The Royal Ballet production required many things the Festival Hall doesn't possess - a theatre venue complete with a 12 x 12m stage area, two prosceniums, a scenery flying system, motorised LX bars to accommodate the huge lighting rig that the ballet were importing and an orchestra pit to house 85 musicians. The RFH is also a Grade 1 Listed Building, which only added to the challenge.

To create the required performance space for the dancers, the stage was elevated to a 7ft high position jutting out into what would normally be the auditorium with several rows of seating removed. An additional Steeldeck thrust was added to provide a further eight feet of depth - utilised for the orchestra pit. To achieve maximum headroom, the RFH's concertina-like wooden acoustic canopy had to be raised at the outset - a delicate and exacting job for the Vertigo team - to gain a vital extra three metres of height.

Vertigo's Ken Mehmed pre-rigged the canopy at 6am on the Thursday morning. To make the experience as gentle as possible, they used manual hand winches (BB's) as opposed to motors. He then returned to Vertigo's warehouse to complete fabrication of the scenery flying system and motorised LX bars and to load the trucks. Once the canopy was raised and deeded off on the Thursday night, full on rigging began, starting with construction of the 20m x 11m trussing mother grid, complete with its own fly gallery.



By 4.30am Friday morning, the grid was floating from its 18 points, concealed way up in the roof void, which had been pre-rigged by Vertigo the previous weekend. Then the various tab tracks, LX bars and hemp lines started to be attached. With two prosceniums, over 200m of tab track in nine sections, 10 hemp sets and 10 motorised LX bars, space on the mother grid is tight! Vertigo custom-designed and fabricated a horizontal flying system for the LX bars as there wasn't the space for them to operate on the more conventional vertical plane.

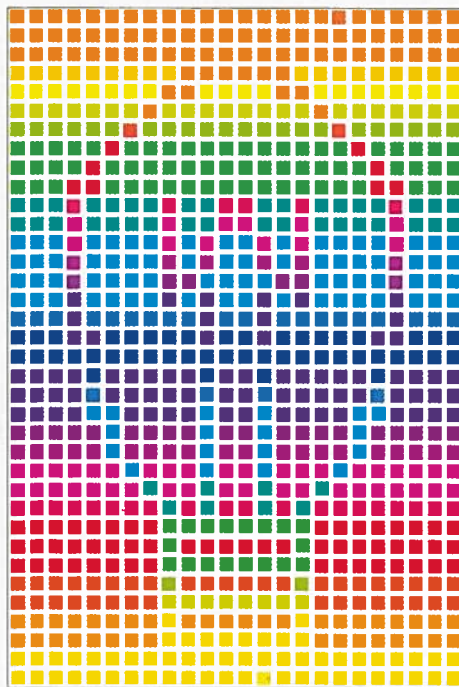
The Royal Ballet crew then came in and started hanging their various scenic cloths and drapes. This section of the rigging process proved one of the most complicated and protracted elements of the project.

From then on, it was a gruelling slog for all concerned - with very little sleep and just grim determination to keep all inspired! Once the

mother grid was ready and flown out to height (clearance from the bottom edge of the trussing being 9.2m), the two fly floors either side of stage were flown into place. These were constructed from Vertigo's catwalk system and hung below the mother grid.

Vertigo also flew two front-of-house advanced lighting trusses in the auditorium - which normally features no front lighting at all! Monday afternoon saw the transformation complete. A massive stage complete with two prosceniums (one was removed for a changeover between Ballet productions) and a rampant Royal Ballet crest plus a full set with all signs of rigging, metalwork and grief artfully concealed was ready for dress rehearsals.

The show were a great commercial and critical success. The season sold out and the critics applauded the more intimate and accessible staging, settings and surroundings of the Festival Hall.



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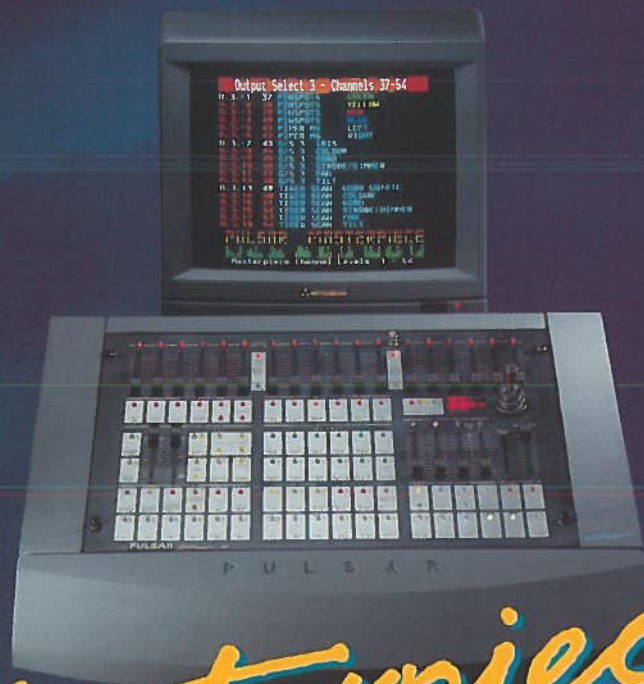
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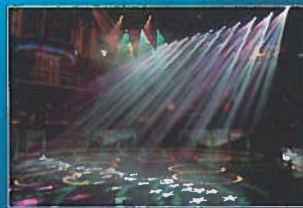
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## Au Revoir, Not Goodbye



Michael Hall (right) with Stan Miller, president of Rosco Laboratories Inc (left), Val Hall (centre left) and Joanna Shapley of Roscolab.

At the end of December one of the lighting industry's leading figures took a step closer to retirement, when Michael Hall, vice-president of Roscolab's European operations and managing director of Roscolab Limited, stepped down to take on a part-time consultancy role for the company. Hall has been part of the industry since 1955 and it was in 1975, when he was involved in the development of light sources for the stage and studio lamp division of GEC, that Stan Miller, president of Rosco Laboratories Inc, convinced him to start up its UK operation. His knowledge of the industry, together with his drive and enthusiasm, were the key factors in establishing Rosco's European operation.

To mark the occasion, a celebration took place on January 17th in London which was attended by over 90 friends, customers and colleagues past and present. Stan Miller, president of Rosco Laboratories Inc, gave a lighthearted and irreverent review of Michael and Roscolab's joint history. Among the several guests who paid honour to Michael's many qualities, both as a friend and a colleague, were Margie Heymann, manager of Rosco's Italian office, Carol Salathiel his first employee at Roscolab and wit and bon viveur John Watt of the STLD (and L+S).

Another speaker was Kees Frijters, who, as part of the management changes following Michael's

departure, takes over as vice-president of Rosco Laboratories' European operation. Frijters joined the company as European development manager some four years ago, although his connections go back to 1986 when he became a Rosco dealer.

Anna Western, who has been with the company since 1992, more recently as sales manager, takes on the role of director of sales and Miguel Najur, who joined in 1991 as European financial controller, becomes finance director, with Janice Hopson appointed general manager.

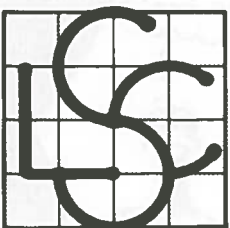
Michael Hall remains on the board of Roscolab and will continue to assist the company on a consultancy basis, so will not be losing touch with his many colleagues in the industry.

### AES UK Conference

The Audio Engineering Society are running a two day conference in London next month, titled 'Microphones and Loudspeakers - the Ins and Outs of Audio'. Three sessions per day will be presented and chaired by leading industry experts.

The conference will take place at Church House, Westminster, from 16th - 17th March. For further information, telephone (01628) 663725.

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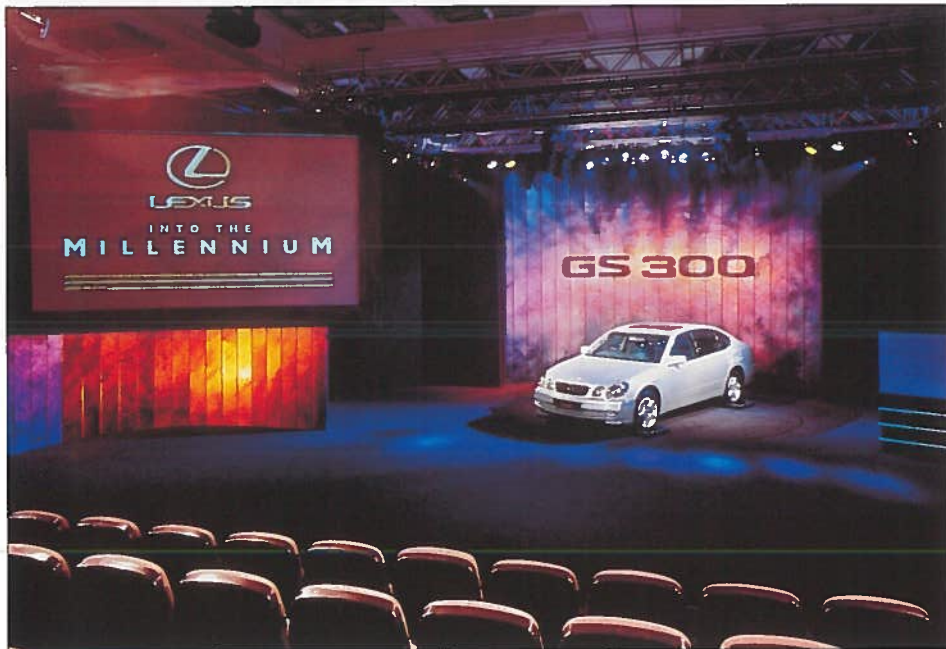
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## Strand Controls Millennium Centre



The Millennium Conference Centre opened last September in South Kensington, London, adjacent to the Millennium Gloucester Hotel. The complex extends over two levels, with the main conference room, divisible in two, seating up to 500 delegates and the upper level capable of being divided into a maximum of 10 completely separate meeting rooms.

The house lighting was designed by LDP and is managed by Strand Premiere proprietary architectural control systems and a total of 144 LD90 dimmers. Two Premiere systems were required to control the 251 house light circuits, while LD90 contactor blocks were used to control circuits which have discharge lamp fittings. The technical manager accesses both systems from a PC.

An AMX system was installed as part of the audio visual systems and a Northern Light custom interface enables the recalling of presets and combining and splitting of the rooms is carried out via the AMX touchscreens.

Two Strand GSX control consoles are provided and can be patched to the dimmer racks so that the number of dimmers available to each desk can be adjusted to suit the requirements of the conference. Via a DMX distribution system, the consoles can also be used to control scrollers and moving lights.

## New Centre for LSD

Light & Sound Design has established a new, central location for its London office. The Euston office will be a dedicated design and sales centre, while all lighting equipment will be concentrated at the company's Birmingham base.

LSD's MD Dave Keighley said of the new site: "The express need for a design and sales centre was the main stimulus to establishing a presence in the capital. Clients will now find the new facility projects a very distinctive style - one that reflects the manner in which LSD is positioning itself for the new millennium."

The new office can be contacted on 0171-388 1999.

## TP Moves Out with the Opera

Theatre Projects has supplied lighting for The Royal Opera House's first major performance outside its residence, as well as supplying lighting and rigging for *Evita* in Oslo.

For the ROH's production of *Othello*, staged at The Royal Albert Hall, Theatre Projects provided, installed and operated a large lighting system. The rig consisted of a Vari\*Lite automated lighting system including 16 VL6 spot luminaires and 10 VL5B wash luminaires controlled via an Artisan control console which also controlled 10 High End Studio Colors via a UDM module. The ROH's Galaxy control console was used to control the conventional system consisting of 50 Source 4s, eight DHA Digital Light Curtains and 300 other conventional lights. The lighting designer was Howard Harrison.

In Oslo, Theatre Projects supplied the lighting equipment and rigging system for a month's residency at the Spektrum for Nick Grace's production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita*. Theatre Projects supplied both Vari\*Lite automated lighting and conventional lighting to a design by Howard Eaton, including 17 VL6 spot luminaires and Source 4s. It also supplied a full rigging system comprising 12 trusses to support the set, drapes and lighting.

Following the three week run of *Evita*, The Russian State Ballet moved into The Spektrum for which Theatre Projects provided a smaller system to the design of Pete Lambert.

## CM Acquires Univeyor

Columbus McKinnon Corporation has purchased all of the outstanding stock of Univeyor A/S of Denmark, a supplier of turnkey integrated material handling systems. Univeyor, headquartered in Arden, Denmark, designs and manufactures systems for material handling applications in a variety of industries. The company has a reputation for high-quality solutions and was one of the first companies within its industry to gain ISO certification.

Columbus McKinnon (CM) will pay DKK 110 million (\$16.5 million), in cash and assumed debt. Univeyor A/S has projected revenues of approximately DKK 165 million (\$25 million) for its current fiscal year.



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## NEWS Shorts

**Transtech** has opened a new production facility in Büchlberg, at the edge of the Bavarian forest in Germany, adding 1,600sq.m of space to the existing facility. The site is used for the production of the company's complete lighting and multi-media control systems for TV studios and theatres.

**ETC Europe** has announced the appointment of new distributors for Holland and Norway. The new year saw the entrance of Flashlight into the ETC fold as the company's sole distributor in Holland whilst this month sees Artlight A/S take on responsibility for Norway.

The Barbican foyer was given a new look for Christmas with the arrival of 300sq.ft of **Maltbury's** Metrodeck, enabling the venue to create an additional performance area in the foyer. The Metrodeck units will be used to form a large central stage for musical works and events such as the annual World of Music and Dance Festival (WOMAD).

## Sennheiser Initiatives



L-R: Sennheiser's Paul Whiting, Chris Beech and LIPA chief executive Mark Featherstone-Witty.

Sennheiser has founded a student Scholarship Scheme at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. The company's managing director, Paul Whiting, presented the first scholarship award to Chris Beech, studying for a BA Degree in Sound Technology. Eventually, three sound technology degree course students will attend the Institute under Sennheiser's patronage at any one time. Whiting commented: "Training is one of the most critical assets that the professional sound industry has to rely upon . . . companies such as Sennheiser who are heavily committed to the industry should play a part in that process."

Sennheiser also recently presented a £10,000 cheque to Elton John, in support of the Elton John AIDS Foundation. The presentation was made to Elton John following his two sell-out dates at Wembley Arena. Sennheiser were an official sponsor of the Big Picture tour, supplying mics and RF equipment to the band.

## Gearhouse March On

Gearhouse Group Plc has announced the acquisition of the entire common stock of Allied Audio Services based in Nashville, USA, for a total consideration of \$2,050,000, settled by the issue of 253,721 new ordinary shares and \$500,000 in cash.

Stephen Lakin, chief executive of Gearhouse told L+SI: "This acquisition is an important part in the consolidation of the North American presence in our core business."

## VL Buy Into Belgium

Vari-Lite International has agreed to acquire, subject to conditions precedent, VLB and EML, the Belgium-based lighting and sound equipment rental companies, from D&D Entertainment Group.

VLB is the exclusive distributor of Vari\*Lite automated lighting systems in Belgium, and EML is one of Belgium's leading lighting and sound rental companies. The acquired companies will be integrated under the Vari-Lite Production Services (VLPS) name and will provide comprehensive entertainment products and services for Belgium's TV, theatre, touring and corporate events markets.

Rusty Brutsché, chairman of Vari-Lite International, told L+SI: "This transaction is a clear illustration of Vari-Lite's strategy to provide our clients around the world with one source for automated and conventional lighting and sound systems. This will create our first VLPS office in Europe. The concept is already receiving an enthusiastic response in North America."



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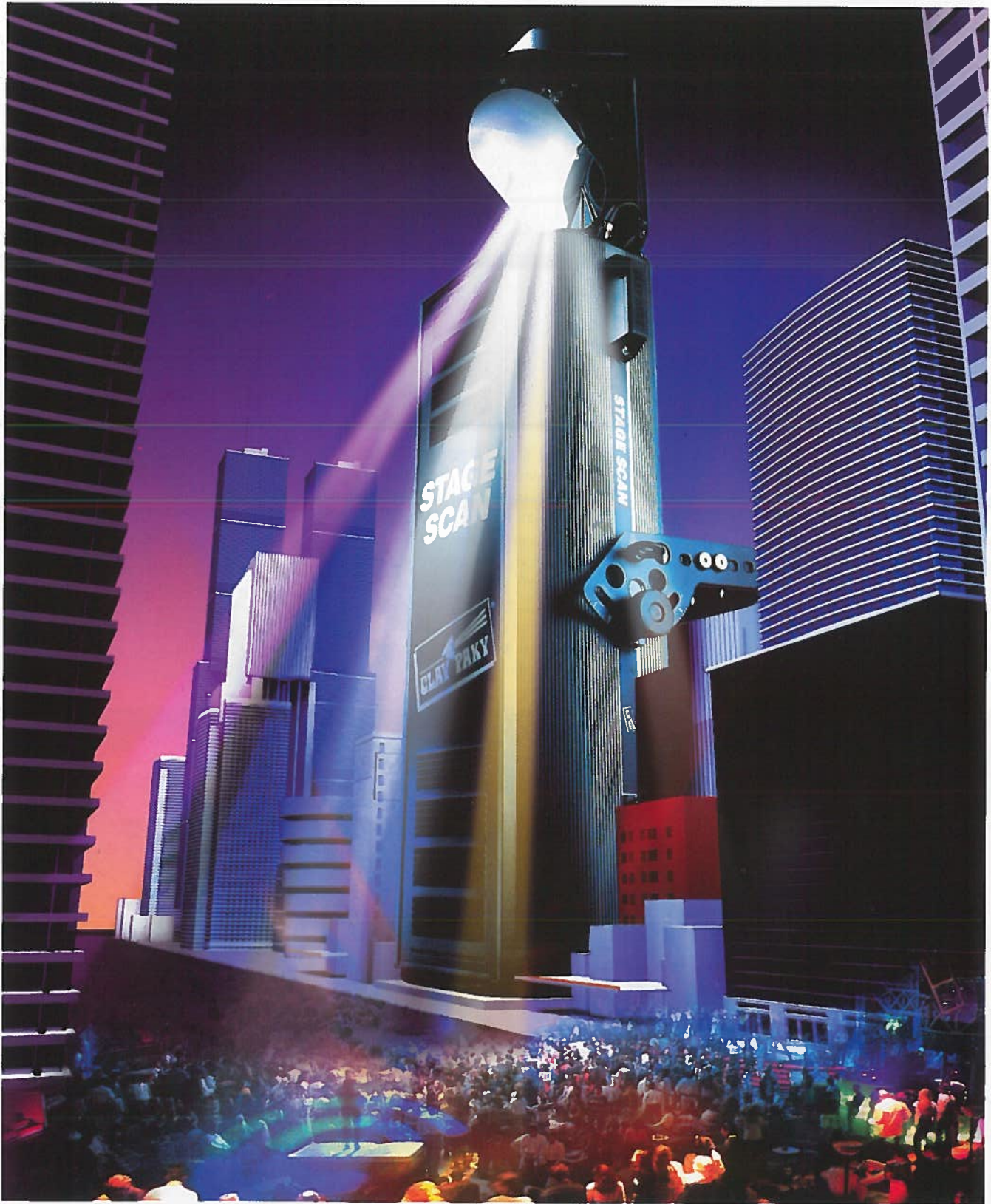
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## NEWS Shorts

**British Harlequin**, manufacturers of portable and permanent performing arts floors, moved its sales office at the beginning of January this year from Farningham, to new premises in Tonbridge, Kent. The new address is: Bankside House, Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1SJ, tel: (01732) 367666 fax: (01732) 367755.

**Light & Sound Design** have welcomed Cameleon Lighting, France to their growing network of Icon dealers. Cameleon are located in the district of Montreuil, Paris, and can be contacted on +33 1 48 70 70 70.

**Cox Audio Engineering** of Sun Valley, California, have sold an L-Acoustics V-DOSC speaker system to Electrotec Productions, a PA rental company with facilities in California and Tennessee as well as Cambridge, England. It is the first time that Electrotec have owned a system not of their own proprietary design.

## STLD Catch up with Phil Collins



The Society of Television Lighting Directors (STLD) enjoyed a successful visit to Earls Court in the run-up to Christmas for a behind-the-scenes tour of the Phil Collins concert. The visit, which was a prelude to their Annual General Meeting, attracted a large turn-out and members were bussed from Vari-Lite's HQ in Greenford to Earls Court arena where stage manager Howard Hopkins gave them a guided tour of the in-the-round set. Lighting designer Patrick Woodroffe (pictured second from right) then took members through the lighting design for the tour.

## New Production in Gulf

A unique production facility in the Gulf has been formed by Definitive Laser Company (DLC) and Waves Studio. In a 42,000sq.ft complex, Waves' state-of-the-art video studio is complemented by a large stock of lighting, sound and special effects equipment supplied by DLC. The company are also agents for the Irideon range of products and as a result of Jonathan Spiers award-winning lighting scheme, have recently taken delivery of 100 AR500 units for the Chicago Beach Resort Project. The first interior AR5 installation in the region has also just been completed for the new cinema chain in Sharjah.

## Expo 98

Glasgow-based design company NVA has been appointed to produce the National Day For Britain at Expo 98 in Lisbon. On Sunday 28th June, the company will present a diverse programme of events, the highlights of which will include a Royal Gala and a Midsummer Fire Festival, while the climax to the day will be provided by Blast Off, a large-scale club event for Lisbon's video stadium featuring the best of Britain's club culture.

Over half the world's nations - 145 in total - will be presenting their own National Days at Expo 98, and NVA see the event as an opportunity for a bold and provocative representation of British culture and style.



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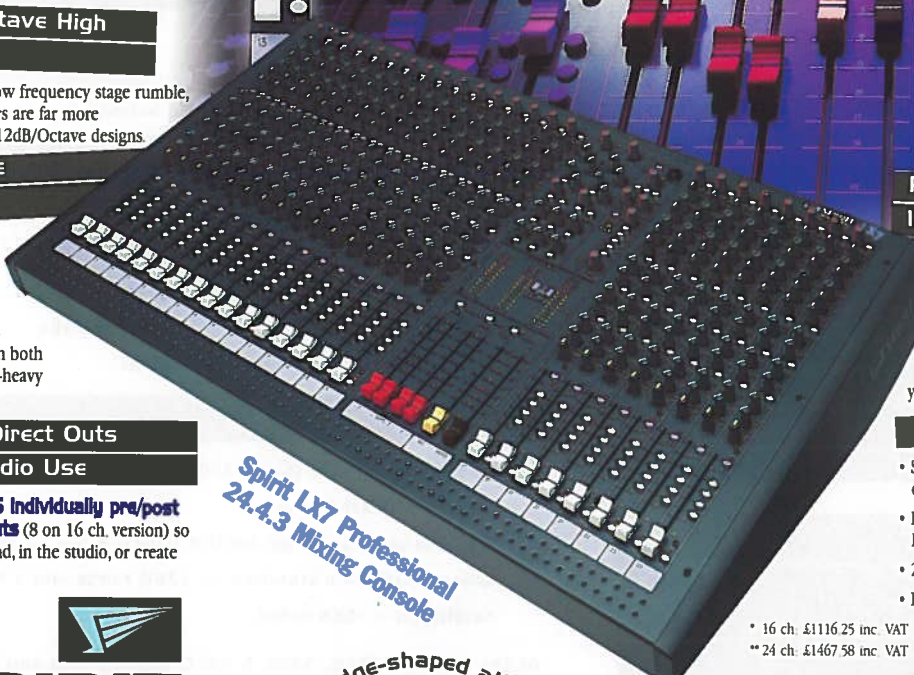
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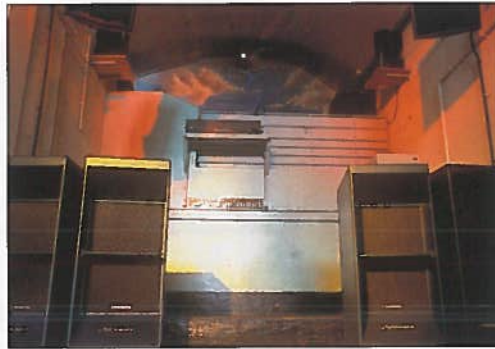
## NEWS Shorts

Following the highly successful Megahertz 97 exhibition in Beirut, Lebanon, **Martin Professional** has set up Martin Middle East, in collaboration with long-established distributor AMAC.

An international workshop of Stage (Theatre) Technology Schools will take place in Amsterdam from April 19th - 29th. The workshops are organised by **Opleiding Theatertechniek** (Theatre Technology School). Participants include The Central School for Speech and Drama from London, and l'Ecole National Supérieur des Arts et Techniques du Theatre from Paris. Tel: +31 20 527 7620.

UK distribution company **Batmink Ltd** has signed an exclusive distribution deal with American DJ of Los Angeles. Currently, the audio range comprises four mixers aimed at DJ and club installations. All the mixers feature beat indicators, tone controls on all channels and smooth Feather Faders.

## Zap and Turbo



Marquee Audio have installed a new Turbosound Floodlight sound system at the Zap Club in Brighton. Marquee were called upon when the club's new owners, Simon Kirby and Martin Webb, approached MD Spencer Brooks at the PLASA Show last year.

Brooks recalls: "They simply said that they wanted the best sound system in the south and I considered Turbosound to be the best option. They knew they had to spend serious money and our brief was to set it up properly as a five-way system."

And serious money it was indeed, with the Turbo system as the central cog in a £100,000 audio package. Marquee installed six TFL-760H skeletons, eight TSW-718 bass bins and a pair of TSW-124 subs. Also recommended were a pair of BSS Audio FDS-355 Omnidrive Compacts and seven QSC Powerlight amplifiers.

One of the first major tests for the system was the New Year's Eve event, headlined 'The Turbosound Ball'.

## Unusual Bond Stunt

Unusual Rigging has designed and supplied a specialist high speed winch system to facilitate a stunt in which James Bond, in *Tomorrow Never Dies*, descends 11 storeys at four metres per second, down the outside of a tower block.

Unusual Rigging were working at 270ft off a high rise building in Bangkok, and had to rig the fall - at a speed which approaches free-fall velocity. To minimise the risk of the cable snagging at high speeds, a pinch roller mechanism was developed that literally pulled the wire off the drum as fast as the fall dictated.

The flywheel driven-mechanism was conceived and fabricated in-house by Unusual Manufacturing, Unusual Rigging's sister company. The whole system, including two winches, two pinch roller mechanisms, plus controlled deceleration braking, were all digitally sync locked together by Unusual's processor-driven controller to make the fall appear natural.

## Turbosound Carries Torch

A Turbosound HiLight system has been specified and installed into a new nightclub in Worcester. The system at Torch was chosen by Dave Bearman and Chris Gunton of CGA, who placed an order with Turbosound dealers, Lightfactor. "We wanted to maintain continuity with Turbosound," explained Lightfactor's Dick Carrier, "and have supplied six Impact 80s and two Impact 50s."

As with the four THL-811s and two THL-828 subs, processed through an LMS-680 which adorn the main dance room, the system is driven by QSC amplification. Four further Impact 80s are used for off-dancefloor infills in the main room.



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## NEWS Shorts

**Laser Grafix** have just secured the contract to supply Lasers for Performing Arts Management Firework and Laser Symphony Concerts throughout the year at a number of stately homes across the country.

Loudspeaker cabinet manufacturer **Logic System Pro Audio** recently supplied Welsh PA hire and installation company **AB Acoustics** with eight LS152 cabinets and four CS1290B boxes from the company's brand new CS1290 range for installation into new Cardiff venue, Club Wow.

**Oasis Sound & Lighting** have installed a Cerwin Vega! system into the new Powerhouse nightclub in Bristol's city centre. Four Cerwin Vega! Intense T36 subs were added to the original spec of ProStax PS15s and PS215B subs. These are configured in two stacks, each comprising two PS15s, two T36s and a 215B per side, with the PS15s flown from the rig.

## Light & Sound Shanghai - A First Venture in China

PLASA and P&O Events' first international venture, Light & Sound Shanghai is a ground-breaking event in more than one way. The exhibition which will take place at the Shanghai Intex Centre, China, from 14 to 16 April 1998, is at the forefront of trade missions to the world's fastest growing economy.

Many of the industry's leading manufacturers are making the journey over to China for the first time to meet direct with their clients, rather than dealing with customers via distributors which has been the usual business practice for westerners in China to date. AC Lighting Ltd, Audio Design Services Ltd, Celestion International Ltd, Coemar SpA Italy, LMP Lichttechnik (Germany), Pulsar Light of Cambridge Ltd and Tannoy Ltd are among just some of the prominent names featured. Another first will be the inclusion of an extensive seminar programme co-sponsored by the China National Committee of Light Industry, to which exhibitors are being invited to participate in a live stage environment, providing an interactive forum for visitors to this new event.

Among other pioneering efforts associated with Light & Sound Shanghai is the DTI sponsorship secured by



PLASA and P&O Events, in tandem with the DTI, ran a seminar at Earls Court to advise exhibitors on how to do business in China.

PLASA which is already assisting many UK companies by providing considerable support, such as grants for stands and travel, equipment transportation and the service of interpreters.

During the show there will be various official functions and cultural venue visits laid on for exhibitors. The British Consulate are taking the initiative by hosting a drinks reception for exhibitors, while PLASA, P&O Events and ACE Lighting of Hong Kong are spearheading a visit to a newly-constructed TV station for a special dinner.

For further details contact Marcus Bernie at P&O Events on 0171-370 8231.





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

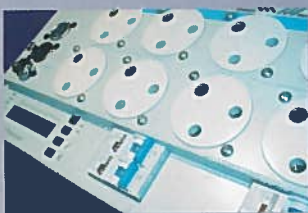
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## Industry People on the Move

Reading-based Glantre Engineering has been fishing for talent in the theatre world, with the appointment of new engineer, **Paul Franklin**. Franklin joins Glantre from The Old Vic Theatre, where he had combined the role of chief electrician and production electrician since 1990. Franklin is no stranger to complex projects; with the resident Peter Hall Company at the Old Vic, he mounted 13 shows in 10 months.

PCM, European importers and distributors of CM Lodestar hoists, have appointed **Chris Jolley** to their sales team. Jolley worked in the engineering industry for many years and joined PCM in 1994 as works manager. He has extensive experience of hoist and lifting equipment, and has worked constantly with Lodestar motors since being at PCM. His move to the office at the end of 1997 will further strengthen the already solid team headed by John Jones.

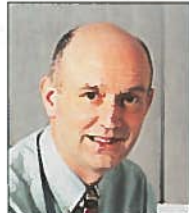
Following **Andy Trevett's** departure from Doughty, **Julian Chiverton** will assume the post of sales manager. Chiverton, who joined the company in 1996 as UK account executive, will supervise all existing accounts while also actively investigating new business opportunities. Andy Trevett, meanwhile, has left the company to pursue other interests within the industry.

Columbus McKinnon have announced management and board changes. **Tim Tevens**, chief operating officer, has been elected president and a member of the board of directors, and retains his COO responsibility. **Herb Ladds** was elected chairman of the board following **Ed Duffy's** retirement. Ladds retains his responsibilities as chief executive officer until his planned retirement later this year, when Tevens will become the CEO.

P&O Events has appointed **James Brooks-Ward** to the board of directors. Brooks-Ward joined P&O Events in 1988, and is currently responsible for the direction of three shows in the entertainment technology sector. As well as the PLASA Light & Sound Show, he is also responsible for dj Culture and PLASA Presents Light & Sound Shanghai, which will be held in China in April 1998.



**Chris Jolley.**



**Riach Ryder.**



**Tim Adams.**

**Riach Ryder** is The NEC Group's new general manager of engineering and technical services. He will be responsible for the provision and implementation of all engineering services across its five venues - National Exhibition Centre, NEC Arena, International Convention Centre, Symphony Hall and National Indoor Arena.

To service an influx of new accounts, industry PR specialist, Jerry Gilbert Publicity, has appointed **Tim Adams** as an account manager, with effect from the beginning of February. Adams has been PR manager at Soundcraft for the past 18 months, and the move is designed to enable JGP to strengthen its position and maintain closer client contact following the addition of Strand Lighting and Bose UK to its portfolio.

Star Hire have appointed **Tony Beresford** as marketing manager. As part of the company's current expansion strategy, Beresford will focus on increasing awareness of Star Hire's core activities through a schedule of structured marketing initiatives.

Navigator Systems has employed two further specialists to help with customer support. **Ruth Simister** has come to Navigator Systems from Metro Video. She will be undertaking a training and development role for Hire Track users. **Paul Toms** joins Navigator from Hackney Festival Support and he will be involved with special requirements for Hire Track users.

Crown International has appointed **Fred Higgenbottom** as senior vice-president and general manager of Crown Audio, while **Mick Whelan** has been promoted to the newly-created position of vice-president of marketing and sales for Crown Audio. Higgenbottom was most recently vice president and general manager of Hasbro Inc.

Following the decision to distribute their range direct from the factory, Fane Acoustics has appointed **Neville Raine** as sales manager, responsible for developing both the UK and overseas markets.

**David Bearman** has been appointed to the position of marketing manager for the UK architectural acoustics division of Peavey Electronics.

## Controlite Moving Head Systems

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- movement pan 355°/tilt 270°
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- hot restrike
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- motorized focus
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- dimmer iris 0-100 %
- beam iris
- shutter blackout/strobe effect
- DMX512/12 channels
- weight 36 kg



### Washlight

- movement pan 340°/tilt 270°
- optics elliptical reflector
- dichroic YMC colour mixing
- motorized focus
- beam angle 9°-36°
- dimmer 0-100 %



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- electronic dimmer
- DMX512/7 channels
- weight 18 kg

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- hot restrike
- mechanical dimmer
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## NEWS Shorts

For Central China Television's live broadcast light entertainment show marking the turn of the Chinese New Year, **Total Fabrications** were chosen to supply a ground support grid via their Hong Kong distributor Macostar. An eight tower system, manufactured from 70 sections of Fold Flat truss, was specified, supported by TFL's 18" Towers and supplied complete with Verlinde hoists and an eight way Control system.

**Navigator Systems'** Roadshow to Edinburgh proved a great success in enabling local companies to view Hire Track software and discuss individual requirements. The company also provided MIS training to existing Hire Track users.

**Richmond Sound Design Ltd.** announced the wrap-up last week of a five-day course in show control techniques, presented by RSD general manager Ken Bell at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts (HKAPA).

## BCS India in New Delhi



L-R: **Scott Callis (Mad Lighting), Derrick Saunders (Pulsar), David Bissett-Powell (Martin Audio), Arun Kalra and Ashish Sharma (RK International), Prem Behl (Exhibition India), Albert Wong (Hawko) and Damon Crisp (Lamba).**

BCS (Broadcast, Cable and Satellite) India was held in December at the Pragati Maidan exhibition complex in New Delhi. A number of PLASA member companies - Allen & Heath, Artistic Licence, Avolites, COEF, DHA Lighting, Electrosonic, Ludwig Pani, Laser Creations, Le Maitre, Lite Structures, NJD Electronics, Next Two, Optikinetics, Pulsar, Rosco, ShowCAD, Slick Systems, Soundcraft, Theatre Projects, Total Fabrications, Turbosound and Zero 88 - all took advantage of a scheme to have their brochures displayed on the PLASA stand at the show.

The entertainment technology industry is in its infancy in India - while event promoters and venue owners are aware of the products on the international market, they have very little idea of how to gain access to them.

## Backstage Skills Workshop

Opportunities for anyone in the East Midlands to develop their technical theatre skills are being offered by Mercia Arts, a Leicestershire-based arts management organisation, through training workshops to be held in the area.

A course entitled 'Lighting The Stage' - a basic lighting workshop will run at The Broomhouse Arts Centre in Burton-upon-Trent on Saturday 14th March. The technical and artistic aspects of stage lighting are covered, with opportunities to handle and work with equipment, which will include computerised control systems. The courses are being sponsored by theatre equipment manufacturers Bridon Theatre & Stage, Harkness Hall, Instant Zip-Up, Lee Filters and Zero 88.

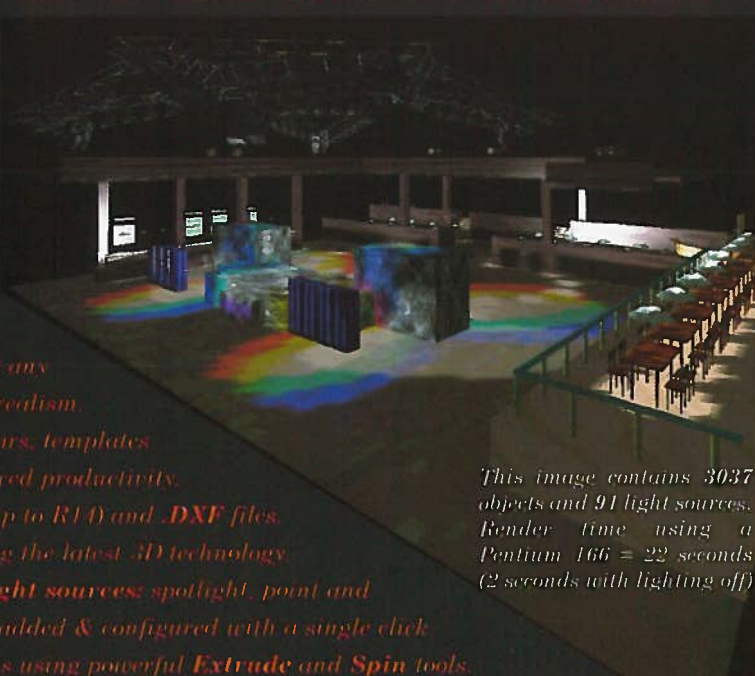
Further information is available from Mercia Arts on (01530) 262272.

## OWL Soars into Top 100

OWL Video Systems Ltd has been recognised as one of Britain's fastest growing private companies. OWL was included in the Fast Track 100 list of top companies for compound growth, compiled under the sponsorship of Virgin Atlantic and The Sunday Times. The Fast Track 100 was researched by Oxford academic, Dr. Hamish Stevenson, who examined the performance of thousands of unquoted companies over the three years from 1993 to 1996. The final list of the top 100 identifies a group of businesses which, on average, have almost doubled in size every year during the period researched. The top 100 companies, including OWL, were recently announced in the Sunday Times.

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## 15 Years of Stage Light Design



Nortel product launch at Nortel HQ, London, July 1997. Show production by Enigma Design. Lighting Design by Alastair Crooks.

London-based Stage Light Design celebrate their 15th birthday this year. The company is run by lighting designer John Rinaldi who started his first lighting rental company when at school, and has always retained an active hand in designing rigs and shows for numerous situations. Throughout the eighties, Stage Light Design was associated with chart-topping acts like Everything But the Girl and Lloyd Cole and The Commotions, plus other bands including Spear of Destiny, The March Violets and Play Dead.

For the last 10 years, the company has worked extensively in the conference, exhibition, trade show, industrial presentation and corporate hospitality markets. Their portfolio of high profile clients includes, Sky TV, Sony Broadcast & Professional Europe, IBM, Thomas Cook, Avid Technology, Siemens, BMW Motorcycles, Nortel and many others.

Stage Light Design's equipment inventory now includes a huge variety of luminaires and control systems to suit all situations - all maintained to conference standards! In addition to the standard stock of conventional lanterns (Pars, Profiles, Fresnels, etc), there are hundreds of low voltage lamps - some common and some more idiosyncratic, plus the latest intelligent fixtures, including Clay Paky Golden Scan HPEs and Mini Scans, and High End Systems Trackspots. Control systems are equally flexible ranging from three channel Pulsar controllers to Jands Events and Avolites multi-purpose consoles.

The Stage Light Design team is further strengthened by Alastair Crooks, another experienced designer, rigger and operator who works alongside John Rinaldi. He has handled some of the company's most prestigious shows over the last five years.



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## Live! Show Squares Up at the Roundhouse



This year's Live! Show returned to the Roundhouse in London's Chalk Farm for what many have called the best Live! ever. Attendance was up 10% on 1997, as were bookings for the accompanying Live! Awards ceremony, with Jools Holland once again appearing as compere.

The Best New Audio Product Award went to Soundcraft for the Series 5, Best New Lighting Product Award went to Martin Professional for the MAC 600 and U2 were given the Best Tour Award for Popmart. Robbie McGrath, sound engineer for the Rolling Stones, won the Best Sound Engineer Award for his work on the Bridges to Babylon world tour, Paul Owen won Best Monitor Engineer for Metallica's 'Poor Touring Me', Paul Normandale won Best Lighting Designer and Dick Carruthers won Best Live Video Director. Other awards included SSE Hire for Best Audio Rental Company and LSD for Best Lighting Rental Company. Best Set Designer was won by Mark Fisher, with Jonathan Park and Roy Bennet picking up silver awards. A Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Brian Croft, a consistent face in the business from his work in theatre, rock and roll and as MD of Vari-Lite Europe.

The Live Awards also gave credit to newcomers to the industry, with the Young Lighting Designer of the Year Award going to Daradh Toner and the Award for Young Professional going to David Poynter.

LSD designed and built the very popular central bar, which was at the heart of the show in both geography and spirit. Also running alongside the show in a specially-constructed geodesic dome from Unusual, was the Production Services Association's annual conference and a seminar for the Association of Lighting Designers. Over 2,000 visitors attended the show over the two days.



A Lifetime Achievement award went to Brian Croft, managing director of Vari-Lite Europe.



Martin Professional picked up the Best New Lighting Product Award - Ian Kirby collects.



Charlie Kail stepped up to receive the Best Set Fabrication Award for Brilliant Stages.



Wet Wet Wet's trusty Dougie Souness picked up the Tour Manager of the Year Award.

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## Clay Paky re-light Quien Sabe



The upgraded interior of veteran nightclub Quien Sabe, in Bergamo.

One of Italy's most long-established nightclubs, Quien Sabe (meaning 'Who Knows?') in Bergamo, has recently undergone a refurbishment and lighting systems upgrade. The club, which opened in 1970 and has been a prominent feature of Italian music and dance ever since, had colonnades removed to leave a single, large rectangular dance floor and lightweight false ceilings installed to improve acoustics.

The lighting system now consists largely of Italian manufacturer Clay Paky's products, including 35 Mini Scan HPEs placed on three mounting rings above the dance floor. Antonella Barcella, proprietor of Sango Sound, the company that oversaw the installation, explained: "We wanted moving lights that would create a great impact, and ones which could be adapted for both ballroom and discotheque dancing."

The system also includes 20 Tiger 575 colour changers for the background on stage and on the dance floor, whilst three Astroraggi Power at the ends of the mounting rings provide effects on the centre of the floor. Five Golden Fog 2000 DMX smoke machines were set into the false ceiling. The lighting system and smoke machines are controlled by three Pulsar Masterpiece 108 units and one Masterpiece 48.

## Trade Show Shorts . . .

The 20th **ABTT** (Association of British Theatre Technicians) **Trade Show** will be held on Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th April 1998 at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London.

• Tel: 0171-403 3778 (UK).

**Lightfair International** takes place for the first time in Las Vegas, from May 26th through to May 29th. Over 12,000 architectural, engineering and design professionals are expected to attend.

• Tel: +1 404 220 2217 (US).

**ExpoLatina**, a new event produced by Intertec (organisers of LDI) will take place in Miami from May 5th-7th, 1999, specialising in the Latin American entertainment, broadcasting and design markets.

• Tel: +1 800 288 8606 (US).

**ABTT North** will run from 11th - 12th November 1998 in the Royal Hall of the Harrogate ICC and a programme of seminars will run alongside the Trade Fair.

• Tel: (01204) 304479 (UK).

**Musicalalliance**, which takes place at London's Barbican Centre from 8th - 9th March, is aimed at promoters, venue and festival directors, agents, musicians, DJs and record labels. Seminars also included.

• Tel: 0181-374 4207 (UK).

**Expo Sound & Light 98** takes place from May 21st to 27th in Bucharest, Romania and is held concurrently with the 15th International Fair for Consumer Goods TIBCO.

• Fax: 0171-886 3101 (UK).

Independent Exhibitions, organisers of **Leisure Industry Week (LIW)**, have announced details of their new Leisure Hospitality show, set to take centre stage at LIW 98 at the NEC in Birmingham in October.

• Tel: (01932) 564455 (UK).

**The Production Show** (formerly The Television Show) runs from 11-13th March at the Business Design Centre in Islington. The show also features a conference programme and a number of masterclasses.

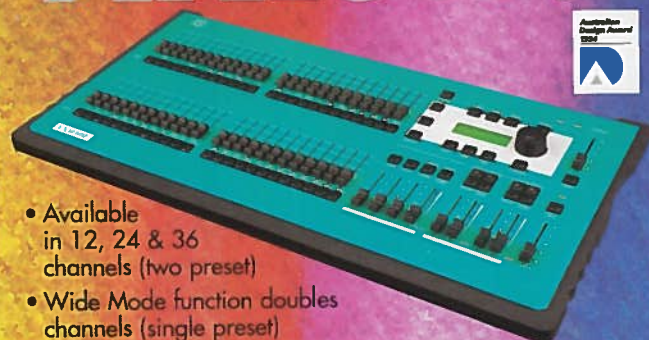
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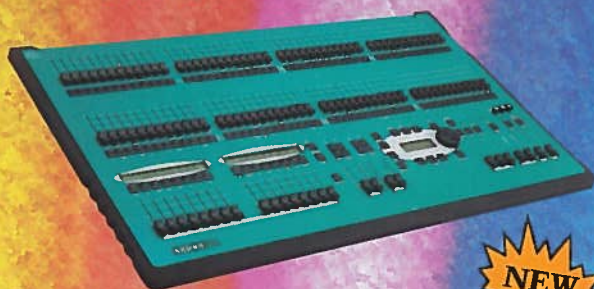


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## NEWS Shorts

The Second National Theatre in Tokyo - one of the largest opera houses in the world, seating 5,000 people - has recently purchased 80 Dark Vader shutters from the Munich-based company **Licht-Technik Vertriebs**. The shutters are DMX-controlled and offer a direct correlation between DMX setting and light output.

**R&G Group Theatre Services** of Gloucester have been appointed sole UK and Ireland distributor of the Italian-manufactured Lampo range of lanterns. Lampo Sales UK can be contacted at R&G Group, 19-21 Foxes Bridge Road, Cinderford, Glos GL14 2PQ.

**Jands Production Services** are using more than 50 DPA4061 miniature microphones for the Sydney production of *My Fair Lady*, purchased from Danish Pro Audio in Copenhagen.

Los Angeles-based **Laser Media** have launched their new site on the World Wide Web. You can find them at [www.lasermedia.net](http://www.lasermedia.net)

**Compulite Spark** control systems have just been supplied to lighting designer Joe Atkins of Beautiful Neptune Design, initially for use on the forthcoming national tour of *Goodbye Girl* and to film and television services for the new Pepsi Chart Show.

## Brilliant Take the Stress



The crowds at the Rolling Stones' current shows are not the only fans of the 'bridge' to Babylon, as Brilliant Stages have recently witnessed.

Scottish company **Fugro Structural Monitoring** were so impressed by the results of stress monitoring tests on the 120ft hydraulic 'bridge' built by Brilliant Stages for the Rolling Stones' *Bridges to Babylon* tour, that they have commissioned Brilliant to build seven articulated masts for their latest project. These are being used on the *Ting Kau Bridge* in Hong Kong to deploy lightning conductors, aircraft warning lights and anemometers.

## Touring Round-Up

**Brit Row** had a busy start to the year - tours already out include *Oasis* - currently insulting the Yanks, then doing likewise to the Japs, Aussies, Kiwis and residents of Hong Kong. His Cliffness is also down in the antipodes, with an orchestral show performing in the round. If you're a fan then you'll be pleased to learn Sir Cliff will return to the UK touring circuit this autumn for the 40th anniversary of the start of his career. Brit Row also have systems out on *Portishead* and *James Taylor*.

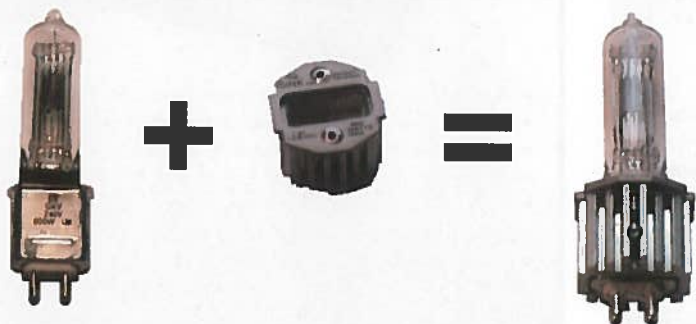
The fledgling **Bandit Lights UK**, headed up by former Meteorlites stalwart Tony Panico and 'Famous' Phay McMahon, are getting the new lighting entity off to a brisk start. "Only the second week in Jan and already we've got four things out," reported a bullish Panico. Of them all, *Lord of the Dance* is possibly the most high profile, a massive rig of lights including DLCs and Cyberights, as well as a healthy swage of Vari\*Lites. Designed by Patrick Woodrooffe, the show is currently assaulting the UK arena circuit. Mr Flatley's forebear, *River Dance* is currently on tour in Australia with a rig from **Neg Earth**. Although Dave Ridgeway reports a quiet start to the year, Neg Earth also have gear out on *The Blues Brothers*, *Ocean Colour Scene* and *Primal Scream*. The Spicey's go into production rehearsals mid-Feb and tour starts early March, reports Chris Hill at **Wigwam**. Wigwam will, of course, be providing an enormous d&b 402 system, while **LSD** do similarly with the lights.

Finally, **Capital Sound** have also started the year well. They have their Martin W8 systems out on Gary Barlow, *World's Apart* and the brief stint from Supergrass who are making up this month for some concerts cancelled pre-Christmas due to musicianly injury.

Down in Greenford, loins are being girded for the re-scheduled Genesis tour, a job to keep **Brilliant**, **Vari-Lite** and **CPL** busy. Plus all three entities have common work on-going on the Stones and Prodigy tours, while Vari-Lite alone helps out in the moving light department for Supergrass, *Portishead* and *Oasis*. Needless to say Brilliant are the set builder of choice for the *Girls*, although Charlie, being the modest man he is, gives equal credence to their work for *Duran Duran*.

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## Tunnel Vision Comes to Leeds City Centre



Opened just before Christmas by Global Sports Bars, the Tunnel is a 1,060-capacity venue in Leeds City Centre. The venue has two stages at 90° to each other and two bars, plus a private and sumptuous VIP area.

Jonathan Reece, the inspiration behind Fun-time, has used RCF enclosures and RCF-loaded own-branded boxes, driven three-way by Crest amplification, and crossed over using XTA digital processing, with two prototype DP226s being installed for the first time anywhere in the UK.

The loudspeaker complement comprises 12 RCF S800 subs, buried under the stage, with eight two-way Funtime mid/highs, loaded with 2 x 12in and 2in RCF drivers, flown and angled over the stage, and a further 22 RCF ART 300s being used in peripheral, VIP area and DJ monitor applications.

The rack reveals five Crest VS1100s (550W into 4 ohms) driving the peripheral speakers, three Crest VS 650s (325W into 4 ohms) handling the top end, and four of the powerful new Crest CA18s (1800W into 4 ohms) assigned to the bass and mids.

For his processing he has turned boldly to XTA, the newer kids on the block compared with the established giants of BSS and Klark Teknik. Featured in the rack are two of their comprehensive parametric equalisers, one operating as a 2 x 3-way crossover for the dancefloor and the other for the delays to split off for the peripheral sound. Different EQ settings are stored on the internal memory of the DP226, while MIDI, RS485 and RS232 and PC card connections allow the DJs to duplicate their settings and dump them onto a computer.

Such an awkward-shaped venue, fabricated in hard, reflective surfaces, with two live stages and a dance playback requirement, requires real pro-audio expertise, but Funtime's work portfolio is nothing but versatile.

Using a Behringer 32-channel desk they have provided a separate monitor mix, with the opportunity to introduce floor monitors. "There are a couple of insert points which we plug the monitor feeds into, in order to send vocal mixes to the stage area - because the stage is also used as a dance area," explains Reece. That aside, the DJs have their own playback system comprising a Denon DN2500 twin CD player mixed through a Formula Sound PM90.

State-of-the art scanner lighting is also used, with four Clay Paky Golden Scan 3s, eight FutureScan III CDEs, eight Galactic Moon CEs and two Gladiator CDEs from Abstract and a FAL Octopus as dancefloor effects, run off a Light Processor QCommander, and 19 Par 64 stage cans controlled from a Zero 88 Lightmaster XL stage desk.

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## Event Show Shines in Docklands

The Event Show 98, held at the London Arena, Docklands, attracted a dramatic increase in international visitors, including a high-level delegation of event organisers from the USA. The overall increase in attendance was put at 10% on 1997, dispelling fears that the notoriety of the London Arena's accessibility would deter visitors.

A programme of seminars included a session on the millennium, which featured the Millennium Dome's production director, Claire Sampson, allowing potential suppliers to discover how they might tender for business at the Greenwich celebrations. One of the most visual aspects of the show was a stunning laser, lighting and projection show which drew large crowds each evening.

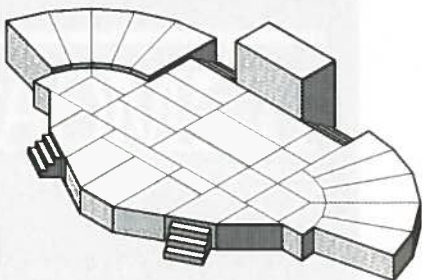
Designed by Dave Bryant of Midnight Design and Jason Bridge of Labyrinth, visitors to the show got a chance to see the UK's largest waterscreen system. Using a 20-ton barge floating in the middle of the Millwall Inner Dock and drawing enough electricity to power a small town, a 30 metre high water screen incorporating state of the art lighting (24 Vari\*Lites, 16 Stage Scans and 24 Dataflash), fire animation and projection images (courtesy of five Hardware for Xenon projectors) the display was intended to give a taste of the type of technology that could be seen within the Millennium Dome. The Event Show returns to The London Arena from 19-21 January, 1999.



## Fane Direct

Following Fane's move to a new factory last year, the company has now decided to handle its UK distribution direct from Leeds. Neville Raine, for long a familiar name at Fane, has been promoted to the position of sales manager. New products continue to flow from the technical team with a further two new Colossus drivers to be launched at Frankfurt.

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# ON TOUR

by STEVE MOLES

AND PRODUCTION NEWS

## Supergrass

Leeds Town & Country

LD: Ali Bale

SD: Mike Hornby

There are several things which need saying about Supergrass. 'What a happy bunch' springs to mind; 'a proper rock and roll band' is another; 'big production specialists' an unexpected third. Yes, here they were at Leeds Town & Country with the biggest show I've ever seen shoe-horned onto the club's tiny stage. Perhaps there have been times when more lights or sound have been crammed in, but the point is, this *looked the part*.

Leaving aside the band's performance for one moment, what preceded it also contributed in a big way to a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Opening acts are always in an uncomfortable position, but Spacehog made a good fist of it, although someone should spank the drummer. What's he doing with a heavy metal kit - two kick drums, four rack toms, and a bloody great Zildjian gong? Spacehog are a pop group! But never mind - good music and not just a warm-up - everybody in the place was pleased to see them.

In the intervening 30 minutes the crowd were kept at an excited buzz by the simple inclusion of video. Not the generally patronising, opportunistic advertising pap screened in an arena near you, this was Supergrass's own choice, put on the screen at no small cost to themselves via one of PSL's top of the range Barco 9100s. A mix of Road Runner, Bugs Bunny and some wonderfully dated Government Public Information films from the seventies had the crowd cheering and laughing throughout the break. When the Kabuki screen dropped and Gaz Coombes hit the first rasping note, the audience were already fully engaged.

## SOUND

Mike Hornby is one of those pleasantly endearing sound engineers - quiet, diffident and considered. What he had to say about Capital Sound will flatter the hell out of Keith Davis and his team so I'd better not repeat it here, but it is worth repeating Hornby's sincere rationale for choosing his system supplier. "Modern systems of this type are all pretty much the same. I choose Capital not because they have Martin Wavefront 8s, but because the band's old monitor man recommended the company. 'Nice people, easy to deal with, they'll look after you,' he said, and this has proved to be the case." Hornby did preface this statement with the coda that his previous supplier, whom he politely refused to name, fell down severely on this one, simple attribute . . .

The set-up was simple enough - eight Compacts and six WSXS subs per side: "We were in and up making noise in under two hours," said front-of-house baby-sitter John Garrish. "I'm sure we could be a lot quicker than that," chimed Hornby. The only thing of significance regarding the PA was



Supergrass at Leeds T&C: a big production shoe-horned into a small space.



that nothing was flown, despite a sold-out balcony. "The available points aren't quite high enough. Even flown you'd still have to tip the cabinets up to target them properly. It's just as easy to do it from the top of the floor stack," said Garrish.

Having been here at least five times before in the past 12 months, and having tried flying, he should know. There are higher points - slightly further downstage, granted, but workable - that are unfortunately occupied by a house truss. "But this works fine," said Garrish. We've got one Compact on its side at the top of the stack. The horn on the one inch is either 40 degrees by 40, or 50, I don't remember which, but it's uniform enough to allow using the cabinet on its side, the trapezoidal sides of the box being sufficient angle to aim it up at the balcony."

Out front, Hornby has a simple rig - Yamaha PM4000 with a few toys - PCM80, SPX990, Eventide H3000 and a Roland SE3000, with the system run through a BSS Omnidrive. As you listen to the show, there's little obvious in the way of effects, perhaps a couple of modifications on

the vocals specific to the recorded version, some panning on the Rhodes, but generally this is a sweet little combo. Coombes' vocals could seem a little harsh on occasion, something Hornby put down to the system: "It's not quite as refined as I expected. It reminds me of an old [Malcolm] Hill system - a bit hard around 2kHz."

But Coombes' vocal intonation has a certain high, brittle quality anyway. Hornby lets the band speak for

themselves; everything image-wise comes right off the stage at you and he maintains a good balance as the guitar sound becomes aggressively louder throughout the night. Never once did I lose sight (what's the aural equivalent for that analogy?) of an instrument. And that was a pleasure. Despite the proper r'n'r band epithet I gave at the beginning, Supergrass are very tight musicians - sharp tempo changes, guillotine endings, all executed perfectly.

## LIGHTING

Designed and operated by Ali Bale, with assistance from Dave Morris on moving lights, the system is, as I said, big. Like Garrish, Bale has been here several times before: "I knew it would fit, but only by that much," he said, splitting an imaginary Rizla. It's not so much the size of the rig as the spread that works so well. The three cross-stage trusses aren't fully loaded, but there are lamps positioned at every extremity. From the opening chord you're immediately struck by how big the stage looks. This is helped by the band's

stripped-down back-line (virtually nothing of it) and the drum kit that Spacehog should have had (made even more discrete by the shock-mounted mics provided by Shure - SM98s and 56s) all on a modest riser provided by Brilliant Stages. The only floor lights to speak of are two VL6s parked right in the middle of the fore-stage that Gaz and bassist Mick Quinn faultlessly negotiate, never once tripping, crashing into or kicking them. Maybe it was a good night?

The lighting system is supplied by Art of Darkness/Axiom and features 72 Pars and 16 ACLs, six Golden Scan HPEs, six Megastar strobes, and a dozen each of VL5Arcs and VL6s from Vari-Lite. The Vari\*Lites are variously dotted about the trusses and on four wind-up stands to the sides of stage, the large, square-cornered C shapes they were under-hung with being visually attractive, as well as putting the lamps into very eye-catching positions.

Bale operates from a Jands Event Plus, Morris from an Avolites Rolacue - the two men both intensely busy for what is a bustling light show. Although it appears they are working independently, but there is more to it than that. "We have that sort of relationship where I tell Dave what I want and he knows exactly what I'm asking," said Bale.

It's busy, but not gratuitous. Straight out of the traps, the first song is a fairground of colours right from the kindergarten paint box: next number, 20 different shades of red, suffused with open white. I don't think I saw a wash until the fourth song.

Bale admits to being given pretty much a free hand by the band. "They ask 'will you try this?' and I do, but if I don't think it works I tell them and they accept that." The bass player, Mick Quinn, backed up this assertion and was, in fact, seated at the lighting desk during late afternoon programming. It was obvious that this was not a musicianly whim: when I asked him about the projector, very much their idea, he had this to say. "The Barco's a bit over-the-top for these venues - we'll probably get something more modest next time, but it's been useful for finding out how the idea works." One gets the feeling that projected images might also form part of the actual show next time they go out.

All in all, a very enjoyable performance and executed with a deft touch - light-hearted, but not lightly taken. As Dudley Moore once famously said: "I haven't laughed so much since grandma died, or auntie Mabel caught her left tit in the mangle."



## Barry Manilow

Wembley Arena

LD: Jack Albeck

SD: Ken Newman

Would Chopin, when he wrote his Prelude in C, have chosen such lyrics if he could? Manilow's derivative song, Magic, builds to a climax like the most passionate love making. Rise and fall, rise higher and fall, and rise again, until finally it crashes to a sustained climax before settling back to the muted notes of Chopin's original melody, its passion spent. Manilow produced the song in 1974, and if the recent interview on Parkinson is to be believed, it's the composition that launched his career. 1974 was the era of pomp rock, the bombastic nonsense of Yes and ELP, and at that time this song shone out like a beacon - I bought it the moment I first heard it on the radio.

Almost 25 years later, Manilow is still packing them in at Wembley Arena while ELP are but a memory and Yes are reduced to playing gigs so small there's not enough room for Jon Anderson's Teepee in the dressing room. Granted, they do come like adherents to some religious event and yes, much of Manilow's audience is composed of fans who will return to see him two or three times in one tour, but it's not all blind obedience. Both

Magic, and the more widely known Mandy, are classics with as much right to the title as Whiter Shade of Pale. What the appeal is of much of the rest of his oeuvre is not so clear cut and requires closer examination.

### SOUND

Ken Newman has been house engineer for Manilow since 1992. With a career spanning two decades spent mostly with artists of similar quality (Iglesias, Minnelli, Shirley MacLaine, to name but three) he is well experienced in presenting this type of live performance. This is not about reining in the excesses of some rock band and fighting to control an unruly mob through a PA run close to the limits of its performance, this is studio time. Nonetheless, it's the familiar truck-load of boxes, an 850 series EAW system supplied by Canegreen.

Perhaps it's a reflection of the artist's more muted presentation style - though I'm sure others have done this here before - Newman has just a flown stack each side of stage, with no delays further down the hall at all. He relies instead on a top row, six wide, of the longer-throw 853s, with 850s below and in the lowest of the four rows, 855s. "I used to use Meyer MSL3s, which sound great when well EQ'd, but these sound great right out of the box," said Newman, dispensing with his system choice in a nutshell.

But it was the console that got him really animated: "I had been using another desk for several years when back in 95/96 I was on Julio Iglesias and had to run the show on an Amek Recall for a couple of months. Only later, when I went back to a venue where we'd used the Recall to run the house system did I realise the differences. The Recall is more musical, especially for a show like this, where the console is the heart of the sound."

But he did qualify this gush of praise: "I went back and forth between the two consoles and each has its own faults and qualities. I concluded that the Recall had more advantages for the Manilow show. It's good for that English sound." Sorry? "You know, when it approaches distortion the Recall has a more pleasing sound." But that said, Newman did admit that he's looking forward to having full parametric in the future with the new Neve modules. With less guile he added: "It

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also has a high chic factor. The desk looks very cool." I wonder if Amek could market that?

As is so often the case, it's the complexity of the show, and the degree to which the engineer is comfortable to subordinate those routines to an automated system, that really turned the argument between console sound and features. "I have a whole rack of effects here. I used to have to carry a MIDI changer which took me some time to programme up. Now it's all in the console, which I also use to fire the two Yamaha Promix 01s I use for the keyboard players."

Newman was at pains to separate this aspect, which he defined as long term, and the short term aspects of the console's programmability: "This is what allowed me to pick up another Recall from Canegreen when we came to the UK. Within an hour of rehearsal I had it sounding just like it did back in the States, instead of the many hours of programming I would have had to do before with the old off-board MIDI control."

The short term is the more functional song to song parameters, something quite crucial to this show, which is run as a live request affair, with punters chosen randomly from the audience using a wheel of fortune buzzer to select songs from across Manilow's entire recorded output. There was some room for criticism: "I wish there was an on-board, sweepable pink noise generator, but then it's got P&G faders, so it's down to pros and cons."

Either way, the performance was realised just as Newman had earlier described it. A tiny band of five musicians was made to sound like an orchestra and in quite a natural way, particularly the string sounds from the keyboards discreetly woven in thanks to a bit of chorus, reverb and delay here and there. As for the system, the 853s had the legs to reach the far end of the room, in truth a misfortune on this occasion, as the rear nosebleeds hadn't sold at all and the slap back was particularly noticeable during the many ballads. But it's Manilow's voice that predominates. He barely opens his mouth when singing, a letterbox slit most of the time, and yet he projects with great power even way back from his Beta 87.



#### LIGHTING

The wheel of fortune analogy also follows through into the lighting. This is very much a TV-style presentation, even down to an elaborate backdrop, a chequered board of brushed aluminium and dun brown squares built by Tait Towers. But curiously, it is painfully under-lit. Designed by Randy Nordstrom, the Morpheus rig (supplied in this instance by their European partner Tour Services) is all concentrated in the back reaches of the stage. Of the 24 Pars, 19 Fader Beams, nine Pro Softs and eight PC Spots, there's just three 3kW washes that are downstage enough to be used on the apron. While the use of back and side is expressive, the amount of light available for the band is hardly adequate. For this final leg of what has been a year on the road, Jack Albeck, Manilow's long-serving lighting designer of 18 years, has been called back to operate the show.

It's immediately apparent he's uncomfortable with what he has to use, but fortunately he's so well versed with the material that he is able to squeeze the maximum out of a limited armoury. Lingering, back-lit head shots of the star on fade out, some nicely choreographed aerial movement chases for the up tempo numbers, all are well conceived and executed, yet can't conceal the fact that for most of the time the stage looks . . . well, just plain dingy.

The justification, as Albeck explained, is "for the variety of venues that have been visited. This show has toured the A, B, and C circuits in the US. The set has a whole different top section for playing stages with restricted headroom down to 18ft, and the wings of the back drop can fold in to fit a 30ft stage width." But by his own admission, there is this glaring omission. "The set is ideal for front lighting with its high gain surfaces, but it really wants something out front to maintain colour balance."

All he has is three Super Troupers and they're kept rather busy on Mr Manilow, otherwise the whole presentation would be a disaster. Granted, with the lamps concentrated on a small stage, this would not be a bad show, but in an arena venue such as Wembley it's frankly not good enough. The three apron washes could benefit from a ten-fold augmentation, and let's face it, another 80-odd Pars aren't really going to break the bank, especially when there's a half-full 72-way Avolites rack backstage and enough truss space to hang them. My heart bleeds for Jack Albeck: I don't want to say any more, but he deserves better.

#### VIDEO

The single notable high spot to the visual presentation was provided by video: three projectors from PSL, two onto square screens at the sides, the third onto a concealed, reversible louvre panel in the middle of the backdrop.

What was significant about the video was the avoidance of live footage. I can't entirely swear to this because I left before the end, but certainly for the first 90 minutes, the only things shown were pastiches of old album covers and some embarrassing close-up portraits of the man himself. The fact that the screen gave something different to look at was in itself nice; the opportunity it gave Manilow to lampoon himself was endearing. He is ham, and like Des O'Connor, his humour is quaintly flawed, but somehow, you have to like him. I thought perhaps it was just me, but even PR guru Ginny Goudy admitted she warmed to his patter.

Maybe that's it, maybe we like our idols to have some humanity. I wonder if Chopin had a sense of humour?



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# RESTORATION THEATRE

*Ruth Rossington caught a train north to see how the former Bradford Playhouse has literally risen from the ashes*

As readers of L+SI will know, last year the Bradford Playhouse & Film Theatre began a programme of restoration following a disastrous fire last summer that completely wrecked the stage area and damaged the auditoria of the art deco-style theatre which was established in the 1930s, ironically after a fire destroyed the building previously occupying the site. Towards the close of last year, exactly 15 months and 13 days after the fire, the newly-named Joseph Priestley Arts Centre officially opened . . .

Tucked away in the Little Germany part of Bradford (so-named because it attracted a lot of German immigrants and investment), the theatre is somewhat unprepossessing at first sight - no grand portico, no classic lines to draw the eye. In fact, it would be fairly easy to pass by on the other side were it not for the brand new sign proclaiming its heritage. Once inside though, it's a different story. There's a definite warmth about the place and the restoration has been tastefully handled. The great thing is that the new hasn't been allowed to swamp the old style and the team behind the restoration have managed to retain much of the original theatre's charm - it's kind of comfortable, in much the same way an old sofa might be.

What feeds this feeling and what proves to be compelling about the place is its history - it's alive with the past - and so it's worth repeating here. As touched on briefly above, the theatre was originally founded in 1929 in the back parlour of the writer JB Priestley's house in Bradford. His sister Winnie was secretary and the great man himself the first president. By 1935, the parlour being somewhat less than successful as a performance place, the fledgling group moved to Jowett Hall in Bradford. By some strange twist of fate, it too suffered a fire and like its successor 60 years later, only the back wall remained. Following two years of fund-raising, it reopened as the Bradford Civic Playhouse in 1937. In the intervening years, it became one of the North's premier venues and staged many of Priestley's productions. It also became the base for the Northern Theatre School, which, under the guiding hand of Esme Church, served a tenancy of over 40 years in the building.

On July 19th, 1996, history was to repeat itself in a dramatic way. Following the penultimate performance of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* members of the crew, by this time in the bar, were certain they could smell smoke and quickly moved to evacuate the building. Within a matter of minutes the fire had taken hold and by early morning, it was clear that the fire had decimated the theatre. Where there once had been a roof, there was now the Bradford skyline and beneath it not much else since everything from the stage up had perished in the blaze. There was severe water damage to the workshop and bars below the



**The gutted remains of the former Bradford Playhouse Theatre following last year's fire.**

stage and whilst the auditorium survived, it was not without cost, the seating being so smoke damaged that it would need to be fully refurbished.

For those surveying the smouldering ashes, it seemed a fairly grim prospect, but clouds, as we know, always have their silver linings and so too did this particular one. Though the fire had been a shocking and distressing experience for all concerned, it was also a chance to wipe the slate clean, strip away the bolt-on upgrades of the interim years and return the venue to how it might have looked in the thirties - albeit a nineties view of a thirties art deco theatre.

Two things needed to be resolved - the financing (the eventual spend was £600,000) and who should handle the rebuilding project. Given their experience of such developments, it was only natural that the theatre should turn to White Light North, based in nearby Sowerby Bridge. Julia Pollitt, from White Light and members of the theatre management sat down with local architects VJQ to iron out a blueprint for development and in so doing reached the conclusion that 60 years of making do had actually given them a quite practical system that worked very well in the space.

The finance was more taxing. The theatre had originally received funding from a number of local groups, including the BFA, West Yorkshire Grants, Yorkshire/Humberside Arts and Bradford Met - but most of that was tied to the film part of the equation and subsequently redirected when the cinema element became a separate company. The key source of funding for the theatre subsequently was a grant from Bradford Met, plus, of course, whatever income could be generated by ticket sales. The vast majority of the rebuilding money came

from the insurers, but the theatre also raised the not insubstantial sum of £100,000 (under the auspices of the appropriately named Phoenix fund which sold seat sponsorships and attracted individual donations amongst other things).

Once the money had been raised, the real work could begin. The site was cleared and made safe. There were still some residual doubts about the safety of the back wall as it had suffered mild thermal shock. Confident that this was not necessarily a problem in itself, the architects recommended that it be steel supported and that the stage area also be reinforced. Although certain restrictions were imposed on the rebuilding by dint of it being in a conservation area, it was felt by the theatre technical team that the longed-for flytower was now a possibility. Despite worries that this would not be cleared, it did get the go-ahead and a flytower was duly built while the rest of theatre was gutted.

The rebuilding then began in earnest and in a matter of months, the new theatre began to emerge from the wreckage. It was at this point that White Light North were able to enter the fray to attend to the technical requirements. Although the fire presented the chance to completely upgrade the facilities at the Playhouse, the insurers were having none of it and insisted on a replacement policy of like for like. Not ideal in the circumstances, but the White Light team were prepared to take the positive view and see the upgrade as the first phase of a future development programme . . .

However, there were some areas where like for like just wasn't practical. White Light North, being canny Northerners, squeezed some extra mileage out of the spec, notably on the dimming system, which was straight out of the ark by all accounts, and the 60-channel desk - a Strand SP40 which had been there 20 years - which it just wasn't realistic to try and replace. The company spec'd a new Strand LBX desk with 72 channels (the only memory desk with faders available from Strand) together with a trio of LD90 dimmers. As a result, the system is much more flexible and has allowed technical manager David Rossendale and his small team (largely volunteers) to extract a great deal more good from the venue altogether. With an eye on the future, White Light have structured the spec to incorporate larger capacity supply to dimmers and made several allowances for the future expansion of the technical system.

For the new counterweight system, which was to replace the original hemp set-up, White Light installed a system of 20 single purchase counterweight sets (manufactured by Harkness Hall). The theatre actually wanted 23 sets and would have preferred double purchase, but the budget simply wouldn't stretch. The new system has encroached a touch on the stage



The Priestley Arts Centre's technical manager David Rossendale with his pride and joy, the new 72-channel Strand LBX in the control room (left) and the tiny stage area, completely wiped out in the fire, now reinforced and mid-preparations for a new production.

which was never large in the first place leaving the theatre with a fairly tiny performance space with the proscenium just 14 feet high and the arch opening only 22 feet.

Above the stage there has been some readjustment of the lighting bars - all the on-stage bars are now flown and counterweighted whereas previously they had been permanently fixed. These are complemented by a further bar on the upper audience balcony and one on the ceiling. Hanging from these bars is a new collection of Strand luminaires - a combination of Cantatas and Preludes.

The unusual thing about the Priestley is that it is actually a cinema/theatre hybrid. When it is not being used to stage productions it becomes a fully operational cinema. To effect this transformation White Light spec'd a 7m x 4m matt white projection screen installed as a flying frame system above the stage and controlled by counterweights.

As all the technical aspects of the stage area were taking shape so too were those of the auditorium. Although the original theatre seating was to be retained and refurbished, the project allowed for the re-tiering and repositioning of the seats clearing the way for

far better sightlines for the audience.

The control room remains at the back of the lower auditorium and is actually rather spacious, but then it did originally have to accommodate projection equipment though this has since been relocated to another room. As many of the consumables also withered in the blaze, White Light's final task was to replace such things as cabling, filters, stands and barndoors.

The original sound system was extensively smoke damaged and had to be trashed. As the brief delineated a system that would serve both the needs of theatre and cinema, Ted Ruddiman of Northern Stage Services had to configure a system that would enable them to patch anything to anything with different inputs and outputs on the patch panels in the amp racks.

Using JBL theatre boxes such as 1745s, 1724Ps with 1350s for cinema and an Allen & Heath GL2000, he designed a speaker patch that enables any of the outputs of the amplification to be connected to any of the speakers, with the exception of the sub bass. The only duplication, according to Ruddiman, is three channels of amplification and three

speakers on stage, which double as a theatre onstage effects system and left/centre/right arrangements for cinema sound reinforcement. The Dolby surround speakers for cinema can also be used in theatre mode as auditorium effects speakers, simply by repatching. It took Ruddiman a couple of days to get his head around the patching design, but once he had resolved the intricacies, what was left was a system that takes just ten minutes to depatch theatre and repatch into cinema mode.

The eight channels provided by four C Audio GB 602s are assigned to the theatre auditorium, balcony, cinema and sub bass (in both applications) while the eight channels provided by the GB 202s run the balcony and auditorium surround sound speakers. Four effects speaker sockets have also been provided for auxiliary use. Having used C Audio's RA and ST series successfully in the past, Ruddiman took a little persuading to try out the newly-launched GB power engines from the Cambridge company, but was more than happy with the end result.

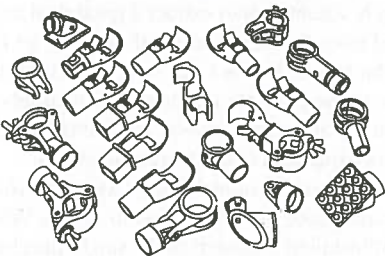
As indeed does everybody right across the board and none more so than technical manager David Rossendale. What has emerged from the ashes is a new venue that seems to have pitched it just about right. Technically, the venue is surprisingly similar to its forebear, but it matters not - for on all other levels it has shed its former self and emerged with a much stronger image and focus. The new flying system has smoothed the way for an extended portfolio of performances and the theatre is currently producing 10 of its own shows in the main theatre and 10 in the studio space below with plans to bring in a further 10 outside shows to plug the gaps. Dovetailing with these are the cinema screenings.

And what of the future? Well, the theatre management are considering a lottery bid and in the long-term aim would leave to see the Priestley become the base once more for a resurrected Northern Theatre School.

Let's hope they succeed - JB Priestley would no doubt be delighted to know that he was instrumental in establishing a theatre which was not only eventually named after him, but one which continues the tradition to which he devoted his life.

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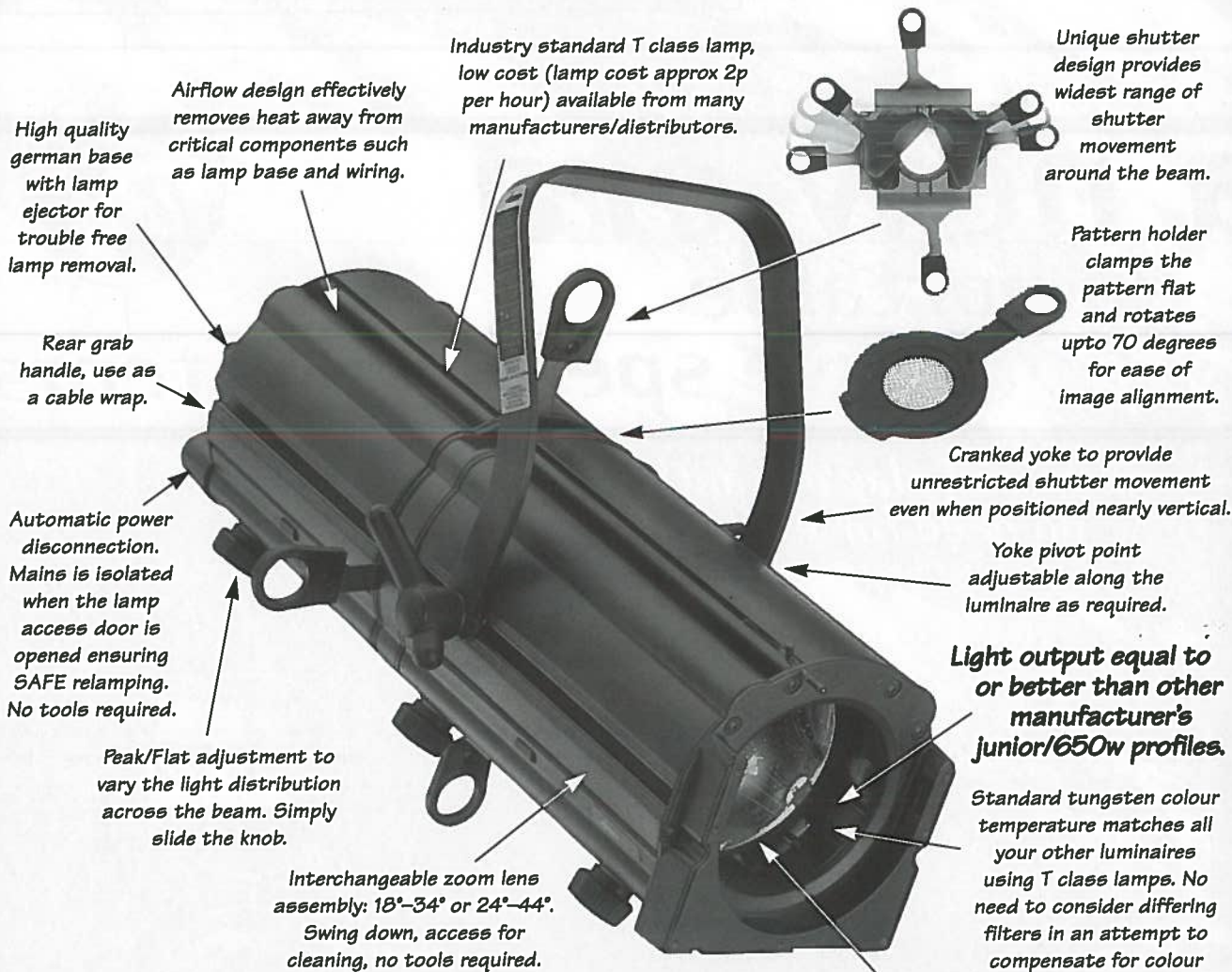
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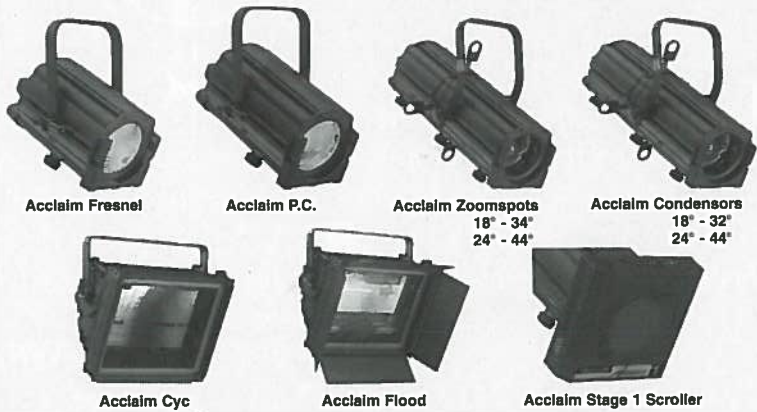
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UNLIMITED SOUND

Someone who has felt the heat of being under the scrutiny of City institutions is my old mate John Conlan, erstwhile chief executive of First Leisure and now running the Troc. John was axed to make way for Michael Grade - although a public company, First is virtually the family business, having been founded by Grade's uncle, the late Lord Delfont.

Although Conlan had been hugely successful in growing the business without taking any undue risks, he had latterly been accused by City pundits of being over cautious. What would they have said had Conlan thrown caution to the wind in the eighties gold rush, and melted his wings as many others did?

The strange thing is that the board decided that it was worth investing £2.5m to get rid of Conlan and his Tonto, Nick Tamblin, just to create the space for Grade to climb into. And what has the result been? The shares have dropped due to some fanning around over the Bingo division. Today, the future, according to Grade, rests with discos, bars and health clubs (strange mix - I guess you need the latter after a visit to the former). Yeah, right! But I can distinctly remember the days when his uncle was completely anti-discotheques. So they don't always get it right. Nevertheless, Grade has earmarked £85 million for expansion in these markets in the current financial year, which is good news for the small handful of suppliers who will get a look in.

So when John is laying in his Jacuzzi (he must have one at home having banked his £1 million plus compensation cheque), contemplating his navel and what might have been - take it from your old pal John, you're better off out of it. Grade, and for that matter that other CEO with feet of clay currently disappointing the grey suits at the Exchange, Andrew Teare of Rank Leisure, is under huge

pressure to deliver. (Teare was the subject of a humiliating spread in the Sunday Times only recently, headed Rank Disorganisation.) Precisely the point at which either or both of these CEOs could make a big mistake and crash and burn.

All this talk of the potential discomfort of running a public company should give Paul and Anita Gregg, the main shareholders in Apollo Leisure, pause for thought. They are apparently considering a flotation of their highly successful operation. Apollo are the owners of many full houses in London, Manchester and Edinburgh, following the collapse of merger negotiations with property group Carlisle. They have appointed City advisers to study the options.

Things will never be the same once they cop the cash: the business will not be theirs any longer for a start, and it will be everybody's business but their own when it comes to critical performance analysis. Though, of course, if the business is worth £75-£80 million as they seem to believe, all that money will have its compensations.

However, Paul Gregg does not strike me as a man with a very long fuse. He it was who paid bonuses to himself and fellow directors in gold bars a few years ago in order to avoid the NI cut. Not the kind of guy, perhaps, to be too tolerant of strangers digging around in his back yard.

I tuned in to Radio Four on my way home the other night and was surprised to hear the dulcet tones of Laserpoint's Andy Holmes wafting across the airwaves. He was bemoaning the losses which his company made at the infamous Destination Docklands concert in 1988 which featured Jean Michel Jarre. No doubt everyone remembers that debacle. The concert was to take place on a series of barges on the Thames, one of the central features of which was to be the much

hyped Laser Harp - which 'special' was part of the Laserpoint supply for the gig.

So this was Andy Holmes extracting his retribution some 10 years later on John Waite's Face the Facts programme, with others in the industry who also claim to have been injured by one Rod Gunner - a serial promoter of failed concerts, by all accounts.

More recently, this gentleman had apparently adapted a new cause to line his wallet in the shape of the emotive Concerts of Hope which were part of the Princess Diana phenomenon. Again, they turned out to be more hopeless than charitable. Stories of failure to apply for entertainment licences, in the case of Docklands, and naming stars for concerts without having signed them up, or secured their agreement to appear in any way, abounded throughout the broadcast.

So while we will all see Mr Gunner coming in the future, and treat his projects with due scepticism, what brought a wry smile to my face was Andy Holmes' description of his sophisticated abort system, put in place on the night of the actual performance. "We were still waiting for our final payment. I was in radio contact with all my operators out on the site, and I had arranged a signal - Code Red meant switch off, Code Blue meant go ahead."

Naturally, your correspondent was breathless with anticipation by this point. Andy went on: "I confronted Mr Gunner in his site office and eventually, at the last minute, he handed me a cheque. I looked at it for a few minutes because, although I knew that it could bounce, I had no way of checking. In theory he had paid me, and in the end I felt I had no choice but to proceed, so I gave the Code Blue." Tough choice, but the rest, as they say, is history. As was the cheque, of course.

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# Second Take . . .

John Watt's view from beside the camera

**T**he thing about being a lighting designer is that once you have served your apprenticeship, whatever form it took, you never get to work with another lighting designer ever again - well, hardly ever anyway. You only learn of their idiosyncrasies and techniques by analysing chance remarks from the sparks, such as 'The blighter ordered 10 different gels and we didn't have one in stock!' which means he has an original approach to colour, or 'he doesn't do a plot, he just pulls it out of the air on the day,' which means he's a lot braver than me and probably started life as a cine cameraman, or maybe hasn't got a stencil yet. Anyway, you can only guess and remain curious as to what it is they owe their reputations, be it good or bad.

**R**ecently I had the rare chance of watching someone at work who I've known for a long time and who has a hell of a reputation which has led him on to the sort of productions I only dream of. Would he live up to the image? The show has been around for years and always looks good, not least because of a deceptively simple-looking set by Roy Oxley. I was standing in on a couple of recordings, hence my day as a fly on the wall. My first impressions were that the rig was extremely simple, almost simplistic. I would have used 50% more lamps, I'm sure. But with some pretty meticulous setting those few lamps certainly earned their keep. Those much-discussed bounce light techniques were in evidence too: I doubt that I would have done it that way, but it worked a treat. Ah, well, you live and learn.

The set features quite a bit of neon and certainly influences the pictures more than somewhat, but in this case to the good. I'm usually fighting over bright tubes that appear to pass clean through bodies, but in this case they work - there's no justice! I guess the moral is that no matter how long you've been at it, never pass up a chance to watch how the other guy does it. Bill Klages is next on my list. The up-and-coming youngster I've been talking about, incidentally, is John Treays.

**M**y knowledge of football is limited only by the fact that the last time I was in a ground was during the all-too-brief life

of BSB, when I was slung out only a couple of hours after arrival by a very irate FA official, for lighting the tunnel and dressing rooms as instructed by my director who wanted a few candid interviews before the match.

It appeared that this was verboten - almost a hanging offence, in fact. Anyway, we hadn't removed that many ceiling tiles and if they had dusted more often, it wouldn't have made such a mess. I suppose it wasn't the first time I've found myself sitting on a heap of tangled cable and a few lamps beside the road, but in general we've done the show first.

**B**ut from what I read and hear in the media, there are parallels between football and lighting. Firstly, both have a strictly regulated league and it's difficult to make it up in to a higher one, but all too easy to get relegated. To achieve the latter you must, against all the odds, become a potential giant killer with a full measure of good luck to boot! An example would be if the catering company that services Teddington and the South Bank delivered a dodgy batch of curry to both sites on the same day, resulting in all the first division LDs keeling over in unison, as it were. You happened to be passing as a distraught director of programmes rushed out into Broom Road hoping to spot a bloke sweeping up who he could recruit as a lighting director.

**Y**ou could step in immediately, undercutting the road sweeper by two quid an hour and thereby equalling the fees charged by early retirees from the Beeb. You could well be into your third Des Forsyth Behaving Badly before the others were allowed out of intensive care.

**T**he latter, i.e. relegation, is rather simpler, in fact somewhat difficult to avoid. All you can hope for is to do it with a degree of elegance and dignity: don't make it easy for them - explain you were attempting the classic principles of portraiture and hadn't expected the guest on the show to be a rival to Concorde who made snuzzle Durante look flat-faced and that you'd only mentioned it to her in passing. The overheard reference to a face like a bag of spanners was intended for the

standby chippie who is not encumbered with the sort of ego possessed by said guest star. Above all, to stay in division one do not write a column in a magazine - I know. Anyway, I think that's the problem.

**I**f you do decide to live dangerously, a tip; ignore the protests of your PC's spell checker and mis-spell all company names, i.e. Wanglia TV or Charlton TV, then their press department's computer programme won't pick up the offending copy; spell it correctly and it's on the MD's desk next morning

**A**nother aspect of the football trade which I'm hoping will be enthusiastically adopted by the lighting business is that of the 'Bung'. It's suprising, given the impressive amounts of my clients' budgets that I've been responsible for distributing amongst the hire companies, that no such illicit payments have come my way. I can't understand it - only last week I hired not one but six Par cans! I told them there could well be a series in it, but still nothing. You can't kid me that those Limos are paid for out of fees alone, a D-reg' Cavalier maybe, but a Bentley!

**I** received a copy of Flo Works this morning (published by Kino Flo) and sub-titled 'How to stop worrying and learn to love fluorescents'. Well, have I got news for them! Firstly, they should write in English for us Brits. I guess we must put up with 'color' instead of 'colour', but we have not taken to using fixtures and we certainly do not globe them. As for signing a 'check' in payment, well my bank manager would certainly be cross.


Anyway, I've resisted the entreaties of former friends to 'love fluorescents' (Pinewood is a no go area these days unfortunately) and no amount of rattling on about 'major savings' on power and ventilation cut much ice either, since I'm unashamedly in show business and have yet to be congratulated by an ageing actress for saving a couple of kilowatts of power. I enjoyed the accompanying lighting plots immensely, though. I've been looking for a universal lighting plot all my life - could this be it?

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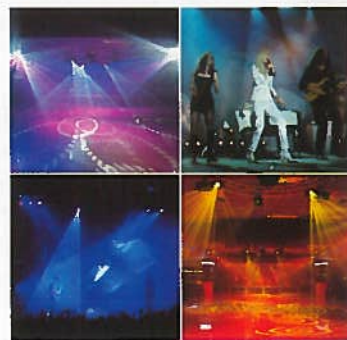
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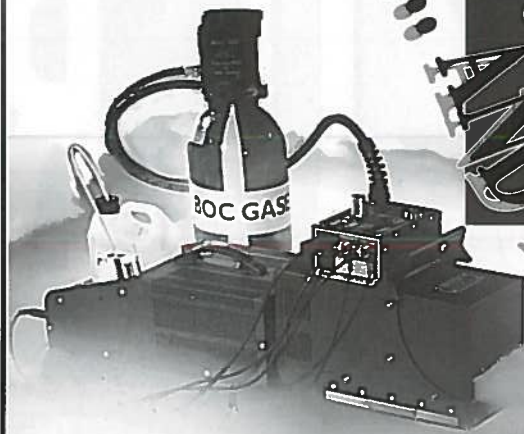
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# STAR-STRUCK

*Steve Moles hot-foots it to Granada Television's Studio 12 where the latest contestants are rehearsing for Stars in their Eyes*



As I sat on the risibly named Trans-Pennine Express (average speed 48 mph), rattling through some of the most stunning scenery in England, I mused on what I would call this piece, settling for 'Lights in their eyes'. After all, what else are you going to call a piece about a studio-based light entertainment show that uses more Vari\*Lites than the latest Phil Collins tour? Incredible - 110 VL5s, 36 VL6s, and 36 of the VL2Cs - major ranking rock stars would welcome such a battery, yet this show 'Stars in their Eyes' is for aspiring wannabe amateurs.

As soon as I reached Studio 12 and looked up, I knew I had a problem with my working title. The Vari\*Lites were all there sure enough, but where was the phalanx of mono-poles supporting the legions of big Fresnels? If these wiggly lamps were to spend much of their time pointing into camera for effect what was going to light the star pretenders? Studio 12 is the largest studio at Granada TV's Manchester HQ, yet all I could see was a small cluster of 2.5kW's to one side of the performance area, and another directly over the centre spot. "There's actually 14," said lighting director Tommy Bardsley, "but they are there specifically for the chat, all the main work is done by the Vari\*Lites."

Bardsley is one of three core LDs at Granada, who all rotate through hardy annuals like Coronation St, but Bardsley has always done Stars since it first aired in 1987. "We've used Vari\*Lites for five series now. We started with just 20 VL2Cs amongst a large V-shaped truss

full of Pars. It's something we've built on over the years, getting used to the lamps, and learning what we can do with them. Now this year we're virtually all Vari\*Lite."

Bardsley went on to say that relatively-speaking, the lamps had also become cheaper to use. "But only because you're still paying the same price you did for the original 20," joked Jim Douglas, the Vari\*Lite account manager.

One vein of continuity has run through Vari\*Lite's association with the show, besides Jim Douglas' involvement, and that's in the operators. "We believe it's quite important they get the same people each year," said Douglas, "even Ian Reith who's our on-site tech' has always done it. This is an intense recording period, the rig is in for barely five weeks and 12 shows will be taped in that time, so being familiar with what Tommy (Bardsley) wants is important."

Mike 'Oz' Owen is the VL programmer for the show. As each episode is completed, Bardsley gives him a tape of the next contestants and Owen comes up with new ideas. "It's better than just programming up a huge number of looks and then choosing show by show," said Owen. "This way helps keep it fresh." There's also a very broad variety to the performance types - from rock to club singers for example - so to pre-empt could be a wasted effort.

The setting for the show is big and elaborate, a reflection of its popularity. Stars in their Eyes has received awards for 'Best Light

Entertainment' show from the TV Times, whilst Bardsley has picked up an award for 'Best Lighting, Non Drama', as part of the Craft and Design Awards given by the Royal Television Society. Designed by Granada's Nick King, the current set (you'll be able to see it broadcast in the New Year) is a two wall enclosure defining a quarter segment of a circle. Most of the vertical elements are sparkle covered and generally three dimensional rather than flat - a series of vaulting curves that grow out from the mist shrouded sliding centre door. At its highest the scenery reaches almost to the studio's lighting grid, at its widest over 10 metres. (The centre door, by the way, has not changed since the first series, another little thread of continuity.) The door is further framed by a four-metre diameter horseshoe suspended from the grid. Again sparkle covered, the horseshoe has eight VL6s built into its profiled fascia. It is also rigged to be tilted backwards or forwards 45 degrees, not a great variation to the naked eye, but quite a dramatic change through the perspective of the camera.

A great deal of effort is made to provide the widest possible variety of image for the camera, and not just through the comprehensive lighting. When I viewed the set, three rostrum cameras worked the centre floor with a crane positioned stage left alongside the seating for long sweep-in shots and for reverse angle work behind the performers. Mid-way through the five week recording period the temporary grandstand of seating for the live audience is

shifted across the studio to enable the crane to be positioned on the opposite side, just to give variance of view-angle.

But it's the set and how Bardsley lights it that provides the greatest variety. Apart from a circular truss with eight Cyberlights over the centre position (supplied by Playlight) most of the Vari\*Lite's are close-angled to the set, mainly from above. On the floor, eight VL6s and six 2Cs are continually re-deployed, sometimes purposefully placed in shot, other times putting intense up-light on the undersides of the set pieces from hidden locations. With such reflective surfaces to work on the set takes colour wonderfully and it seems no matter how rude the colour Owen comes up with, the camera shots look nothing less than lush.

Indeed every effort is made to provide the aspirants with a real star quality setting, even host Matthew Kelly when not working to camera, spends much of his time talking with the hopefuls helping them become familiar and relaxed in what must be an alien environment. The set and false floor is further embellished with a horde of practicals and 60 circuits of up-lighting through opaque floor panels. Neil Yates operates all these, over 4,000 pea lights delineating the set and 64 Par 36s out in the audience, run from the studio's own Strand Galaxy. He also runs the Cyberlights via an MA ScanCommander, again provided by Playlight. Add to this hod-loads of dry ice ("There's five or six Londoners dotted about the set," said Reith, "with trunking running all over the place,") and you've got a busy looking show.

Each contestant is rehearsed three times to determine camera routines with another couple of blind rehearsals with a stand-in if the director is still not sure. When you watch one of these run throughs, what strikes one most is the relatively low amount of lighting on the contestant themselves. "That's right," said Bardsley, "often the only light on them is the followspot, the majority is on the set."

That said, there is plenty of wash from the VL5s across the stage and a further strong framing tool in the shape of opaque back-lit panels between the curved sections of set, used to put colour key around the performer. Outside the set, almost every remaining inch of wall-space in the studio is covered by starcloth, providing yet more surround for those reverse angle shots. But what surprised me most was the absence of masses of studio lights, something Douglas also remarked on. "It's nice to see a studio full of moving lights and not have the whole lot washed out by heaps of 5kWs."

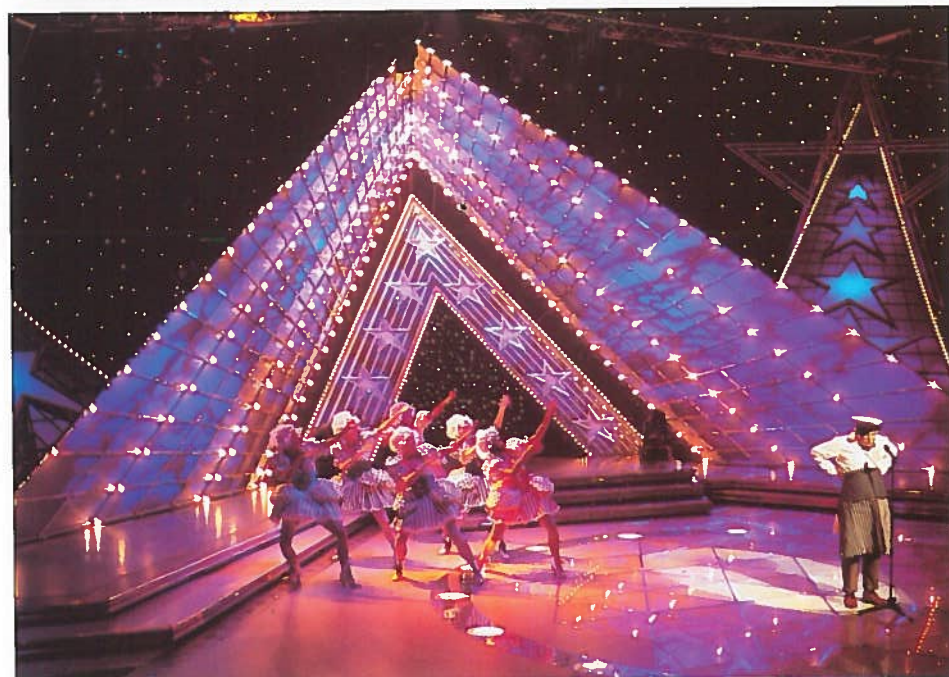
And that's the truth of it. I saw two contestants - 'Harry Secombe' and 'Anne Wilson' (I think she's one of the female vocalists from Heart) and both very accomplished they were too. When performing, what showed on the studio monitors looked top notch, just like any other solo artist on TV. But what was different was how good it looked in the studio from the audience perspective. These contestants are judged live by an invited studio audience - the fact that they all were presented - in context - as it were, rather than under the harsh spotlight of the studio, must go a long way to helping them give an assured and confident performance.



One of the contestants braves the bright lights for a taste of stardom.



Round-table discussion with Mike Owen, Tommy Bardsley, Ian Reith and Jim Douglas.



Stars has always been visually striking - the set above featured in last year's run.

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# LET'S GET SIRIUS

Ten years after the 24, Zero 88 think they have another world beater.

Ian Herbert visited Cwmbran to find out more

You can take the Golden Valley road, or come through the Black Mountains as I did, if you're on your way to Zero 88's Cwmbran works from mid-Wales, but most will miss that colourful scenery as you speed down the M4.

Arriving there, your first impression is of space - the factory sits comfortably on a slope, with a fine vista over its industrial park to the hills of the Welsh Border, and once inside you find a sales office that could fit a bowling alley into its spare space, a well-equipped showroom the size of a (less well-equipped) Fringe theatre, and an airy, high-roofed assembly floor with plenty of elbow room of its own.

Upstairs, the management suite and programming area flow easily into one another, and the effect is one of interweaved, co-ordinated effort. My visit was a chance to get some idea of what a middle-scale supplier is doing in a wicked world of stiff international competition, a rising pound and an ever-growing number of smaller niche companies snapping at their heels.

The history of Zero 88 will be familiar enough to most of L+S's readership. Of the four Brunel University engineers who got together in 1972 in an attic in Hanwell to make lighting controls, starting with some rather nifty effects cartridges for the disco market, three (MD Peter Brooks and design supremos Chris Fenwick and Richard Thornton Brown) are still very much involved in the operation, having moved with the expanding business first in 1973 to St Albans and then in 1989 to Cwmbran. (The last survivors of St Albans, the sales department, finally came West at the beginning of this year.) The fourth, Alan Munton, left in 1987 to start his own restaurant.

The company name was picked more or less at random - Zero to indicate that the business had been started from nothing, 88 because 1988 seemed far enough away at the time. By a useful coincidence 1988 was the year in which they launched their most successful product to date, Sirius 24, the first affordable lighting board with memory, which was to do for the company's place in theatre what the almost equally successful Eclipse board had done five years earlier for it in the disco world. Richard Thornton Brown tells the story of the gentleman at 1988's ABTT trade show who was leaving their stand, impressed by the new board but obviously convinced that it was beyond the means of his amateur



theatre group. "Wait a minute, I haven't told you the price," said Richard. When he heard it, the gentleman stopped in his tracks and came back with added interest. "Do you realise," he said, "that's only three jumble sales?"

So Sirius consolidated the move from the company's disco beginnings towards the theatre business. Now they supply to the main three sections of the entertainment technology market, disco, music and theatre (not to mention their highly successful line of products for film and TV) and the structure of their overseas sales will vary according to the dominance of their local agents in one or other field. At home, they can reach them all through a strong dealer network.

As an innovative company in which two of the founders are still very much concerned with the development of new products, Zero 88 has to keep a finger on the pulse in these three spheres. One successful way of achieving this is by bringing in lighting people to test Zero products in their showroom. Right now, ALD members will be getting their hands on the latest development, the new Sirius boards, arriving exactly 10 years after the original.

The Sirius 250 and 500 are, as they sound, rather larger than the 24, but those who have worked with the old warhorse will find they look familiar - and what's more they'll be half

way to understanding how these much more powerful beasts work. What the new boards do is to take the well-trying Sirius approach to control into the realm of moving lighting. These 'hybrids' can accommodate either conventional or moving lights, and as someone who hasn't really been in front of a lighting board since Strand phased out the Grand Master, I can tell you that the concepts behind the 250 and 500 are easy enough for a complete novice to grasp. The board looks a bit like a grey sailboard, but it would be rather uncomfortable to tread on it: it has the familiar banks of faders, plus strings of

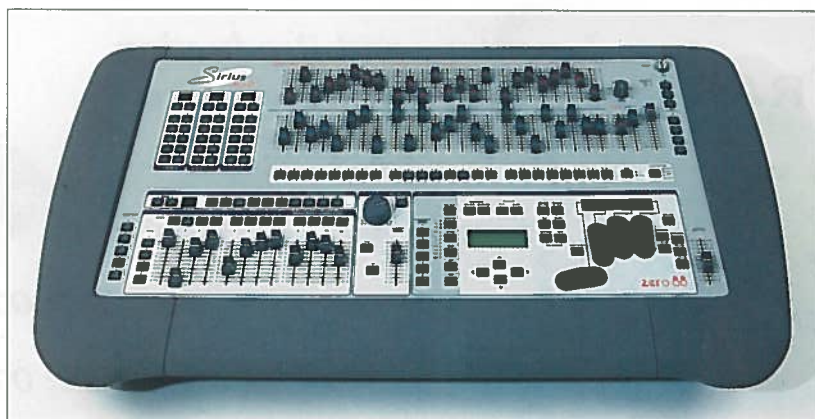
well-organised function keys and some clusters of simple yet versatile buttons to work the various special memory activities. It even has a fader in the bottom right hand corner called the grand master. Memory Lane . . .

Once you get a moving light into the Sirius, a library of types will identify what its different channels should be doing and fit them in to the 256 or 512 available. Then you can programme for colour, focus, beam shape, gobo, size - you name it. The gimmick which makes these boards different from any other produced so far is the patented 'four wheel drive', a set of four encoder wheels with a tire-tread surface which fit your thumb and first three fingers to access the activities which are best controlled by touch. (You vary those menus by a set of buttons that are in reach of your little finger.) Thus thumb and forefinger can control the x and y axis in either moving a beam around or defining its area. Built-in acceleration means that if you move the wheels quickly, the beam will move equally fast; for fine adjustment, you just turn slowly.

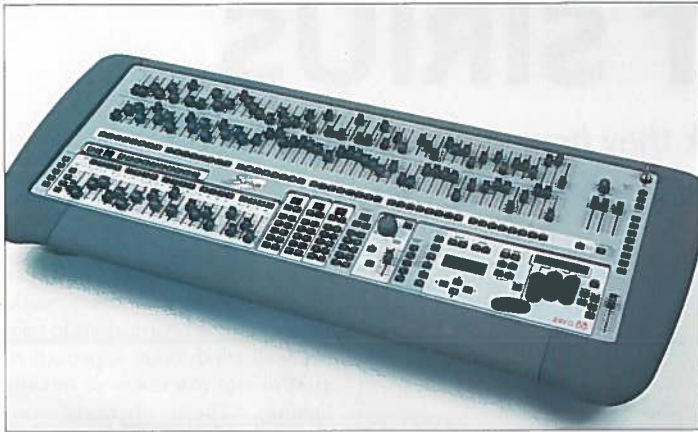
There's some very clever software to go with the boards, too, strongly graphic and (I'd have thought) a blessing to visually-oriented lighting people. Not only is there a monitor display of all that you're doing with the board's built-in capabilities, there's a new plotting system,

Cueline, which uses mouse and monitor to plot a show. Once the board knows all the lanterns you've got, and all their properties, you go into Cueline to determine fade times and intensities, movements - and it all shows up in time-linked pictures on the screen.

An imminent development is a portable Cueline, called Sirius Offstage, which LDs can use on their own PCs for preliminary plotting or fine tuning of shows. These new machines mark something of



The Zero 88 Sirius 250.



The Zero Sirius 500.



The Assembly floor at Zero 88's Cwmbran headquarters.

the return to integration we have been seeing lately in the different segments of the lighting world - the moving lights and visual effects beloved of the music and disco lighting fraternities have made their way into the theatre, and as the trade in second-hand moving lights heats up we are likely to see what was so recently only a top-end activity percolating down pretty fast.

Perhaps we shall see more chase and sound-to-light effects creeping into legit theatre too. With the 250 coming in at the cost of a couple of high-end desktop PCs, the 500 maybe a couple of decent laptops, the price of sophisticated control for today's clever new lighting machinery has just got within a lot of people's reach - just as happened with the first Sirius 10 years ago.

So what kind of a company is Zero 88? It's one that has been able to keep some stability in a field which is notoriously subject to change. From a tiny technology-led outfit powered by the enthusiasm of its founders it has grown into a middle-scale organisation, comfortable in its modern premises, with an almost completely new local workforce - over 50 of them now. The board have been very pleased with the quality of staff available in South Wales, from assemblers to programming people. The original driving force continues, with Peter Brooks still a very active MD, but while Chris Fenwick and Richard Thornton Brown continue to exercise their share of control through the board, their day-to-day energies can be devoted to what they like best, respectively electronic and mechanical design.

This design element is something that especially impressed me about Zero 88: a team of software gurus is constantly at work not

simply producing strings of code, but devising smart graphics and busy but clear screens that make their messages quickly, visually intelligible. And it's there in the hardware too, with the company designing their own switches both to keep costs down and to impart a Zero 88 individuality to their products. The components are made outside - volume is not enough for them to make their own - but every product is assembled, and extensively run in, on the premises. Those products, apart from the boards and power packs include all sorts of dimmers from portables via the evergreen bestseller, the Beta, to big installations like the LTC. A company favourite is the digitally-controlled Contour, popular for touring.

Much of the present responsibility for management of the company and its future planning rests with the next, younger tier. Marketing executive Claire House, a recent arrival, is looking after the test drive programme for the new Sirius boards. She reports to Blair Drummond, who as marketing and development manager takes charge of the software and hardware design teams, and market planning. Operations manager David Rosen runs the factory and sales side.

Like most British manufacturers, Zero 88 have suffered overseas lately as a result of the strong pound, and Drummond, in particular, is keeping a weather eye out for new markets - the trick is to hit them when they can afford a product of Zero 88 quality, and although spots like India and the Eastern European countries may not be candidates today, they could become so very quickly. Both can't wait for the Single European Currency - whether or not Britain is in it, pricing in Ecus will immediately make life a lot easier and quotes a lot more comparable.

After a quarter-century of not always smooth progress (let's not talk about the great sales slump of 1980) Zero 88 today occupies a high-profile position in the industry. Part of this can be put down to well-directed public relations effort. As well as Peter Brooks' stint as chairman of PLASA, the activities of another PLASA stalwart, Freddy Lloyd in devising memorable Zero 88 occasions have ensured that they are a difficult name to forget. Lloyd's background was in entertainment, as a performer, and in maintaining Zero 88's excellent relations with their dealer network he makes good use of his performance skills. Some of the events he has staged to celebrate shows like PLASA or SIEL are almost legendary, and his latest, the biennial Zero 88 Go-Kart Grand Prix, has become a huge undertaking.

Having closed the St Albans office and reached the magic 65, he is now technically part-time, though the hours sound quite long enough to me, even for one who describes himself as 'the youngest geriatric in the business'.

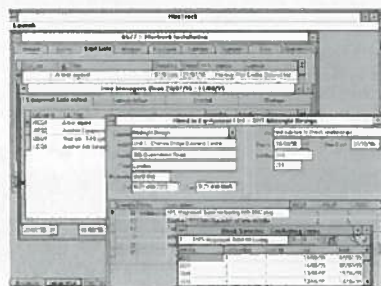
And what of the future? No self-respecting businessman is going to give away trade secrets to a passing enquirer, so the crystal ball gets a little cloudy at this point: a plan to make their own lanterns has long been consigned to the shelf, but production of what Zero 88 know best, for OEM sales, is likely to be expanded. It seems reasonable to expect the new boards to be a hit, and to have spin-offs quickly in both hardware and software, not to mention stiff competition from rival manufacturers. I'm waiting for the moment when you can really tell that the Sirius 250/500 series has made its mark: that'll be when they introduce the left-handed version.



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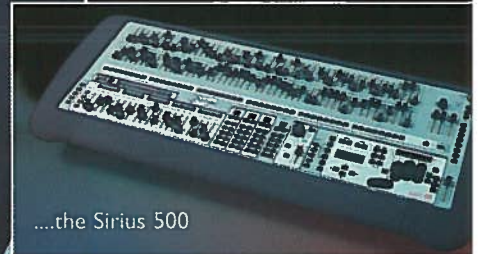
# The hybrid....



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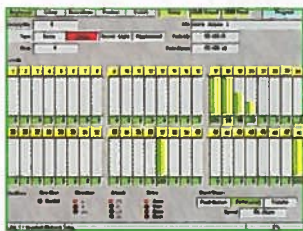
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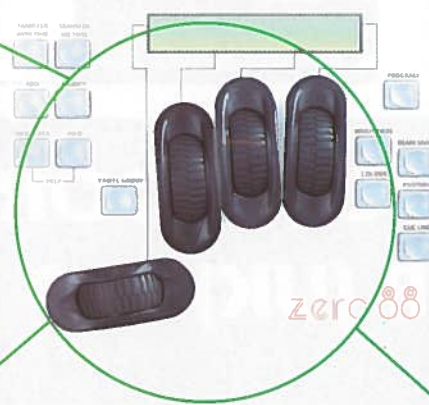
# Sirius 250 & 500



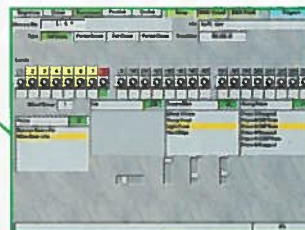
Brightness



Position

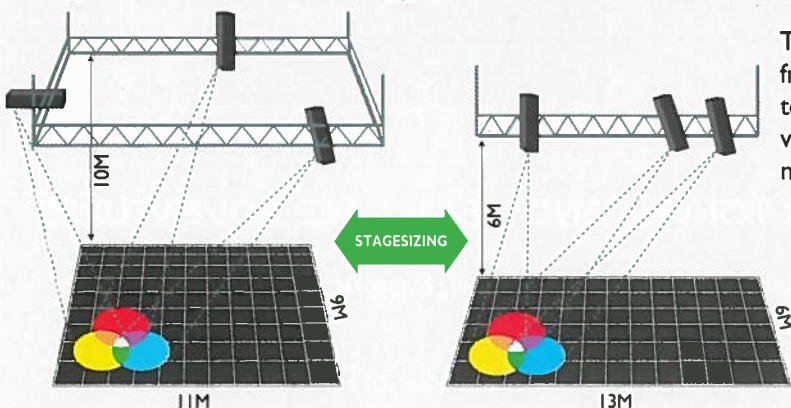


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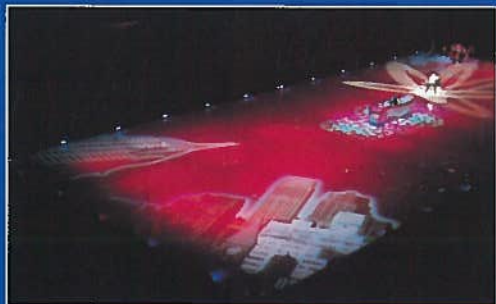


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# ICE ADVENTURES

*They may not be everybody's cup of tea, but Steve Moles discovers why Torvill & Dean are still drawing capacity crowds, with not a little help from some stunning projection*



From the moment the plush red velvet drapes draw open to reveal the opalescent icy surface, you're entranced. I've seen large format projection before - as I'm sure will most people by now, in some guise or other - but the surface of an ice rink adds another dimension: the velvet looks real enough to snuggle up to.

Why the effect should be so striking in this environment is down to a couple of self-evident truths: the first is that most of the audience are in fairly close proximity to the projection area and can thus appreciate the lavish detail of the images from this high resolution system; the other is the vertical nature of the projection. Because the image is projected straight down onto the ice, the overlap on to the performers is of almost no consequence. They cast little shadow and move too fast to give any real awareness to the viewer of the fact that the projection is washing over them too. It provides the perfect scenic element for an ice show: it is high definition, fast and easy to apply, causes no obstructions for the skaters and . . . you can do tricks with it.

Torvill and Dean's *Ice Adventures* 1997-98 didn't appear to get off to such a confident start. For any who saw the posters for Wembley, NEC, Nynex, you'll have noticed the 'From Jan Nth', with no indication of how long each venue visit would last. I took this to be a certain inclination on the part of Promoter Phil McIntyre to hedge his bets: after all, the cancellation of just one date on a 10 date residency due to poor ticket sales can be the kiss of death as far as other venues are concerned. But production manager Ian Day quickly relieved me of this notion when I arrived. "Oh no," he said emphatically, "We've actually sold out everywhere, and added dates. We left the posters open so we could put in extra shows. We've done many weekend

matinées, even one on a Tuesday at the Nynex. How many acts do you know that could fill the Nynex on a Tuesday afternoon?"

In fact, the only hiccup of any sort that the tour has suffered seems to have come when the resident Wembley ice-making system failed to live up to the job, but temporary ice specialists ESP were able to fill the breach and promptly supplied 280 extended aluminium plates, four compressors and over 300m of connecting pipes to lay 1,300sq.m of ice in just four days.

Many members of the production team have toured with Torvill & Dean before. It's a happy, family show, and all confirmed the success of this particular tour. Several also commented on an audience shift: "There's hardly any of the blue-rinse mob," said one. "We seem to be getting a younger audience," said another. Well, I walked through the arena and took a good look and I have to say, I think they've all changed their hair colour. One of the more noticeable elements of a T&D show is the time allotted from the pre-show bell to curtain up - time enough for the audience to get their puffing, wheezing carcasses up the vertiginous steps of the bleachers.

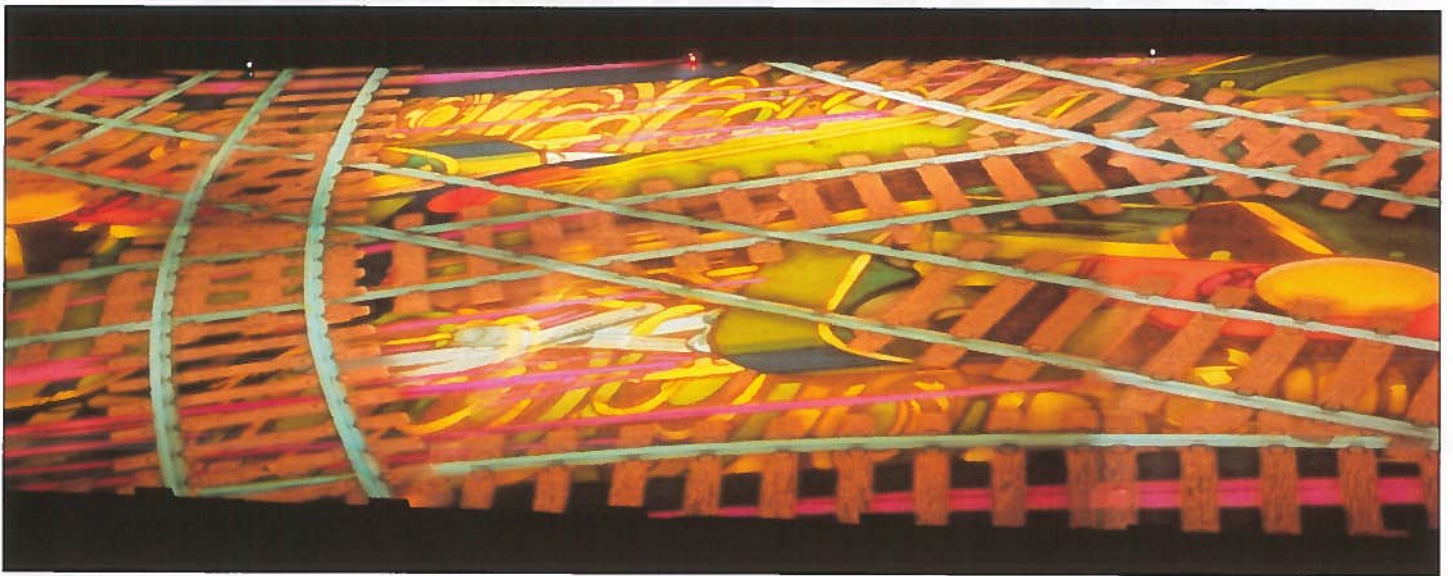
But I digress. T&D may not yet have reached the pensionable age of their audience, but they're no longer at the peak of their skating prowess, so what packs them in?

Jenny Gilbert, the dance critic of the Independent on Sunday, made a couple of sharp observations on this show. Talking in flattering tones about Dean's choreographic ambitions she further commented: "He needs a new audience," (which may to some degree be happening already, if only by choice of hair colour) and "the real novelty is the lighting, which allows elaborate designs to be beamed down onto the ice surface."

What she really meant, of course, was the projectors. Supplied by E(TC) UK Ltd, there are eight 5kW Xenon PIGI projectors beaming down onto the ice. "All have double scrolls," said tour tech Peter Wilms, "and all the projectors are mounted vertically." This is a first apparently, standing these big five Ks on their noses, and it's by this simple device that the images are able to be so coherent and striking. Some praise should go to Harry Box of CLS UK Ltd who built the support system for the projectors - simple enclosures, not unlike old Par lamp meat-racks with big castors, which meant the projectors didn't need to be demounted for every venue change. Remarkably, each projector and enclosure weighs just 180kg, thanks largely to a new power ballast. "A Polish development," said Wilms, "based on some sort of resonance theory, which means the PSU is about the size of a shoe box, weighs about 20kg, and yet can power a Xenon up to 7kW. The supply is also very stable. Despite being Xenons, there's very little flicker from the lamps."

Logically, each projector covers a one eighth segment of the ice, in two rows of four. Shone vertically there is no key-stoning to distort the image. Remotely controllable lenses allow a focus range from 10-14m from the ice surface: lining them up, however, is another matter. "I start with an opposed pair at one end of the ice and match up using one of the show images using the adjustable feet on which each projector is mounted," explained Wilms. "Then I can use a standard line-up image to work my way down the ice, matching each projector."

The whole process takes up to five hours, a luxury Wilms doesn't always have on some tight overnights, as was the case on the show I saw, but the rush version is not bad. I could



see the joins because I was looking for them, but for most of the images this barely registers.

"Thierry Noyer provided all the images. He does a lot of work for E\TC\ and knows the projectors well. Chris Dean and Andriss Toppe scripted the show and Noyer worked up the images from their storyboard. With all the various masks for the reveals across the ice, it's difficult to synchronise across eight projectors, but once the PC-based control had been programmed, it's pretty straightforward."

The final realisation needs to be seen to be believed. All right, it's not revolutionary, but the ice is a great projection surface, and as Wilms himself said: "It's so nice to see people actually standing within the scenic element of the projection," and *interacting* with it.

Despite Jenny Gilbert's slight misunderstanding, the lighting is very much a big part of this show. Her confusion may lay in the almost seamless integration between lighting and imagery. There were occasions when I was totally unable to discern whether what was painted on the ice came from the E\TC\ PIGI or an LSD Icon. Durham Marengi is the show's lighting designer and he's applied his extensive grounding in the theatre to the wide open stage of the ice-rink with great effect. He's been lucky too: when you look up from the arena floor you're immediately struck by just how much stuff is up there - over 1000ft of truss alone. Ice shows are notorious for being as tight as the proverbial duck's dumper when it comes to production budget, but not this one. In spite of which, Marengi is quite humble about what he has done.

"It's a basic rig. They [T&D] didn't want a Disney show - this is very theatrical rather than a spectacle. The moving light element is to provide a focused wash. Attention is so specific to the skaters' positions on the ice that you might as well do the wash on the spot they're working. Torvill & Dean like having the audience lit as well, so I've created a coloured environment with LSD's two-cell (Par 36) Mole Cycs around the floor."

The effect of these is to put a gentle wash over the ice, just the spill creeping up over the crowd, something far less distracting than audience lights mounted above.

"The ice presents benefits and problems," continues Marengi. "You basically have three surfaces to work on during the show. Glossy

and hard when the show first starts, then as skating takes its toll the surface becomes frosty, opaque. Finally, as you near the end of the performance, the surface is quite wet and splashy. Exciting, but you do have to watch for reflections."

Although Marengi was at pains to draw attention to this element it did little to compromise the projected images, and the sparkle created as Icon beam cut through skaters' crystalline spray only seemed to add to the drama.

In total, the rig LSD has supplied comprises 60 Washlights, 32 Icons, 25 Eight-lights with Molemags (flown) and 33 two-cell Moles around the ice. There's also an enormous 12kW HMI at one end of the rink with Mag and douser, a couple of huge mirror balls, and various smoke and snow machines.

Marengi's ideas with the Icons have proved the most innovative. There are nine custom gobos in the lamps, the indexing of the images allowing him to programme some semi-animated cues that help blur the lines between projectors and Icons. Most striking are the schools of fish, that scatter as the skaters sweep out onto the ice. "Because of the accuracy needed to make such cues, we weren't able to WYSIWYG this part of the show ahead of rehearsals," said Marengi. "Some of the cues required very tight indexing."

Even so "It took only a couple of days to programme the show," said Andy Gibb, who's taken a break from his work with Clapton to operate Ice Adventures. "There's only 134 cues in two hours," Gibb continued, "but it's the sheer size that's the biggest problem - getting enough light on the performers when they're at the edge of the rink."

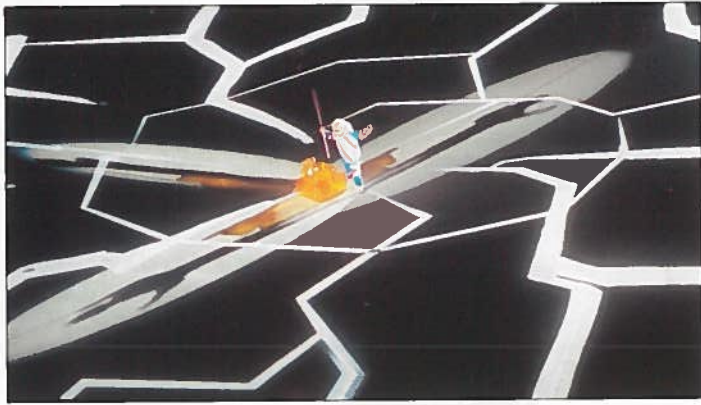
This, at first, looked a problem they hadn't quite conquered. Accustomed as we are by TV to seeing the whole rink brightly and fully lit, it was disturbing when large areas were shrouded in darkness. But this merely required a mental adjustment on the part of the viewer, to embrace the fact that lighting was often specific to the area of skating activity, and left deliberately dark elsewhere. Otherwise it was a light show full of light and delicacy, and some nice elements of pantomime frivolity.

One of the most warmly welcomed *coups de théâtre* was the flying sequence where Jane Torvill was whisked magically around the head

of her partner. Supplied by Foy Inventoprises (no prizes for guessing the American origins of that one) the Foy Tracks are fairly simple twin wire Peter Pan devices for flying, spinning and twirling the human body. There were, in fact, three tracks - two at the far end for more modest displays by other members of the cast and the more sophisticated device for Torvill just past centre ice. Operated by Danny Hulse, who runs the system from two frequency inverters which control movement and speed, the track system is not dissimilar to a heavy duty tab-track. Two motors are used, one controlling the position of the traveller, the other for raising and lowering the artist. The combination of two graceful dance-forms, skating and flying, is inspired. The flying sequence was a truly magical interlude that left the crowd speechless for many seconds before they snapped out of their reverie and applauded wildly.

At first glance, sound looks the easiest gig on the tour. No band, no massive dynamic variations to deal with, only low level transmission required - what could be simpler? "Well yes, it's all playback material, mostly commercially recorded material off CD, but there's a lot of cross-over stuff in the show," said house engineer Mike Downes. "The opening of the show has about 20 cues in a matter of minutes. Overall, there's about 50 in the first half and over 60 in the second. When you consider running time that's almost a cue a minute."

The system is supplied by Canegreen, a centrally rigged cluster of 24 Meyer MSL3s in four quadrants of six cabinets projecting all around the arena. Each quadrant has a further four UPAs under-slung to cover the front rows around the hockey dasher and there's eight twin 18" subs sitting atop the central trussing grid. With the runs from amp rack to speaker at something over 80m (over a kilometre of speaker cable in all), it was perhaps surprising that Canegreen didn't proffer their self-powered MSL4s instead. Not only would this have saved a lot of time and cable runs, but the PA hang would have actually been lighter than the five tons that was up there. But then that's not a luxury any other PA system would have been able to offer, and it was certainly not detrimental in terms of the sound quality the audience was subjected to.



Downes has a Yamaha O3D for a basic control surface and a TC1128 for a bit of EQ modification from time to time, otherwise it's all hands on with the playback machines. Phil Christiansen, Torvill's husband and a former sound engineer, does get involved in the audio side of the show, but with just the lightest of touches. "Phil does work with me for the first few shows, but he doesn't get involved in the technicalities, he just wants to listen to how the show sounds. It's actually very useful for me, I can concentrate on setting it up and have someone out there listening to it who knows exactly how it ought to sound. After the first few shows he leaves me to it." Mind you, Downes should have a good feel for the show - he did their last tour too, a mere 14 months, so he's very familiar with the format.

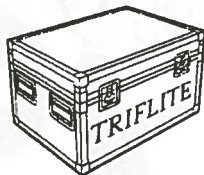
For the skaters themselves there's just a pair of wedges slung between two PA clusters to keep them in time with what the audience are hearing. "There are some dead spots on the ice," reported Downes, "and in reverberant rooms like these, the skaters could end up listening to the echo, which would knock their timing all to crap. The two wedges, with a slightly topky mix through them, is just enough to keep them on time."

The PA's role is all about coverage and, under these conditions, not a hard job. Steeper venues like the Nynex Arena required more system up above the grid, but so long as you thought about speaker placement, which Downes obviously did, there were no nasty surprises. Effects were the crucial element, the music often being merely incidental. This in many ways is a mime show, especially for the gags, and Downes' toughest job is watching for the sound effects cues - little skill, but great concentration.

Overall, I found the show slightly imbalanced. Too much ensemble work, not enough dueting. If Dean aspires to become a choreographer, and judging by the reviews of his work for the English National Ballet last year he's headed that way, then he needs to revive his penchant for the big *pas de deux*. In the same way you couldn't go and watch them perform Ravel's Bolero for two hours, so too I found this wanting. The flying was good, but it was a trick, not a display of skill to rival Bolero. The show needed something of panache to provide a focused high point to what is otherwise two hours of lavish entertainment.

Gilbert also said: "This makes for some pretty effects but diminishes the skaters' role. Once the ice is no longer a big blank page waiting to be filled by the skaters' scribbles, all they have to do is not fall over."

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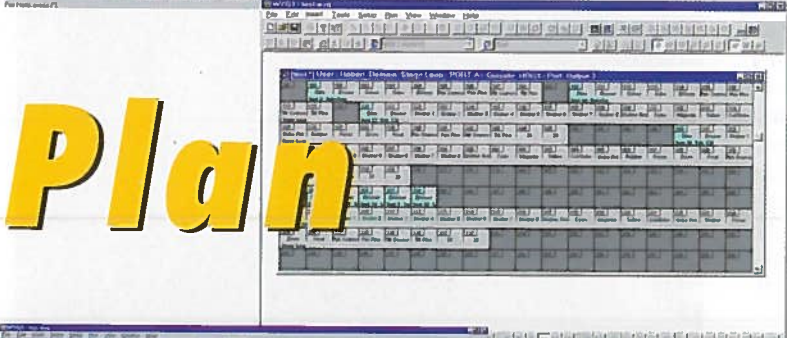
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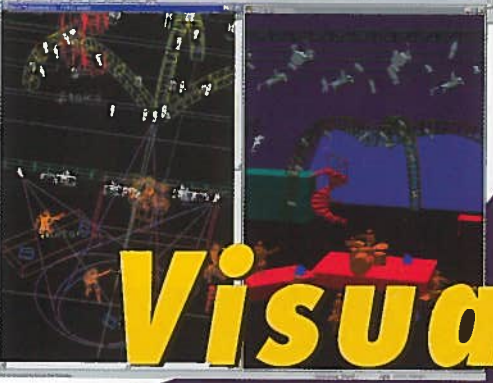
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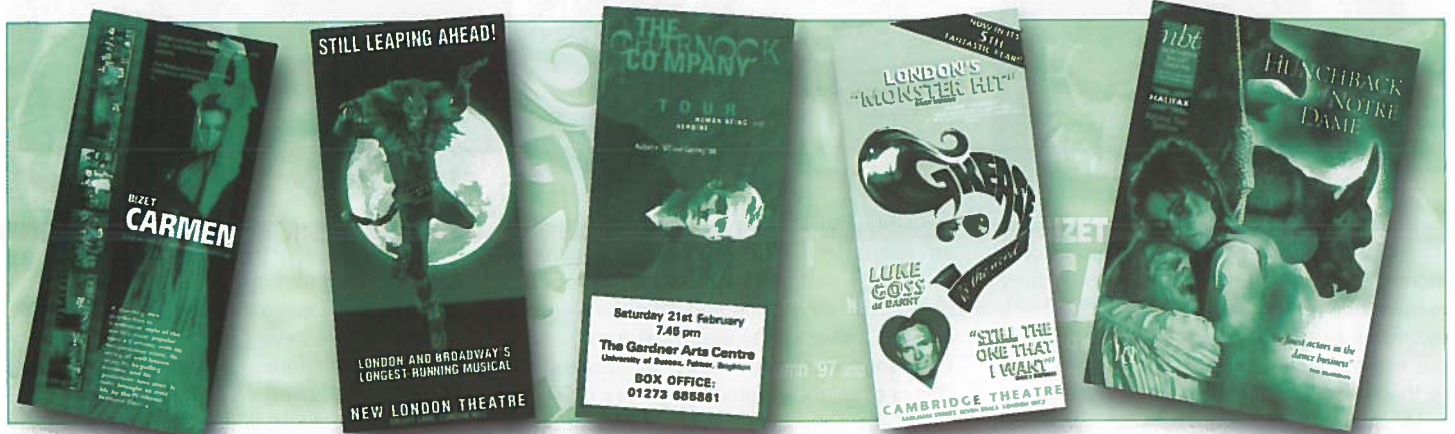


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# ART OF THE MATTER

Graham Walne looks at why National Lottery funding may not be all that the Arts world expected



People's response to the UK National Lottery is frequently similar to that of landslide election victories - no one will own up to taking part, but every week, 35 million of us do buy a ticket. In these terms, and in relationship to the literally thousands of arts projects now underway in this country, it must be true that the National Lottery has touched everyone's life in some way or another.

Lotteries are not a new phenomenon: the Romans raised money this way and so have the British on and off since the 17th Century; currently more than 160 nations run Lottery games of one sort or another. The UK National Lottery was launched in 1994 and by August 1997 had received 3,254 applications for funding; by that date 1,562 projects had been awarded £804m, 411 projects had been completed, 614 applications were then pending a decision and 1,077 applications had been rejected. Camelot, who run the UK game have the licence till September 2001.

Our Arts Lottery concentrates almost (but not quite totally) on capital projects, the majority of which are at the moment concerned with a refurbished or extended building, rather than something totally new, and this perhaps points up to the serious lack of even maintenance of the national fabric over the last 25 years. The sixties were great theatre building years, the seventies strong on refurbishment, the eighties . . . ? The result is that, having been told there were previously undreamed of amounts of money washing around, all the big projects, which had schemes prepared years in frustrated hope, were able to cross out 'GLC' and write 'Arts Council' and get to the table early. Thus the Royal Opera, Sadler's Wells, the Royal Albert Hall, the South Bank, the Globe and RADA were all early contenders for a total amount in excess of £300m. The result of this was that the regions felt left out, but encouraged that so much money seemed to be available.

The apparent plenty in the Lottery department of the Arts Council is not matched by the funding elsewhere in Great Peter Street. Despite Mr Blair stating in 1995 that 'investment in the arts is vital to the future of this country', the recent and continuing

standstill in the grant to the Arts Council (at £184.6m) is reported as being £34m less in real terms than five years ago; it is certainly £1.5m less than last year and Mr Brown has reported that it will be cut by a further £1.1m next year. Regional Arts Boards have reported that it would be very difficult to take on new clients as a result of the standstill.

An Arts Council spokeswoman has estimated that their grant would have been £219m had it at least kept pace with inflation; many people also believe that arts inflation is higher than the national average. Glasgow Citizens last year lost 10% of its funding although the Scottish Arts Council helped out with a special grant of £18,000 - nevertheless, the company's position redefines 'shoestring' but it continues to produce highly acclaimed productions. Many other nurturing grounds are under threat - the King's Head, the Gate, Greenwich and the Donmar have all reported serious problems; D'Oyle Carte has already gone dark. Meanwhile the RSC posts a £1.6m deficit but this pales besides that of the ENO at £2.5m. This is said to be behind the Culture Minister's suggestion that ENO move into the ROH, although Richard Eyre's review is assumed to be rejecting this, as has just about every other organisation questioned.

Deficits can easily be created if costs are fixed and the public just choose not to come; theatre is, after all, a risk, otherwise we would all be millionaires. Some attendance patterns are more predictable than others, however. Many live venues record a gap in attendance from the 20s to 40s age group and arts practitioners seem to be divided about the long term implications; many seem resigned but patient that everyone reaches 40 eventually and acquires a lifestyle which might just involve theatre-going. Others suggest that the accepted patterns no longer apply and theatre needs to work harder to maintain its audience.

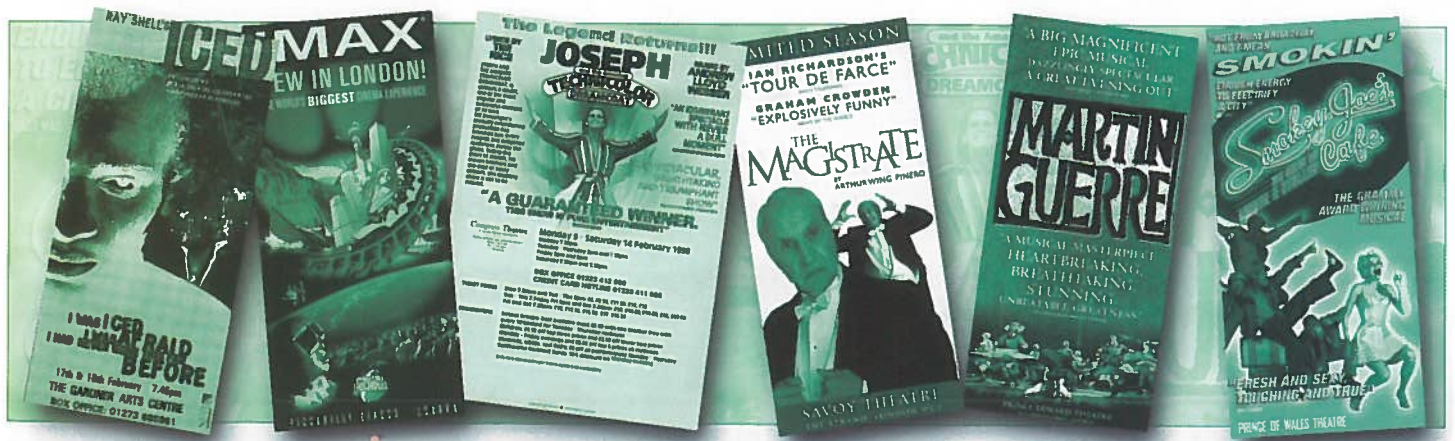
Certainly tomorrow's theatregoer will bring a greater experience of cinema-going to inform their enjoyment of the live experience. Film is increasing in popularity - in the eighties the lowest annual attendance was 54m, last year it was 139m although this doesn't compare with the 1.5bn attendances in the forties.

Nevertheless, the greater investment in UK film making, some of this through the National Lottery, is having a beneficial effect, even if many UK films are also finding it hard to get distribution, one reason why the Arts Council is keen to see a chain of independent cinemas.

It seems to me that cinemas can teach theatre some useful lessons: when did you last go to a cinema and accept that your seat might not see every inch of the screen? But theatre architects are obliged to do this all the time - numbers, not comfort, drive the seating layouts. Cinemas promote their wares so that there is no illusion about what people will see; theatres expect people to attend out of a sense of duty and trail almost nothing of the content of the production. Cinemas time performances to suit their public, theatres time performances to suit themselves. Generations which have grown up with modern cinema and little else are not likely to be attracted to, or be as comfortable in, a traditional theatre if it goes on like this.

Meanwhile, even the RSC has posted a decline in attendance from 74% in London in '94-'95 to 65% and at Stratford from 78% to 72%. Since the RSC enjoys a lower subsidy per seat than the other big three national companies, such a reduction hits hard. Nationwide, regional producing houses report similar figures: Chichester's '97 figures are down almost 10% for example. Elsewhere anomalies mean attendances can't be the only barometer of success; Salisbury reported an increase in attendance, but also an increase in deficit.

The National Lottery wasn't designed to be an answer to these problems, but the vast sums promised probably deluded the theatre community into thinking that some of them would be solved by osmosis if nothing else. However, Arts for Everyone came to the rescue as a sop to the critics who said we would end up with empty theatres if money wasn't put into people not places. A4E so far has been a mixed bag with professional deficits being wiped off here, and amateur companies being funded there. Wherever assessors gather, they swap horror stories and A4E has produced some treasures.



Are we fair to criticise the Arts Council for unnecessary bureaucracy and occasional incompetence? Perhaps we are, since they existed before the Lottery and had a track record of assessing applications and handing out money. Nevertheless, other funders, such as the Sports Council for example, operate a faster and cleaner system. The Arts Council has frequently been criticised for the opacity of its decision making process, recently by no less an organisation than the National Campaign for the Arts.

Certainly the assessment of Arts Lottery applications is a complex process with only the independent assessor's report being available to the applicant, together with an explanation of why applications fail. Unlike other bodies (such as the European Regional Development Fund) the Arts Council has only recently let slip that it assesses applications on a points system but will not tell applicants what the system is. The new three-stage process follows this pattern, a real improvement on what went before, but with more opportunities to turn schemes down . . .

This is becoming essential as funding dries up. Projections from this year are that eventually each Regional Arts Board will have only £9m per annum for capital projects costing over £1m in its area, a central fund will take care of national projects but this is insufficient to finance them all. Last summer the Arts Council issued details of a new three-stage application process, but sadly launched the scheme backwards by sending out new application forms, then consulting assessors and finally writing new guidelines. They admitted that applicants could be sending back the forms before the assessors had been briefed or even before any advice was

available. An assessment training session I attended had to ignore its agenda because of the weight and nature of questions from the floor. This fiasco could and should have been avoided. Ironically the new three-stage process is an improvement on earlier models and my clients certainly are producing more objective work as a result. One outcome is that some applicants are not proceeding to the bitter end but settling for a smaller project which they can fund themselves from their 'match' funding. This results in more control, an earlier completion, and fewer future strings.

The latest Arts Council statement likely to cause blood pressure to rise concerns an impending review of the need for flytowers since the Council feels there are opposing views and consequently questions the value of the high cost of such structures. Whilst it is true that modern scenic design rarely incorporates flying as part of the experience, it seems to me to be undemocratic in the least to restrict designers to a static or electronic experience. I am tempted to suggest that only a few years ago we would have been criticised for not considering a fly tower.

In some ways the Lottery has been a force for good despite the inevitable (and sometimes valid) criticism. Organisations have been obliged to raise their eyes from the balance sheet and think about the reason why the company exists in the first place, what form of theatre actually suits their programme, who it is for, and so on. These might seem the kind of fundamental questions it is fatuous to ask, but many a theatre company cannot answer them to the satisfaction of the Arts Council assessors. Despite Oliver Twist's view of the proceedings in today's world of funding, to simply exist is no justification for wanting more.

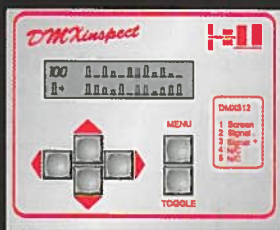
I am informed that every Lottery ultimately becomes too attractive to a National Treasury and is 'raided' for funding to prop up the main programmes. Ours is no exception setting aside £220m of the new 'Opportunities Fund' for out-of-school clubs. The money comes from the mid-week game which provides an income additional to £6bn which Camelot originally projected (and exceeded) for the Saturday game.

As usual in life, nothing is black-and-white. Yes, the original Lottery was not intended to have such a close relationship with Public Spending - but yes, the money being used is additional to what was envisaged and isn't being taken from elsewhere - it's just not available for the elsewhere!

Clauses in the draft National Lottery Bill which set up the new sixth 'Good cause' were designed to give the Government more flexibility in their use of the Lottery funding in future. In some countries this creative accounting has totally eroded the central Treasury grant to the arts so that in Western Australia for example the Lottery (considerably older than ours and much more experienced) now concentrates on revenue and project funding, not capital, because virtually no central government funding survives.

I would hope that in a few years, when we have refurbished much of our theatre stock, when we have built the flagship, that we can then think not about where we should have been years ago, but genuinely about where we want to go tomorrow and what real good this money can do. It will be then, when we are least focused on bricks and mortar, that the Treasury is likeliest to cast avaricious eyes again. Dream a little, it may be necessary tomorrow.

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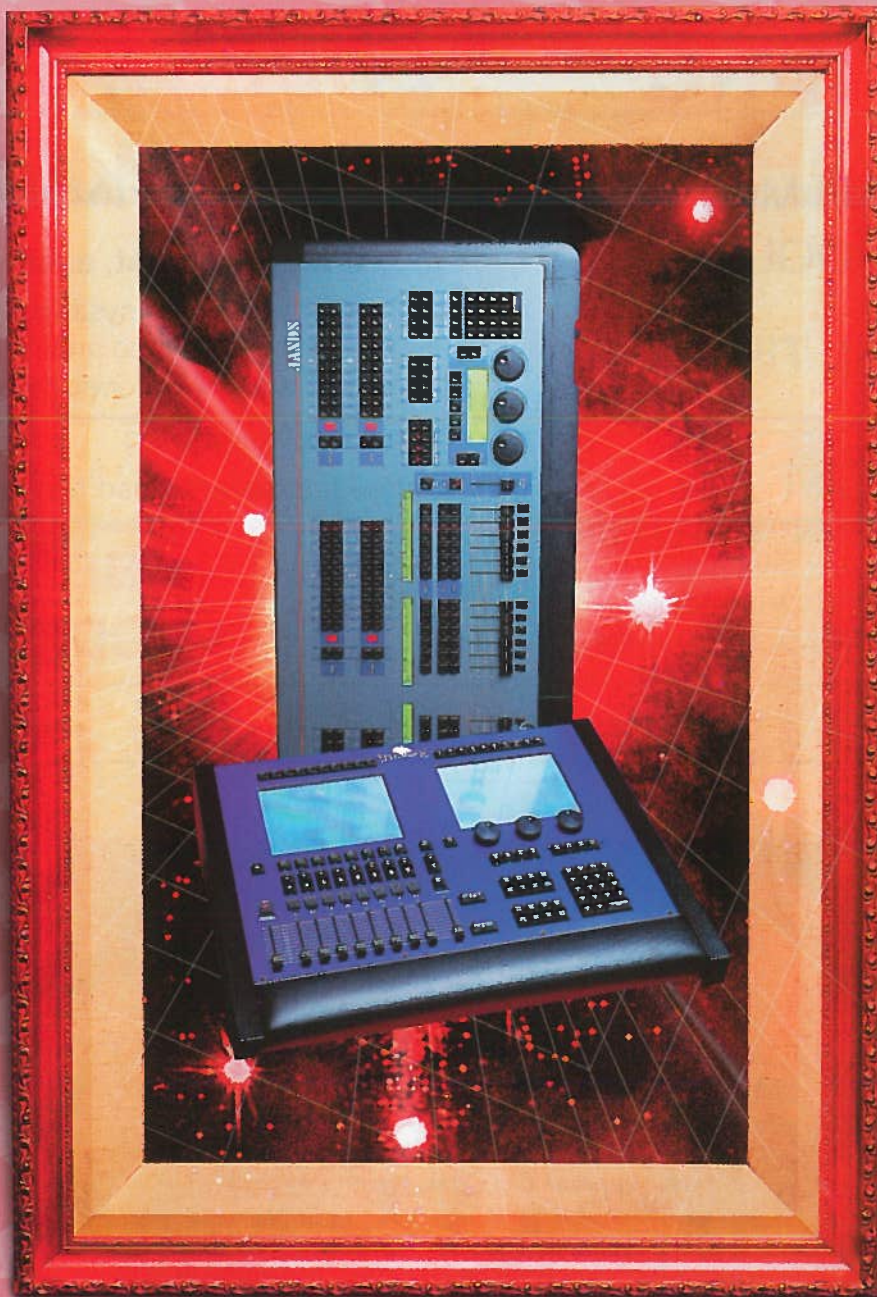
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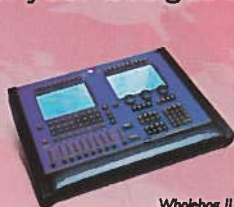


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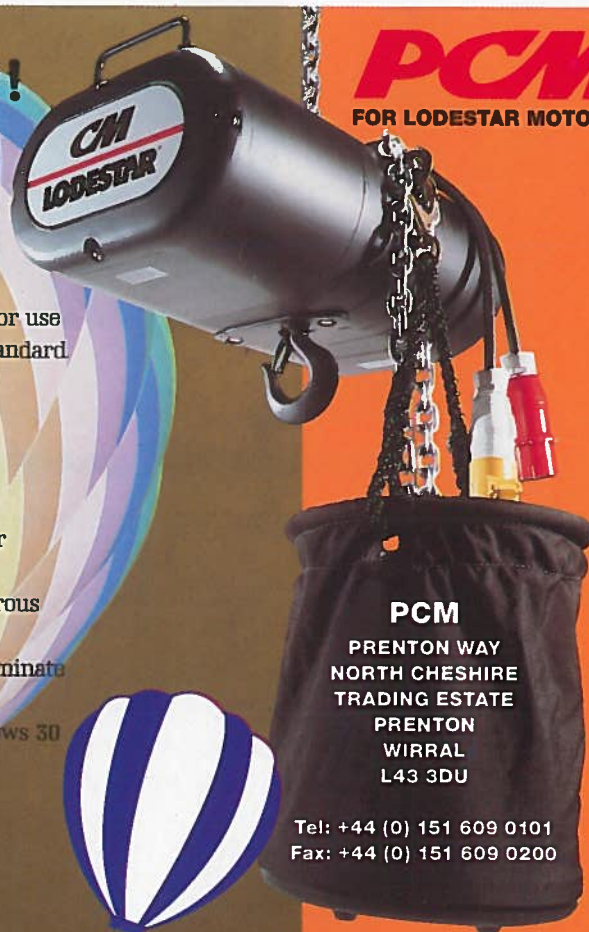
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# Arms Length in the Stalls . . . Ian Herbert

It's good to be able to start this column with some not entirely bad news: Lord Gowrie's last Arts Council budget has (like some of its predecessors) used both creativity and prudence in its attempt to minimise the damage being inflicted by a blockheaded Treasury and a slogan-parroting Chancellor on Britain's arts world, one of the biggest earning sectors of the nation's industry. Taking a percentage of a percentage point away from the grants for some of their biggest customers is likely to cause less havoc than taking away the entire grant for smaller ones (London Arts Board please note) and the council's determination to trim their own in-house expenditure by half a million pounds is evidence that their art is in the right place.

And we have new Chairmen for the Arts Council and Covent Garden. I hope that these major appointments, of Gerry Robinson to follow Gowrie and Colin Southgate to fill the Chadlington gap (isn't that a motorway service station? If not, it ought to be), will be equally rewarding in the long run. These gentlemen each carry odd financially linked baggage with them: Southgate will combine his chairmanship of the Royal Opera with the running of EMI, a company that records many of the House's most expensive artists; Robinson will chair the Arts Council (one day a week) as someone who also has a very large stake in the entertainment business. Still, I read in a recent Stage that Mr Robinson is chairman of BSkyB as well as chairman of Granada. This seems like a rather larger conflict of interest than putting in the odd unpaid day in Great Peter Street, and you don't hear Sky or Granada complaining.

As head of Granada he earns £900,000 a year for starters, and there can be little doubt that he's worth every penny of it if he's the man responsible for the doubling of the company's share price over five years. Usefully for Mr Robinson, this means that his own shares and options in the company have doubled too, to around £10 million. This is obviously a handy man to have as a fund-raiser, and the Royal Court have chosen well to get him on board. Presumably, if the last million

for Sloane Square is slow coming in, Mr Robinson can flog them a few shares. But can a man who earns £18k a week understand the possibility that several hundred people will lose job opportunities at the Gate, which has just lost its £35K annual grant, for lack of the equivalent of two weeks of his salary?

Mr Robinson is a Labour supporter, we gather - he gave £10K to the party for their last election campaign. From the figures above you can see that he didn't have to dig very deep to find that ten grand, and those who reckon the Arts Council chair is a plum post will tell you that he got it very cheap. There are plenty of others who'll tell you, however, that they wouldn't take the job even if it were handsomely paid. Lord Gowrie, who left the Government because he couldn't afford to live on a ministerial salary, has been putting in a full 35 hour week there. Lord Palumbo's contribution was to provide his own chauffeur and pay for the decorations. What will the Council get from one day a week Gerry?

The indications are that they'll get at least a flavour of strong management, something which you could argue has been lacking in an organisation which instead of making loud noises about the neglect of the arts in this country and promoting exciting policies for their renewal has sat tight (pausing only to count its lottery winnings from time to time) under an increasing barrage of questions about the effectiveness of its own role. Word has it that Chris Smith wants to know what the Council has to say in defence of itself and of the arts, and presumably Gerry Robinson will be encouraging them to speak their minds.

I hear, too, that there's excitement, not panic, in the Arts Council corridors. The feeling there is that the pressure is on them to dream big dreams, not pussyfoot around dishing out a fiver here to this disabled poetry group, a fiver there to that ethnically challenged morris dance academy. (What's Arts for Everyone for, after all?) The Arts Council we see in a year's time is likely to be a very different body from the one we have grown to know and, in some cases, love.

Let us hope that the new model Council, whatever the politics of its new chairman (and new Secretary-General, whose name you'll know by the time you read this) will be able to re-establish what was a sacred principle, that of arms-length operation, preserving us from a Government too directly involved in creative, artistic decision-making. We now have an Arts Minister who is prepared to make his own views felt, for instance, in floating the idea that Covent Garden and ENO share the same building and going on to appoint his own committee to investigate the idea. Shouldn't we have an Arts Council that will say 'Lay off, Smith, that's our job. We're the non-partisan experts and we will make the recommendations based on our in-depth knowledge of the field.' It's not too encouraging that the only similar body the Council has set up recently is a committee to investigate the abolition of fly towers, headed not by a theatre consultant, but by an architect.

Independence is the key question - is Robinson going to be able to fight the arts corner? It was a depressing experience, in the Thatcher years, to watch so many previously neutral arts bodies being crammed with Tory placemen. The great and the good who had promoted the best interests of broadcasting and the arts became the small and the not-so-good. I was outraged when Lord Chadlington, or Gummer Minor as his schoolfellows will remember him, approved the allocation of lottery millions to Covent Garden and then went off hotfoot to spend them; it didn't look much better when Mary Allen, who as Secretary General of the Arts Council was deeply involved in Lottery allocations, went off to join him there, especially without an interview and without telling her then boss, Lord Gowrie.

Can we hope that this new blood will be any better at restoring ideas of integrity to public office? I have a sneaking suspicion that with the restoration of integrity, efficiency would not be far behind.

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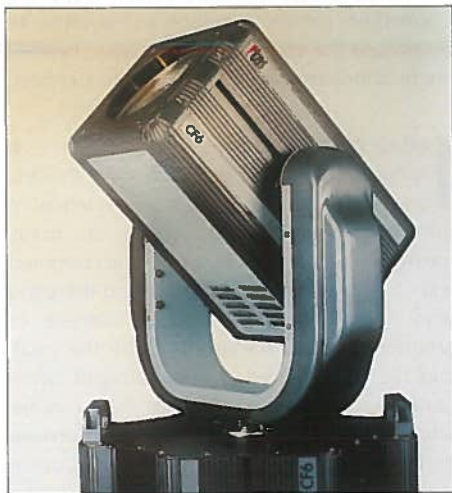
## New Images

ALTO Imaging Group have launched a new range of display systems based around an LCD optical engine. There are three products in the range - Vision 40, Vision 52 and Vision 58.

Using an innovative LCD projection system instead of conventional CRT these units offer high image clarity, but are slimline enough to reduce the amount of floor space required. The robust optical system ensures bright, attractive displays, even in environments with a high degree of ambient light. Image quality is improved as there is no image flickering, and no RGB convergence requirements.

For further information contact ALTO Imaging Group in Staines, telephone (01784) 462002.

## TAS's New Head



Italian lighting manufacturer TAS has introduced a new DMX-controlled moving head fixture aimed at live stage applications. The Cf6 utilises a 575W MSR/2 lamp from Philips, with a fresnel lens providing a soft-edged beam. The unit is lightweight (29kg), silent in operation and incorporates CMY full colour mixing and choice of beam shapes. The fixture uses a parabolic glass reflector with achromatic finishing to reduce the internal temperature thereby avoiding the need for forced ventilation.

For further information, contact TAS in Italy, telephone +39 376 780497.

## ShowMan Debuts!

Richmond Sound Design Ltd, manufacturers of sound and show control equipment have released ShowMan show control software for Windows NT.

Two years in the coding by NT expert Loren Wilton, ShowMan duplicates on the affordable PC platform, the power of the company's true multitasking standard, Stage Manager. ShowMan boasts all of the features of Stage Manager, including multiple simultaneous cue lists, manually fired cues, the full command sets of MIDI, MIDI Show Control and MIDI Machine Control, and switchable time code lock. ShowMan also incorporates a fast-update feature allowing cues to be retimed in cadence with musical or stage action.

For details contact Richmond Sound Design in Vancouver, Canada, telephone +1 604 664 5860.

## Towards 2000

US company Towards 2000 have introduced the new Blimp Board, an inflatable billboard and/or projection screen. The sign can be inflated in less than 30 seconds and provides a 20ft high by 20ft wide billboard surface for a painted sign during day-time or a huge front/rear projection surface for slide, video or image projection at night!

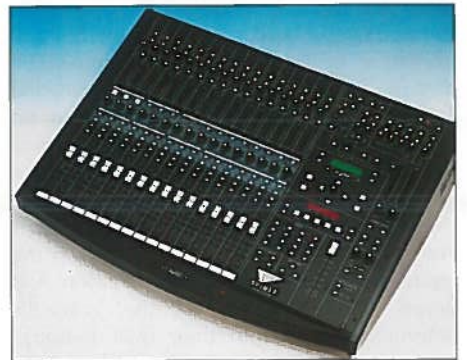
For further details contact Towards 2000 in Burbank, telephone +1 (818) 557 0903.

## Lytequest Fly

LyteQuest Pro has introduced four new lighting effects. Described as a 'dual moonflower' effect, the Moon Rider 2 rotates 360 degrees vertically on a 360 degree rotating base. Operating in a similar fashion, LyteQuest Pro's Moon Rider 3 is described as a 'triple moonflower' effect, whilst a third new product, the Fly 2, a dual multi-coloured ball effect that also rotates 360 degrees vertically on a 360 degree rotating base, is suitable for those venues limited by low ceilings.

For details contact Gemini Sound Products in Waterlooville, telephone (01705) 591771.

## Spirit Digital



Spirit have introduced the Digital 328, the first in a new range of digital mixing consoles. Digital 328 offers an intuitive hardware-based interface that will be familiar to anyone who has ever worked with an analogue 8-bus console.

It comes in a 32/8/2 frame size that includes 16 mic/line input channels with Spirit's Ultramic+ preamps, High Pass Filters and inserts and 16 tape return channels - all routable to groups and mix. Five pairs of stereo inputs have also been included, bringing the console's input count up to 42. Mic/line inputs, tape returns and group and master levels are accessed in banks of 16 via three fader bank buttons. Every input has access to identical facilities, which include three-band parametric EQ, four external effects sends, and access to two internal Lexicon effects units with editable and storable parameters. Two floating stereo dynamics units are assignable to any input or output.

For those using a large number of sequenced samplers and keyboards, an optional eight channel analogue I/O interface will be available from launch. Connecting two interfaces to the TDIF ports will allow 32 analogue line/ins with full channel facilities and the possibility of 16 track analogue recording. Other interfaces planned include a Pro Tools option on pairs of AES/EBU connectors, and an analogue mic preamp option - turning Digital 328 into a 32 mic input 8-bus console for theatre and live performance.

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

## PLASA AT SIB 98, RIMINI HOTEL POLO

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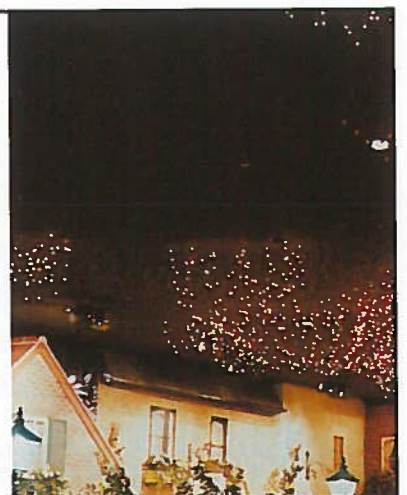
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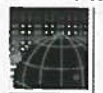
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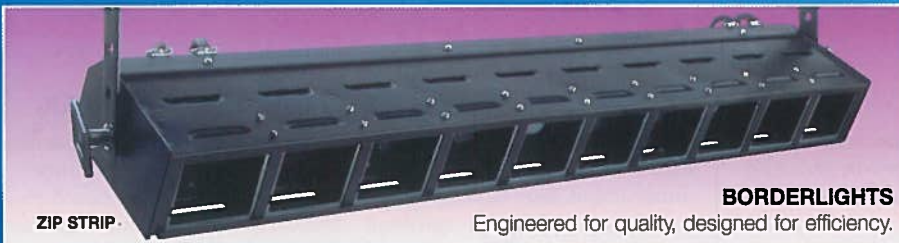
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### L+SI Talks to Artistic Licence's Wayne Howell

Wayne Howell will be a familiar figure to many readers of L+SI. The man who founded Artistic Licence 10 years ago this year has been one of the industry's true innovators, producing a stream of products aimed at bringing greater freedom to technical production.

Howell has found success with numerous products including the Dimmer-Chip, first seen in 1990 and subsequently used in dimmers the world over; Light-CAD followed, introduced in 1991, a package which allowed shows to be pre-programmed and copied to a control console; CDTC, a product which allowed the audio-visual industry to synchronise audio CDs by converting digital information from a standard CD player into a timecode output, to say nothing of the steadily increasing range of DMX boxes-of-tricks - Micro-Scope, DMX-Relay, DMX-Split, MIDI-DMX.



Wayne Howell.

board operator, and as technical support on numerous major tours, including Queen, Eurythmics, Bruce Springsteen, Madonna and Prince.

During his time at Avolites, Howell's role as one-half of the R&D team proved to be invaluable, as it gave him the freedom to handle entire design projects such as the Rolacue console - one of the first ever computerised lighting control consoles to be produced - the basic concept of which is still in production at Avolites.

In 1987 he was involved with the installation of the new lighting control system at London's Hippodrome nightclub. This landmark project involved an incredible 800 control channels at a time when the norm was 90. The scale of this project allowed Howell to combine his experience in production, service and R&D to great effect.

Artistic Licence was formed the following year in order to give Howell the freedom to move in a new direction, both technically and commercially. He built the company on the principle of using freelance designers with the appropriate skills to get the best possible results, and using his own experience as a service manager to work closely with his clients. His experience of physics, electronics, lighting and good old-fashioned problem solving has led to the succession of innovative products - some of which have been outlined briefly above.

The nature of the work meant that technical support on major tours continued on occasion. It was in Los Angeles in 1994, whilst touring

with Pink Floyd, that Howell experienced one of those moments that make you think you've got things just about right.

The crew were using a disused aircraft hangar at Norton Airforce Base - the only available building large enough to accommodate the rig. In the early evening, he and the rest of the crew were working on the final adjustments to the special effects system, which Howell had designed himself. As they worked, the band came on stage for their first dress rehearsal and as they struck the first chord of 'Shine On You Crazy Diamond', the entire crew stopped to watch and listen. Howell knew instinctively that he was in the right business.

He has seen the rock and roll industry grow up considerably over the years. He remembers the days when everything that was needed for a show was put together in somebody's shed. Now the industry has numerous major production companies, the sheds are huge and the crews are highly professional. The big players treat the business far more seriously, taking the emphasis away from the individuals. Artistic Licence sits somewhere between these two poles - on the one hand it is a highly professional company enjoying success in the modern industry, while on the other hand it has, says Howell, held firmly onto some of the original rock and roll ethos of 'Crazy idea - let's do it!'. With a growing product range, a client list ranging from the Rolling Stones to The Imperial War Museum, and sales and marketing resting in the very capable hands of Tracey Patterson, herself an experienced lighting operator, Wayne Howell and his company have much to look forward to.

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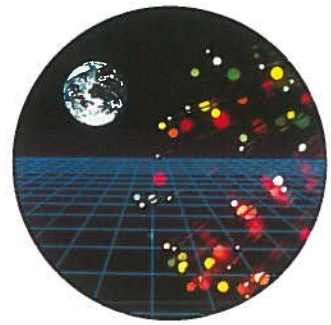
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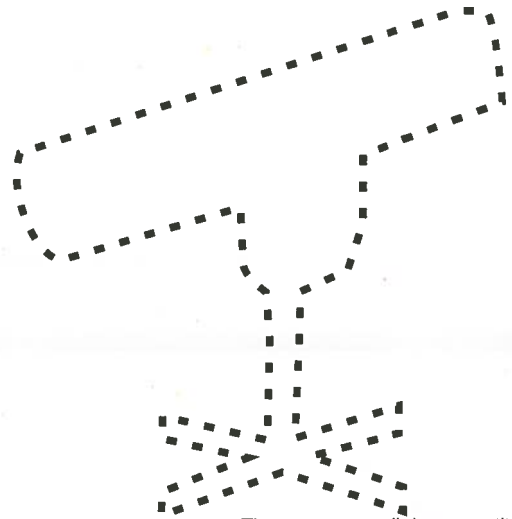
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