

# Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

February 1999

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

## Burning Bright

- London's Tiger Tiger

## The Return of Martin Guerre

- at London's Prince Edward Theatre

## Road Movie

- The Titanic sets sail on a world tour

## Rod and Reba

- Rod Stewart and Reba McIntyre

## Future Sound of

## Acacia Avenue

- Technology in our millennium homes

## Focus on China

- L&SI looks at the Chinese market

## The Corrs

- Talk on Corners at Wembley

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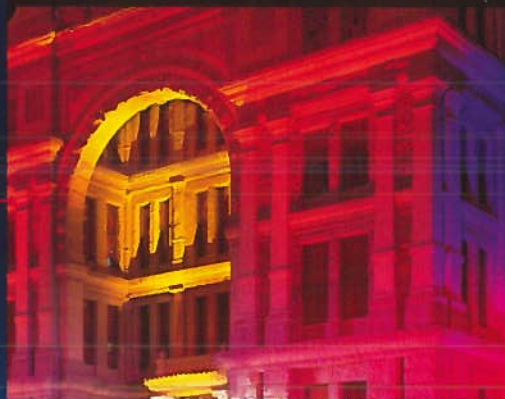
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## Virtually Saudi

**The first use of virtual scenery in a live event to be executed on a grand scale took place recently in the Arabian desert.**

The show - 'Janadria' - was a centennial celebration of the founding of the Saudi nation. The event was a mammoth undertaking produced by those masters of the mighty spectacle, Unusual Services and Major Michael Parker. "This was a massive show by any standards," said Unusual Services MD Alan Jacobi, "requiring an immense amount of co-ordination between the companies we contracted."

One of the key contributions came from Screenco. "This was the biggest TV screen I've ever been asked to assemble," said Screenco's Chris Milnes. "We supplied 20 tons of it in two dolly-mounted parts that split and tracked across the stage." A total of 98 Jumbotron JTS35 modules were employed, producing a record-breaking 205sq.m of screen area 23.5m wide by 8.75m tall. "To the best of our knowledge this is the biggest mobile CRT screen ever assembled," said Screenco MD Dave Crump. "It is definitely the biggest mobile Jumbotron ever assembled, being twice the area of the monster Stones screen."

For visual imagery, creative director of imagery Martin Jangaard (Insight Interactive Ltd) produced an opening sequence of jaw-dropping drama. "We were following a script for the opening," he says, "but the images were entirely our interpretation. Using Media 100 and After Effects, we took the visual story from The Big Bang, through to the creation of the Earth and the formation of the Arabian land mass."

All this as the screens majestically tracked towards each other, and with great theatrical timing, met just as the World was formed. "The tracking system was a development of the one we produced for the Genesis tour back in 1990," said Jacobi, "but this one involved movement of much greater mass at higher speed - one metre per second for each screen."

Accuracy was the important factor, as Unusual's motion control expert Dave Weatherhead explained: "We had the two screens coming to a stop just two millimetres apart, and then tensioned the system to pull them into contact," he said. Significantly, the screen played a double role, being used as an element of the stage set. "John Maher from Pinewood Studios built a huge replica of Musmak, a famous Arabian Fortress," said Milnes. "The main gate was the stage centre piece, flanked by the two halves of the Jumbotron. The screens were fed still image of the wings of the fort, keyed exactly to the central set. By judicious use of lighting, and it must be said some painstaking applications of paint, screen and set became indistinguishable."

Lighting elements for the show were provided by Theatre Projects, sourcing equipment from both London and their newly-opened Dubai offices. The rig, supplied for LD Robert Orno, consisted of over 500 Par cans, plus 60 four-cell groundrows and a number of ETC Source Four luminaires, all



controlled via an Arri Imagine 500 console. Moving elements consisted of 52 VL2C spot luminaires, programmed by Stuart Porter and controlled via an Artisan. TP also provided an eight-person crew for a three-week period, led by crew chief Ian Bagshaw.

Sound was supplied by London-based Dobson Sound Productions, and included d&b audiotechnik E3, 402, 702 and 902 speakers. The show was run off two Akai DR8 hard disc machines with an Akai S1100 sampler, and a Yamaha PM3500 mixed FOH. Sound design was by John Del'Nero.

## Stop Press

Just as L&S1 was clearing the final pages for print, news came in that Vari-Lite International has served a writ on Martin Professional for patent infringement. Full story next issue. See No Comment this month on pages 48-49.

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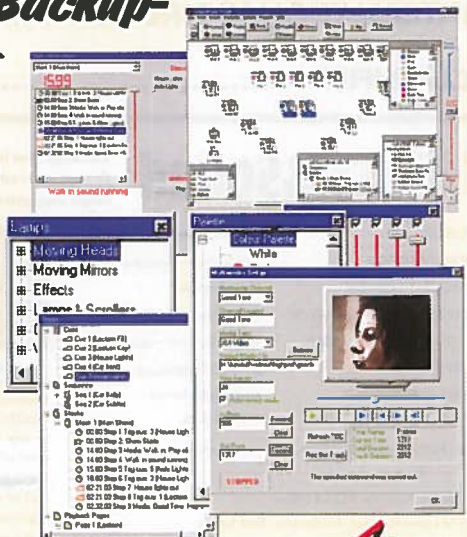
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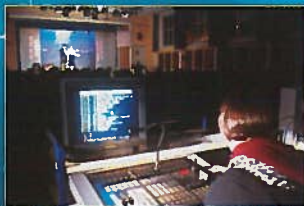
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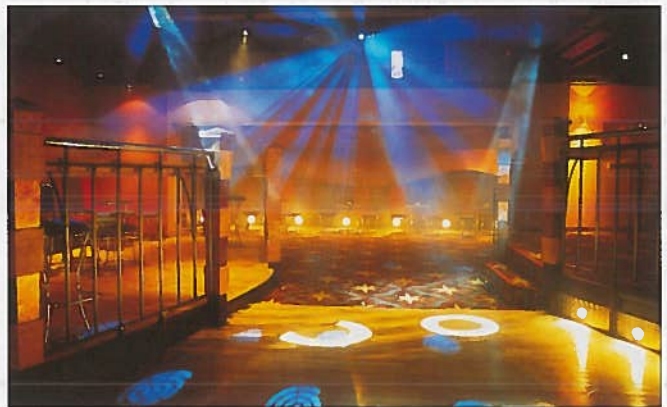


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**News  
Round-Up**



## Martin Meets the Millennium

**Located on a prime site in Plymouth's famous bar and club area, Union Street, the Millennium Complex represents Northern Leisure's biggest club venture to date.**

Housed in an old cinema complex, formerly Oz/Blonds nightclub, the entire site has undergone an extensive refurbishment, with the whole project being completed in only 12 weeks. The result is a stunning multi-themed bar and club complex consisting of two 750-capacity clubs on the first floor - the Millennium Discotheque and Lancons Nightclub. Below the club level lies The Boulevard, an indoor street design with a Spanish theme. Three individually themed bars are located off the main Piazza, each with their own shopfront - The Beach Bar, The Sports Bar and Murphy's traditional Irish pub. Throughout the Complex, lighting and sound installers Over Audio specified a large amount of Martin Professional equipment. The Millennium Discotheque's lighting rig, which can be raised or lowered via remote control, includes one Mac I200, 24 Pro 812 Roboscans, four Pro I220 Roboscans, one RoboColor III system, six RoboColor II systems and eight Destroyer effects, with control via Martin 3064 and 2518 controllers. Atmospheric effects are provided by two Pro 2000 smoke machines.

Lancon's, meanwhile, features four Martin Pro I200 Roboscans, four Robocolor III systems, 16 Pro 812 Roboscans and eight Destroyers controlled by Martin 2510 and 2518 controllers, with a further two Pro 2000 smoke machines providing the necessary murk. More Martin fixtures can also be found in the Piazza and the Beach Bar.

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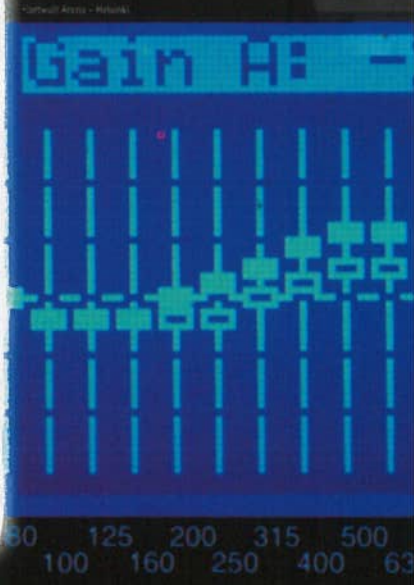
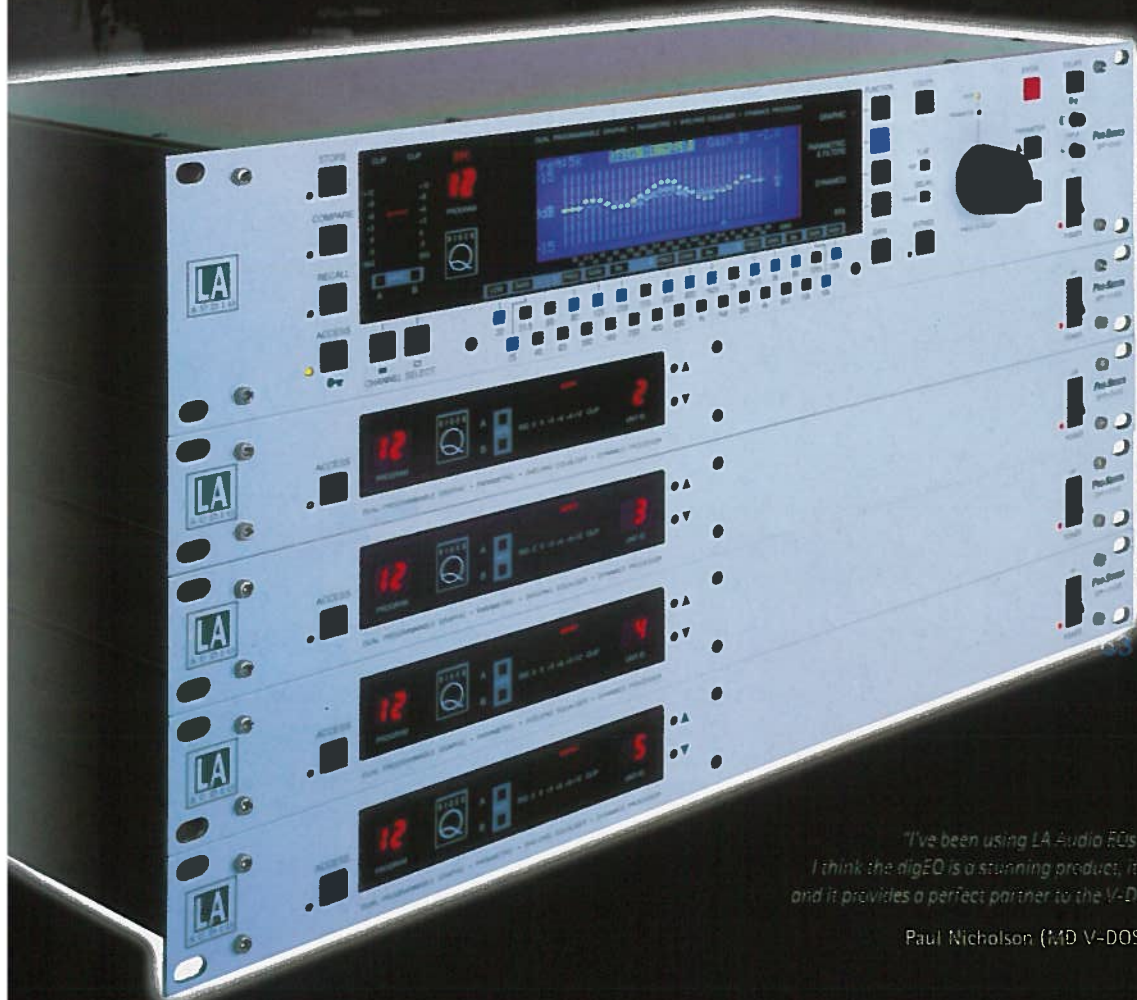




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## £22M Development

**Scottish-based Northern Light have completed the first phase of the £22million redevelopment of the Hanley Cultural Quarter in Stoke-on-Trent, with the supply of a sound and lighting package for the Victoria Hall, built in the last century. The second stage of the project - the refurbishment of the Regent Theatre, situated 500 metres away - is scheduled for completion in the early summer.**

With a new structure quickly taking place above the old venue, Hanley's skyline has been transformed. The Grade II-listed Victoria Hall was one of the favourite concert halls of Sir Thomas Beecham in the early part of the century. Seating 1,340 people, it boasts greatly improved front-of-house facilities, with a new foyer that stretches across three storeys, containing new offices and bars.

The redevelopment has been funded by National Lottery cash via the Arts Council, the European Regional Development Fund, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and private sponsors. The council, meanwhile, have entered into partnership with the Ambassador Theatre Group, who will be managing the venues. Norwest Holst are the building contractors whilst all the technical infrastructure was specified by Technical Planning International, headed by Dick Brett and Roger Fox, who, in turn, brought in specialist consultant Rick Clarke to detail the audio requirements. The job was put out to tender and Northern Light won the contract to fit out both venues - which is worth in the region of £750,000 to the company. Northern Light director, Mike Smyth, was appointed project manager.

The lighting system had to accommodate the fact that the venue would be used for both concert and theatre-style applications. As a result, Roger Fox decided to go for a dual rig approach - a permanent concert rig and a second theatre rig which can be adjusted from show to show. To facilitate the switch between the two, he spec'd 96 ADB dimmers, 38 of which have alternating outlets fed by contactors so that operators at the venue can switch from the concert to the theatre rig in a matter of seconds. The rig itself is a mix of Par cans and ETC Source Fours, plus a small amount of kit that was rescued from the old hall and refurbished. An Express 125 control desk sits at the helm.

Much of the audio equipment for both schemes has been sourced from Sound Dept in Abingdon, and includes loudspeakers from their three distributed ranges - Community, EAW and Sound Advance - plus amplification from Crest Audio. The speaker design was defined by the absence of a proscenium arch, and Community enclosures are flown up in the roof bridges to give long throw projection. Eight Community 915s, run full-range, are directed to the sides of the auditorium and four of the larger Community 920s are pointed at the stalls, while 24 EAW JF60s, on different delay settings, are positioned in the balcony and under stalls. Four Crest Vs 450s are assigned to drive the JF60s and four Vs1100s drive the Community enclosures. Processing equipment was supplied by TOA and XTA along with a 16-channel Soundcraft Spirit mixer. However, the cable infrastructure will handle up to 36 ways of microphone, allowing visiting productions to patch their own desks into the resident system.

Northern Light also provided the full paging system and stage management control, most of which was custom-made. Because of the lack of ceiling height in the box office, and the requirement for wide dispersion they used two Sound Advance CT8s, also supplied by Sound Dept, as part of the public address in the foyer. The Victoria Hall will now operate as a multi-purpose venue; meanwhile Northern Light continue on site at the Regent Theatre.

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## Club Millennium

Manchester-based Kelco have completed an audio contract in a new-build out-of-town club and bar complex in Dudley for Healthstone plc.

Club Millennium is the brainchild of legendary Birmingham nightclub operator, Eddie Fewtrell and Kelco have recently completed the third development phase - putting sound and lighting into an extension to the 2,000-capacity club's feeder bar. Kelco's design was



based around eight stacks of Turbosound TFL-760Hs skeleton Floodlights and TSW-718s for the dance sound, while on the stage they have flown six stacks of Impact 121s, with the complementary Impact 180 subs on the ground. Another pair of Impact 121s, sited in the control console, function as DJ monitors.

Peripheral areas of the club are served by 18 Impact 80s with their own remote controls. The system settings are held in a Turbosound LMS-700 Omnidrive and other processing equipment includes OSC and MC2 amplification and BSS graphics and compression. In the main 600-700 capacity bar, Kelco have opted for Turbosound HiLight, with four flown THL-2H and THL-818s, with a further eight Impact 50s - which, like all the Impacts, are finished in TurboBlue. OSC and MC2 again provide the amplification. Finally, in the new bar extension - which opened on Christmas Eve - four Kelco-customised THL-2Hs and a pair of THL-828s provide the playback sound reinforcement.

## Showpower's London Office

Showpower are expanding their operation in the UK with the opening of an office in London to support the European operation currently run from Bristol.

The office will be part of the Three Mills Island Film Complex and is part of an overall expansion programme, which also includes an office in Brazil and planned expansion into Australia. Bristol-based mobile power company Templine were taken over by Showpower in April 1997 and Templine's staff and management, headed up by Peter Wills, run the UK arm of Showpower.

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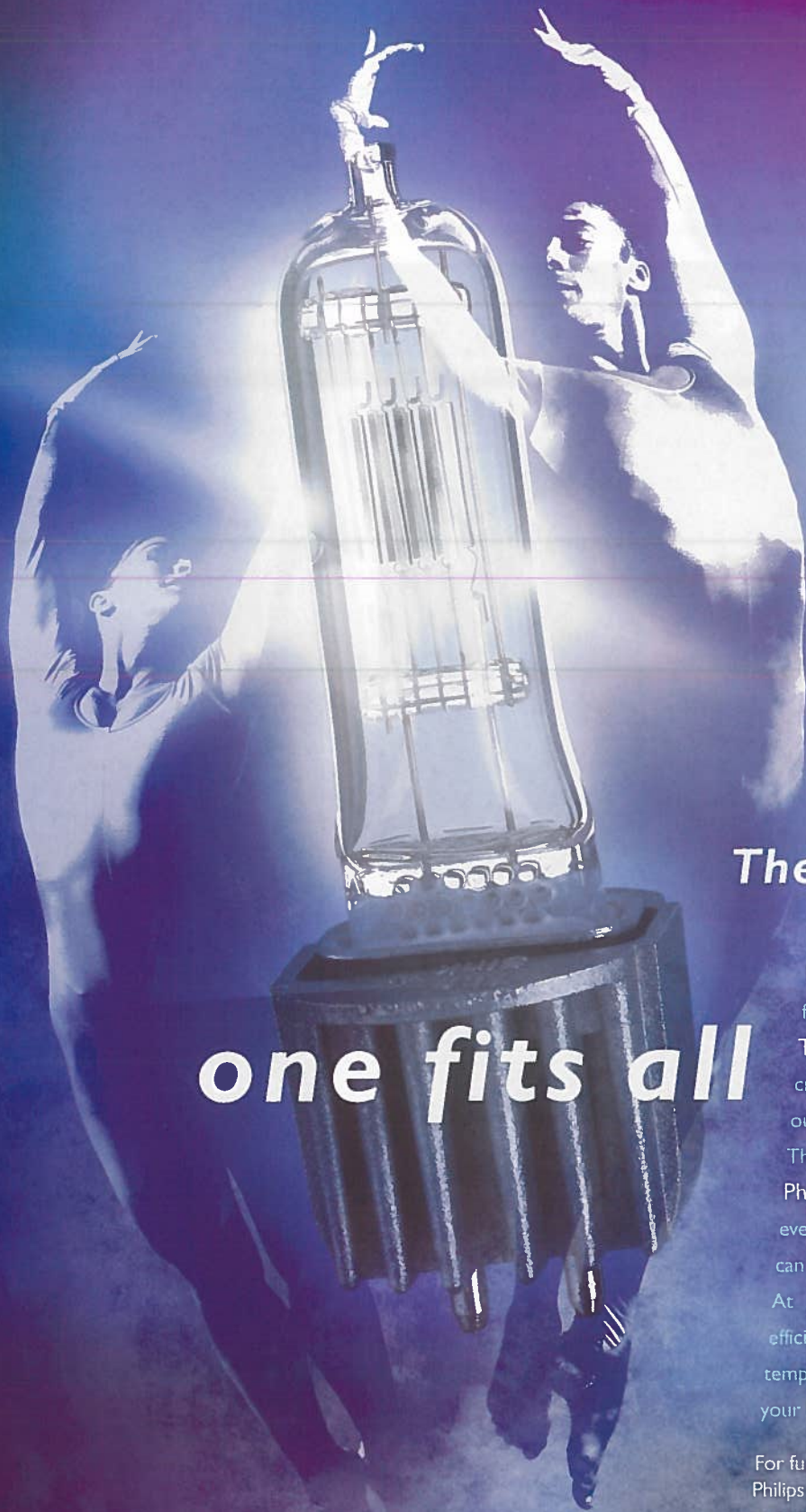
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# Illuminating Manchester



**Outdoor lighting and laser specialists Illuminatum recently combined their creative resources and lateral thinking abilities in Manchester, to produce a lighting and sound project initiated by local company Small World.**



The event was a demonstration for Blackpool Borough Council which involved the exterior lighting of Manchester Town Hall from a variety of lighting and projection fixtures rigged in Albert Square which adjoins the Town Hall. The idea was to illustrate how they might create a large Millennial spectacular using Blackpool's Central and South piers in conjunction with the Tower and a plethora of lighting, effects, projection and sound technology.

Illuminatum lit the building with an impressive cocktail of 12 Studio Due City Colors, 12k HMI's with scrollers, Clay Paky Golden Scans, Molefays, 5k and 2k fresnels and numerous other fixtures. The company also supplied their mobile laser truck which projected onto a screen rigged from the building. This latter contained twin 360 degree projectors and a PFE control desk, and the laser show was constructed on a PFE Storyboard.

The lightshow was designed by Ruben Pinkney who also operated the show from an Avolites Pearl, controlling all fixtures apart from the searchlights. Despite the early start, the gruelling fit up consumed all of the day involving the five Illuminatum crew in 3 - 4 kilometres of cabling alone, the traditional eccentricities of generated power supplies, plus battling with atrocious weather. It also left Ruben with the challenge of a mere 20 minutes of programming time before the hour long show went up.

Other companies involved included Production Arts, who provided a Pani 7kW projector with automatic slidechanger, whilst Coe-Tech provided 4kW Coemar NATs. Francis Searchlights provided the Starift 7kW searchlights and Screenco brought their new LED screen truck. Chris Fitch of Skan PA provided the audio system which consisted of two stacks of Turbosound Floodlight speakers with Funktion One bass bins run from XTA crossovers. These were controlled via a computer, thereby eliminating the need for graphic equalisation.

The demo was attended by a clutch of corporate leisure companies, individuals and others involved in events production as well as Blackpool Council.

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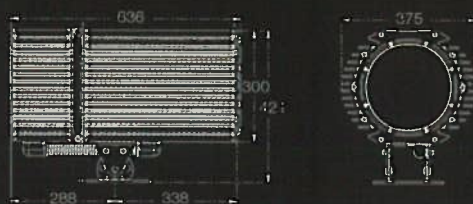
Size w/o bracket (LxHxW) 678 x 308 x 575 mm (26.7 x 12.2 x 22.8 in). Weight: 48 kg (106 lb).

### Power

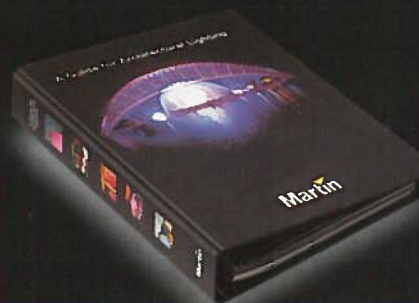
AC supply: 200/230/245 V, 50 Hz. 208/227 V 60 Hz. 750 W, 3.4 A @ 240V.

### Optics

22° - 38° field angle, (edge of beam = 10% intensity)



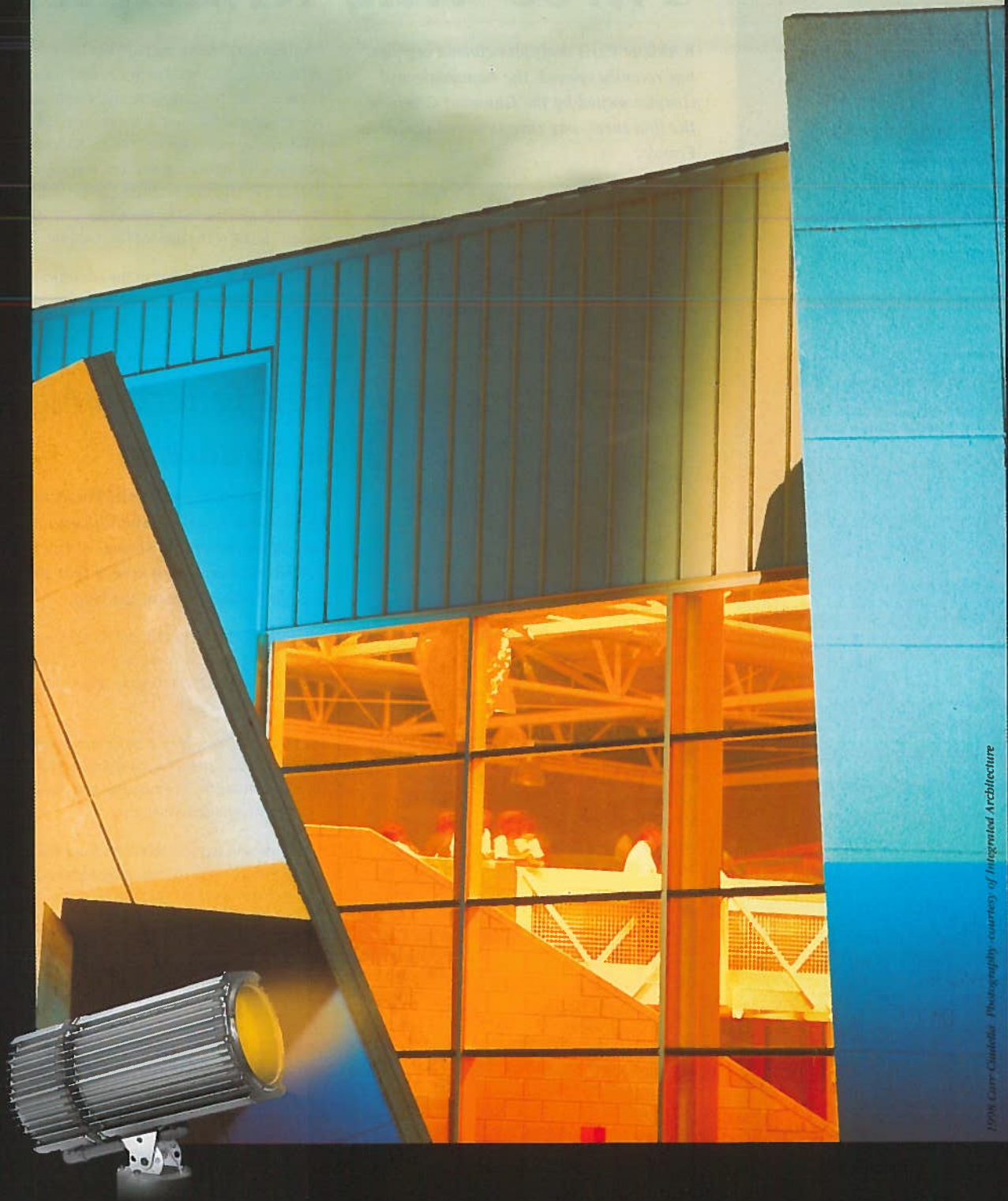
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## News Round-Up



# France's First Three-Way Multiplex

**A unique Paris multiplex cinema complex has recently opened: the Aquaboulevard cineplex owned by the Gaumont Group is the first three-way cinema sound design in France.**

Installed by TACC, the multiplex comprises 14 theatres, divided into four different-sized rooms. The largest of these has a capacity of more than 500 seats. TACC's Patrick Kermarrec chose a JBL-5674 system and spec'd a C Audio SRX 3801 to drive the low end of the system, and an RA 1001 to handle the mids and top.

A further 22 GB 602tx run the LF of the 4673 and 3678s, and drive a JBL Control 1 100V line system in the bar and the peripheral areas of the 13 other theatres. The surround system in the main theatre, however, sees two C Audio ST 1000s powering JBL 8340 loudspeakers. Multiples of RA 4001 and RA 1001 respectively power the LF of the 4670s and the 5674s, while four SRX 3801 handle the LF of the JBL 5674 and 4645B.

Finally, a GB 202 is linked to the security system in the foyer, where JBL Control 28s are to be found.

## Kam Bounce Back



**Kam mixers, distributed exclusively in the UK by Lamba plc, have bounced back with a new series of DJ mixers.**

Heading these is the GMX5 Mk11 - the successor to the GMX 5. The Mk11 boasts every facility the DJ needs including six line inputs for multi-functional use, two phono inputs and two DJ mic inputs. The Kam DMX100 entry-level mixer includes 26dB Kill facilities, two line and two phono inputs, a DJ mic input, headphone mix controls and separate bass, mid and treble on each channel - plus a smooth crossfader.

Lamba UK - tel: +44 (1727) 840527

## SIB Entertainment is Launched

**When the organisers of SIB Magis made the decision to go biennial last year, largely on the urging of some of the major exhibitors, it was even money that the slot wouldn't remain vacant too long.**

SIB Entertainment, the first Italian exhibition of creativity for entertainment, shows and events, has been launched by the same organising team to neatly plug the gap.

The show runs from March 28-31 and is expected to draw 30,000 visitors to an exhibition that will cover everything from furnishings and design to audio, video and special effects.

Further details are available from Fiera di Rimini on +39 (541) 711711 or from Tony Andrew at KMS in the UK on +44 (1323) 442747.

## New Audio for Cafe Royal

**A new PA system has been installed in the basement of London's legendary Cafe Royal in Regent Street, by Birmingham-based The Cloud One Group. Paul Stratford's company specified a combination of Martin Audio Wavefronts and Citronic and Allen & Heath mixing when they won the contract to install the sound in the independently run bar/club China White, for owners Tetton Trading.**

The Wavefront 2s will be used to replay CD and turntable-sourced material (from Teac multiplay CD and Technics SL-1210s respectively) in the three-roomed venue, which has been designed into four sound zones. Cloud One have used a full array of industry standard equipment to construct separate systems in the three interlinked areas - which can either operate independently or take a common feed. The sound is mixed through a Citronic SM550 and routed by an Allen & Heath zoning mixer, while the main Wavefront system is processed via a BSS FDS-355 Omnidrive Compact and powered by Crown 2400 and 3600 Macrotechs. The entire system is protected by a Formula Sound Guardian fire alarm interface.





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## Is it Goodnight Nightclubs?

These are worrying times for nightclub operators if a recent report by stockbrokers Charterhouse Tilney is indicative of a growing trend. The report finds that turnover during 1998 was up to 10 per cent less than in 1997.

The tail-off began last summer, when First Leisure's Interim Results reported: "... trading in the first few weeks of the second half of the year has seen consumer demand softening." The combined effects of lessening consumer confidence, together with the growing popularity of so-called 'chameleon' venues, such as Chorion's Tiger Tiger (see major feature this issue), which trade as café/bars during the day, are probably to blame. The 'flat-floor' leisure park-based clubs of the kind typically operated by Rank and First Leisure, are the hardest hit. The report goes on to predict that 2000 will be a disastrous year for leisure operators...

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## JEM Earn ISO Accreditation

JEM Smoke Plc, a division of Martin Professional, has been awarded ISO 9001 accreditation.

Jon Petts, general manager, told L+SI: "This is something we have worked hard on for 15 months and we're pleased to be the first company within the Martin Group to achieve this quality mark." The company has already secured a number of new contracts as a result of the accreditation. Brian Creasey, a consultant from SQM Ltd, is seen above presenting Jon Petts with the ISO 90001 certificate.

## PLASA On The Road

As part of its ongoing campaign to increase vital communication with its membership, PLASA will be presenting a second series of Roadshows during March in Brighton, Bristol and Knebworth.

The first PLASA Roadshows were held during October 1998 in Glasgow, Manchester and Birmingham, and were welcomed by the 60 or so members who attended as a positive and productive exercise.

The aim of the presentations is to promote awareness of the many areas of work that PLASA undertakes on behalf of its members and of the range of benefits and services available to them through the Association.

The Roadshows will begin at 7pm and consist of a presentation followed by a buffet. Dates are as follows: March 16, Grand Hotel, Brighton; March 17 Knebworth Barns, Knebworth; March 18, Marriott Hotel, Bristol. Anybody working professionally in the industry is welcome to attend these meetings. If you would like to do so please contact Norah Phillips at PLASA on +44 (1323) 410335.



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## Nexo Opens US Office

**NEXO, one of Europe's leading loudspeaker manufacturers, has announced the opening of corporate headquarters in the US, and also the appointment of Jim Sides to head up the sales and distribution activities of the new Nexo USA.**



Jim Sides

Although NEXO is successful in Europe and Asia as a manufacturer of high-end sound systems for touring and installation, the company has not promoted itself aggressively in the North American market. However, as Nexo continues on its programme of international growth, it was determined that a sales and distribution centre be established in the United States to service the US, Canadian and South American pro audio market.

The recruitment of Jim Sides played a critical part in the timing of the company's American launch. "Finding the key individual was central to our opening the American operation," explains Eric Vincenot, chairman and president of Nexo. The new California facility brings technical and customer support channels closer to American users, and one of Sides' first tasks will be the establishment of a national dealer network.

Nexo USA: 7950 Redwood Highway, Unit 3 Cotati, California 94931, USA.  
Tel: +1 (707) 793 9300.

## Raising Standards Conference

**Royal National Theatre chief executive Genista McIntosh, TMA vice-president Ken Bennett-Hunter and Louise Jeffrey, newly-appointed head of European theatre at the Barbican, have been confirmed as keynote speakers for the Raising Standards Conference at the Nottingham Playhouse on March 17th.**

The event will explore themes such as 'The Role of the Production Manager', 'Career Tracks and Qualifications' and 'The Planning Process'. Metier chief executive Duncan Sones will be on hand to provide an update on technical NVQs and answer questions from delegates. A highlight of the conference will be a plenary session in which a panel of top designers, directors and general managers will address the question 'What do we expect from a Production Manager?' Full details and a booking form are available from Arts Training Central on +44 (116) 242 5202.

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## Sporting



After what has proved to be the most successful exhibition ever staged by the Science Museum, *Science of Sport* is now on the move.

The exhibition, which attracted 800,000 visitors whilst in London, has now moved to Leeds. The exhibition uses state-of-the-art sports simulators and is designed and built using Optikinetics' Trilite structural systems. To facilitate the move, Optikinetics had the task of redesigning the truss so that the exhibition would fit into its new home at the Armouries Museum in Leeds. The company have now been commissioned to build two more exhibitions for use in the US.

## Show Me the Money

Rick Wilson of UK-based PLASA Members Le Maitre contacted the offices of L&S recently to draw our attention to a rather curious letter he'd received from a gentleman calling himself Rex Eweta Mohammed, who claimed to be the brother-in-law of the late Nigerian dictator, General Sani Abacha. According to the letter, Mohammed had been representing the late dictator's interest in business and because the General believed that he would eventually be deposed had quite sensibly, been making arrangements for his future by depositing 'diplomatic baggage' with banks and security companies across the world. Unfortunately, Abachi died in June last year and Mohammed, who had no idea what the boxes contained, but had become increasingly suspicious following press reports about the old man's greed and appropriation of state resources for personal use, naturally couldn't contain his curiosity.

To his great surprise he found that two of the boxes contained between them \$30million US dollars, while a third contained approximately 125 kilos of Alluvial Gold Dust. As Mohammed mentions in the letter, the present political instability in Nigeria and the West African sub region as a whole, coupled with the worldwide publicity the dictator's looting has attracted, has made him understandably very sceptical about investing these 'inherited' funds in Africa.

His solution was to contact Le Maitre in the hope that they would advise him on good investments in the UK and find buyers for the gold, in return for which they would receive a 30% cut. The means by which all these transactions were to take place, according to Mohammed, was an investment account to be opened by Le Maitre in Abidjan which would act as a feeder to their own UK bank account. All our friend needed to proceed was confirmation of Le Maitre's willingness to be involved in such a project and just one or two details about their financial status.

Needless to say, Le Maitre will not be taking Mr Mohammed up on his kind offer. This is, of course, not the first time such letters have circulated the industry, but it's as well to remind people of the regularity with which they appear.

## Helsinki City Theatre

The modern, yet historical, Helsinki City Theatre in Finland's capital has undergone a major lighting refurbishment. Conventional lighting within the magnificent 910 seat theatre comes from Niethammer and ADB, with dimmers from Compulite, whilst intelligent lighting fixtures include Telescans and the Cyberlight from High End Systems. Controlling all this is a Flying Pig Systems Wholehog II. The theatre is due to reopen at the end of February with a production of 'Les Miserables'.

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## EVI Returns to Klark Teknik



*After several changes of ownership and the consequent name changes involved, the name of Klark Teknik has now regained its precedence as the banner under which Klark Teknik, Midas and DDA brands will be marketed.*

It was Klark Teknik, founded in 1974, which initiated the formation of the group with the purchase of DDA (1984) and Midas (1987) console brands. Then, in 1990, Klark Teknik was bought by Mark IV Industries, who sold it on to Greenwich Street Capital Partners in 1996, where it was marketed as part of the EVI Group.

In February 1998 the EVI Group merged with Telex Communications Inc, and moves were made toward clarification.

Managing director Dave Merrey commented on the change: "The series of name changes somewhat muddled the water. When the opportunity arose to rename the company again, we chose the Klark Teknik Group (UK) PLC as it is the name that most people associate with the company and they know that DDA and Midas are part of it. It is appropriate that on its 25th anniversary the company should return to its original name."

## Test the Waters of Azerbaijan

**For the first time ever a British Week - Visions of Britain - will be held in Azerbaijan offering companies the opportunity to forge new business links with this expanding country on the Caspian Sea.**

The main feature of the week will be the British Week trade show - offering British companies the opportunity to dip a toe into the trading waters of Azerbaijan. Visions of Britain will be held from 11-15 October 1999, and the Visions of Britain Trade Fair taking place in the capital city, Baku, will run from 12-15 October.

Spearhead Exhibitions - tel. +44 (181) 349 9222

## Millennium

Countdown

The BBC has outlined its plans for a spectacular £10million concert - the largest musical event ever to be staged in Britain. Although planning for the millennial event is still in the early stages, initial indications are that Music Live 2000 will take place in May next year and a series of concerts will be staged across the country with some of the larger cities including Manchester, Glasgow and Belfast taking the lead.

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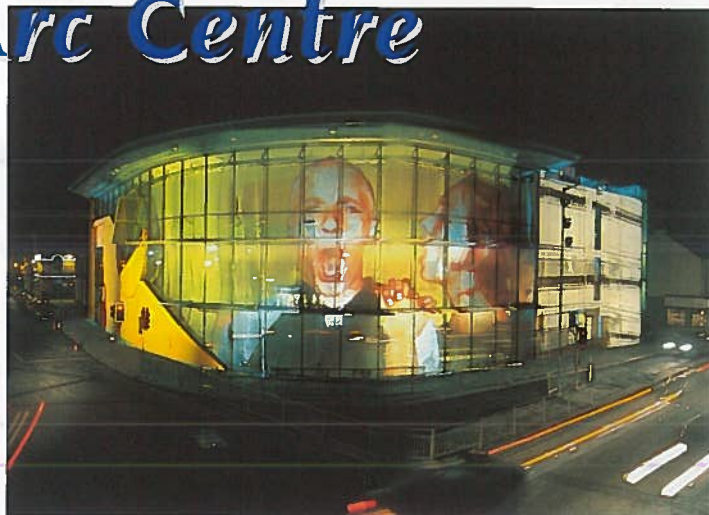
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**Arc at Stockton-On-Tees is the first lottery-funded arts and music venue in the north east. A flagship of the Northern Arts region, it includes a 275-seat theatre, 100-seat studio theatre, flexible 300-600 capacity informal multi-purpose space, cinema, dance and music workshops and interactive studios. The venue was given an impressive launch in mid-January.**

The launch show was designed and produced by the Danish avant garde theatre company Hotel Pro Forma. Production Arts provided three Pani 4kW HMI projectors, complete with EYAC Audiovisual Simple Scrollers and an EYAC 5kW Xenon projector with a Double Scroller. These cast a 70 metre wide by 12 metre high image across the outside two exterior walls of the building, creating a synchronised scrolling image across the façade of the Arc Centre. The projection design was by Signe Krogh, the images were photographed by Ravi Deepres, the lighting designer was Jesper Kongshaug and production manager to the Arc Centre was David Metcalf.

## Arc Centre



## Five to Try

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

5

1. PLASA website: a host of information on the entertainment technology industry  
[www.plasa.org.uk](http://www.plasa.org.uk)

2. Producers Source London: an on-line production guide, with an extensive database  
[www.producers-source.com](http://www.producers-source.com)

3. Tolkien on-line: details of the current staging of Lord of the Rings in a circus-style tent in Berlin. L&SI feature next issue  
[www.herr-der-ringe.de](http://www.herr-der-ringe.de)

4. Railtrack: full details of Railtrack's timetable and an interactive section where visitors can get information on specific travel options.  
[www.railtrack.co.uk/](http://www.railtrack.co.uk/)

5. Live Music: Full European concert listings and on-line ticket buying  
[www.live-music.com/](http://www.live-music.com/)

## Pixelite Video Screens

Newly-formed Avesco plc subsidiary PIXEL Displays Ltd has launched a new range of indoor, outdoor and high-resolution giant video screens.

Utilising the experience of the specialists assembled by PIXEL managing director Graham Burgess, and sister company Screenco's expertise in giant screen rentals, the new Pixelite screens feature the latest developments in LED technology and several processor options to suit specific applications and budgets. Pixelite screens will use specially commissioned LEDs displaying identical radiation patterns, thereby significantly improving screen uniformity. A common criticism of LED screens is the 'dotted' effect that is produced by many separated points of light. PIXEL has introduced a specification for 'Pixel Fill' whereby a measurement can be given for the percentage of the screen surface that emits light.

The range will include: PXT-3228 32mm outdoor model suitable for stadium and advertising, PXT-2416 24mm pixel pitch, ideal for stadium installations or screen sizes as small as 16 square metres (PIXEL also expect rental companies to use this system in the music rental business), PXT-1204 12mm high-resolution system for indoor and outdoor rental applications and PXT-803 8mm high-resolution indoor model competing in the video wall market for applications in conventions, shopping centres, indoor music events and small arenas.

In addition to MD Graham Burgess (formerly Head of Sony JumboTron in Europe, Africa and the Middle East), the PIXEL team will consist of Frederic Opsomer, a director of PIXEL and also MD of sister company System Technologies, who has been involved in the design and integration of outdoor screens for many years, and Simon Taylor, previously sales and marketing manager at sister-company Screenco, who has extensive experience in sports marketing and sponsorship.

PIXEL already has offices in London, Belgium and Sydney and will be opening shortly in Germany, Asia and North America.

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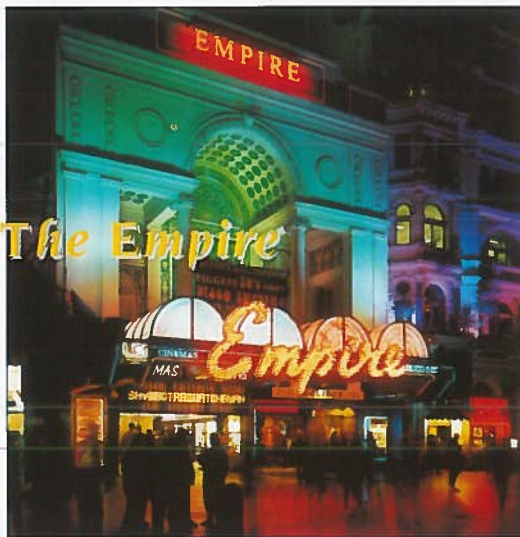
**NEXO**



Our picture right shows the Equinox nightclub in London's Leicester Square which boasts the capital's first installation of the new Studio Due CityColor colour-changing outdoor floodlight.

## Citycolor Lights The Empire

CityColor, which is distributed by Lumenation in the UK and first seen at SIB last year, is a square projection floodlight which can create an infinite variety of colours through a system of dichroic colour filters driven by DMX-controlled stepper motors.

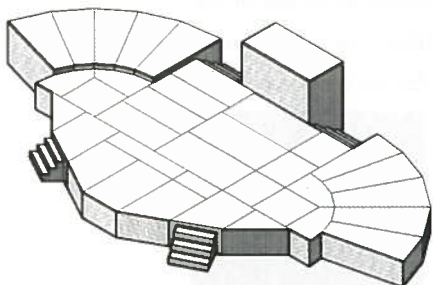


## Elvis Lives

Confused? Don't be - it's perfectly simple. Elvis Presley, the King of Rock and Roll, has just departed on a European arena tour, just 21 years and five months after his untimely demise. In what must be one of the most unusual forms of hybrid entertainment yet to be devised (and a possible foretaste of things to come), the King, reincarnated via video and multitrack, is joined on the tour by a seven-piece band, all of whom played live with Elvis in Las Vegas, before his career was temporarily interrupted by death.

Accompanying Elvis on stage (Brilliant Stages designed the set) is a choir of nine and a 15-piece orchestra, not to mention a whole raft of technology that makes this digital transformation possible. Greg Hamm, the lighting designer, is working with an LSD supplied rig which centres around High End Cyberlights and ETC Source Fours with control coming from a Wholehog II and an Avolites Pearl. The PA contractor for the tour, Eighth Day Sound, have spec'd a d&b system which has been supplied by Wigwam. Mark Burnage mixes front-of-house on an Amek Recall desk, with Owen Orzack taking care of monitors on a Yamaha PM4000. At the heart of all this technology is the celluloid Elvis brought to life on a video supplied by Performance AV.

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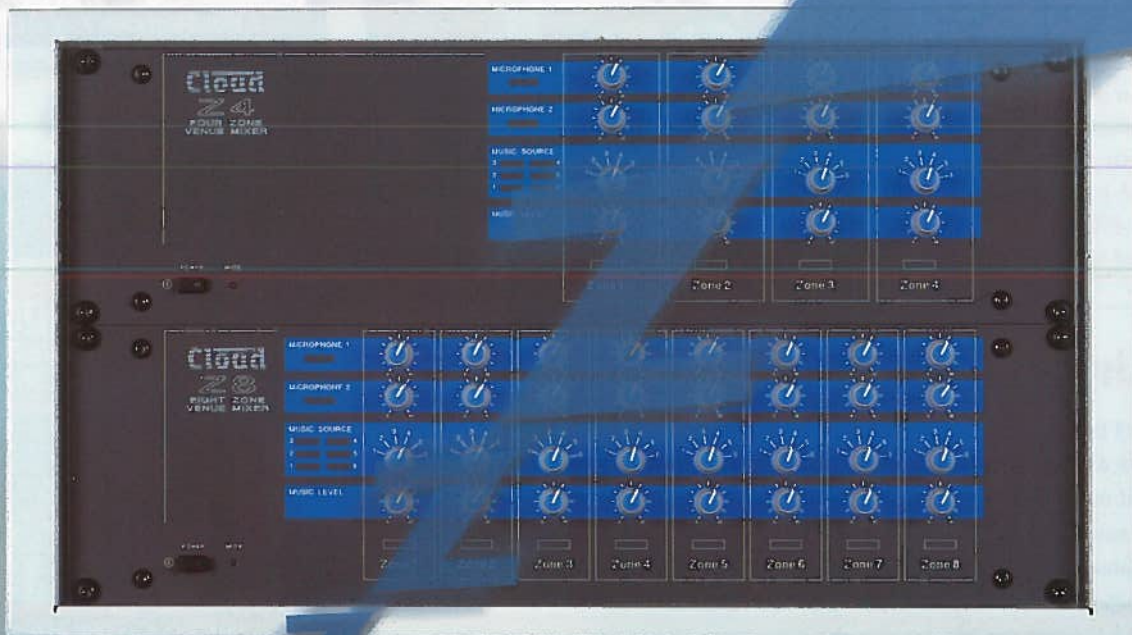
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## Harry Enfield finds Salvation

*The quiet little church of St James, Fryern Barnet didn't expect a miracle, but when Harry Enfield moved in it did request a certain reverence to allow the church to maintain its primary function as a place of worship.*



The church's pulpit was deemed the perfect setting for Enfield's recent televisual offering 'Sermon from St Albans'. Unfortunately, the six foot tall wooden crucifix in the background did prove a mite distracting for the cameras. "The production manager for Granada, Joan Cuffy from the comedy department, initially called us in," Summit Steel's Jon Bray told L&S. "Granada asked us to remove the cross when it was found to be in camera shot. They were filming from Monday to Friday for a six week period, with the cross needing to be back in position for each Sunday service."

Shifting it was simple enough, but Bray took a more enlightening approach. "I suggested we install a pulley system to avoid the cost of taking it down and re-hanging it every week." A few blocks, a small counter-weight system and some kid gloves on the medieval architecture, brought solace to all parties.

## Court Releases Ramjet

*Court Acoustics have launched Ramjet, the new medium-to long-throw concert system.*

The system can be used in singles or doubles for short- to medium-throw clubs and theatres and, when stacked in multiples of four, six or eight units, forms a vertical line array providing medium- to long-throw without sacrificing bandwidth for large concert halls or open-air events. The high bin is a 5.5 degree trapezoid for wide angle horizontal arrays, and consists of a three-way moulded horn assembly with a 12" carbon fibre dome 400W low-mid driver in a constant phase horn which couples in arrays down to 80Hz. High mids and HF are handled by a ferro-fluid cooled 2" driver and a 1" driver in a pair of conical horns for minimum throat distortion which combine into a single flair for accurate phase, imaging and transient response.

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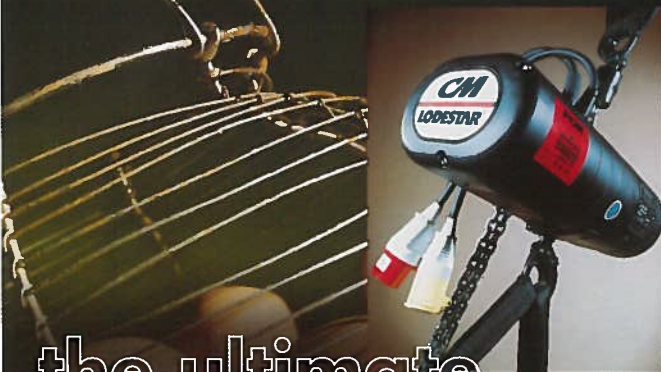
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## People News

Electronic Theatre Controls has announced the appointment of **Fulvio Cotogni** as regional sales manager for Southern Europe. Cotogni is a familiar figure to many in the industry, having set up Arri Italia in 1985, before moving to Strand Lighting in 1992 as European market development manager. He joins ETC from the company's Italian distributor, DeSisti.



Fulvio Cotogni

**David Wiggins**, formerly of LMC Audio, has joined Klark Teknik as international sales manager. Wiggins is an experienced manager with over five years' experience in the domestic markets. The company have also appointed **Patricia Baxter** as public relations officer, to improve the efficiency of the sales and marketing team whilst continuing to encompass the Klark Teknik, DDA and Midas brands and their individual products.

Strand Lighting have announced a number of key personnel changes. The present European management team will be reassigned as follows: **Ian Roberts**, from General Manager South European Trading to General Manager Sales, based in Rome, **Horst Eickmann**, from General Manager Central European Trading to General Manager Project Support, based in Berlin, **Ivan Myles**, from General Manager North European Trading to the new role of General Manager Training and Product Support, based in London, **Steve McKean**, from Customer Service Manager in the Kirkcaldy factory to Customer Service Manager, based in Scotland, and **Philippe Marc**, Group Marketing Manager, based in London.

Audio-Technica has added several new names to its line-up. **Tony Cooper** joins the company from the Harman organisation and takes up the position of area sales manager for the North of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. **Denise Turner** transfers internally from the German sales department to become sales and support team co-ordinator in the UK. Working alongside Turner are two new members of the team - **Ziggy Waters** and **Sharon Stevenson**. **Sophie Kramer** joins the German sales administration team and will be based at the UK office in Leeds with **Ramona Schoenwetter** taking up a position in internal sales administration in the German office in Wiesbaden. Further strengthening of the marketing and service and repair departments has been made with the recent appointments of **Helen Waggott** as marketing assistant, **Charles Field** as service engineer and **Leigh Watson** as service assistant.

**Andy Collier**, formerly with Teatro, has set up his own company ADC Technical Marketing to provide marketing support to the IES range of dimmers and controls. **Mike Mann**, has left Meyer Sound as European sales & marketing manager to establish a sales and marketing consultancy under the name of Absolute Marketing.



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## Workshop on the Wharf

**The Sound Workshop has recently completed a major sound, lighting and communications system installation at the Wharf Bar and Brasserie in Teddington, Middlesex.**

The sound systems at the Wharf comprise a mixture of Bose 25s and 151 Environmental speakers on the first floor and outside boardwalk, with a FreeSpace One Business Music System on the Ground Floor. All of these are driven by two Bose AmPlus amplifiers. The system also features a Trantec S101 radio microphone system, run through an Optivoice card, whilst the main music source is a Sony CD playback system. Each area has separate volume control capabilities.

David Mitchell of the Sound Workshop, who specified and installed all of the sound equipment, also supplied the telephone systems at the Wharf, along with several hundred feet of Lumenyte fibre-optic cable, which is used to 'backlight' the 20ft long curtains.

The company is perhaps best known for its highly-acclaimed entertainment technology installation last year, at the Voodoo Lounge in Leicester Square (see L+SI October 98).

## University of Singapore

**The Straits Times in Singapore has reported on the construction of a 'Vibrant New Cultural Centre' for the National University of Singapore. The new centre is to include a 1,800-seat concert and convocation hall - the latter to be used for graduations, major lectures and assemblies.**

The venue is also equipped and designed to accommodate concerts of both popular and classical music with a platform able to take an orchestra of 90 musicians. The smaller courtyard theatre seats 450 and is flexible to allow productions to be staged in a number of formats.

A three-storey museum will house The Lee Kong Chian collection of Chinese scrolls, jade and ceramic displays. Due to open in February 2000 the architects are RSP of Singapore, theatre and acoustic consultants are Theatre Projects Consultants and Desisti of Singapore are the theatre equipment contractors.

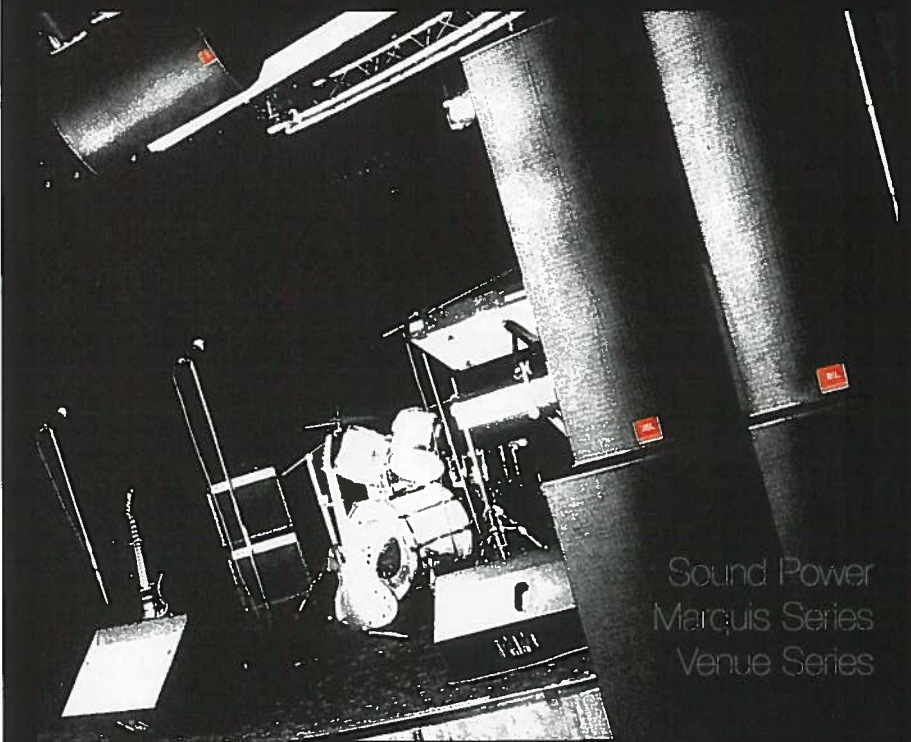
## ESTA's Announces Public Review

**Esta has announced a Public Review of three draft Standards - Aluminum Truss and Tower; Photometric Reporting and Wire Rope Ladders.**

ESTA is seeking comment so that the standards reflect the consensus of informed opinion in the industry. The first draft standard is intended to cover the aluminum trusses and ground-support towers that are ubiquitous in modern touring shows; the second specifies a way of presenting the photometric performance data of stage and studio luminaires, whilst the third applies to the construction and use of wire rope ladders in the entertainment industry.

Copies of the documents can be obtained from the ESTA website at [www.esta.org/](http://www.esta.org/) or by e-mail: [standards@esta.org](mailto:standards@esta.org)

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

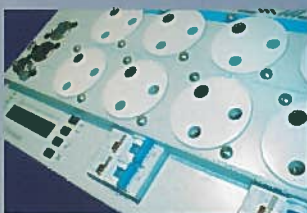
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# Burning Bright . . .



THEMED VENUE

*Tiger Tiger is definitely doing something right. Barely two months after its opening, the unmistakable buzz of London's West End has reached out, touched and stormed these slick, stylish and vaguely antithetical environs. Louise Stickland reports*

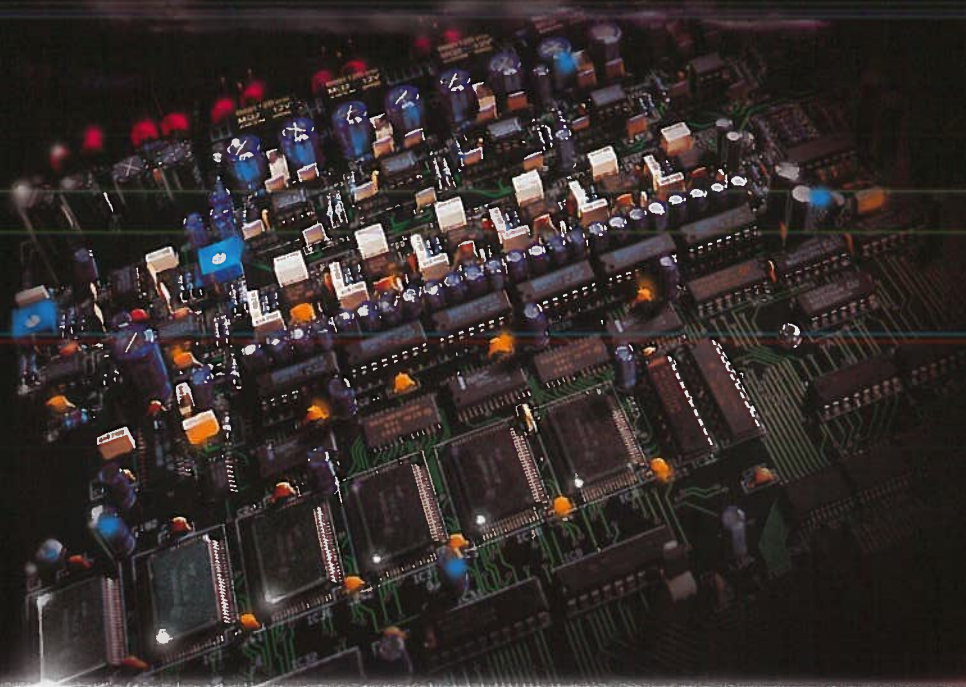
**D**espite Tiger Tiger's cavernous interiors and 1,770 capacity, queues of over 300 people have regularly circumvented the block, defying the inconsistencies of the wait and the January weather, forcing the operators into a one-in-one-out situation and spreading the word quicker than ever on the super-efficient party persons telegraph.

Becoming the 'It' place so quickly has had dramatic impact on the newest and arguably grooviest venue in central London for over 25s. Aimed at those seeking atmosphere with action, sense without sensation, choice without confusion, Tiger Tiger

boasts an eclectic collection of spaces within one building to sate the most schizophrenic of mood changes. Healthy interesting food, dancing, drinking, chill-out areas, a safe and accessible musical policy and a civilised door code . . . but most importantly the irreplaceable clamour of glamour, glitz and night out special-ness! An instant winner in the commercial league table.

Deftly dodging traditional 'type' definitions, Tiger Tiger is a new and currently unique concept in terms of providing several potential (but not obligatory) elements of a night on the town under one roof. As an integrated entertainment venue, its runaway success is unlikely to go unnoticed. Bets are already being taken as to where and when the first copy cat venue will spring up - and who will do it!

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Tiger Tiger is clearly aimed at a more mature and sophisticated, predominantly urban, audience. Definitely not the place for those still up for the thrill and adventure of traipsing miles across country or dipping into derelict buildings, defying authority and expectation for a free and facility-free underground party. But for some who did 10 years ago, and those omnipresent thirty-somethings with die-hard party streaks - this is their venue. Thus aimed at an affluent, enthusiastic and relatively safe audience, Tiger Tiger, it seems, can do no wrong at present. It's a NOW venue pitched perfectly for the bright youngish things of New Britain. You can almost see Tony and Cherie kicking back sipping cocktails in the Kaz Bar or the Club Lounge.

menacingly back at the thronging crowds. Apart from being the meanest thing in the place, it's also one of the most visually provocative!

Downstairs in the basement is The Club. In contrast to the plush upstairs, it is stark, raw, unapologetic and industrial, with flagstones on the floor and metal finishes in all directions; just enough to satisfy those from the target audience looking for a more cutting edge. The Club opens at 9.30pm with a live DJ playing slightly more underground music than upstairs. It was originally scheduled to open only Thursdays through Saturdays, but the runaway success of the venue has made it a nightly event.



The 400 capacity Club is as hard as it gets at Tiger, Tiger

Tiger Tiger is owned by Chorion PLC who owned the Trocadero in Piccadilly Circus until October 1997. Some of the money from the sale of that prime real estate has been ploughed into the venue. Obviously there's been a budget, but certainly not a shoestring one! The environment is comfortable, colourful, interesting and highly visual, combining influences from many continents and cultures. The seven bars, three dance areas, two lounges and the Una Fonda restaurant are designed to provide something for everyone.

Upstairs in the Club Lounge, the principle chilling area, modern Bauhausian-style furniture nestles alongside expressionist-style paintings and Indian lanterns above the tables. Next door in the Kaz Bar, Indian, African and Arabic 'artefacts' adorn the walls, ceilings and floors - in terms of design and ambience, Tiger Tiger completely pulls it off. Big, butch, silvered air-conditioning fans and ducts snake their way around the tall ceiling of the main Tiger Bar. In other spaces it simply wouldn't work, but here they complement the conservatory feel of the seated areas as well as the bustle and freneticism of the bar itself.

Green coolie lights, stained glass, polished dark wood and marble feature behind the decorative Neo-Gothic Tiger Bar. Silver flame-shaped wall sconces abound and flourishing curved deco-style polished aluminium supports stand cockily under the pillar drinks platforms. Escaping the just another 'themed - yawn - environment' ticket by a mile, Tiger Tiger presents an animated space with multiple personalities. The most stunning object in the main Tiger Bar is a huge steel skeletal tiger sculpture, climbing up the pillar, staring

Chorion's technical manager Jeremy Dowding explained how the technical specification tied in closely with the operational requirements and concept. One of the crucial elements of this was to have an audio system capable of very close control. The reasons for this were two-fold, firstly because of the isolation needed within the building for different areas, often playing different music but in very close proximity, and also in relation to their neighbours. The latter includes six storeys of offices up above the main space and a TGI Fridays directly over the club.

In addition to the Club, there are two other DJ positions. One is used nightly for the main bar dance floor at the back of the Tiger Bar which goes 'live' at 9.30pm and the other is an optional spot up in the Cocktail Bar on the first floor. The idea is that this area can potentially be sealed off and hired out for private functions and so has tie lines for a mobile DJ, mixer and lights, as well as its own small integral dance floor lighting rig. A black and white camera and a CCTV monitor link the Cocktail Bar and the main bar DJ, so if it kicks off in either area, the other DJ can react accordingly!

Chorion appointed The Design Build Partnership from Birmingham as main contractors. The Design Build team was headed by Stuart Trett and the flamboyant interior design was created by Tony Carty from sister company Tibbatts Associates. From a design and contracting point of view, Tiger Tiger presented two key elements making it as exacting a project as it was exhilarating! Firstly, the overall idea of a single venue offering so many varied spaces, and secondly, a very high degree of designer/client interaction, debate and

*Deftly dodging traditional 'type' definitions, Tiger Tiger is a new and currently unique concept - its runaway success is unlikely to go unnoticed."*

project development between Chorion and The Design Build Partnership. Visually, the goal was to avert any single idea or theme being dominant and to ensure that the seven zones contrasted with one another to create endless talking points in one venue. The name was intended to encompass the entire site, symbolised by the steel tiger sculpture together with the Eastern connection on the mezzanine area. However, the reality was more a result of the organic evolution of the design as opposed to any conscious decision to thematically link areas.

JBL's UK distributors. The initial acoustic analysis of the building was handled by Ken Dibble of Ken Dibble Acoustics and Manwaring worked closely to that report. Preventing noise spillage between areas, in particular between the club downstairs and the main bar dancefloor, was very much at the forefront of the audio challenges. Further acoustic conundrums were tossed into the bargain with each space being a different size and each featuring a diverse selection of materials and finishes, all of which had radical impact on the acoustic properties.

expanses of The Club Lounge are four Control 28s supplemented with a pair of JBL SB2 sub bass bins which kick in when the club is in operation.

Downstairs in the main club itself are four Sound Power SP222 mid top units and a pair of SP128S sub bass. The SPLs in the club are consuming and engulfing - just as any true grooving space should be. The DJ console areas in both the Club and the upstairs Tiger Bar dancefloor are kitted out identically, with Formula Sound FSM600 mixers, Technics turntables, Denon twin CD players, Denon twin cassette players and Light Processor QCommander lighting consoles.

Music during the day is provided by two Denon 1400 200-disk CD players, one loaded with slightly more upbeat music than the other for atmospheric adjustment. The daytime musical policy is rocky and poppy under the 'easy listening' banner with a few classics thrown in. With the onset of evening, the bar areas morph into medium to medium-fast danceable pop, oldies and commercial dance.

Music Marketing sourced the majority of Tiger Tiger's effects lighting fixtures and control from Lightfactor Sales and Coetech. The comparatively intimate dancefloor of the Club is packed with visual goodies, starting with four High End Systems Technobeams. These are joined by four Dataflash AF1000 strobes, four Studio Due Giant moving yoke lights, four Coemar Comets and a couple of Apollo Miracles, eight Apollo Tourlights, two Apollo Vortex, UV guns, a smoke machine with fan, a TAS Syncro and 10 metres of Pulsar Flexiflash strobe tubing. The Cocktail Bar dancefloor also features some effects lighting including High End Trackspots and Apollo Tourlights. Mounted in the ceiling of the Tiger Bar are three further Technobeams, whilst the more contained area of the main bar dance floor has four Apollo Tourlights and a TAS Syncro.

Sound for the entire venue is controlled via a Peavey X Frame Media Matrix system with custom software written by Manwaring after discussions with the client about what they required. Manwaring explains that the advantage of X Frame is its ability to have multifarious products - equalisation, signal processing, crossover, limiting, etc, in one box. Everything is dealt with in the X Frame itself and its additional breakout boxes. Once the parameters are loaded into the box by portable PC, no-one can interfere! It leaves management and bar staff with the extremely straightforward set-up of eight buttons and one data wheel with which to play!

Up to four different music sources can run concurrently in Tiger Tiger - two live and two background systems, but in reality, once the DJs get everyone fired into action, they take over. Tiger Tiger is best experienced 'live' and at different times of the day and week to appreciate fully the spectrum of atmospheric variety. With a busy summer tourist season approaching, it's runaway highs have only just begun.



*The Club Lounge - the main chill-out zone*

Another specific aspect of the design brief was to create a one-off, individual feel. The Design Build Partnership appointed other specialist installers to complete different areas of the project which all took place within a 16 week period. All audio equipment, video and effects lighting and control were supplied by Music Marketing Services in their biggest project to date, overseen by account manager Paul Woodward and technical project manager Ed Manwaring.

Practical, and environmental lighting was supplied by Torbay Electrical, much of it sourced from Image Lighting Design who custom-manufactured some fixtures for the venue. Torbay Electrical also undertook the power installation (including a new 300 KVA supply), all cabling and general electrical work. The company also fitted over 250 environmental light fittings; these ranged from down-lighters, spotlights and wall lights to the more off-beat, realistic flickering flame effects in the entrance to the Tiger Bar. The latter, together with certain others, were specially constructed by Image Lighting Design. They worked closely with Tony Carty to achieve the galvanising demands of his lighting scheme.

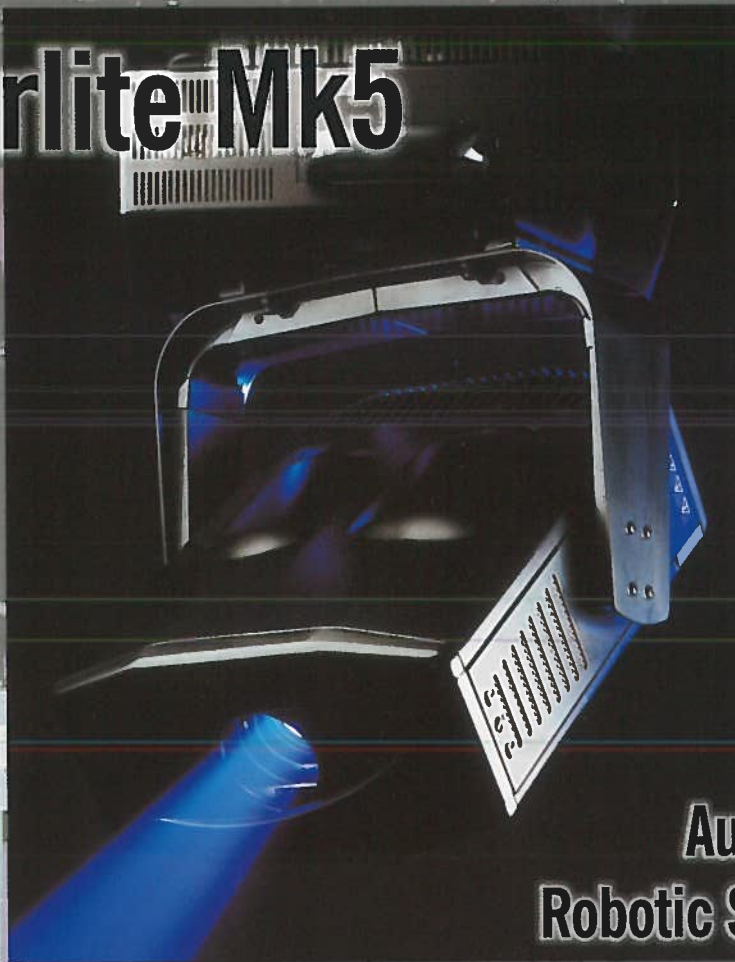
The sound design, conceptualisation and specification was done by Ed Manwaring in association with Simon Gillett from Arbitrator,

Much of the spill factor is contained with acoustic dampening and by carefully picked, positioned and fine-tuned speakers. Manwaring decided on JBL because he was keen to specify one manufacturer with a sufficiently assorted range to satisfy all requirements. From the Control 23s in the restaurant for background music to the Sound Power Series boxes downstairs in the Club, there is product in Tiger Tiger from nearly every current range of JBL.

The Tiger Bar features four JBL Marquee Series MS112 speakers and two MS125 subs. There is also a range of eight Control 28s and Marquee MS28s for the bar dance floor with a 125 sub for when it gets busy. DJ monitoring is provided by the EON 12 Power series and all amplification is also JBL. The restaurant has an open al fresco feel, complete with reclaimed Mexican antiquities juxtaposed with contemporary mosaics and specially commissioned glasswork; it features a distributed background sound system utilising 12 Control 23s. Moving upstairs to the Kaz Bar there are Control 25s and a pair of MS28s in the cocktail bar which overlooks the Haymarket on one side and down into the Tiger Bar on the other. For the more restrained sofa, rugged and cushioned-up



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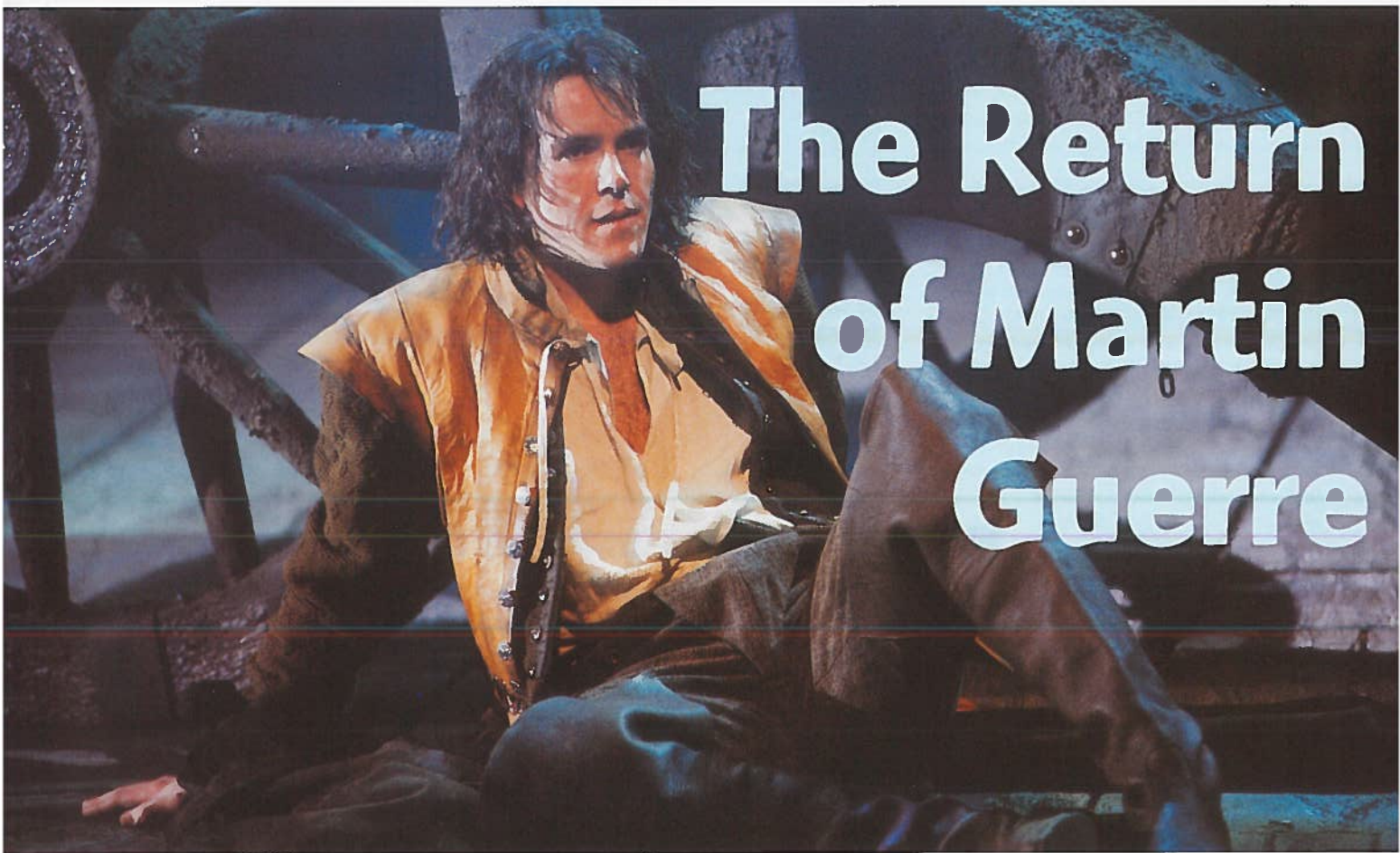
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# The Return of Martin Guerre

**I**t's funny how some things don't quite work out as planned. Take, as a case in point, *Martin Guerre*. When this opened at London's Prince Edward Theatre in July 1996, it was meant to be the hit to end all hits, the latest work from the men behind *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon* and the world's most successful producer of musical theatre. That anticipation was reflected in every stage of the show's creation, from its design, fit-up, rehearsals, and long, long technical period right through to its elaborate, highly memorable first-night party. Rob Halliday was there throughout it all . . .

Musicals are hard beasts to get right, and this one wasn't quite right. All who were at the final run-through in the rehearsal room remember - and still discuss - the power the show had there, but it never quite translated into the vast space of one of London's biggest auditoria. The audience never quite felt a connection with it. The story - despite constant re-writes, including a week six-months in when the show was closed for quite major surgery - was never quite clear enough. It didn't work. And 18 months later (which might have been a respectable run before the likes of *Cats* and *Les Mis* re-defined respectable, and but for the £4million cost of mounting the show), *Martin Guerre* closed.



THEATRE

There's also an old saying about musical theatre, though: great musicals are not written, they are re-written. And when you have a producer like Cameron Mackintosh and two committed writers, it is not going to be allowed to just fade into history. Which is why we found ourselves at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds in November, mounting a new production of *Martin Guerre*. And, in contrast to the months-long fit-up and technical period of last time, getting it from fit-up to first preview in just nine days.

The show is, somehow, all new - even sporting a new logo - while still being very much the same. Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil have re-considered all of the material, basically re-structuring and re-telling the story in a way that is remarkably different from the London production given that it has basically the same plot. And Boublil and Stephen Clark - the last of three lyricists brought in to the London production - have re-written the words from scratch, sometimes re-using old tunes, sometimes to new music.

To bring this new version to the stage, Mackintosh has turned to a different creative team from the one he used in London - though composed of names familiar from other Boublil and Schönberg shows: set designer John Napier and costume designer Andreane Neofitou filled the same roles on both *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon* as well as on countless other productions around the world. For the lighting, Mackintosh selected Howard Harrison, Olivier-award nominated for his work on last year's *The Fix* at

the Donmar Warehouse, while sound was entrusted once again to Andrew Bruce and Autograph. But to direct the show, Mackintosh approached a name completely new to musical theatre: Conall Morrison, associate director of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Morrison attracted attention with his production of *Tarry Flynn* at the Abbey, a story told in a style which Mackintosh and his authors clearly felt was relevant to *Martin Guerre*. Morrison brought with him choreographer David Bolger, and so the team for the new production was complete. Apart from a venue - which is where the West Yorkshire Playhouse came in - artistic director Jude Kelly inviting Mackintosh to stage the show in their Quarry Theatre as its Christmas musical prior to embarking on a UK tour.

John Napier's set design reflects the way the show has changed while staying the same: visually it is completely different from the London set, yet it works to achieve the same aims of being highly versatile, able to create different looks for the many different locations demanded by the show, and has much of the same feel - of scorched earth and wooden framed houses and tiny villages and shadowy forests. The design is based around a crucifix-shape of rough wooden boards, with the corners of the cruciform filled in to look like earth and the whole floor raked and angled slightly away from the theatre's setting line. In Leeds, the downstage edge of the crucifix thrusts out into the audience and over the orchestra pit, though this thrust may be curtailed slightly for the conventional pros-arch venues the show will be playing on tour. The crucifix wood contains



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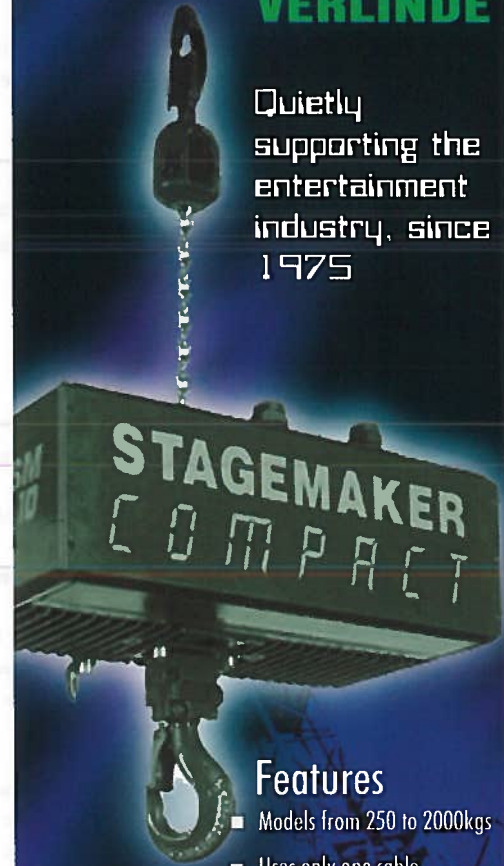
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The rig thus consists of familiar, proven elements from the Autograph stable. Control is from a selection of Cadac desks, with a 30-way E-Type handling the vocals, and combined six-way and 15-way A-Types dealing with the orchestra. The band is much smaller than in the London production, and the sound they create with William Brohn's orchestrations is much harder and harsher, using synthesised reproductions of period instruments, rather than the lush strings of London. However, the band's positioning presented Autograph with additional headaches: the 'pit' sits partially under the front of the stage, and is divided into three separate sections. Quite a large number of video monitors were thus required just to let all of the musicians see the MD, who also plays keyboards.

Vocal sound is collected by 21 Sennheiser 1046 radio microphones, with every member of the cast being mic'd, and sent to the desk, then back to an array of Amcron amplifiers, these located along with the radio racks in two large flightcases positioned in a 'sound corner' upstage, behind the set. The production's tight budgets mean that the sound gear will be toured in this way rather than in the kind of elaborate service truss that is now found on the larger Cameron Mackintosh tours. The sound is then fed out to a mixture of Meyer MSL-2s and UPAs and a series of front-fills mounted on the front of the set. This set-up will remain more-or-less as-is for the tour; Nick Lidster admits that they had

from hard disk. Rough sound effects were created using the Protools digital editing system, then transferred to the DAR where they could be edited and repositioned as required, with the effects triggered from the MIDI control system running the Cadacs, and submixed using an Out Board Electronics mixer.

Though rushed, as with all of the departments, Nick Lidster admits to having enjoyed the pressure and speaks highly of the show's operator Ken Hampton for the way that he learnt the show, handled all of the changes and now provides high quality sound to what is, sound-wise, a complicated show with lots of characters having short, individual lines. Though there were some panics early on, particularly with the level of sound from the very open pit in the Quarry, these were resolved through co-operation between the music and sound departments. Now they are all allowing the show to settle in before facing up to the challenge both of the first move and simultaneously adapting the design to suit a conventional pros-arch theatre.

Putting this version of Martin Guerre together, technically, took place in just eight rollercoaster days where everyone worked flat-out to get the show on, followed by another week of previews where everyone worked flat-out to get the show right. It is arguable that this is a better way of working than months of seemingly endless rehearsals, since it focuses the mind very sharply.



considered using a mixture of Autograph and West Yorkshire Playhouse equipment early in the planning stage, as a cost-saving exercise, but had decided to use the Leeds production period to put together and prove the touring system, since there would be no time available to do this once the show started rushing around Britain. The system was installed by Greg Pink, Tim Lynn, Tony Gale and Eric Loots along with the West Yorkshire Playhouse's Rob Tice, Andrew Brooks and Andrew Meadows.

With a number of battle scenes, as well as the fire sequence at the end of the show, Martin Guerre relies quite heavily on sound effects, and for this Andrew Bruce opted to use the DAR TheatrePlay sound effects system, a PC-controlled system that allows eight tracks of sound to be replayed, together or separately,

In retrospect, it seems that the shows which have become huge hits have been mounted in this way, whereas the shows that have been mounted as if they were huge hits have largely failed. Perhaps there's a lesson in there somewhere . . .

People have long predicted the revival of the mid-scale musical. The new Martin Guerre is such a show and one which benefits from all of the technological advances brought about by its bigger siblings and the related worlds of rock and roll and industrial theatre. That those technologies can now be integrated into a show of this scale shows how far they've come. The real triumph is that the technology isn't used for its own sake and doesn't make the show a good one: it simply and unobtrusively helps it to be that. Which is as it should be.

Photos: Michael Le Poer Trench

**Tony Cottler**

# No Comment...

**A**mong the other flotsam and fallout from last year's urge to merge, the combining of Polygram and Universal into the restructured Universal Music Group is the one which is likely to have the major impact on most of our lives and livelihoods this year and beyond.

**THE SUPERGROUP** which has resulted dominates 24% of world disc sales and 27% in Europe which makes them a leviathan in the music biz, on which most of us depend to a greater or lesser extent. The sting is in the aftermath of the merger when, to make the deal stack-up, they have had to clean up their act, which, in fact, means clearing out acts. Not only will 3,000 staff go, several famous labels including Island, Mercury, A&M and Geffen are

also under threat, but some 200 bands are to be unceremoniously dumped in the process. Not the really big names you understand, just those that are on the edge, but that could mean on the verge, quite as easily as in the margin. The point is that these bands will now be struggling to generate any revenue at all, let alone go on the road with light and sound support.

**THE FEAR** is also that with other potential mergers of the remaining players, such as EMI, Sony, Warner and the old RCA now part of Bertelsmann, new talent

is not being encouraged either. With so much current selling music originating from recycled versions of old songs, and a drastic reduction in independent labels, where is the impetus for new creativity and talent?

**ON THIS SUBJECT** I am grateful to Norman Lebrecht, who knows a great deal more about the record music industry than I do, for his recent comment in the Daily Telegraph, of all papers: "The sight of the Rolling Stones cranking up for another world tour and [Mick's] divorce suit is a grim indictment of the industry's latter-day failure to produce sustainable young legends."

The point is, that while we would all be happy to take Jagger's coin - in which respect we are no different from the lawyers - by doing so are we in some way collaborating in and encouraging a

decline in progression and contraction in our own marketplace? Or, to return to one of my familiar themes, is it the whiff of Wall Street and the be-suited bean-counters (do they father beanie babies by the way?) who are responsible for corking off the vital creative juices? Here's what Lebrecht thinks: "Rock, a rebellious culture, is endangered in corporate hands." Great minds!

**AND FOR A TALE** that proves that with some financial encouragement, in this case from government in Montreal, from small creative beginnings, large productive enterprises can grow, one need look no further than Cirque du Soleil. Their annual report reveals that yearly sales have grown to a gigantic £76m. So much so that they have been able to recycle £16m into a new office building in Montreal, while still showing a profit of £3m. They employ 1,300 performers who appear in 13 countries. No wonder New Labour sees Mark Fisher's Millennium Dome extravaganza as an enterprise zone all on its own!

**N**one of the players is going to thank me for this, but in the euphoria which surrounded the settlement between Vari-Lite and High End, I wonder if we have lost sight of its potential impact on the wider industry.

**MOST** agreed, while the litigation continued, that it was bad for the industry in general, while the money was pouring out into the claws of the carnivorous legal eagles. However, the details of the settlement have never been revealed, both parties being bound to mutual secrecy; not even Vari-Lite's shareholders know the details. So could the deal be potentially worse for the entertainment technology business as a whole, than allowing the litigation to come to its ultimate denouement?

**INITIALLY**, the mystery has simply lit a match under the fire which drives the rumour-mill, and there are some scary stories doing the rounds. Transparency would snuff out a potential conflagration. What we do know is that High End agreed to a financial settlement in VL's favour and that the disputed patents not only remain intact, but, by implication, have been validated. The thing is, had the boys from Austin been able to see it through, it is just possible that some of the disputed copyright inventions might have come under doubt in the face of prior art, if only because the system in the US which governs these matters is not considered as safe as the European model. And there may be other implications, subject to how the financial settlement was structured. You can't blame

anyone for taking a deal, almost any deal, in those oppressive circumstances, but the point is that it has left other manufacturers vulnerable. And since it was not their choice to be singled out, and the rest could only offer moral support, why should High End care? In fact, in this competitive atmosphere, the opposite is almost certainly the case.

**THE PRECEDING** paragraphs were penned, with some foresight, I like to think, before the news featured on page 6 of this issue came to light. So now we know what some, at least, of the implications really are. It's someone else's turn to feel the pain. Despite the stress and distraction of the previous battle, Brusché has now levelled his sights at Martin Professional and, since he's shown that he's a man who sticks to his guns, the temptation to settle quickly will be enormous. Then, no prizes for guessing who'll be next. It's a battlefield out there.

**W**ith an annual exhibition, and a magazine devoted to the business on the launch pad, I can report that there is a great deal of confusion surrounding the use of the word 'event'. Of course, we all know what the word means generically, but in business terms it can mean anything from a gymkhana to a tea dance. It's like the word 'show' which has so many connotations it beggars belief - the main confusion being between a stage performance and an exhibition. And it is the latter which has also commandeered the word event, it seems.

**YOU WOULD THINK** that the English language, with over 60,000 words, at least three times more than any other modern European language, but with roots in all of them, might have got this one sorted out. But then we don't have the help of the English equivalent of the Academie Francaise to pronounce on these things. Most new language these days is invented by the computer nerds, but there again we have also added a new definition for anorak, rather than sticking to the equally insulting, but perfectly adequate, N word.

**EVENTING** on the other hand, in British English, as opposed to US spell-check English, is a sport of the aforementioned equine variety. The goings-on at the National Arena at the end of January, where the annual Event Show is staged, couldn't have been further removed from that scene, and you have that from the horse's mouth! Consequently, the Show, or more correctly the exhibition, obviously represents an industry with an identity crisis.

"Initially, the mystery has simply lit a match under the fire which drives the rumour-mill, and there are some scary stories doing the rounds. Transparency would snuff out a potential conflagration."

*Tony Cottelhor*

**WALKING AROUND** the floor, it was impossible to nail down any common cause between those who were offering services for conferences and exhibitions, or those for corporate hospitality, for outdoor 'events', and for concert and touring. There are no less than nine, yes nine, trade associations representing that lot and consequently nine acronyms to remember! For PLASA members, not one of the nine incidentally, the overlap is in corporate presentations and product launches, what our colleagues across the pond call 'industrials'.

**IT SEEMS TO ME** that there is a problem when those in a perceived business can't themselves sort such basic issues as to what name to nail to the door. I ended up wondering why I was there - except that I had actually gone to witness the Laser Grafix 'Millennium Water Screen Experience'. Which I know is something to do with what I do.

**IN TIME-HONOURED FASHION** of diary writers everywhere, I offer a bottle of champagne, (and when I say champagne, I don't mean shampagne, even without Martin sponsorship) to the reader who comes up with the best suggestion for a collective title for that unidentified bunch of providers - Experience, Happening, Occasion and others in the Thesaurus notwithstanding.

**M**y dire predictions for the discotheque market came home to roost with a large plop of guano when the end of year returns showed an average drop of 11% in revenues last year. Now they are even saying, or at least Michael Grade is quoted as saying, that when times are tough, people stop going out to drink and dance. Well excuse me, they may stop going to your venues Mr. Grade, but all previous evidence runs contrary to that theory. The more excuse to go out and get wrecked.

**AND FIRST LEISURE'S** response to this carnage, a tour of the Chippendales to boost up ladies' nights (which should now be called women's nights to be strictly pc) - oh dear, oh dear! No wonder John Conlan has moved back into the club business. Meanwhile, First have admitted to being in talks with others with a view to 'strategic alliances'. How the mighty have fallen - just check out the share price for

confirmation: Allied Domecq are in similar turmoil, Rank don't know whether they are at rock bottom or between the Hard Rock and an even harder place, having elbowed their chief exec, Luminar are reputedly eyeing up Northern Leisure and European are in talks with Allied Leisure. It seems like the corporate end of disco, which always seemed to me a contradiction in terms, needs to eat itself like some weird insect every few years. Some of these deals may, indeed, already be consummated by the time you receive this issue. Meanwhile though, as if to prove the point, the entrepreneurial end of the nightclub business is going from strength to strength and expanding, which is as it should be. Check out Big Beat, the K Bar Group, the Ministry of Sound and others. You won't hear any whinging amongst that lot.

**I** was riding in a taxi in the West End of London recently when it came over the cabby's radio that the ubiquitous Peter Stringfellow was going to have a facelift! Frankly, I would have thought that a new hairstyle would have been sufficient, but perhaps not as newsworthy.

**SO**, it seems that the once-great nightclub king, turned minor personality and lap-groveller, has given up on his madcap scheme to run for Mayor of London and gone for a makeover as compensation for the disappointment. I look forward to seeing the results when they are revealed; he certainly won't be able to resist a public launch of the new face which previously launched a thousand nights of lust (or so he claims). No doubt, this will occur shortly before he flies off to Never-Never Land with his latest nubile Wendy.

**SHORTLY AFTER** hearing that shocking news, I read in the press that the great Houdini is also planning to turn his lap-dancing emporium and associated activities into a public company. He figures that it's worth £20m. If he can get investors to stump up that kind of money then he truly will be a magician of Merlinesque proportions. But first he will need to find a respectable City firm to tart-up his balance sheet, which may require restructuring of a different sort.

**COME** to think of it, I wonder if our lad has got confused? When making a public offering, it is normal for the founder to go out with a road show in a sort of wooing process to convince investors and their advisors of the vital statistics and the financial gratification they may expect from the business. Within the Square Mile this is sometimes called a 'beauty parade' - do you think that this perhaps explains the facelift?

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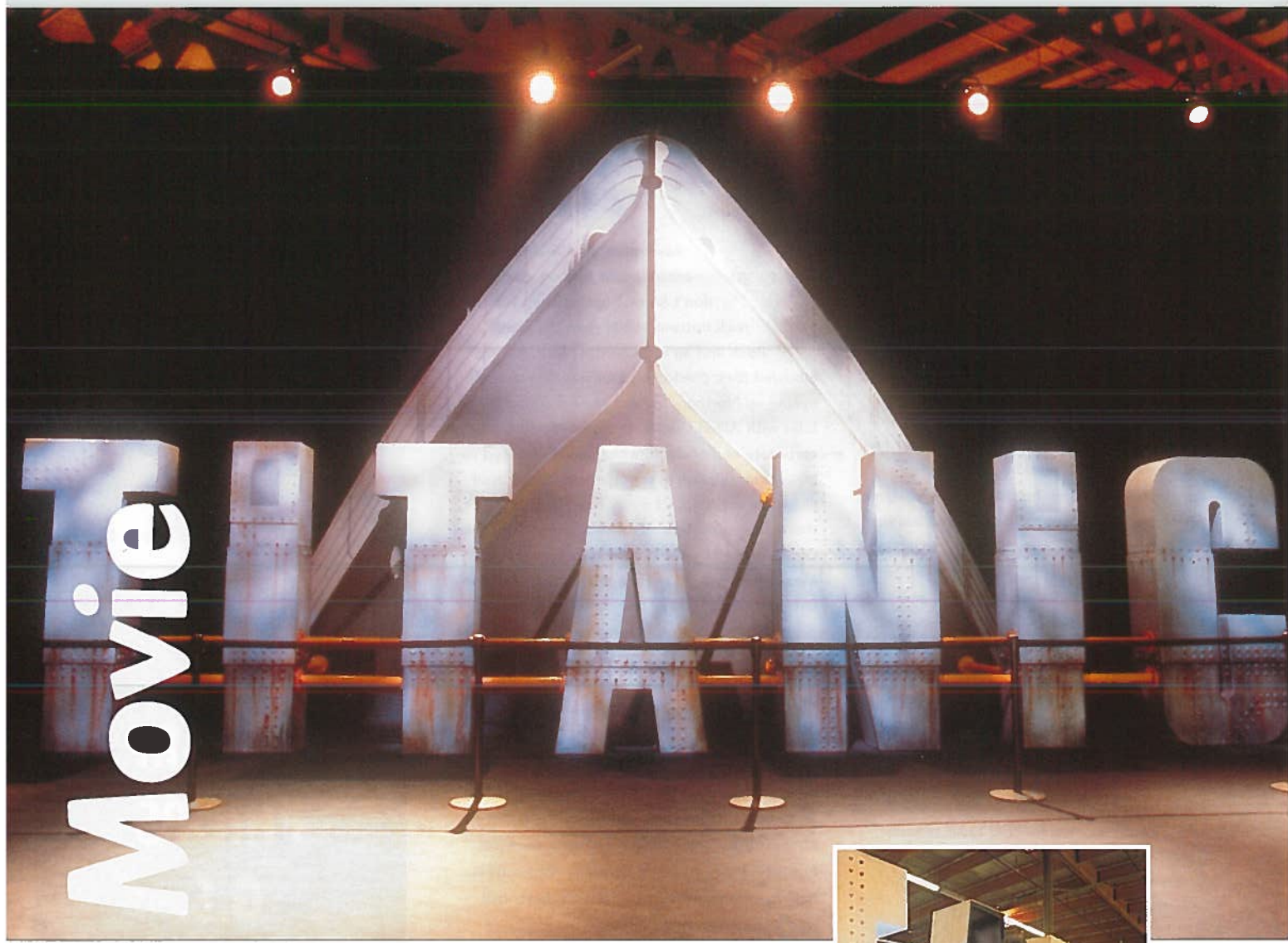
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Movie

Road



TOURIST  
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*Sharon  
Stancavage  
joins the  
Titanic  
as it sets  
sail on a  
world tour*

**T**he movie Titanic touched a universal chord in the hearts of film-goers across the world, making it one of the most profitable, as well as best-loved motion pictures of all time. The Titanic experience has now grown into a themed entertainment project scheduled to tour Europe and Asia for the next 30 months, before reaching its permanent home at Fox Studios in Australia.

Produced in California by Special Events Entertainment and Messe Dusseldorf, the tour came together in a remarkably short period of time - the technical specialists involved had less than six months (and some had much less than that) from the initial concept to the finished project. Add to that the fact that many of the components involved in the fabrication were not available in the States, and the task was nothing short of remarkable. All in all, it was a gargantuan effort that spans over 45,000sq.ft and will be seen by an estimated three million people over its three-year tour.

The Tour combines a variety of entertainment disciplines to bring audiences back to the movie that they loved. The one-and-a-half hour tour is divided into three main parts: two theatre environments and a production area. The journey back to Titanic begins at the sunken shipwreck area. As visitors make their way through the pre-show queue, they're taken on an undersea journey. "This area really sets the mood for the attraction," comments sound designer Brian Edwards of Edwards Technologies. "It's as if you're walking on the sea floor up to the wreck of the Titanic." Deep blues



*Above, the Titanic sign and inset, work in progress on the project*

and blue-greens bathe the undersea area in an otherworldly light, while visitors inspect undersea dive equipment, high pressure camera casings and replicas of the Russian underwater vessels used in the actual production of the film. It's a dark and faintly unsettling area, that evokes an otherworldly sense. "We wanted the visitor to feel as if they were in an immersive underwater environment," comments director of design Patti Drum from Lexington Scenery and Props.

The lighting for the tour was designed by Marilyn Lowey of Lowey & Co, who specified a rig made up almost entirely of ETC equipment. To illuminate this dark, forbidding area she spec'd 150 ETC Iekos and Pars, which were provided by The Obie Company from Torrance, California. These units were the base lighting of the area, although Lowey also depended on the special effects wizards at Technifex to help create the visual mood. "We used a lot

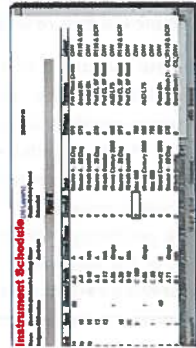




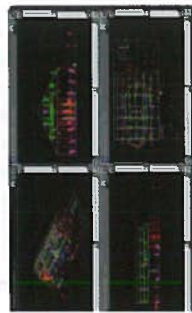
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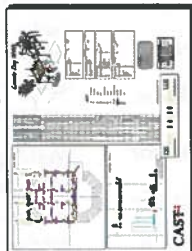
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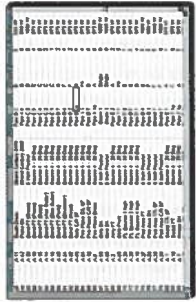
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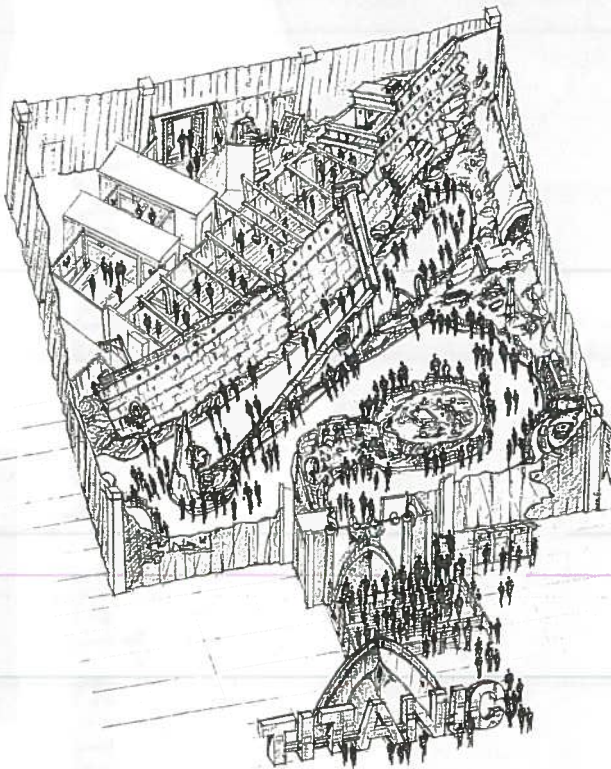
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One of Lexington's preliminary drawings for the Shipwreck area.

*Inset, the actual shipwreck set from the film - now part of The Tour*



of water effects in different colours of blue, blue-green and some purples," Lowey comments. "Everything had gobos and used break-up patterns," she notes. "Technifex built two different types of water ripple projectors for this area - a black light ripple projector and a white water projector."

Lowey used a total of six black light ripple projectors, which simulate the look of actually being underwater, which were placed three to four feet apart, spanning the sunken shipwreck area lengthwise. "The black light ripple projector is a black light, with a moving cylindrical pattern that creates depth of projection as it rotates." The projector, which uses a standard 350W light from Nocturne, is unique in the fact that it doesn't use any white light, which is common for most water effects simulators. "In the past, there was no way to create water ripple effects without introducing white light into the scene," explains special effects producer Rock Hall. "What Technifex wanted to do was develop a system that used a high-powered lensed UV fixture to project a pattern without introducing any white light into the area." Hence the invention of the black light ripple projector, which Lowey used to overlay on her base of ETC Source Fours.

Working in conjunction with the projector are the white water projectors, 20 of which can be found in the sunken shipwreck area. While the black light ripple projectors simulate being underwater, the white water projector gives the appearance of being underwater and gazing up at the surface above. "We've taken a Twinspace and modified it with our own patterns," reports special effects project leader Don Simon of Technifex. Once again, Technifex used an easily accessible fixture as the base of the white water projector - a Source Four ellipsoidal fixture with a 575W lamp.

As visitors traverse the cue, it is anything but silent. Sonar beeps echo from the distance, courtesy of eight ETI 2000 eight-inch two-way speakers supplied by Edwards Technologies Inc. As they continue along their way, visitors encounter various artefacts under the sea, which are augmented by video monitors. "There are four video monitors as you go through the queue," reports Edwards. "Within several of the artefacts is buried a monitor, and each monitor talks about a certain aspect of making the movie from the underwater perspective." The core of this monitor

system is a digital video server, which is operated through show control, that Edwards Technologies Inc. created in conjunction with video giant Panasonic. For the monitors themselves, Edwards also turned to Panasonic. "We bought the monitors in London," he explains. "We used a monitor that could accept both PAL and NTSC, so we were able to do our video production here in NTSC and then feed that signal throughout the attraction. And even though it was a monitor from Europe, it was still able to receive our signal."

Each monitor also had its own soundtrack that accompanied it, and Edwards made sure that the audio bleed between areas was virtually non-existent. "We used four-inch speakers in very small cans that were hung like pendant light fixtures," Edwards explains. "We hung them quite low, which allowed us to isolate the audio in the immediate vicinity of the video monitors." As soon as the visitors walk away from the monitor, the audio track dies, and they are once again listening to the various undersea sounds of the texture track.

As visitors traverse the artefact-filled queue, they find themselves walking along the side of the sunken Titanic. An NEC MT 1035 1,000 lumen projector sits in the hallway, projecting onto a 4ft scrim shows a ghost image of Old Rose and New Rose morphing back and forth, once again controlled by the Edwards Technologies Inc. digital video server. A gaping hole in the side of the ship beckons, and visitors find themselves in the morphing hallway, at the true beginning of the tour. The voice of Old Rose, courtesy of two Edwards Technologies Inc. ETI 8" 2000 two-way speakers, starts to reminisce about the Titanic. Edward's multi-channel texture track, which is played over a total of 12 speakers placed throughout the 100ft hallway, gives us the sounds of the passengers boarding the Titanic, the ship creaking and her mighty horn bellow in the distance.

From the morphing hallway, the voice of Old Rose carries visitors into the grandiose Grand Foyer. At first, it appears to simply be the first-class grand staircase from the film, resplendent in honey-coloured wood, but upon closer inspection, it turns out to be a live movie set. "The Grand Foyer was extremely difficult to light," Lowey remarks, "since we had some height restrictions." The area has an 8ft ceiling, which made this part of the project more challenging for

*The tour opened at Wembley in the UK in mid-December and has now headed off to Amsterdam, Paris, Dusseldorf and Milan. It will visit 15 major cities across the world during its three-year run*

[www.titanicmovietour.com](http://www.titanicmovietour.com)

Lowey. "I originally started off with a 5k in each corner and three 50 degree Source 4 Lekos with patterns," she reports. "But I had to get rid of the 5ks because there wasn't enough distance for them to spread anywhere." In the end, Lowey used 12 ETC Source 4 Lekos with break up patterns and warm, amber-toned gels. "The Grand Foyer is the arrival point in the ship," Edwards added. "The whole attitude now changes, and we deconstruct the movie."

The Grand Foyer opens up into Production Central, which is a variety of sets and interactive displays, covering about 12,000sq.ft. "Production Central is more exhibition-like," explains Patti Drum. Many of the areas have 28" Panasonic monitors that play video clips from the movie, accompanied by Edwards Technologies ETI 2000 eight-inch two-way speakers mounted on top of the monitor enclosures, which are tastefully integrated into the sets. The Production Central area is the largest section of the show and Lowey approached the lighting in a fairly straightforward fashion. "I approached it as if I were lighting the set for a film shoot," she asserts. For the Production Central area, Lowey used 15 to 18 5k units on stands (most of which used frost), as well as a number of practicals that were placed in the sets themselves. "The practicals created a sense of warmth and intimacy in each of these sets," she comments. A 250-300ft long spine truss also runs the length of Production Central, and has 120 Par 64 units also illuminating the area.

From the wide variety of sets in Production Central, visitors then board what looks like the exterior of the ship. "As you board that, you turn the corner and realise that things aren't exactly as they should be," explains Patti Drum with a smile. Visitors have now entered the sinking hallway. Basically, this area is a recreation of a scene from the movie in which a hallway door bursts open from the force of the water behind it, engulfing those unfortunate enough to be in its path. Visitors descend through a hallway in which everything is skewed, and disaster appears to be imminent. There are screams in the background, and two stewards rush visitors through the area, telling them to 'hurry up, the ship is sinking.' As visitors rush through the 30ft-long hallway, they come upon a door. "At the end of the hallway is a flood of water coming through a double set of doors that you're getting closer and closer to," begins Don Simon from Technifex. "As you approach the door, you see more flooding and the doors actually push out towards you a bit, making you believe that there's a mass of water behind it."

To achieve this effect, Technifex used over 1,000 gallons of water that flow through this area and end up in a tank built under the set piece. "There's a 10-horse power pump that draws the water from the tanks and forces it through some custom-made stainless steel nozzles," explains Rock Hall from Technifex. "The nozzles are inserted in the cracks of the doors, along the hinge line." There is also an

additional water pipe that pushes on the door, which lends animation to the door itself. The effect also makes use of a Microcool high pressure water fogger that creates ultrasonic fog, which spills out of what appears to be a broken steam pipe. The water in this, the sinking hallway, goes about six feet away from the doorway, but is separated from the visitors by a steel expanding doorway.

While water is apparently gushing through the doorway, the sound and lighting effects perfectly augment the mood. "We're creating a feeling, using sound effects, water and lighting, that the ship is literally going down around you," remarks Lowey. "We're trying to create the feeling of the panic the people in the Titanic literally experienced - the horror of it." Lowey used a number of strobes in the sinking hallway, as well as several red and white wall units that were actually practicals.

Accompanying her lighting effects was the sound reinforcement, which is quite concentrated in this area. "We've got tons of audio in the sinking hallway," Edwards comments. "We've got two EAW SB

is the disaster theatre area, where up to 250 people at a time can experience a multimedia event that takes them through the actual sinking of the Titanic. "Basically, in the disaster theatre, we're taking the film and literally translating it into a theatrical event," according to Lowey. The disaster footage itself is projected onto two 50ft wide x 20ft tall scrims by six video projectors that essentially run a multi-media show.

"Basically, it's a surround-sound theatre with seven discrete digital audio channels," claims Edwards. "It's an immersive sound environment because it's a full surround sound environment. We even have 40 Aura Transducers under the bows of the lifeboats so you can actually feel that something is going on." Edwards also makes use of numerous speakers in this area, including three EAW JF 200 speakers, four EAW DS 122E surround sound speakers on house left and right, as well as two Aura CS 8.1 subwoofers on stage left and right.

The Disaster Theatre features two scrims with 10ft between them, as well as a roll drop farthest upstage, which shows the propeller of the ship thrusting out of the water. "It's



subwoofers under the floor, as well as eight ETI speakers placed overhead, making you feel as if you're in this ship that's literally falling apart."

Visitors take a quick turn and survive the sinking hallway, only to find themselves being ushered into the most intense area of the tour. Some visitors are rushed into five lifeboats, while others stand behind them - above is a black sky. In front of them are dark waves that make the sea come alive - in the distance is the vague outline of an iceberg. Cries for help echo in the night. This

very MTV," explains Drum. "There's flashes of images moving between the two screens."

To enhance the total disaster experience, which takes place in a very dark area, Lowey uses a number of specialised lights. "The purpose of lighting in this area was to augment some of the special effects that the audience is watching," she begins. "Here I used eight High End Technobeams, a Clay Paky Pin Scan and 16 Technifex white water projectors. There's also a cross-shaped truss positioned above the Disaster

*The famed first-class Grand Foyer*

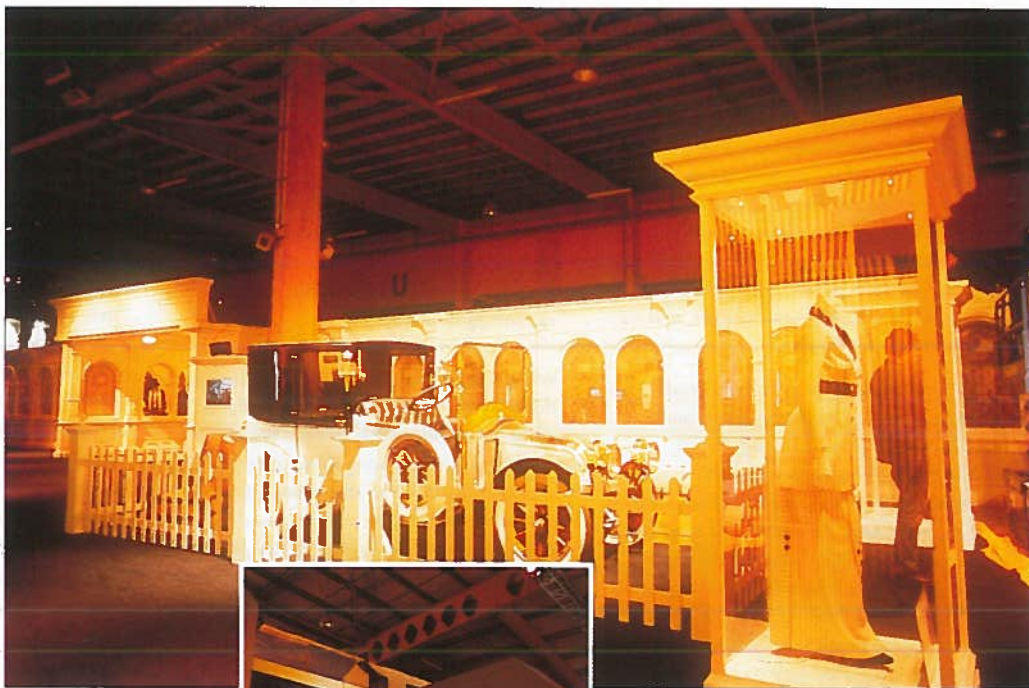


Theatre, which has its sides and top masked, and the Technobeams hang between the audience and the first scrim," Lowey concludes.

While the visitors view the momentous disaster of the Titanic, there are simulated waves and floating debris that appear in front of them, between the second scrim and the roll projector. "The challenge for everybody was to try and create a room that looked like it was a wet environment, but in actuality wasn't," reports Rock Hall from Technifex. Using very dark blue silk, Technifex used theatrical principles to create the waves that augment the video experience. "We developed some simple fans that created the movement of the silk, as well as little motion bases that we used to mount debris onto," Hall explains.

"The motion base has a random X/Y axis platform to mount things - everything from barrels to deck chairs - that float out amid the waves. These are also controlled via show control so that between the silk and motion bases, there is also floating debris, as well as the motion of the ocean, which is enhanced by the use of the white water wave projectors." Technifex used a total of six fans placed off stage right and left, working in conjunction with the three scrim areas.

The tour is quite simply stunning: through the use of special effects, lighting design, scenic marvels and sound reinforcement, James Cameron's vision of Titanic lives on, bringing thrills to an entirely different audience.



*Titanic: The Official Movie Tour boasts the largest collection of actual props, sets and costumes from the film ever assembled. Above can be seen just part of that vast collection of Titanic memorabilia. Inset, the entrance to the sinking hallway from Production Central*



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# Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

Somehow I missed out on the grand opening of the new Sadler's Wells, but I'm not proud and tickets are cheap. Two tickets for the Royal Opera, albeit in the next-to-back row, seemed a bargain at £7.50 each - even more so when I found that the programme itself costs £3. So, off to Islington for *The Bartered Bride*.

**THE FIRST IMPRESSION** from Rosebery Avenue is pretty good, with the mega-TV glowing out of the theatre's glass frontage. However, if you arrive as I did from the side road you get an immediate sensation that all is not tickety-boo - a notice on what will be the Stage Door tells you that the Stage Door is at the Box Office. A novelty, that.

**IT'S A COUPLE** of months after that grand opening, the main excitement of which seems to have been the last-minute arrival of the safety clearance. The management aren't going to claim even now that everything is finished - a note at the foot of the stairs suggests that patrons who aren't happy with the state of the building should write to Messrs Bovis. I wonder what sort of

postbag they've been getting, especially from those who paid rather more than I did to see the Royal Opera.

**NOW OF COURSE** there's an intentional difference between the Lilian Baylis, culture-for-all approach of Sadler's Wells and the champagne and sponsorship style of Covent Garden, but at first sight I wonder whether the new Sadler's Wells hasn't taken its cut-price image too much to heart. The downstairs bar, into which you can walk straight from the street, has the unmistakable air of a station buffet. The staircase follows the Renton Howard tradition of linking all levels, but without the grandeur of some of their other efforts. Indeed, it looks like a staircase in a students' union, very functional, but not very wide. A central rail divides it, allowing for the possibility of a one-way system, but thus divided it has room for only one-and-a-half people going up, and one-and-a-half going down. Can it be adequate for a house of 1800?

**GOING UP IT**, you arrive at a rather pointless mezzanine floor, oh-so-imaginatively lit by a flock of birdies from the ceiling, with a few students-union type chairs strewn about. No doubt it comes into its own when the sponsors' playrooms leading off it are opened out to make a more attractive space. The woodblock floor, poorly sealed, is already showing signs of wear.

**THE NEXT FLOOR**, leading to the first circle, has a bar like that on the ground floor: is it minimalist in its eschewing of colour, or just plain dull? I begin to realise that the institutional feel of the building is caused by the lack of ceiling height in the public areas, and no amount of dramatic full-height windows and giant TV screens will remedy that. The dark grey marble surface of the bar itself is already marked with ring-stains - looks difficult to maintain. A fancy glass shelf for drinks looking down into the stairwell seems a nice touch - but one of its lengths has already smashed, suggesting another idea that didn't translate too well off the drawing board.

**ONWARD AND UPWARD** to the second circle. In spite of some rather elegant signage, there is confusion at the entrances, because the left-hand circle door looks like the entrance to the Gents. It's quite a journey to the next-to-last row, and it's even more of a struggle to get to the middle of it. Sure enough, when you sit down you realise there's not the most generous supply of leg-room. The view down the long, thin new auditorium is like looking down a child's kaleidoscope: at the end of the black tube is the small, square stage opening. Your most immediate view is of the metal screening that part-hides the lighting grid straight in front of you. During the show you can see followspot operators scurrying about. Keep your eyes down and concentrate on the show.

**NO QUIBBLES** about the sound quality. From what seems like half a mile away, you can hear every word of soloists and chorus, even if the words are Czech. You can just about pick out the surtitles from this distance, too. You can observe the careless spill of some of Wolfgang Gobbel's FOH lighting on the wooden drop-curtain, and you can see all you need of Alison Chitty's flat whitewood sets, an exercise in art-school modelmaking which reeks of balsa cement and gives stage design a bad name (there's a similar sod-off statement in Tom Piper's sets for the current RSC *Measure for Measure*: nice model, shame about the play, they seem to say). You can certainly see the costumes, most of them bright green. Only in the circus scene at the start of the second half is there any sign of life and colour on stage.

**AT HALF TIME** we join a heaving mob trying to get out of the second circle and down to the first-circle bar. We congratulate ourselves on having ordered our drinks beforehand. The time taken to clear the hall for the interval is a foretaste of the time taken at the end - that staircase comes in for heavy punishment, and this with a crowd moving in only one direction. A friendly usher-lady downstairs says that it's really not that bad, and there are other emergency exits if there ever were a real emergency. I reckon it is that bad, and the time taken to get out of Sadler's Wells (especially for us plebs at the back) is going to mar the enjoyment of many an otherwise special evening.

**SO**, that's the new Wells. It will be super, I'm sure, when it's finished, and I expect the technical facilities are terrific - many of them are visible enough, indeed accessible enough from the auditorium to suggest that Ian Albery is very proud of them. But just now its warped wall-panels, scuffed floors and dodgy paintwork have all the hallmarks of a rushed job, poorly finished. I wish it better.

"You can observe the careless spill of some of Wolfgang Gobbel's FOH lighting on the wooden drop-curtain, and you can see all you need of Alison Chitty's flat whitewood sets, an exercise in art-school modelmaking which reeks of balsa cement and gives stage design a bad name."



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# Robert Juliat

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# Rod and Reba

Steve Moles

**A**s I crossed the Pennines en route for the Manchester Evening News Arena for the second consecutive night - the first show had been postponed at the last minute due to illness - several thoughts about Rod Stewart crossed my mind. The thought that the man renowned for a voice like rusty nails had been laid low by laryngitis made me chuckle as I groped my way through the blizzard on Snake Pass.

But then I thought back to the first time I ever saw him. It was 1969, a pub just outside Princes Risborough in Buckinghamshire. Even then he drove a Lamborghini and was accompanied by an impossibly long pair of legs topped with blonde hair and boobs. In his early twenties, he still had a very lived-in face, one that has stayed with him over the years, giving the illusion that little has changed in him over the intervening three decades. He's still fit, lithe and attracts huge audiences; 85,000 tickets at Earls Court over five nights must make him the biggest-grossing act of the winter. So how does the youth of today view him? Is he the Frank Sinatra of my generation?

Surely not, for Frank never had to cavort like a teenager around the stage when he reached his fifties. I guess he's made a rod for his own back (no pun intended); the curtains will finally close when his hair falls out, or he needs a stick to mount the stairs. Interestingly, his sound from those days in the Faces has changed little over the years - quality has improved, but as his engineer Lars Brogaard said: "It's still kick, snare and guitars," and his larynx of course. "He wants his sound to have a bit of an edge. It is a loud show. In fact it's probably the best-sounding show you've ever heard." Coming from the country that gave the world Carlsberg, I think we can allow Mr Brogaard that little witticism.

Fresh from his success at Earls Court - "This was the first time I'd ever played it," - Brogaard had an interesting observation on a gig that's generally loathed by sound engineers. "I thought it was a great venue, so enormous. I had no problem with the sound. With the V-dosc we were easily able to keep the sound off the roof and still cover every seat in the house. All those pillars make for a lot of seat kills, but because of its shape, 17,000 a night still felt like a club atmosphere inside." This is interesting, because we don't often hear the building praised by a sound man, and also because, if memory serves me correctly, you don't normally get rock shows in there just before Christmas. Are the trade shows finally turning their backs on this awkward venue?

Brogaard's V-dosc system is arrayed two hangs per side in Manchester, 12 each side of stage and six with an Arc under-slung

*finds veteran performers Rod Stewart and Reba McIntyre in fine form*



CONCERT/  
TOURING

at the sides: "I've also got 10 Arcs dotted about as near fills and eight Aura subs either side of stage." Unlike Ray Furze on M People last month, Brogaard has no problem with low-end punch, even here in Britain's largest capacity venue. There appear to be several reasons for this, not least the fact that this man has been using the system for some time now and knows its idiosyncrasies well. "I'm rolling off the main system at around 84Hz; the subs cross over up around 116Hz," which sounds straightforward enough until he adds: "But we mess around with that every venue," giving some insight as to how familiarity contributes to a

firm hand at the controls. He also gave a hint as to how to approach one of the system's other features. "Because of the way the system works there's no room for bullets in there. At the high end, around 16kHz for example, you really have to push, maybe another 15dB. The whole system is driven by Crown amps, but for the high end we've replaced the regular power amps with a Crown Reference amp. It's not so loud, but it's smoother and lets the high end breathe more."

As is compulsory for the system, Brogaard extolled the evenness of coverage. An opinion I agree with, having knackered myself walking up and down the tribunes around this vertiginous venue. There are

inevitable dips in the very low end caused by the wavelength of the sound, but even in the most distant seats high end information was clear and present all around, something that could not be said about M People in Sheffield. Brogaard uses his own XL3 out front, fitted with Out Board Electronics' flying faders: "Even on the input faders, there's lots of level changes between numbers. That edginess Stewart likes in his sound comes largely from the band." Brogaard has a few older pieces of equipment out front, a Lexicon 224, three AMSs and a newer TC2290. "The Lexicon is great for a bit of 'Concert Hall' on everything, whilst the AMS is for voices (backing vocalists and Rod) and snare, plus I do a bit of pitch change on Rod, up and down, just to fatten his voice. It's the same with the 2290 - a Doppler effect around 30 millisecond delay just to fatten." And then there's an Aphex Aural Exciter for exactly that - a bit of attacking whoomp on the kick drum.

With everyone on in-ear systems, stage levels are low and Brogaard is able to leave everything pretty much open, just a bit of gating on the Toms with compressors sitting idle. Robin Fox and Phil Wilkie share the honours on monitors, Fox taking Rod, the backing vocals and one guitarist, Wilkie the rest of the band. The entire in-ear system is AKG. "These are the first production units," said Brogaard. "I spent a lot of time with Walter Ruehrig at AKG on these. They're a true stereo image and there's no radio noise, plus there's the IVA bi-aural effect. They're only 1U high and half a rack wide and at





width of the stage, with metal grille panels hung vertically between; the entire edifice flanks the portrait orientation LED screen. "The rectangular panels are all to the same dimension ratio as the screen," said Payne. "The vertical trusses are filled with Pars and there's Mini Moles with Color Mags behind the grilles. Rod likes to feel the heat of the lamps." Something he probably

The show itself (two hours, ten minutes. Not bad for a middle-aged man suffering from laryngitis) is a carefully paced affair. Sound-wise it is exactly as the man himself decreed, kick, snare and guitars, but having said that, it was easy to distinguish the backing vocalists in the mix and pick out the keyboard flourishes. There were occasions when the Exciter on the kick seemed a bit over the top to me, but it was far from all the time, so at least it was deliberate. Payne, meanwhile, kept pace with the performance with a range of strong colours and restrained effects. Strobing Studio Colors in the old Edwin Starr standard 'Losin You' caught my eye, and had me notice for the first time how they outpace Pars in attack and decay. But such things were the exception rather than the norm. Truth is Rod, even when ill, can hold an audience's attention.

**It's a sobering thought that in the US, Reba McEntire is a bigger grossing artist than Rod the Mod. In fact, she's been the biggest-grossing female artist in the US for some time now, and she manages to combine a modest, if accomplished, Hollywood acting career to boot. Her success has been a slow, steady build, she might have shifted 70 million albums but that hasn't been achieved through a couple of blockbusters.**

It was no surprise then to discover that many members of her production team have been with her a dozen years or more, plundering the US arena circuit year on year, and generally all benefiting from the fruits of their boss's labour. It's obvious too that she's a good employer, all talked warmly of their time with her, and the fact that they all stay so long speaks volumes for what a happy band they are. All of them, from Brian Leedham her production manager of 18 years, to Ricky Moller on sound (a mere 15 years), have been a little taken aback by her venture into new territories. "This is a real different thing to try," said Leedham, and he knows better than most, having worked previously for Marcel Avram at MAMA back before McEntire. "She's done the odd show over here, country festivals and such, but compared to the 18 truck productions back home . . . Well, this is real intimate." And he's right - it could be seen as risky. But judging by how she played the stage, and considering how Moller confirmed she'd been equally motivated during a similar foray into Australia last year, McEntire appears to be embarking on a new venture. She's either going to end up shifting units in new markets, or she just needs the challenge to raise her game back home in the States. Either way fans in the UK benefit, and she hasn't failed to sell out a show here, even if it is the sub-3,000-seater circuit.

Moller is a Prism aficionado, using Showco back home; over here he gets the same Prism gear with a front end from Concert Sound. "I like to use the Midas XL4," he said somewhat tersely, suffering as he was from a case of severe jet lag, though one gets the impression Moller is a man of few words. He looks for all the world like Lee Marvin, circa Cat Ballou,

\$1,700 each I don't know how they price them so cheap." Brogaard had good reason to make the sales pitch on AKG's behalf, the company had gone that extra mile to support him and their product, sending technicians to rehearsals in Los Angeles to iron out any niggles. Fox, who's at the delivery end, was more measured in his assessment, but no less flattering. "For the performer they are exceptional. There are less drop outs - much less than with other in-ear systems. The IVA system for vocalists makes a big difference, - the guitarists thought it was a cool effect and wanted it to start with, but now we've turned it all off."

appreciated even more on this occasion. "I'm pumped full of antibiotics, that's why I'm sweating like a pig," was Rod's unnecessary aside as he repeatedly left the stage to change one sodden shirt for another.

But back to that dialogue. "We started rehearsals around 7.00am each day, the band would come in about 11.00am and we'd work through until 8.00pm. For the first time, we were there when Rod was, instead of programming overnight. So we had continuous contact. I also made Chris Keating set up next to me instead of backstage as is usual."

Payne operates the show from an Icon Console; the rig is supplied by LSD and, apart from the Pars and Mini-Moles, comprises Icons, High End Studio Colors and Diversitronics Strobes. "This show looks very different," said Payne, "because there's no smoke. People don't necessarily register its absence, but they do comment on how the overall look is clean and sharp. As a result, we don't have to hold back the intensity of the screen output." However, I'd have to say part of the reason for that is the silvered surface of the set and the metal grilles. There's so much gain from them that colour saturation and set intensity sits at a par with the screen output.

This is Keating's first time with an LED screen (a Serco-built unit provided by Screenco. "I'm using a lot of black & white footage, or single-colour stuff. With other screens you tend to get a bit of black bleed, but with this there's none. I always like to push things. Ever since I first worked as a cameraman I've always been creative and experimented. From the minute I started using it I never imagined the screen would deal with what I put on it." So it is that there's the full range of visual trickery, beautifully edited archive material inter-cut with live camera footage, time lapse footage, screen as lighting effect (strobe screen for example), and straight track and zoom camera work. Video Tech provide the PPU and four camera system - two podiums out front, one in the pit and a hand-held (also in the pit). Interestingly, one of the cameramen is from the lighting crew, while another is none other than Pete Rayel of Hangover, the tour's rigging contractor.

**"The show itself (two hours, ten minutes - not bad for a middle-aged man suffering from laryngitis) is a carefully paced affair. Sound-wise it is exactly as the man himself decreed - kick, snare and guitars. For lighting there is a range of strong colours and restrained effects."**

Yet again lighting, set and video have consorted to work together and produce an integrated whole. "Well not entirely," said video director Chris Keating: "The set and lighting was already designed, along with the screen in the back wall, but from the moment I arrived in Los Angeles for rehearsals, Mark Payne (LD) opened a dialogue with me." Dialogue is exactly what Payne had in mind from the onset, though it seems he'd thought and planned a great deal beforehand. He'd designed his system, in collusion with Ian Knight (set) back in the summer when working with Eros Ramazzotti:

"When we got to LA for rehearsals nothing had been changed, which is unusual." Even more unusual was Payne's lack of pre-programming. "I'm not a great believer in it. We'd always done the shows with video and because Rod doesn't like smoke we'd always put in some background - towers, drapes etc." The end result is a fairly muted stage set, built by Access all Areas; the stage proper is a compact silver-clad stepped platform at the heart of the stage. The big background feature is a set of vertical trusses across the full

and warrants the same respectful leeway. "The desk they've given me is a '4', but this one doesn't have the automation on the input side I'm used to. However that's not a real problem, but I'm looking forward to trying the new Showconsole when I get home," a reference to the long awaited new flagship desk from Showco. "The only real compromise comes because on these stages I can end up with Reba with her mic in front of the PA. And also, any acoustic instrument on stage, e.g. the drums, breaks out into the house." However, with a wall of Perspex around the kit, the effect was diminished, nevertheless Moller did have to mix louder than he obviously wanted to. But that wasn't so much the drums. In some ways this looked to be at the insistence of McEntire's husband manager who sat at Moller's right hand all night and appeared to egg him on.

Whatever the reason, there were complaints at the end of the evening about level. Having sat close to some of the complainers for the opening act, and later at the console for the show, I can confirm they were sat in a mid/high beam and quite frankly had to suffer this injustice for the sake of the bulk of the audience where levels were more than acceptable. This was a shame for the people concerned; after 15 years you'd have to expect Moller's mix to be good, and I'd have to say spot on. A 10-piece band all nicely separated, but coherently a whole. Perhaps he'll get to try the new small-format L3 series, a speaker apparently more suited to the smaller venue.

Apart from working closely to the dynamic of the band, the constant to'ing and fro'ing of the multiple solo flourishes, Moller does little in the way of modification. "I use minimal effects, a bit of light reverb, and I do some doubling. I like to use the PCM70 with the V2.0 software, it has the same algorithms as the old 224/480s and just sounds warmer to me." He also has a pair of Summit DCL200s, a channel each for Reba and the three backing vocalists, plus another assigned to Kick and Bass. Drums apart, the stage sound is muted. Monitor man Robert 'Koz' Kozloski has everyone on in-ears, "and most of the sends are

wireless too," said Moller. "Since there are so many bad-sounding places we like the stage sound to be as controlled as possible, we like to treat it as a studio." Which is as close to lucid as he got, and possibly hints at where the clarity he achieves comes from.

LD Gayle Hase - a man, I should point out - is similarly a McEntire veteran (since 1980). As a designer he has progressed over the years to an eclectic approach to lighting references. "There's just so many different lights these days; each has its own character. I like to pick out what each

them from the dark set which they inhabit. Too often it's a spot-lit McEntire against a black set of risers, with a band dressed in black and black back-drop. Hase did qualify this approach by noting: "I probably am using stronger front light on her here, just to make her jump out a little more on these smaller stages."

There were scenic elements to break the space; two vertical trusses upstage flanked the stage as towers, while across the back-pleated swags of yellow and blue drapes made for some plush lighting touches against the coloured Starcloth



can do and change from time to time." Thus he has no long-term relationship with any particular company or lamp, on this occasion using LSD who'd just serviced the much bigger McEntire US tour pre-Christmas, but even so his rig comprises High End Cyberlights and Studio Colors with just over 100 Pars, run from a WholeHog II.

"I like to paint pretty pictures - she's very theatrical," was his opening line, and 'pretty' is right, though if a criticism can be made it's that not enough light is devoted to the band who are, after all, a big presence on stage. McEntire is no Shirley Bassey, though she does have the same potent vocal weaponry, but not the same charisma. Thus, a couple of stops lighter wash on the band would have been enough just to lift

(all from Blackout). "I'd like to try a Cyber' down the fibre optic core" said the ever-exploratory Hase, who also regretted that he had to leave the Starcloth behind when they return to the States. Don't they have these things over there? "Not as good as this one."

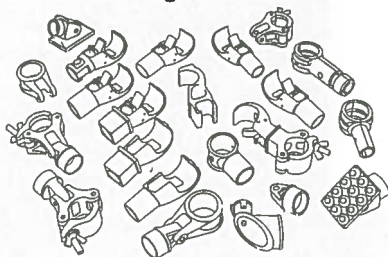
Hase is enjoying the return to smaller venues, "It's fun. We did a show at the Point in Dublin the other day, not huge, but much bigger than the gigs we're doing here. I was acutely aware of the change in size straight away - it didn't feel right." Fun is the overriding ethos, it's evident in McEntire's demeanour, and as Leedham says: "This is the closest she's got to an audience in years," and she's obviously loving it. Watch out for Reba 2000.



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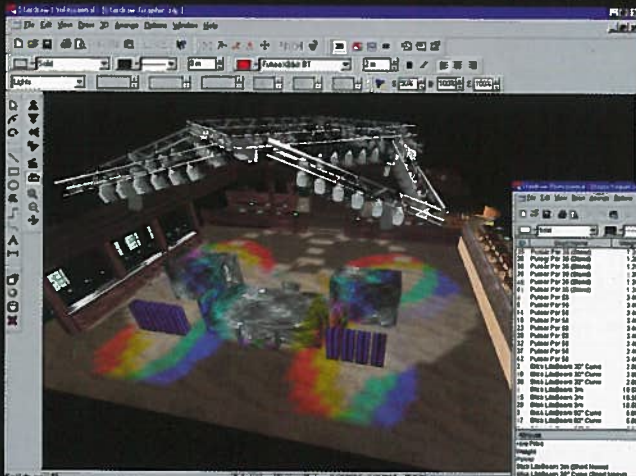
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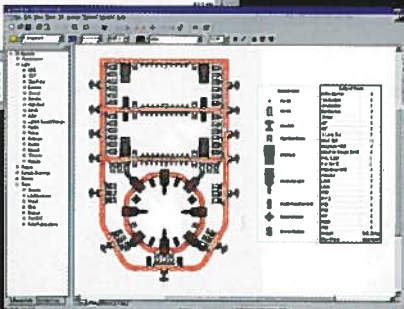
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# Future Sound of Acacia Avenue

*What kind of audio and lighting technology will we be enjoying in our millennium home?*

*Ross Brown dons his deerstalker to investigate . . .*

Just imagine the problems that Loyd Grossman will have wandering around the house of the 21st century, with Lord Frost and a panel of C-grade celebrities back in the studio attempting not only to decide who could live in a house like this - but what the hell half of the stuff does.

It can hardly have escaped your attention, but the house of the future is almost upon us. A flick through any of the five terrestrial channels on an average night of the week might find Carol Vorderman waxing lyrical about a 'Dream House', Peter Snow ditching his swingometer to take a wander around some madcap inventor's latest idea of future dwellings and a re-run of the Jetsons demonstrating that the imagination of the guys at Hanna Barbera wasn't that far from the current reality.

With his ever-sturdy grasp on the zeitgeist (or, failing that, buying it up from someone else), Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates' new home, on the outskirts of Seattle, is the epitome of the trend towards a merger of environment and electronics. Sprawling across a hillside on the edge of Lake Washington, the home of the richest man in the world covers some 40,000 square feet and gave him little change from \$50 million. With that kind of money, and working in the ever-changing and adapting world of IT, it's no surprise to learn that Bill's new wonder house contains the very latest in modern technology, offering a sneaky glimpse at the kind of things us mere mortals will be enjoying in the next few years.

Attempting to find out the exact contents of this wonder home is akin to spending an afternoon at the races watching Shergar ridden by Lord Lucan. Uncle Bill has refused permission to any company wishing to announce their connection with the project.

Suffice to say that it is public knowledge that it has a 60-foot long indoor pool (with an underwater music system), two elevators, a 30 car underground car park, a 20-person movie theatre, trampoline room (obviously), massage room, an amusement arcade, heating under the floors and driveway, and a 24-screen videowall. Connected by literally miles of communication cable, largely fibre optic, all the various appliances are linked to computer servers powered by Windows NT. These servers control the lighting, music and climate (amongst other things) in each of the seven bedrooms, 24 bathrooms, including 10 full baths, six kitchens, two conference rooms and countless other living rooms via a touch-sensitive pad.

It sounds fancy enough to start with, but here's where it gets really smart. It's Saturday night, you're sitting down to watch 'Blind Date' but have a sudden urge for a sandwich and a beer. However, if you go to the kitchen you will surely miss finding out if Debbie from Doncaster picks number one, two or three. Worry ye not. At chez Gates, everybody has an electronic tag attached to them (clothing recommended), allowing the computers to know not only who they are, but also where they are. So, as Bill, his wife Melissa or any one of the 2,000 guests they could probably fit into the place move from lounge number four, into kitchen number three, the computer automatically switches on every television they pass.

I know what you're thinking . . . such in-house improvements are so far beyond anything us mere mortals could install in our own modest residencies and that reading about these things is simply pie in the sky. Nothing could be further from the truth. "At the moment the technology is only at an early stage of penetration, it's the very rich and famous that have it in their houses," says Yvonne Womersley, sales and marketing manager of AMX - installers of such fine systems. She adds: "Bear in mind that although there's no such thing as a typical installation - if pushed, I'd say that the 'typical' installation is going to cost you around £20,000 - it is possible to buy simple systems for £3,000 - but then you need to buy equipment for the system to control."

If the fact that I choose to quote her wise words isn't enough for you demanding people, you can add further credence to Womersley's opinions when



FUTURE  
TECHNOLOGY





you realise that AMX may well have had something to do with an installation at a famous billionaire's home.

It's difficult to pinpoint exactly what technologies are likely to pass from the pro audio field into the average home. Okay, it's probably safe to say that as consumer demands grow, and new technologies filter down the budget scale, the barriers between 'professional' and 'amateur' audio will disappear and that the same - in one form or another - can probably be said for innovations from the lighting industry as well.

The essence of 'environmental entertainment' (for want of a better term) consists of a combination of audio and video units all controlled through a variety of key pads dotted around the home. That's the simplest way - but such things are not for the house of the future. Oh no. Now call me paranoid, but if I was manufacturing and promoting a voice recognition software system that could control just about every single appliance in the home, I wouldn't call it HAL. Anybody who's seen '2001: A Space Odyssey' will know exactly what I mean. HAL 2000 is a PC-based digital home systems integration operating system that uses state-of-the-art voice recognition technology to give users the power to control automated devices in their homes by voice from anywhere in the world. Or, in layman's terms - you talk to it.

Produced by Home Automated Living (HAL), you might need to sit down to take all this in - cause it gets better: you don't have to stand next to the thing and shout at it.

You can pick up any phone in the house, tell it to turn the heating up or put your lights/Barry White CD on - and it does. Are you ready for this? Or, you can phone your house and order it to turn the oven on! Okay, this is Lighting&Sound International not 'The Caterer' but I like the idea nonetheless.

In fact, the blurb for HAL 2000 suggests using the system for starting your car in the morning, CD/audio/video distribution,

answering the phone/taking messages and as a security system controller. Greg Jack is operations manager with cabling company IMI: "Any home can be cabled and any house can be retro-wired as long as the client is aware of the consequences." Cabling is usually a combination of Cat. 5, Ethernet or fibre optics - each having their own uses (data, audio, etc.) - and each being preferred by a different contractor. But what if you don't want cables filling up your wall cavities? You are a child of the future and, for you, the ether is the transmission medium for all your information.

Luckily, the people at Creston agree and have produced the Spectrum STX, a system of wireless, two-way RF touchpanels. The signals can travel up to 1,000 feet to and from the transceiver, even through walls - with no line of sight problems experienced with infra-red controllers, and with control coming via the standard pressure-sensitive keypads - available in either full colour or mono screens.

Another American company, Lutron, produces a similar system (RadioRA) and both allow signals - audio, video, lighting, toaster, etc. - to be transferred from any location in the house where there's a suitable 'electronic eye' reader. And the added bonus of all this wireless technology? You can take it with you when you move!

A cost-effective entrant into the market, currently awaiting European approval for its systems is Phast, a subsidiary of AMX. I feel like a kid in a particularly pricey branch of Toys R Us when I start looking at this stuff, even though I'm unlikely to see any of it for some time. But when you begin to run through what the Phast NT system promises, it's difficult not to get excited.

Exhibit One: select a television programme you don't want to miss by simply highlighting it on Phast's TV Grid and the system tunes in or records the programme automatically. Exhibit Two: change lighting settings to fit your mood: set one level for listening to CDs and have PHAST NT automatically dim the lights when you watch a film. The business end of all this jiggery-pokery is a Phast Landmark Hub, where 15 separate runs of a maximum of 1000 feet of Cat. 5 cable - each driving up to 10 devices of their own - meet up, exchange information and then get on with the job of turning on lights, playing videos and piping the Spice Girls into the garage.

Now obviously all the fancy control equipment in the world is a waste of money if you're going to plug a Dansette into it. What we need is some future technology to power this baby. And it's just around the corner . . . oh, here it is. DVD - Digital Versatile Disc - is the format of the future - no, please don't argue, just agree with me on this one. Not only does it hold music in CD quality, but it can play back videos as well - a real all-rounder you could say. No offence to any manufacturers reading, but, at the moment, one DVD player is pretty much like the next one. Now, it's not that this one stands head and shoulders above the rest - though it is pretty good - but we need an example.

Enter, stage left, the Denon DVD-3000. It plays MPEG2 DVDs and MPEG1 video CDs, as well as all your existing music CDs. MPEG stands for Moving Picture Experts Group, a collective working under the joint direction

of the International Standards Organisation (ISO) and the International Electro-Technical Commission (IEC), to produce standards for the coding of moving pictures and associated audio. MPEG has four layers, the third of which (MP3) deals with audio, and the others video - and the compression rates are around 10:1.

So, add all this together, chuck in the graphical on-

screen display and it's fairly clear that you've got a serious bit of kit. You've got your playback (and eventually DVD will allow recording too) apparatus, your fancy routing and control system to ensure you never miss a thing - how about amplification and some speakers?

The Audioaccess PX 612, is a multi-room amplifier designed specifically for use in a total home/multi-room environment. You may wonder why things must be so specialised, surely any old amp would do the job? Unfortunately not; for, unlike



## WEBSITES TO CHECK OUT

There are literally hundreds of web sites about the House of the Future on the web site.

For a guided tour of Bill Gates' home, visit [www.usnews.com/usnews/nycul/tech/billgate/gates.htm](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/nycul/tech/billgate/gates.htm)

See HAL 2000 at [www.automatedliving.com/](http://www.automatedliving.com/)

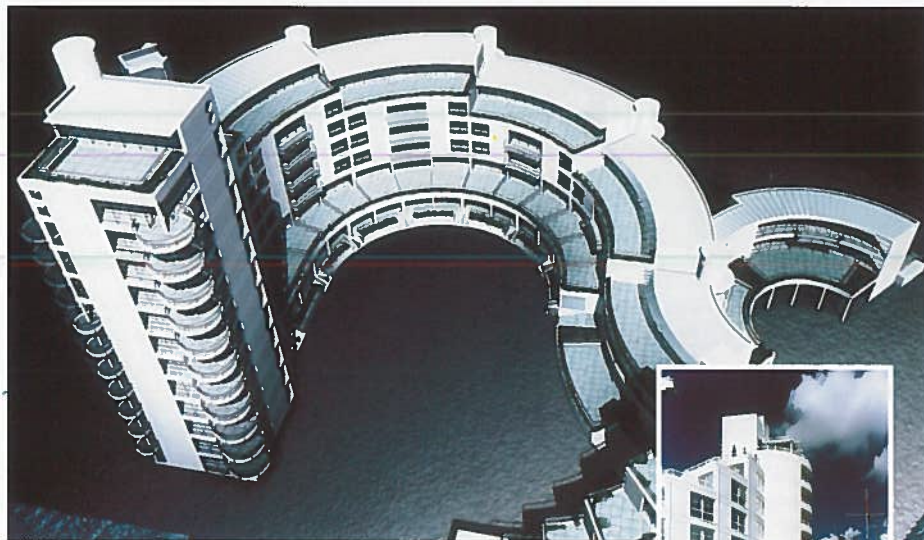
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conventional audio amplifiers, multi-room amplifiers must reject interference from power circuits, lighting, RF, and even other audio/video system components. In other words everything you've got connected to your system!

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into the terminals, fasten securely and turn on - immediately reducing the number of speakers in your house by half. So, if this stuff is so good. the equipment is available, and the wiring and control mechanisms aren't that expensive - why haven't we all got these things installed now, never mind in the future? Say hello (again) to Yvonne Womersley: "I think one of the main problems people have with such systems is that they are unsure about everything being controlled by one piece of kit. What if it fails? It's that side of the equation that scares people."

Alan Gorelle of Lutron, believes that it's lack of knowledge at the primary stages that's slowing the process: "We're trying to educate



sound important right now, but imagine a power line spike or a refrigerator turning on at 3am creating a sleep-disturbing 'pop' throughout an entire installation - including your bedroom.

Non-'popping' amp sorted, all you need now (you wish) is a pair of speakers. Did I say pair? You'll have read many things in the past in these pages about NXT, slim speakers and the like - but what about a stereo signal from a single speaker? Speakercraft has introduced the 6.1dt speaker, capable of reproducing stereo sound from one speaker, using the company's own 'WavePlane' technology. This improves sound dispersion, and uses a pair of polyamide dome tweeters with a 95% solid surface and a six-inch woofer. All you do is plug both the left and right speaker cables

housebuilders and architects as to what's available." The theory being that once they start building homes with the hard wiring already present - and therefore no ripping up of walls to install the kit - then the environmental entertainment revolution will truly begin.

The photos accompanying this feature were provided by Midnight Security & Communications who are installing complete security and comms systems at some of the high tech housing developments in London. The title page features a typical apartment at West India Quay, also shown from the outside on the opposite page. Left is Barratt's Globe View development and above is Pierhead Lock.

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# Chinese Puzzle



FOCUS  
ON CHINA

*China, home to one fifth of the world's population and with one of the fastest rates of economic growth, is a major target for global business. L&SI reports on how the prospects for this are now better than ever.*

**T**here cannot be a country with a more complex image than China. The legacy of its turbulent history and an inflexible political and economic infrastructure, are still very much in evidence, but a new China is emerging onto the world stage.

As recently as 20 years ago, it was all quite different: the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established a new system of government in 1949 following almost 30 years of political unrest. The opportunity thus presented for change was not taken and the country remained virtually closed to the world until a few years before the death of Mao Tse Tung in 1976.

At the same time, world markets were beginning to open up and the countries willing to embrace them were reaping the benefits. If China was to become a force to reckon with, it was inevitable that efforts would be made to modernise the culture and move China more into line with other trading nations.

Deng Xiaoping, who took over the reins of the Communist Party following Mao Tse Tung's death, concentrated his efforts on economic reform and establishing stronger relations with the outside world. He ushered in a period of significant economic and political progress and the defining feature of the last decade has been China's willingness to reveal itself to the outside world.

The Chinese leadership has loosened the economic reins determined to move the economy to a more productive and flexible footing with market elements, but still within the framework of Communist control. To this end, they have introduced long-term reforms aimed at giving more play to market-led institutions. They have also encouraged a wide variety of small-scale enterprise and opened the economy to increased foreign trade and investment. The result has been a strong surge in production and industry has also posted major gains, especially in coastal areas near Hong Kong and opposite Taiwan, where foreign investment and modern production methods have helped spur production of both domestic and export goods.

As a result, China is already a significant global player and within a few short years its economy is expected to bypass that of the United States as the world's largest. It has reported 7.8% economic growth for 98 - proof that it hasn't been too badly affected by what is happening in the surrounding countries. It has also underlined its commitment to the cause by signalling its intention to join the World Trade Organisation.

For those watching from the sidelines, China's transformation from a rigidly controlled society into a much more relaxed country governed by market forces heralds a range of opportunities. The route to doing business in China remains complex, but the barriers are diminishing by the day and for those now looking to China as a potential export market, the timing couldn't be better. If you're prepared to put the time in, the rewards are worth the wait. Let's lay some facts before you. UK exports to China in 1997 amounted to £928.2 million with exports via Hong Kong worth another £697 million. With pledged investment of \$US12 billion, the UK is



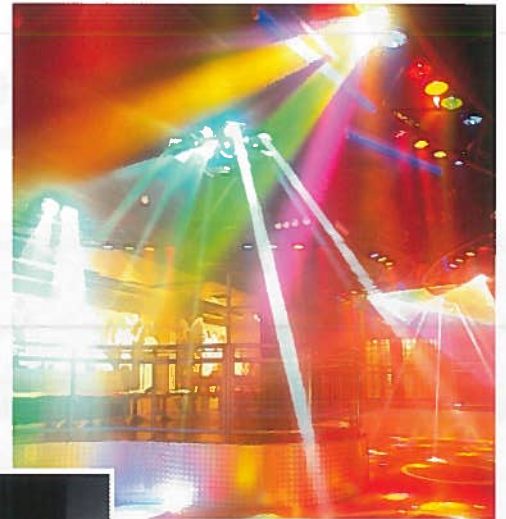
acknowledged to be the leading European investor in China and the main EU source of technology. And the picture maps out on a global basis. The US and Japan are both key trading partners and trading nations worldwide now recognise that substantial opportunities exist across China. The chances are that companies with profiles similar to your own are already doing business with the Chinese, either directly or through Hong Kong.

At the heart of the new China is Shanghai - a vast metropolis which looks more like Dallas than anything more usually associated with China. For political reasons there was very little investment in the region after the Revolution, but this has actually proved to be a plus point rather than a negative, since it means that other than Shanghai (which is restructuring anyway) the area is not saddled with large out-of-date State-owned enterprises. It sits at the forefront of recent reforms and has been targeted by central government to market test much of its economic liberalisation.

This has bred the rapid development of a whole range of new industries and venues (the official figure shows that there are currently 16,000 separate building sites in Shanghai) fuelled by the fact that Shanghai is now an area of concentrated wealth. Its growth rates are ahead of most of the rest of the country and it is fast becoming Asia's principal banking and commercial centre. Its economy grew by just over 10% last year fuelled by spending on infrastructure. The fact that Shanghai and other cities reoriented much of their business towards the US and Europe after Asian markets evaporated last year, also contributed to the strong growth.

Much of the progress is being driven by foreign investment and today the city is being consciously developed as a counter-weight to Hong Kong. The market potential for the entertainment technology industry is vast in this one city alone and you can perm that several times over across the country. What cities

like Shanghai clearly demonstrate is that, for good or bad, western culture is seeping into the very heart of China, driven largely by the youth population - there is now huge investment in theatres, stadiums, nightclubs, TV studios, bars and restaurants. Shanghai, today, boasts restaurants clubs and bars



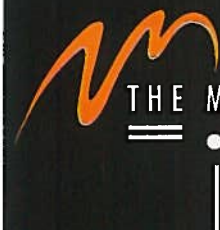
*China is investing huge amounts of money in entertainment for an increasingly sophisticated audience.*

courtesy. There are no religious or other taboos for a foreigner to unwittingly break, although there are some fairly obvious political sensitivities.

So is there an easy route in? Well, there's a starting point in the form of PLASA Presents Light & Sound Shanghai. The first event took place in April last year and the countdown to the 99 event (13-15th April) is underway. The show, aimed at the entertainment technology industry in China, showcases the latest lighting, sound, effects and display technology. The show is jointly run by PLASA (UK), P&O Events and Chinese co-organisers Intex Shanghai, and also has the full backing of the DTI (UK), as well as other important industry associations such as ESTA (USA) and VPLT (Germany), along with many leading Chinese sponsors.

The show will not provide all the answers of course. The only thing we know for sure is that China is set to become a major player, both economically and politically, in the next century.

For further details on the show call P&O Events on +44 (171) 370 8231. If you want to know more about the Chinese market, the Internet has hundreds of sites dedicated to doing business in China.



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KNOW HOW

# John Watt

## Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

If you are a course lighting designer like me then moving lights are not the norm. Mostly it's a question of "we want it to look really special and innovative, but there's no budget so you will have to use what's there. Think of it as an opportunity."

**WHAT IS** usually available are a few 2ks, grey with MR cast on the back, a 10K with a cracked 20" lens and some pups, probably blue Colortran with two very narrow doors (sometimes quite handy). There's also usually 20 Par cans with the obligatory open terminal block at the back and a selection of different lamps, which some spotty youth thought were a good idea in the eighties. But occasionally, when the budget allows and the producer feels that his flagging format can have life breathed into it with some jazzy movement in the lighting, what lighting designer would dare to delude him? Not this one any old how.

**SO OFF YOU SET** on the idiot's crash course, trying to remember which lights have moving gobos, which have proper dichroic colour mixing and which focus, and wishing you had taken more in at last year's PLASA Show. One thing's for certain - I seem to remember, that they all make a noise, which mostly drives the sound department mad. Sound balancers have a scientific way of telling whether they can live

with this pleasant and well nigh imperceptible hum. They point all 20 mics in the general direction of the offending luminaires (this is in anticipation of the entire audience of a discussion programme leaping on to the rig and talking at once in whispers) and then raise every fader on the desk to a point where the air conditioning sounds like a jumbo jet taking off. They then say to the director, "You decide". He decides for the sound, rather than the picture quality, having till recently worked on Gardener's Question Time, and the lighting department wonder if they, in turn, can build a career on lighting for radio.

**IN PARALLEL** with this, you will have gone through the necessity of explaining the need for smoke. Brace yourself for the withering looks as you point out that light is invisible until it hits something. In general they won't believe you, but will humour you by going along with the idea as it's a bit late to book someone else. Do not, under any circumstances, get into the business of filters and all that stuff about a blue gel filtering out everything but the blue - this is rocket science to most producers.

**I USED** to work on the ITV soap Emmerdale Farm, as it was then called. This was in the days when only the animals behaved like animals, rather than the characters, and the studio interiors were shot in a proper studio where old-fashioned techniques were employed, such as making the set look as though it were lit from the windows. Anyhow, with the redesign forcing a slight reduction in my word count, I got to wondering if I should write this column in the form of a soap which could continue from episode to episode. You would soon be hooked, desperate to find out if Tommy survived the 100 foot drop from the cherry picker, whether Vanessa breaks his fall, and whether the liaisons between the console operator and the lady from Vari-Lite result in the lights moving for them. We could have outrageous fictitious characters like

an LD who drives a Rolls Royce or a spark who suffers from vertigo. There could even be producers who live north of Watford and come from a production background: no, it's too far-fetched - no one would believe it.

**ONE OF MY** correspondents remarked that I was in good moaning form last month and in retrospect he was right, though in self defence, I had been trying to find something watchable over Christmas. My comments about The Snowman, lit for TV by John Burgess, which would have redressed the balance, wound up on L&S's cutting room floor. Burgess's design was a beautiful, sensitive treatment, no doubt full of compromises necessitated by these adaptations of theatre shows, but which didn't show.

**I CAN'T** imagine you read this column in order to learn anything about lighting (warning, these articles can seriously damage your pictures) unless in a lateral-thinking sort of way and you surmise that it's the one place you won't start from if faced with a similar scenario. So I'll assume that you won't be led astray by the following sad account of cowardice and lack of professionalism . . .

**I'VE RECENTLY BEEN** faced with an almost completely round amphitheatre-style set in which a fairly adversarial type of discussion takes place. There are nine cameras, sometimes 10; one is hand-held (just to make it interesting) and there are two booms and two fishpoles. They work almost all the 360 degrees. Now a circular set is not that unusual, not for me anyway, and I'm quite used to the challenge of hanging 40 lamps in the same place (the centre) but the problem is always how to key it - even if you can get the lights where you want them. The truth is, all those frantic booms going for anyone who even looks like speaking, is a nightmare and there are more shadows than speed cameras down the A1. So after much heart searching I've settled for rows (circular rows) of soft lights, that is to say no key at all. My predecessor on a similar series did the same and, at first, I thought he'd taken the easy option. Now I've decided that he took the only option! A hefty backlight fools some of the people some of the time, but then there's the producer - "It looks a bit flat Watty." You're damn right it's flat, but I think on balance, it's better flat than smothered in boom shadows. So on this one I've kissed photographic lighting goodbye and settled for something not dissimilar to the rig in the local Sainsburys.

**SOMEONE WRITE** and tell me where I went wrong. But please remember, putting up a fight these days results in not getting the second series. Not putting up a fight is the norm and the results can be seen on any channel any day.

"Now a circular set is not that unusual, not for me anyway and I'm quite used to the challenge of hanging 40 lamps in the same place (the centre) but the problem is always how to key it - even if you can get the lights where you want them."

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# The Corrs

*Ruth Rossington heads to Wembley to catch up with the group's revamped 'Talk on Corners Tour*

photos: Phil Dent

**T**he rise of The Corrs was probably one of the defining features of 1998. Interestingly, it was a rise to prominence that few predicted. When the group started in 1991, record companies were reluctant to pick up on their gentle blend of folk and pop and for several years it seemed unlikely that they would become known outside their native Ireland. Two strokes of luck were to change all that: first, the four siblings auditioned for, and secured, cameo roles in Alan Parker's *The Commitments*. Critically, this brought them to the notice of John Hughes, the film's musical director, who became their manager. Then in 1994, the US ambassador, Jean Kennedy Smith, heard the group playing in Dublin and invited them to perform in Boston. Whilst there, they went unbidden to New York's Hit Factory and met with producer David Foster. Within 24 hours they were signed to Atlantic and plans were being laid for their debut album *Forgiven, not Forgotten*. Thanks to a support slot on Celine Dion's world tour, the album went on to sell two million copies.

Despite a growing international reputation, the UK was slow to catch on, and when we did it was almost by accident. In March last year, they performed a St Patrick's Day Concert at the Albert Hall. This proved a catalyst and like *Riverdance* before, this Irish phenomenon was suddenly everywhere: their second album *Talk On Corners* started to enjoy number-crunching sales and began to comfortably out-perform a raft of established artists. Their cover version of the legendary *Dreams* by Fleetwood Mac glided to Number 1 and paved the way for further chart successes with *What Can I Do* and *So Young*. By the end of the year, The Corrs CD found its way onto many a Christmas wish list.

Determined to capitalise on the successes of 98, the group returned in the New Year to pick up the thread of their *Talk on Corners* tour which kicked



CONCERT/  
TOURING

off in October 97. To add new impetus to the Arena tour, the look of the stage show was developed, the key change being the introduction of the new Optiscreen from Gearhouse LED.

The staging is a relatively low key affair by anybody's standards, but then with The Corrs the music has always come first.

Although the show is getting bigger all the time, it still remains a fairly simple black box affair, the only change of pace coming from a central elevated walkway complete with stairs which flank the drum riser. The man responsible for the set design, Liam McCarthy, also doubles as the group's lighting designer and explains that the fairly conventional look was a deliberate attempt to play down the setting.

McCarthy's rig appears, at first glance, to be reasonably straightforward: three cross-stage trusses with curved truss arms either side and two further front-stage trusses all clothed in a grey gauze. These host an LSD-supplied system of 26 Icons, with a further eight on the floor, 20 High End Studio Colors, seven of which are on the floor and an army of Washlights. There's also a battery of Pars and Molefays up there and a dozen or so ETC Source Fours. When the band hits the smaller venues, this rig will be scaled down and in Europe will probably lose one of the curved trusses. McCarthy runs the show from an Icon desk, working with a stash of Avolites dimmers and an ETC 48-way rack, which is being road-tested on this tour.

Given the nature of the show, McCarthy keeps a tight rein on the looks, preferring the subtle colour washes over a full-on, in-ye-face affair. That's not to say that the light show lags in any way: McCarthy's touch is assured and he opens the look up expertly through the clever use of deep colours, contrasted with muted washes and simple gobo break-ups to fill the whole look out.

Either side of the main truss system are a pair of conventional screens, with the new Optiscreen positioned centre-stage. OptiScreen has burst onto the touring scene in much the same way as The Corrs: it first debuted with Ocean Colour Scene at Stirling Castle and then completed a UK tour with Boyzone and more recently has been out with M



People. The screen, supplied by PSL, is made up of rows of modular self-addressing panels, each measuring 1280mm x 960mm, thereby creating the standard 4:3 television aspect ratio. Its use of Virtual Pixel Technology effectively doubles the perceived screen resolution. Aside from the issue of resolution, the big bonus here is portability; the lightweight aluminium supports automatically engage and lift the Optiscreen panels into position so that it takes half as many crew to erect and de-rig. When it was first pulled into the tour spec, the Optiscreen came in as a 3 x 3 configuration, but for the Arena performances the band requested that it be expanded, and it duly grew to a 5 x 4 configuration.

Craig Tinetti is the vision mixer producing the visuals for the three screens. At the Wembley Arena, he drew from four manned Sony cameras and a Toshiba Minicam on the drums. The feed from the cameras is mixed through a FOR-A vision mixer and this is essentially a live mix with Tinetti working to a cue list, but also feeding in pre-recorded footage. Tinetti is certainly impressed with the Optiscreen and if 1999 is to be the year of the LED, PSL will not regret their decision to garner the largest stockholding worldwide of LED screen technology.

Max Bisgrove is the house engineer for the band and has spec'd a Meyer self-powered MSL-based PA from Canegreen. For Wembley Arena, Bisgrove has clusters stage left and right that feature a stack of self-powered MSL-6s, MSL-4s and DS2s. Whilst the upper levels address the depth of the Arena, the lower layers of MSL-4s are kelped down to feed the first few rows. At the corners of the stage, there are further clusters of MSL-3s and beneath these a pair of



MSL-2s to fill in the bleachers, whilst at the front there are six self-powered UPAs for front fill. The Wembley Arena doesn't offer the best acoustics in the world and above the mix position there are eight further MSL-4s set on a time delay of 140ms.

Throughout the concert, Bisgrove was hard at work

on his Midas XL3 desk which has a 16-channel stretch to give him the channels he needs to deal with the blend of vocals and instruments. The band are predominantly on Shure mics, with additional AKG mics for the overheads and the bodhran. Bisgrove runs both violin and lead vocals through a Meyer CP10 parametric, whilst the vocals also get treated through a BSS 901 and just about every instrument and voice is assigned a DBX160S. There is the standard core of effects - Roland and Lexicon being the key players. Bisgrove also has a Wendel drum sampler which is triggered from the kick drum microphone, while

a Klark Teknik DN360 is run over the whole mix in line with a BSS Varicurve for picking out the different frequencies. There is a KT DN405 parametric equaliser for the sub-bass and all the different components of the PA are driven by KT DN8000s which time align everything.

Otherwise there's just some rather subtle touches - Bisgrove concentrating most on his Midas XL3 and levels. The result was a beautifully clean sound without diminishing the appeal of the live mix.

The Corrs are seemingly unstoppable and their busy tour itinerary for this year (following a January and February spent touring the UK and Europe, March will see the group touring with the Rolling Stones before a return to the UK at the end of May) will just bring them closer to a growing army of fans. A clear marker of their current success comes with the re-release of the single Runaway - they've issued this no fewer than three times previously and at no point did it take. Now, of course, it's surging up the UK charts. What a difference a St Patrick's Day makes.

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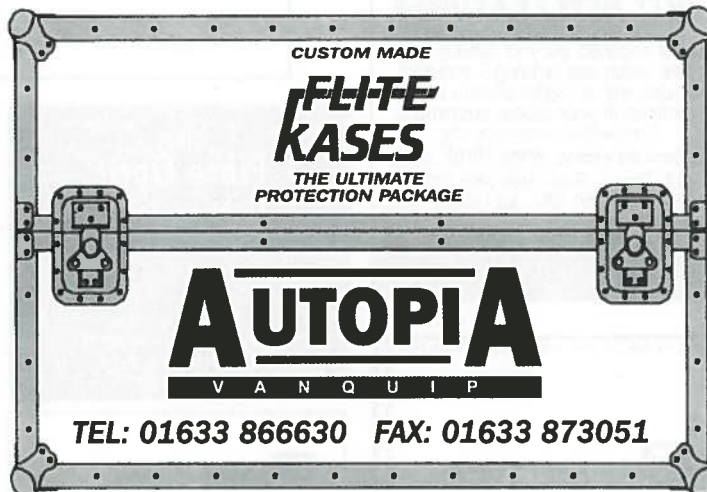
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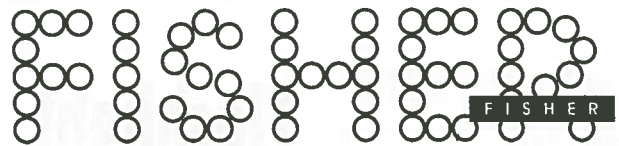
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Working alongside our existing team, this position will involve the preparation and maintenance of lighting and power distribution equipment to the highest possible standards.

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### WAREHOUSE MANAGER

You would be required to oversee the day to day operations. Checking in/out rental equipment - client liaison and assisting the hire manager. You may be in a similar role and looking for a position with more responsibility and the opportunity for promotion. We are a well established company based in West London specialising in Lighting and Sound Rental for Conference, Theatre, Television and Film productions. A current driving licence is essential.

Applicants should send their current CV's to the  
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- **AV Technicians/Riggers**
- **Broadcast Video Engineers/Technicians**
- **Film Projectionists and Engineers/Technicians (35mm & 70mm)**
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You should have experience in AV control systems, LCD/CRT display equipment, broadcast video systems, film projection equipment, video replay, LED large screen displays and general AV systems.

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We will need Sound Engineers and Sound Technicians of all levels of experience to operate and maintain the wide range of sound systems on site. Working as part of a team, the ideal candidates will have excellent knowledge of live sound and Pro Audio equipment and experience of Digital Audio and/or broadcast and recording techniques. Fault finding experience and computer literacy would be an advantage.

Contracts for sound positions will run from June/July 1999 through until January 2001.

Individuals on all contracts must be prepared to work as scheduled throughout the Christmas and New Year period 1999/2000.

Please send CV and a brief covering letter to: Gary George, Human Resources, NMEC, Gate 1, Drawdock Road, Greenwich, London SE10 0BB



MILLENNIUM  
EXPERIENCE

# In Profile...

L&SI Talks to the Industry Trend-setters

Designer Andrew Carter has good reason to be caught up in the hype surrounding the arrival of the new millennium: he is one of three set designers responsible for creating the look that will herald the opening of the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Along with acclaimed designers Brian Thompson and Eamon Darcy, Carter will design a section of the 45-minute opening ceremony that will be televised to a mere four billion people around the globe with an additional 100,000 spectators in the stadium. The prospect of the event both challenges and terrifies Carter: "Put it this way, I think if you get it wrong for the opening ceremony of the Olympics you've had it. It's a rather public way to finish a career which makes it a scary, but exhilarating, project to participate in."

**Jacqueline Molloy talks to set designer Andrew Carter - one of three key designers for the Sydney 2000 Olympics**

From his base in the hills just north of Perth in Western Australia, Carter manages a hectic career and gruelling schedule that sees him boarding a plane every couple of weeks. His freelance activities keep him busy internationally on a varied mix of projects, though dance has been the main focus of his design career. Since

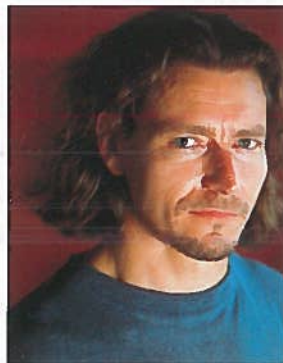
graduating from Yale University in 1984 armed with a Masters degree in Fine Arts, Carter has established himself as one of Australia's leading theatre designers and has collaborated with most of the country's major dance companies. He is also an established visual artist with no fewer than seven solo exhibitions to his credit; add to that his playwriting, teaching and music-related activities and you have a man enjoying a life that is constantly in motion.

At the age of 41, Carter believes he is at an interesting point in his career and has recently

branched out into lighting design: "I used to design the lighting and sets for productions whilst I was at Yale and then early in my career I decided to focus on sets only, but I've recently become reacquainted with lighting again, which I've really enjoyed." In 1998, Carter designed both lighting and sets for the Australian Ballet's full-length work '1914', which was based on World War I and which premiered at the Sydney Opera House: "1914 forced me to work within a standard dance lighting rig which I don't find as interesting as creating a lighting scenario that defies convention. I pulled it off but at great cost to myself." His work with Nederlands Dans Company has allowed him to be more adventurous with lighting and to work outside the accepted conventions which he finds stimulating. Though he wouldn't describe himself as being in the same league as Australia's top lighting designers, lighting is something that he hopes to pursue when the project is right for him.

Carter finds the collaborative aspects of design exciting and enjoys working with like-minded individuals who don't pigeonhole people. He spent a lot of time during 1998 attempting to establish a new company - Meltdown - which would be a multi-media based arts company for the next century. Carter feels that the traditional mode of government funding for arts organisations is failing and that as companies are forced into economic accountability their artistic integrity is being challenged. Meltdown would provide a base for practitioners to launch projects and have access to resources and personnel. Its philosophy would be built on the X-generation's familiarity with the internet, television, electronic media and live performance.

Meltdown would also offer Carter the opportunity to explore what he defines as 'his



fifth and final career' - film. "I've had an interest in film for a long time and I've been writing scripts with a colleague. Through Meltdown I would have the opportunity to explore the medium further."

1999 will see him undertake a project to create a video clip for the highly acclaimed, and unconventional, Australian

Chamber Orchestra. The clip would be focused on the orchestra's artistic director Richard Tognetti, who would be playing a virtual violin duet with himself. Another of Carter's upcoming projects is with the Aboriginal Island Dance Theatre and he spent part of 1998 in remote aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory undertaking research. The production - Crying Baby - is based on aboriginal mythology. At this stage Carter is the "visual" person attached to the project and he is unsure of what his final involvement will be: "I may end up lighting it, but at this stage I'm involved in the initial concepts, workshoping and the development of the story." The production will eventually have a long touring life through the remote aboriginal communities of the far north.

With the 2000 Olympics not far off, Carter is faced with a hectic year, but this is what he thrives on as long as he has a bit of time out to enjoy it all. At the conclusion of this interview he was off to indulge in one of his favourite past-times: deep-sea diving. What else would you expect from a man with such eclectic interests and restless energy? ■

**Lighting & Sound** ENTERTAINMENT

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