

Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

April 2001

The Entertainment Technology Monthly

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Castaway

- The Almeida's portrayal of The Tempest

Making Waves

- The Ocean Music Centre, London

Capital Celebration

- Canberra's Centenary Celebrations

Frankfurt/ABTT

- All the news from these two exhibitions

West is Best?

- Westlife at Sheffield Arena



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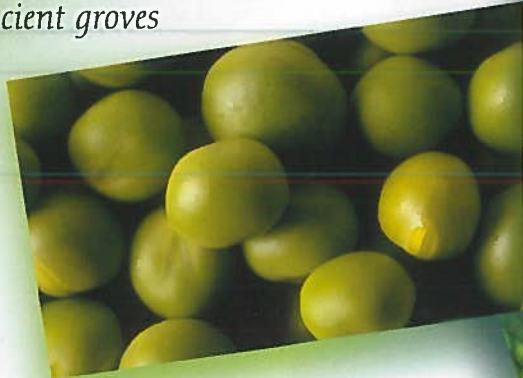
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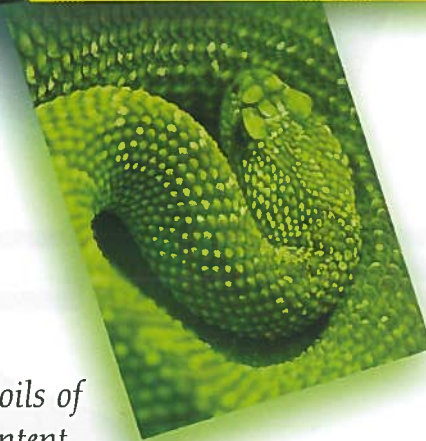
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April 2001 Volume 16, Issue 4

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Lighting & Sound INTERNATIONAL

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EDITOR Ruth Rossington - ruth@plasa.org
 DEPUTY EDITOR Lee Baldock - lee@plasa.org
 ASSOCIATE EDITOR Tony Gottelier
 ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER Barry Howe - barry@plasa.org
 ADVERTISING CO-ORDINATOR Jane Cockburn - jane@plasa.org
 PRODUCTION MANAGER Sonja Walker - sonja@plasa.org
 SUBSCRIPTIONS Sheila Bartholomew - sheila@plasa.org

PLASA - Managing Director: Matthew Griffiths - matthew@plasa.org
 PLASA - Financial Controller: Shane McGreevy - shane@plasa.org

Regular Contributors:
 Steve Moles, Rob Halliday, Louise Stickland, John Watt,
 Ian Herbert, Jacqueline Molloy, Mike Mann, Phil Ward.

Published from the PLASA office:
 38 St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3UT, UK.
 Tel: +44 (0)1323 418400 Fax: +44 (0)1323 646905

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International News Round-Up

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Jands Sells Lighting Assets to Bytecraft

Australian companies Bytecraft Entertainment and Jands Production Services have jointly announced that they have entered into a Heads of Agreement which will see Bytecraft Entertainment Pty Ltd purchase the lighting assets of Jands Production Services Pty Ltd.

This includes all Vari-Lite, rigging, dimming and associated lighting equipment. The sale will be completed before the end of April. In announcing the agreement, Stephen Found, managing director of Bytecraft Entertainment told L&SI: "This is an important milestone in the development of the Bytecraft Entertainment lighting division. For the first time ever, we will see four major brands of intelligent lighting - High End, LSD/Fourth Phase, Martin and Vari-Lite - all under one roof. The Jands inventory will be integrated with Bytecraft's own which will enable Bytecraft to provide whatever lighting products their clients require."

Eric Robinson, managing director of Jands Production Services, commented: "The tendency worldwide is for our industry to specialise. This sale allows Jands to focus on its sound department which has recently undergone considerable expansion with the purchase of line array systems from V-Dosc, JBL and Clair Bros."

Home is Where the Heat is

Europe's largest nightclub, the £10million Home in Leicester Square, London, was closed in late March, after an undercover police investigation showed there was open and serious Class A drug dealing and usage at the venue.

Westminster Council made the decision to revoke the club's entertainment licence at an emergency meeting following police advice. Chief Inspector Chris Bradford, of the Metropolitan Police Clubs and Vice Unit, said: "We felt it was necessary to take the unusual course of action in a bid to try and eradicate this serious and open problem from the premises. A full investigation has been carried out by my officers and we have explored many other courses of action to avoid having to make this application. Our actions in this case should act as a warning to other premises where there is a



serious drug problem that we are prepared to take every step in our power to solve the problem." We understand this is the first time that a club of its size has had its licence revoked.

The venue, which opened two years ago, is operated by Ron McCulloch, the man behind the Scottish-based Big Beat chain of bars and clubs. He and his management have been given 21 days to contest the decision.

Decoupe in Liquidation

L&SI has learnt that Decoupe, the Tottenham-based distributor of theatrical products, has been placed in voluntary liquidation.

The company, founded in 1993 by Tom Mannings, specialised in supplying high performance lighting equipment to the

entertainment industry, and was until recently the distributor of the range of followspots, luminaires and digital products from Robert Juliat. It was also the UK agent for the MDG range of fog generators and the Sajem Copernik dichroic Par cans. Robert Juliat recently confirmed the appointment of White Light as its new official distributor in the UK. Liquidators are The Thompson Partnership.

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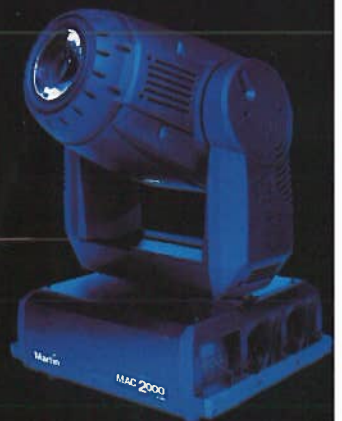
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The BRIT Awards, 2001

The UK's annual pop music back-slapping gala event, The Brits, was recorded live, in spectacular style, on February 26th at Earls Court 2, London. The live production was managed by Brit regular MJK Productions.

Another regular, Vari-Lite Europe provided the complete lighting system - featuring more than 500 luminaires - as well as providing the rig for the After Show Party. Lighting designer for the event was Al Gurdon. With the ceremony designed to look spectacular both for the live audience and a massive worldwide broadcast audience, the lighting design encompassed the entire space within Earl's Court 2, both on and around the huge stage and the specially-constructed auditorium.

The large-scale lighting rig included 40 VL2416s, 54 VL5 Arcs, 81 VL5Bs, 76 VL5s, 24 VL6 wash luminaires, 38 VL6Cs, six VL7s and 130 VL2C spot luminaires, with control from two Virtuoso consoles. VL also supplied a substantial conventional rig, with 16 4k Xenon Sky Art Searchlights, two 70k Lightning Strikes, four 40k Lightning Strikes, 160 Par 36s, 400 Par 64s and 44 Diversitronics Strobes. The rig also included 420 metres of truss, two 12 metre-diameter semi-circles of truss and 14 one-tonne hoist motors complete with cable, control and rigging accessories.

The After Show Party's lighting was designed by Theo Cox who lit the four exclusive rooms - Air Lounge, Water Bar, Earth Garden and the Fire Club - using a rig that featured 56 VL5 wash luminaires, 16 VL6B spot luminaires, VL Moving Mirror Ball units and conventionals, all run from a pair of Wholehog 2s and an Avolites Pearl desk.

Derrick Zieba, was once again chief sound coordinator for the event, which included live vocal



Microphone-dunker Robbie Williams does his thing at The Brit Awards

less cabling, thus saving a significant amount of time during the set-up. The accurate semi-circular arrangement of the loudspeaker enclosures is used so that, once time aligned, every delay point heads back to the same origin point at the centre of the stage - thus creating a perfect point source.

This loudspeaker positioning was further enabled due to a change this year in stage orientation. By placing the seating to face the long edge of the stage - rather than end-on - all the invited guests (including those from L&SI) were within 45m of the events on stage. This, combined with the circular speaker configuration, ensured a significantly more consistent sound performance.

Bob Lopez told L&SI: "The new arrangement of the system worked fantastically - and any extra time spent on the hanging of the main PA was certainly made up for by the simplified time alignment of the whole system and by the easy-hanging of the TQ-440SPs. Not only was the sound performance enhanced, but the flown nature of the whole system meant that the brief for the sound system to be unobtrusive was more than satisfied - giving the director, Hamish Hamilton, free reign to film the award ceremony."

Shure wireless microphones and in-ear monitor systems were specified: in total, 13 wireless mic channels and four channels of in-ear monitoring were used, with a further two channels of IEM being used by the production crew.

All frequency management and licensing was taken care of by Hand Held Audio. Hand Held's Tarkan Akdam, who was on hand to ensure the myriad of transmitter changeovers went smoothly, stated: "As ever, the Shure gear has given us no problems. It just gets on and does the job. The only real moment of stress was when Robbie Williams deposited his transmitter in the water feature after collecting his third award. And yes ... despite the dunking it still works!"

GL UK Ltd, the newly-established subsidiary of French event services giant Generale Location, were one of the suppliers of LED systems to Chris Saunders of Black Pig Ltd for the Awards. Providing 72sq.m of Megascreen, the set design called for the screen to be divided into four separate systems, each 4.87m wide by 3.66m high. Under the expert control of Outback Rigging, the screens were raised and lowered in pairs at key intervals during the show, allowing artist access and providing an impressive backdrop for some of the acts.

performances from a host of top talent including Robbie Williams, Craig David, Westlife, Destiny's Child and U2. As has been the case for the past five years, Britannia Row Productions provided a Turbosound sound reinforcement system for the event. However, there was a slight departure from previous years in that a different speaker system set-up was utilised, to a final design by Brit Row's Bob Lopez. The Turbosound Flashlight enclosures, which formed both the main PA and the delay system, were positioned with pinpoint accuracy into semi-circular arrays.

The main PA, flown at the front of the stage, comprised at the mid-point of the semi-circle, a hang of 10 Flashlight TFS-780L bass enclosures. Leading directly out to the left from this point was a hang of six Flashlight TFS-780Hs and Floodlight TFL-760Hs, which was mirrored on the right. Following on, a further two hangs of 10 bass units, with a hang of four-wide Flashlight TFS-780Hs and Floodlight TFL-760Hs - again mirrored - to finish the configuration at the ends.

The delay featured 12 of Turbosound's new compact, trapezoidal Qlight TQ-440SP enclosures - again flown to form a perfect half circle. As the cabinets are self-powered they need significantly

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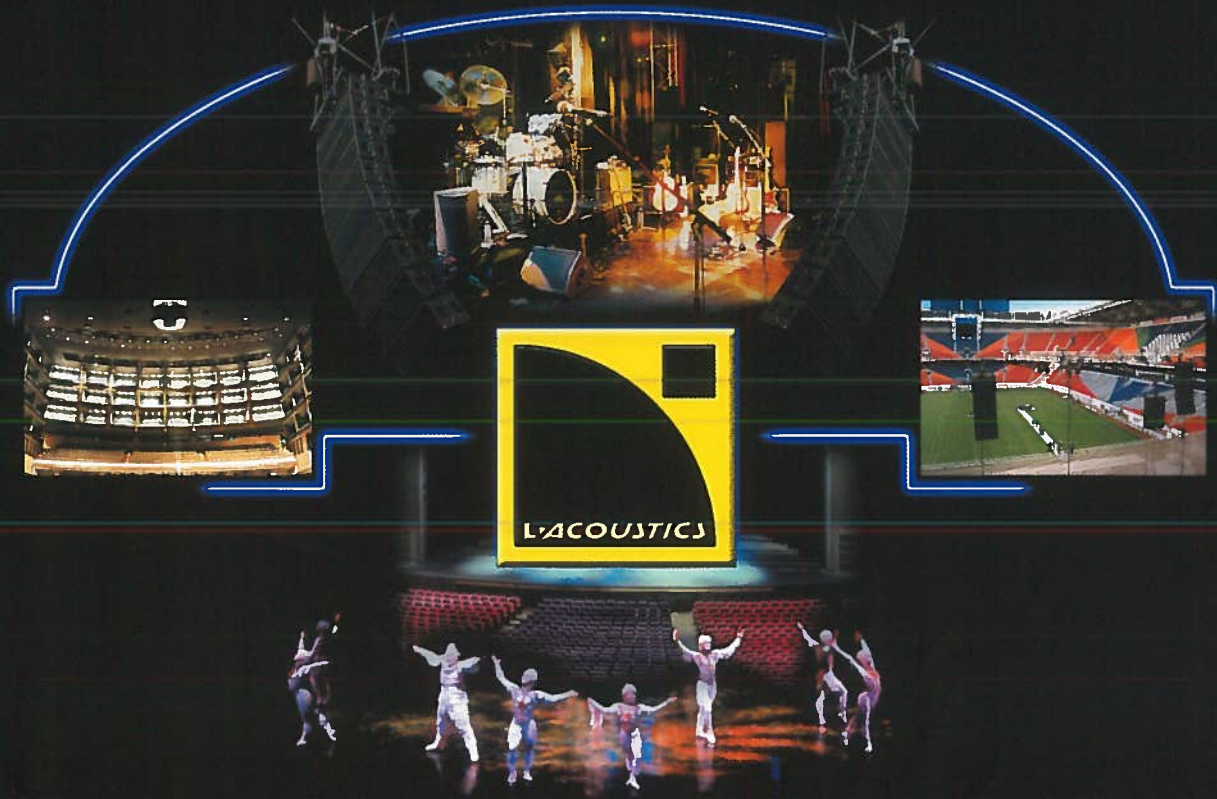
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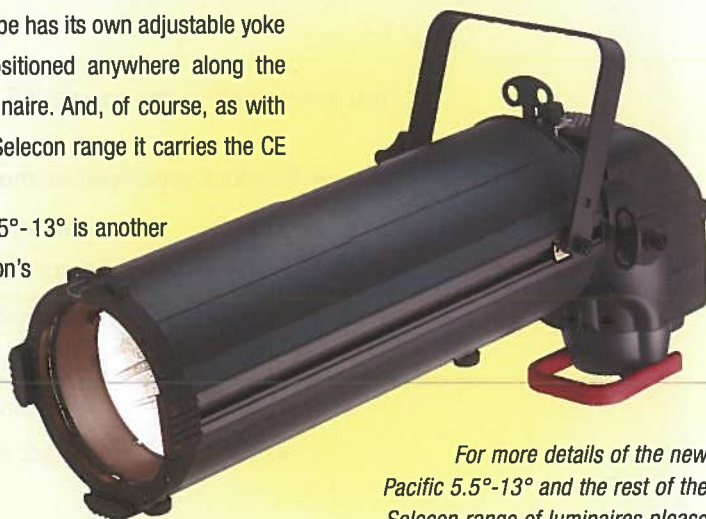
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By Degrees . . .

We have heard much, over the last few years, of theatres being given large sums of lottery cash to undertake major improvements. But what of the poor souls left behind without major injections of cash?

The Hazlitt Theatre in Maidstone is owned by Maidstone Borough Council and, like all other departments of the council, has to take its place in a long queue for what small amount of money is available. A general re-fit was accomplished 20 years ago, but since then there has been no major injection of cash available to it.

Theatre manager, Mandy Hare, took the reins just over three years ago and set about raising the profile of the venue, putting in more events, a wider artistic base, a thriving youth theatre, a regular programme of workshops and a selection of outside events. Production and operations manager, Eric Lund, joined the team just over two years ago and soon realised that the existing resources just didn't shape up. "I realised that the technical resources available to the two theatres at the Hazlitt were simply not going to be able to cope. With a combined technical budget of just £5,000 to last a year, we were barely standing still. Not only that, all the new equipment which had been put in 20 years ago, needed either major servicing or replacing."

Hare and Lund devised a cunning plan. Knowing that a single major cash injection was not going to be possible, they decided to split their requirements into several separate projects, each requiring only a (relatively) small amount of funding. They took their plan to councillors who, impressed with what they saw, approved a series of small injections of cash. When linked together, these began to show a significant improvement in technical facilities.

Lund cites one example of the plan in action. "Our existing 12-channel mixer in The Exchange (the second venue) came to the end of its life, refusing to carry power along the buss. We decided to replace it with the Allen & Heath 16-channel desk in the Hazlitt. We then asked for a budget to replace this and, in so doing, to upgrade to 24 channels (which were desperately needed). This was approved and we went

for a Studiomaster Live 42 desk. We specified that it must be delivered by a certain date, which the suppliers (The Music Company) confirmed would be honoured. Two days before the due date, we got a call to say the desk wasn't ready, but Studiomaster had a 32-channel version of the same desk available. Would we like that instead? As you can imagine, it was a tough decision!"

When Lund then turned his attention to the dimmers in the Hazlitt, he discovered a hand-written note on a piece of electrical tape which read 'Warning, lives and neutrals may not correspond.' He also discovered how easy it was to put two phases of power on the same lighting bar. This raised all sorts of Health & Safety issues and a bid was made to replace the dimmers and IWBs. Again councillors and officers backed the plan and the theatre closed for two weeks to allow a new lighting infrastructure to be installed by Stage Electrics. All the wiring was replaced; 60 channels of Strand analogue dimmers were replaced with 72 channels of LD90s, three lighting bars were replaced, new patch panels went in, and DMX was brought in to replace D54 throughout, with break-out points on every bar.



Eric Lund and Mandy Hare

Last summer the job was completed by The Stage Lighting Company who added a new advance bar complete with another 12 channels of dimmers, a 125A socket for incoming lighting equipment, plus a splitter box providing 63A, 32A and 13A

alternatives, and extra sockets in the footlight troughs. 12 assorted second-hand lanterns were purchased to service the new advance bar.

Flying at the Hazlitt involves the old-fashioned 'brute force' hemp technology. There is no space in the wings for counterweight flying and no budget for motorised flying. However, very little can go wrong with a hemp system, but the motley selection of flying bars was another matter. All have now been replaced with a full grid of identical aluminium bars and associated tab tracks from A S Green. Just last month, an unexpected 'find' of spending money has brought a whole new set of soft black masking.

There is still plenty to do at the Hazlitt. Mandy Hare and Eric Lund have a wish-list a mile long of other improvements they'd like to see made, hopefully continuing this year with new followspots and a new coat of paint for the auditorium. A theatre which could easily have struggled to cope with the demands made of it, is increasing its throughput, increasing the range of events offered, increasing the quality of its reputation and still managing to keep up with the technical demands made of it.

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Gearing Up for PLASA 2001

Association NEWS

The countdown to the PLASA Show 2001 has begun! The entertainment technology industry's leading event will run from 9-12 September at Earls Court Exhibition Centre, London.

With over 89% of the available stand space already sold and all the leading manufacturers booked into the show, PLASA 2001 promises to live up to its reputation as the showcase event that launches the entertainment technology year. Venue improvements have continued, with over £500,000 invested in the last 12 months to improve comfort cooling at the Show. Furthermore, an overall investment of £6million will ensure that Earls Court is a fully air-conditioned exhibition centre by 2002.

Over 400 exhibitors and 14,000 UK and international visitors are expected to attend. Manufacturers, suppliers and distributors of professional lighting, sound and AV equipment will descend upon Earls Court to unveil their latest products and technical developments for the vibrant and hugely diverse entertainment and leisure industry.

Almost 13,000 visitors, including a record 25% from overseas, attended the PLASA Show last year. Specifiers, consultants, attraction managers, recording technicians, disc and light jockeys, technicians, architects, installers and other professionals

PLASA
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from the world of entertainment technology travelled from all corners of the globe to see the very latest products, innovations and designs showcased.

The PLASA Show 2001 will feature many of the attractions that contributed to last year's success including the PLASA Technology Gallery, a display of the product developments entered in the PLASA Awards for Product Excellence. An expanded Architectural Lighting Feature will showcase interior and exterior architectural lighting products, to demonstrate how effective lighting can enhance a building or venue.

One again, the DJ Competition, sponsored by DJ magazine and Gemini Sound Products, will search for the newest and hottest DJ talent on Sunday 9 September. A new educational programme will also form part of the day, offering expert tips and advice on how to make it as a DJ. An enhanced Masterclass Programme is also planned for PLASA this year.

Full details of the 2001 event will appear on the PLASA website in the next few weeks. In the meantime, you can get further information on all aspects of the Show by calling +44 (0)20 7370 8179/8233

PLASA Makes Training a Priority

The first meeting of PLASA's newly established Education and Training Steering Group took place in March.

Chaired by Dave Ward of the Gateway School of Recording, members of the Group include some of the key training providers in the industry, together with representatives of the trade press and the PLASA head office team.

The intention is that the Group will make recommendations to the PLASA committee on the way forward for training and education initiatives for this industry. Part of its remit will be to review ways in which PLASA can create a coherent and sustainable training structure which addresses not only those coming into the industry, but also those already in it. Issues such as accreditation, new technologies, health & safety and good training practice will all be addressed as part of PLASA's training strategy.

In the first instance, PLASA is looking to identify the training needs of each sector, and as part of that is looking to add to its existing register of training courses. If you run a course, whether you be an academic institution or company/individual within the industry, please e-mail a brief description of the course, together with details of who it is aimed at to - training@plasa.org



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DAS Do it in Style



DAS Audio's Jose Brusi, Robert Giner and Jack Palacio

Spanish loudspeaker manufacturer DAS Audio recently hosted a dealer and press visit to its premises in Valencia, during the final days of the city's world-famous Fallas Festival.

The Festival provided the perfect backdrop for a visit to the company's manufacturing facilities in both Valencia and Barcelona, where dealers got the opportunity to take a closer look at a number of new speakers recently launched by the company, and first seen just a few weeks earlier at the Frankfurt MusikMesse.

Key amongst these is the Compact 1. Self-powered, it is a three-way, bi-amplified system that can be used as a full-range stand-alone unit or as a mid-high cabinet with bass reinforcement. It features a 1000W 'Class D' switching amplifier, which delivers 500W to the low frequency transducer and 300W to the mid/high section. The low frequency section has a G-354, 15" low frequency speaker with 4" voice coil, whilst mid-range frequencies are reproduced by a horn loaded B-6, 6" cone loudspeaker. An M-5, 1" exit compression driver with 2" titanium diaphragm handles the high frequency reproduction.

The second new product is an addition to the popular Reference Series. The R-214 is configured as a passive two-way system designed for fixed installation applications. Providing powerful bass response, it features two high efficiency 15" low frequency speakers with 3" voice coils and a carefully engineered cooling scheme. The high end makes use of a 1" exit compression driver with 2" titanium diaphragm, coupled to a constant directivity horn. The third new speaker is a self-powered subwoofer in the ACtive Power line-up of products. The Sub 118A incorporates a 'Class D' switching amplifier, delivering 500W to the low frequency transducer. The Sub houses a DAS P-18 18" cone transducer configured as a direct radiator.

These latest developments add to a vast array of products that includes loudspeakers, components, power amplifiers, electronic signal processors and accessories - a product portfolio that has gained the company a worldwide following in over 85 countries. In addition to its main office and manufacturing plant in Valencia, DAS also has a regional office in Miami, handling sales and distribution for Canada, Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean. It also has an established international partnership with Sennheiser operations in the UK, US and France.

The DAS of today is, of course, some way removed from the DAS of 30 years ago when a young industrial engineer called Juan Alberola began building loudspeaker components for the hi-fi market in a small shop on the Calle del Mar in Valencia. What started as a hobby had, by the eighties become a major concern, pioneering the use of high-pressure injection-moulding techniques. The success of the Biflex-8 paved the way for the development of a complete line of small to medium-sized sound systems, and the DS-15 was the first injection-moulded 15" speaker system manufactured in Europe. If the latest products are anything to go by that history of innovation continues.

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MCL Opens for Business

Media Control (Europe) Ltd (MCL) is a new company set up by Avesco Group plc to provide full AV staging services to the UK and European corporate presentations market. Based in Chessington, Surrey, it is headed by Mike Bell (pictured), who has worked for rental, conference production and support companies in the corporate presentations market for over 20 years.



The company will carry a complete inventory of audio, lighting, staging and AV equipment, and will provide a wide range of services, from dry hire packages to complex presentation solutions. It will also offer a 'cloaked' service to agencies and freelance producers whereby to protect agency brands, equipment is provided in unmarked boxes. Mike Bell told us: "We are intent on changing current perceptions about AV staging - MCL will maintain an overall

project view, ensuring that all departments come together to fulfil clients' expectations."

The new operation will enjoy the full backing of the Avesco Group, which has offices throughout Europe and the USA. Companies in the Group include Screenco, Creative Technology, Dimension Audio and JVR. Mike Bell is joined at MCL by operations manager Ed Marron, operations coordinator Ian Rawlinson and office manager Laura Cameron.

Michael Northen

Veteran lighting designer, Michael Northen MBE, died peacefully in the early hours of Sunday 18th March.

Northen, who was Life President of the Association of Lighting Designers (ALD) and one of the best-known figures in British theatrical lighting design, had been suffering from degenerative heart disease for some time. Credited with being the first professional Lighting Designer, he designed for over 300 productions during his long career, at venues including the Royal Opera House, the Royal Ballet, Glyndebourne Opera House and RSC Stratford. He was awarded the MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List this year in recognition of his services to theatre.

ALD chairman Rick Fisher said: "Michael's thoughts were always with the lighting world. It is entirely characteristic that he wished to celebrate his MBE by making two donations; one to Light Relief to aid people in the lighting industry and a special bursary to a young lighting designer who is currently training. We will all miss his support and interest in the ALD, of which he has been a founding member, Chairman, and President." The funeral took place on Tuesday 27 March.

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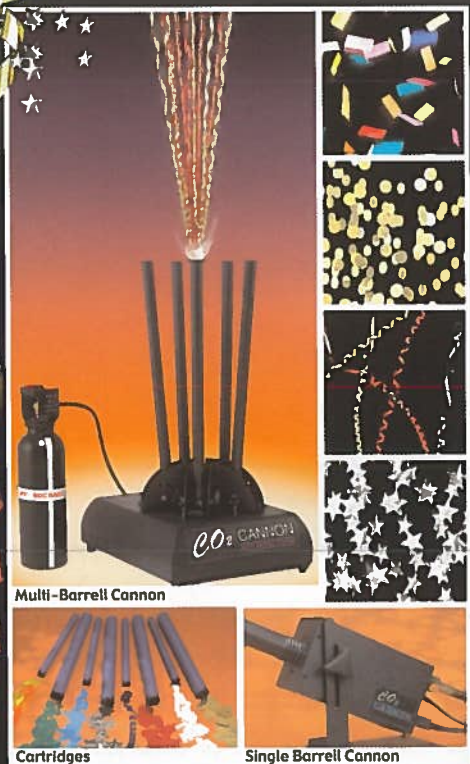
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Nocturne Europe Change Name to XL Video

Live video production specialist Nocturne Europe is changing its trading name to XL Video with immediate effect.

The move is intended to offer a more consolidated approach to international markets and associate the company directly with XL Video in Belgium, the USA & Japan - outdoor screen suppliers with extensive stocks of Barco, Delite, Saco & Lighthouse LED screens.

In California, an even closer association is taking place with the opening of a new XL Video office in LA, also specializing in live video production. The US operation is headed by Bob Higgins and Barbara Riedling, both of whom have a long-standing history in, and vast knowledge of, the US concert touring market. XL Video's Lee Spencer told L&S: "The opening of the US office is very exciting. It



helps integrate and streamline XL Video's concert touring divisions for tours that traverse Europe and America - in either direction - by enabling continuity and the provision of identical systems without the cost of freight."

The name-change and US office launch, follow a successful 12 months for the St. Albans-based company. Over the past year it has worked with artists such as Oasis, Madonna, Eric Clapton, Craig David, the Corrs, Robbie Williams, Steps, Leftfield, David Gray, Westlife and is also involved with the just-commencing U2 Elevation world tour.

US Court Rules in Favour of Switchcraft

In a ruling handed down by the US District Court, Southern District of New York, Switchcraft, a leading manufacturer of audio connectors, was granted summary judgment in the patent lawsuit filed by Neutrik Inc, in regards to Switchcraft's HPC connector series.

The Courts ruled that Switchcraft Inc has not violated Neutrik's US Patent No. 5205749 on the Speakon connector. The Court also found that Switchcraft was not in violation of trade dress infringement, unfair competition, or unlawful use of a trademark, the other aspects of the lawsuit filed by Neutrik Inc. Keith Bandolik, president of Switchcraft Inc said: "We are obviously very happy with the court's ruling, and look forward to continued success with the HPC Series." The HPC Series, a complete line of panel mount and cord plug connectors, was developed and is manufactured by Switchcraft Inc. to be compatible with the Neutrik Speakon series.

ISCE Seminars

The Institute of Sound and Communications Engineers (ISCE) has announced a programme of technical seminars for the coming year.

These include a tutorial on 'AFILS' on 1 May, a two-day course on 'Basic Acoustic for Sound System Professionals' on 15 and 22 May and a one-day practical seminar on 'Measuring Loudspeakers' on 5 June. The courses are open to all, and full details with relevant fees are available from Cathy Mackenzie at cathy@cmrl.demon.co.uk

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PROFESSIONAL SHOW LIGHTING



Craig David

I'm not going to write much about Craig David; not that there isn't much to write about, but because I expect to be writing much more in the future.

While Westlife are a well-voiced, but ultimately plastic facsimile of pop stardom (see feature this issue), Craig David has it all. Last time I made such an assertion was for Baby Bird, who promptly migrated South, so I'll temper my predictions for David. He is a skilled songwriter - consecutive hits have established that - and he has a rich, round voice, but it was seeing him live that convinced me. He prowls the stage with the leonine grace of a caged animal. He's compelling, urging the crowd like a Gladiator holding his sword to the neck of his vanquished foe: Thumbs up? Thumbs down? Who cares, this man is dangerous. He may not be playing as many arena shows as Westlife, but they're sell-outs, and get this - the audience he attracts is, at a rough guess, two years older than theirs, and they scream at 116dB A weighted, according to sound engineer Carl 'Snake' Newton - 6dB over Westlife... that's 200% more powerful.

Newton uses a V-dosc system supplied by Wigwam, which is 15 cabinets per side, with three of the near-fill dV-dosc below. As with Westlife, this is the biggest hang of this type I've heard. In light of the supersonic screaming of both bands' audiences, it would be wrong to draw comparisons: there again, the comparison is perfectly made. Walking the room, there's nothing to choose between them, though I still prefer the low end of the d&b to the 2 x 18" Auras. But vocal intelligibility is acute when conditions permit. Of course, most coverage issues are a different matter with the V-dosc system, so instead of ultra-



Main picture, 'prowling the stage with leonine grace' - Craig David. Inset, 'Snake' Newton

multiple zone control, the BSS Soundweb module sitting in Mr Newton's house rack is inserted on the desk. "Mainly I'm using it as an expander on his voice. There's a kind of a 90I-type affair in there I'm using. The point is, when I did the Pet Shop Boys last year, I took out rackfuls of stuff to give myself solution options - with this I have a wide selection of tools in one box, and I can try stuff as I need." And he sees one other great advantage: "Because the connections and devices are all virtual, I can configure things so that I can compress away without affecting the expander." An Amek Recall almost full of Neve modules is Newton's control surface.

John James on monitors has the new M2 wedges from d&b. "I told Wigwam I needed something decent and they gave me these. They're bloody good for a 2 x 12, in fact they'd be bloody good for 2 x 15." The only band member not using the M2s is David himself, "though I have a pair front stage centre just in case." He's on the AKG in-ear system instead. James operates a Midas Heritage board: "It's what you use these days," he says - a comment that gives a clear indication of what's important to his manipulation of the black arts. Simple mixing, David takes BVs, keyboards for pitching, and loops or whatever's appropriate for time.

The lighting design is by Jeff Buckley, formerly the force behind DBN lighting. He's now taken the unusual step of semi-retiring by selling his company and going back to his LD roots. Neg Earth has supplied the system here, Buckley taking the 'easy rig' approach to his design. It's big but simple, forcing scale to the relatively bare stage by hanging metre-wide white cloth strips each side of the main stage cyc.

Buckley has a no nonsense way of underselling himself: "The brief they gave was easy, 'not to look like a boy band,' and 'make it a bit arty'. I just chose what I like, which is a dozen Clay Paky Stage Scans because I can point them at the cyc and do lots of nice things. I especially like the six-lens wheel - you can make some very big images. I've also got 34 Studio Colors: point 'em at the band, the cyc', and you know what they can do." He's equally self-effacing about his Diamond 3: "When you've no production rehearsals to speak of, you can bosh a show together really quickly on one of these." This all sounds like Buckley will have exhausted his repertoire by song three, but not so - go see for yourself.

For video, Nocturne Europe is providing a small Armada of Barco 9200s; one each side for live video directed by Chris Keating, and two pairs doubled onto the cyc, used by Kit Monkman (brother of James, the tour manager). "I'm using all sorts - photos, abstracts, VT, and I'm using Macro Media's Director, and taking an audio input to animate what I do." David is unpredictable - a feature Keating really enjoys: "On the camera side, you quickly get into a routine, but with David you never know what he is going to do, so it's really interesting for me. It's a great show to cut for." And it really looks it.

Steve Moles

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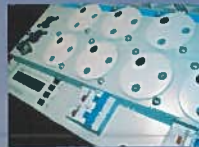
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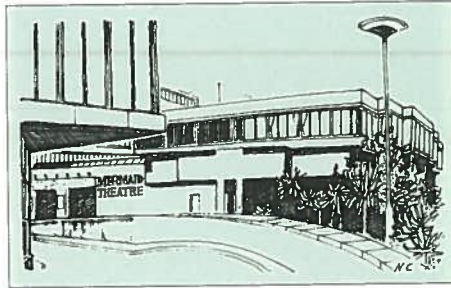


Mermaid's Tale Over?

The famous Mermaid Theatre, overlooking the Thames between the City of London and the West End, is under threat.

Plans have been lodged to demolish the current building and replace it with an office block containing a 'conference-style' theatre. The Mermaid was originally conceived in the 1950s by the late Bernard Miles and his wife Josephine and has a unique place in British Theatre history. Its foyer, bars, auditorium and ground-breaking open stage served as a template for countless new theatres across the country. Over the years it has seen numerous famous names tread its boards.

The controversy surrounding the theatre centres on a planning application lodged by current owners Blackfriars Development Limited, with the City Corporation, which will see the theatre demolished and replaced with a 'performance space' inside a large office block. The Mermaid Theatre Trust and Save the Mermaid Theatre Appeal have rejected these plans and are looking for support from the wider industry to try to save the Theatre. They are encouraging people to write



a letter of objection to the City Planners at the following address: Mr. E.V. Rayment, Department of Planning, Corporation of London, PO Box 270, Guildhall, London, EC2P 2EJ, UK. Fax: 020 7332 1806. The company is also planning a Show of Support Walk in May to coincide with the 42nd Anniversary of the opening of the Theatre in 1959. The walk will start at the Royal Exchange and go via the Guildhall to the Mermaid.

Further details are available from Maggie Sutton, Campaign Coordinator, 'Save The Mermaid Theatre' Appeal, Upper St. Martins Lane, London, WC2H 9EG. E-mail: maggie.sutton@btinternet.com

Proel Wins B&C Deal

Italian loudspeaker manufacturer B&C has appointed London-based Proel as its official UK distributor.

B&C speakers can be found inside many 'big name' manufacturers' enclosures, but this is the first time the company will have had an active distributor and stockist in the UK. The appointment of Proel coincides with two new high-power woofers being added to B&C's main speaker series, plus the launch of a completely new range of lightweight drivers.

The two newcomers are the 18 TBX 46 and 15 TBX 40. The 18" driver will handle 1,000W AES, and features a ventilated magnet assembly for higher power handling and lower power compression. The 15" TBX 40 will also handle 1,000W AES and shares a similar design approach. The new B&C range is the company's HPL series, which features neodymium magnets and high pressure aluminium chassis with solid heat sinks, allowing higher power handling and lower power compression.

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In the world of lighting, there is much talk about lighting style and whether a designer's particular characteristics are visible in the designs that he or she creates. There is much less talk about personality - perhaps unsurprisingly, given that a lighting designer often ends up subservient to the show and the other members of its creative team.

42nd Street Studios

Personality, though, is exactly what lighting designer Anne Militello has given to the New 42nd Street Studios building in New York - and, given her background of work in the City and beyond, her close involvement with the project and the way in which the lighting was created, one can't help feeling that the building's lighting personality closely reflects its designer's own.

Created as a calm, non-commercial oasis for the creation of the theatre arts that are the heart of Broadway in an ocean of commercial development, the 10-storey, glass-walled Studios contain rehearsal rooms and small performance spaces, as well as providing a frontage to what is now called the American Airlines Theatre. As a long-time New York lighting designer who subsequently spread into architectural and other areas of lighting, including a spell with Walt Disney Imagineering, Militello was brought into the project at its design development stage, four years ago. "I worked closely with the architects [Platt Byard Dovell] and client, examining our intentions and conducting mock-ups. We researched materials that would accept and reflect light, we studied optimal angles and optics, and worked with fixture manufacturers before we decided on a final design."



That design involved adding carefully angled steel-mesh panels to the outside of the building, in front of the glass walls; supported by regular uprights that work with the building's floors to effectively form a grid across the building. During the day the panels shield those inside the building from the glare of daylight; in the half-light of afternoons and evenings they work like a gauze, leaving the creation of shows within visible to passing pedestrians.

As night falls, Militello's work comes into play. Planning regulations in the 42nd Street area demand exterior signage and lighting; in the Studio team's interpretation of this rule, the building's entire frontage acts as one enormous lightshow with colour patterns and fades moving across and around the building's grid. It appears alive: though there are clearly patterns to the sequences, it is hard to understand what is triggering them. In fact, Militello eschewed the current trend for using environmental feeds (sound, light, movement) to trigger lighting and instead created the patterns herself. "The programming was the interesting part: I did it on the street from dusk till dawn for three months. I

sat by myself in a folding chair on the sidewalk across the street from the building and spoke by radio to my programmer, Ryan O'Gara, who was perched four storeys above me in another construction site across the street. I needed to be on the street to program from the perspective of the optimal viewing area. I often took requests from gangs, cops and homeless people who would sit and watch me work. I composed to the sounds and sights of the street, in order to capture the essence of the environment. Now the building lighting moves to its street choreography every night, with different nightly compositions and with holidays programmed specially."

The building's many looks are achieved with a relatively simple complement of equipment: each segment of the grid is uplit in two colours by two pairs of Altman Outdoor Pars together with a Sterner metal halide flood providing a base wash of dichroic blue; these are mounted on catwalks for ease of maintenance. High End EC-1 colour-mixing architectural fixtures at the base of the building provide variable colour washes up its height, and Elliptipar fluorescent wall washers on gauze screens inside the windows provide a deeply coloured background. 180ft of TIR LightPipe runs up one side of the building; fed by seven Irideon AR500 colour-changing fixtures, it too becomes part of the sequences. The lighting is controlled from ETC Sensor dimmers programmed using an Expression 2x and now run from an Expression LPC controller, the system integration carried out by Production Arts.

The Studios building is an eye-catcher, even to those who just walk past without realising they are seeing just one of its many moods. Its location also makes it possible to look along 42nd Street and see its lightshow in front of an elder statesman of architectural lighting: the calm white outlines at the top of the Chrysler Building. They are of different times, different styles, yet both have style and personality - and so deep-rooted and long-lasting appeal.

Rob Halliday



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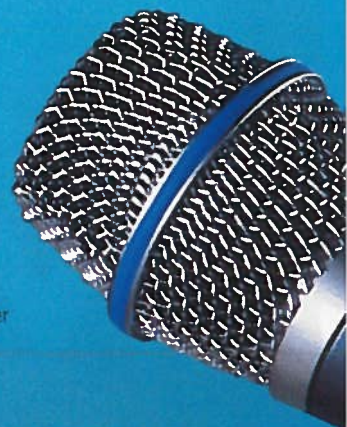
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Dial Launches ShowMagic AV . . .

The well-appointed showroom at Dial HQ was packed. No less than three PAs - Bose, Martin Audio and ASS - stood arrayed before us at the far end; above, hung from Tri-lite trussing, were the latest lamps from Abstract, Clay Paky and Opti. Was this to be a light and sound shoot-out?



From left to right: Kevin Caldwell, Kay Caldwell, Andy Blackwell and Edward Caldwell

Well, no - and the clue to why lay in the neat little Sanyo video projector (700 lumens yet barely bigger than a desk diary) tucked neatly in amongst the lighting gear. "This is to witness the birth of a new AV control," Andy Blackwell of Dial Sound and Lighting confided.

None-the-wiser, we settled in as the presentation began; music played and lights began to dance in harmony. We are informed that all the elements of light and sound were being controlled by a single piece of software. Nothing revolutionary there, but then the screen rolled sedately down from the trussing. It wasn't so much the projected images, though they were pin sharp, nor the Panasonic demo DVD's recourse to seventies footage of well

endowed 'chicks' or action sequences, it was what was added. The soundtrack was overlaid by perfectly synchronised music, and the overlay could be turned on and off like a tap. Then, during the famous bungy jump from *Golden Eye*, the video itself was augmented, colour being added to its periphery, and lighting subtly introduced to the surroundings. What was striking was the effortlessness with which it was all achieved. "That's the point," said Blackwell. "Some people look at this and their initial reaction is 'it looks a bit Fisher Price'. I say 'great' and 'why not?'. It is child's play to use, and why shouldn't it be?"

The 'it' of Blackwell's adulation is ShowMagic, or rather ShowMagic AV (video control straight off

the hard disk), and yes, it is very easy to use. Kevin Caldwell of Ace Visual & Sound Systems who developed ShowMagic has added so much facility to this control software that there's virtually nothing it can't do. John Kopelciw of SpaceKraft, an organisation which provides interactive learning tools for children with Special Needs, saw it as perfect. "One of the most important criteria about aids for children coping with difficulties like autism is timing. They need instant results. Now we can pluck a range of responses straight off the equipment in real-time, from a single controller."

While some at the top end of the Pro' market might find that a slight overstatement, there's no escaping the fact that for an installer, ShowMagic AV has several attractions. It is extremely competitively priced; and for the busy facility manager in a club or themed bar, the ability to control every aspect of a house system from a single device means a reduced learning curve and potentially much more sophisticated delivery. Blackwell was in no doubt: "I've been waiting over 10 years for something like this to come along. It's very clever and it does exactly what you programme, every time, at the touch of a button."

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Pooh on Tour With Clay Paky

Italian rock veterans of over 30 years, Pooh have spent the past two months on an arena tour of 19 Italian cities, promoting their new triple-platinum album 'Cento di queste Vite' (A Hundred of these Lives).

Pooh, one of the few acts which manage to stay on stage for three whole hours, are renowned for the quality of their technical and musical presentation. Staging and lighting for the current tour is looked after by service company Xenon, owned by Renato Neri, who is using a wide array of Clay Paky lighting fixtures for the show, including the new Astroscan projector, launched at PLASA 2000. Neri says: "Astroscan is a spectacular effect that can create a range of atmospheres. As well as providing an effect that blends in perfectly with the rest of the lights, Astroscan gave us the opportunity to light the audience in a creative way, making the audience an active part of the show."




Lighting designer Giancarlo Tosani, who has handled the lighting for the band since 1980, turned to the Clay Paky portfolio to provide him with the mainstay of his rig. Super Scan Zooms have been placed on the central truss above the stage, together with Stage Color 1200s for basic lighting. Stage Zooms 1200 feature on the upper truss, on those perpendicular to the stage and on the floor, while the Astroscans are arranged on the stage and ceiling. For the projection elements, the canvas for which is a large white drape that encircles the stage, a Pani projector is used for the graphic effects.

Playlight Opens New London Base

In order to maintain close contact with its customers in London and the South East, Playlight is moving into new premises in North West London in late May.

The new office, which will be up and running by July, will concentrate on the dry hire of lighting, sound, drapes and starcloths to the conference and theatre markets, as well as the dry hire of film gear to the industry. Dan McMullan and Jim Ewart are setting up the new base, with Ewart heading up the operation. Ian Duff and Andrew Charters will be providing logistical and technical back-up.

The northern end of the company has also come under the spotlight and in addition to its core areas, will also have a specialist division handling OBs, festivals and studio work. The company plans to streamline its hire stock through an auction (planned for Friday May 18) and shed a large volume of sound and lighting equipment surplus to its requirements. Following the auction, the company will be revamping its remaining hire stock and investing in a range of new equipment.



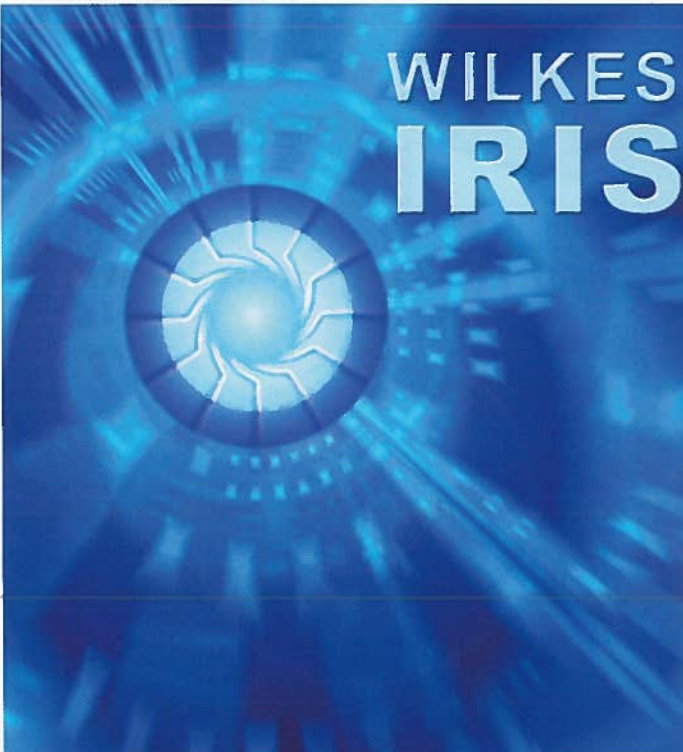
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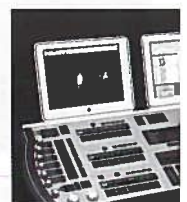
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Stage Electrics Unveils New HQ

At the end of February, Stage Electrics completed the final phase of its move into a brand new purpose-designed building in the Avonmouth area of Bristol. L&S was one of the first to visit the new facilities . . .



Stage Electrics' founder and MD David Whitehead (right) with commercial manager David Pearce and sales and marketing manager Linda Moore.

For the company, a major player in the theatre, leisure, conference and presentation markets, the move to a new 60,000sq.ft headquarters is a fitting way to mark 21 years in the business.

For the last three of those, the move to a new facility has been part of MD David Whitehead's daily agenda. One which he has worked towards ever since he identified the site on the Avonmouth industrial estate, close to the M5 access routes, as being ideal for his purposes. It has been well worth the wait; at last, under one roof, come all the personnel and all the products that were previously spread across six separate facilities. And it doesn't take a genius to understand what a difference that has made in itself.

But the investment (not insubstantial as you might imagine), is not just about consolidating a previously fragmented operation, it's also about creating an environment that benefits everybody - no matter what link in the chain you happen to be. At the centre of the new HQ is the trade counter, the company's daily interface with its clients. To its left is a product demonstration area, kitted out with the latest lighting, audio, control and trussing equipment. Overlooking the demo area are the windows to the company's elegant and relaxed cafe - the real heart of the operation, and the place where, thanks to David Pearce and Linda Moore's understanding of the route to a journalist's heart, most of this interview was conducted.

Arrayed across the two floors around these central features, and connected by areas theatrically lit by David Whitehead (he remains a practising LD), are the finance, IT, administration, sales and customer support teams - the clue to the work undertaken in each area being signalled by a series of quirky signs that appear around the building. The client meeting room, for instance, has been rechristened the 'royal box', the cafe is



the 'green room' and so it goes throughout the building. Elsewhere, finance has been accorded the rare privilege of two - 'money in', 'money out', but my own personal favourite is the title bestowed on Linda Moore's office - 'the cabaret room'.

A series of workshops and product test areas provide the link to the 44,000sq.ft warehouse - the first part of the building to be occupied when the hire operation took residence in September last year. It is the home to a huge inventory of lighting, sound and rigging equipment. More importantly, there's not an item in there that wasn't tested or checked before it was transferred to the new facility.

The long lines of shelves also reveal another advantage - for the technical team had decided long before the move, that they were going to make the new warehouse space work harder for them. Using a software programme to mimic the warehouse layout, they factored in the physical dimensions of every product in the stockholding

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Facing page, the extensive warehouse facility. Left, the shop and trade counter. Below, the cafe - the window at the far end overlooks the technical demonstration area

(all measured by hand), and by careful calculation arrived at a system of storage that would take maximum advantage of the available space.

Stock levels have also risen as a consequence of the move, and into the hire stock has come the latest 300 series of desks from Strand Lighting, the entire Martin Professional product portfolio from Mini to Mac (the company is now the largest stockist of MAC moving heads for hire in the UK), the latest Avolites ART 4000 dimmers, a range of Optikinetics GoboShow projectors and the new range of luminaires from Selecon. A further feature of the new warehouse is a dedicated area for touring shows, where members of the Stage Electrics team can work with visiting production electricians during preparations for a show.

The transfer has also acted as the catalyst for a change in the hire running order; prior to the move, equipment was tested before it went out on a job, following the move it is now tested when it returns from a job, placing the company in a far stronger position to react to those typical 'last minute' requests.

In a separate facility behind the new building is a suite of bedrooms, with kitchen, living room and shower facilities, for those brave staff committed to early starts or late finishes or for touring production electricians.

Phase III of the move is now underway with the company part-way through negotiations to acquire the adjoining property. When the sale completes later this year, it will bring to the Avonmouth site the last two departments of the company - scenic and transport - together with the company's fleet of over 60 vehicles.

It all seems a lifetime away from the company's modest beginnings 21 years ago, when David Whitehead and Maurice Marshal (both still active in the business) first began Stage



Electrics to serve a growing amateur market. What was then a two-man operation has grown to become a 210-man operation with a nationwide presence and an annual turnover approaching £18million.

Whilst the company continues to have strong roots in the South West, courtesy of its branches in Exeter and Plymouth, it also has a growing profile in the north, following the opening of an office at the NEC in Birmingham, principally to serve a growing exhibition and conference sector clientele. Just last year, the opening of the London Waterloo office took the company further into the design arena, thanks to its WYSIWYG-based Virtual Lighting Studio. Already the benefits of this latter development have reached some key clients, including venues such as the Barbican, not to mention the West End lighting designers who have taken advantage of the facility.

However far it might have come, MD David Whitehead is determined that the company should not forget its roots. Although it now works in sectors as diverse as cruise ships, health clubs and retail stores, as well as the more traditional theatre and events work, its objectives for the future aren't too far removed from those it set 21 years ago - to provide a reliable and comprehensive service to customers in the entertainment, leisure and presentation industries.

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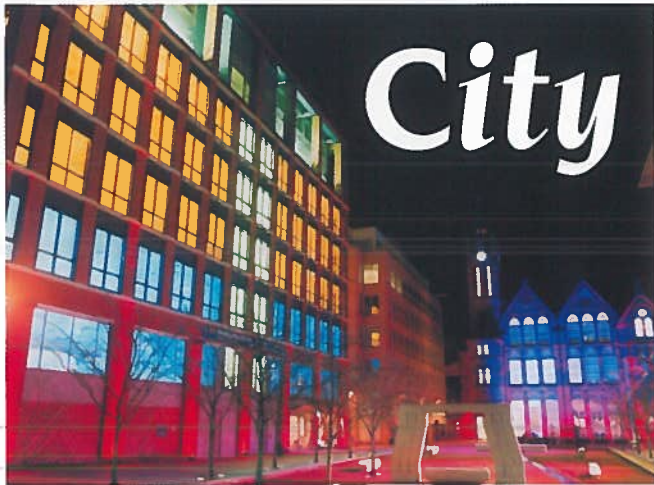
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Lights

The citizens of Birmingham recently treated the Mayor of Lyon to a spectacular reception. The cause of the celebration? - the fiftieth anniversary of the twinning of the two great cities.

Lyon has been appointed European City of Light for 2001 and kicked off the year with a spectacular display of architectural lighting over the Christmas and New Year season. Birmingham took this as the key to their event, commissioning installation artist Colin Pierce to conceptualise something comparable.

"Birmingham City Council Arts team has visibly moved a long way and diversified from the idea of stainless steel sculptures outside buildings," explained Pierce. "I first made a site-specific exposition for them under Spaghetti Junction in 1993 and over 10,000 people attended. Since then, we've done other things, most recently 'The Gallery in the Trees' which ran through 1999-2000. The thing is, they (BCC Arts team) have recognised that something temporary can still have a very strong impact."

Interestingly, BCC used the event to kill two birds with one stone: "They wanted to use the event to showcase colour-changing lighting, how it can

affect the environment, to developers, planners and urban architects." Pierce went on to explain that Birmingham City is currently undergoing a great deal of re-development: "They are drafting a Lighting Strategy and will invite developers to have a 'lighting policy' as an integrated part of their planning application. What

the BCC wants is lighting that makes the city safer, more attractive and accessible, and thus in the long run, more sustainable. They recognise that the creative use of lighting can have an economic impact. They want good quality lighting in all new schemes."

Jill Robinson of the City architects office, and Nigel Edmonson from the European Unit arranged for Pierce to 'use' Oozells Square as his metaphorical canvas. "I had three areas to work with: the first, the Ikon Gallery was built in 1880 and is a Gothic revival building with masses of features and dark red brickwork. It is surrounded by several of the city's leading restaurants, not least the 'Petite Blanc', and that's one of the reasons they chose this area, it's a very interesting public space, but under-exploited."

Pierce also had the adjacent Zen Garden, another successful piece of public art, designed by Paul de Monchaux in the classic Japanese 70:30 proportions. Most significantly his third area was the newly completed, but empty, office development, 6 Brindley Place.

"The Argent Group had redeveloped the whole of Brindley Place and they were particularly co-operative in letting me use the inside of the building." As can be seen from the photos, Pierce

did something very different here, instead of washing the exterior in an array of colours from the outside, he placed all lighting equipment inside. "I wanted to project the building out in a modernist light. Like Mondrian, squares, colours and spaces. It's not revolutionary, but it's colourful and yet not too busy." For the Ikon, Pierce used sombre, but rich colours, mauves and deep purples, accentuating the verticals, something that gave a gravity to contrast with the bright tones of Brindley Place.

All the lighting for the project was supplied by LSD Fourth Phase, with Geoff Jones from Illuminatum providing a laser. "The laser was originally intended for the Garden's water feature, but it was too distracting, so we had it gently scanning across the surface of the gravel. All the lighting was very much a collaborative effort. The logistics and the technical side of things were handled by Martin Nicholas."

Pierce has worked with Nicholas and LSD before: "He supports me, I support him. This was a complex piece of lighting that needed to be specified, installed and then removed, quickly (just four days in/up and out). The arts field can be like that, and LSD are ideally suited to working under those kind of pressures - you couldn't do this with a conventional (construction industry) lighting company, not at such short notice."

The upshot is that this event certainly opened-up the possibilities to the right people. Pierce already sees the potential for more permanent installations, "in a sense that's a diversification for me, but it isn't a radical departure, it's still art in the same area." Let's hope the architects and urban planners are listening - the art of lighting has a lot to offer.

Steve Moles



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New UK Distribution for Dyalnite

Australian manufacturer of architectural lighting control products, Dyalnite, has announced that Dimtek Ltd has been appointed the exclusive distributor of Dyalnite Products in the UK and Ireland.

The move follows the decision by Dyalnite's former distributor Dyalnite UK, to become part of the iLight Group (see major feature last issue). Dimtek is a joint venture between Dyalnite, and a company headed by Jon Theis (formerly lighting controls product manager at Thorlux Lighting, a division of FW Thorpe plc) which has an experienced staff of sales people and engineers. Dyalnite has a number of new product releases scheduled for 2001, amongst them the DIN Rail range of touch-screen, internet-enabled software and a range of products for the 'smart home' market.

Brighton School of Audio Formed



Two live sound engineers, Jon Burton and Mark Jones (pictured), have joined forces to launch BSA Live, a ground-breaking training forum for young people interested in a professional career in live sound engineering.

Burton and Jones have a combined touring experience of over 30 years and have engineered for a diverse array of top-level artists, including Pulp, James, Radiohead, Suede, Bryan Ferry and Morcheeba. Burton told L&S: "We've identified a gap in the market. There are studio courses available, but virtually nothing specifically addressing live sound in a hands-on manner. We

want to provide an opportunity for young people interested in sound and wanting to make a career out of live audio to get started."

The 'Foundation in Live Sound Engineering' course is designed for maximum accessibility, and is open to students of little or no previous experience. It will run over an eight-week period with students attending on a part time, three-day-a-week basis. Classes will be restricted to a maximum of 10, allowing them to receive full attention. So far, BSA Live has gained enthusiastic support from several leading industry brands including XTA and Drawmer. XTA are donating computers, processor units and their new SIDD (digital dynamic processor) units for use on the course, and their Audiocore software will be used as one of the teaching tools.

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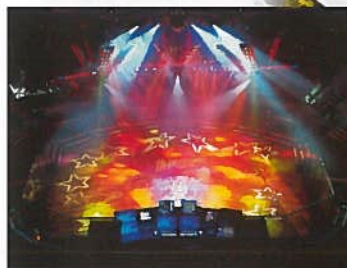
Masterpiece™ 216

The London Hippodrome recently installed a new control system using the latest Masterpiece and Replay Unit technology, capable of providing total control of their vast 2000 channel lighting rig.



Connectable

Masterpiece is packed with multiple inputs and outputs as standard to enable system integration. Three output formats are provided, these being +10V analogue (36 channels), Pulsar MultipleX (216 channels) and DMX (512 channels). Four control inputs are provided these being Pulsar MultipleX (RS-232), Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI), Analogue +10V and Audio. This array of digital and analogue inputs and outputs makes it possible to connect the Masterpiece to almost whatever you have in mind.



Expandable

Masterpiece is easily expandable and can be used in a modular way to provide large and complex control system solutions. The use of multiple Masterpieces and Replay Units along with Outstations enables the designer to specify logical integrated control. Use of the remote inputs additionally allows linking to MIDI keyboards and remote devices.

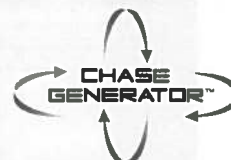
The Hippodrome's Technical Manager Derek Chalmers states: "The new system allows for fast total control of the lighting rig and rig movements. The flexibility of control allows us to offer an integrated production capability for multi-media shows, presentations and a whole host of other diverse events."

If you want total control, take a look at the new Masterpiece 216.



Upgradeable

Masterpiece is driven by powerful software, written in machine code for the ultimate in controller response. Software upgrades are free of charge enabling you to keep your system state-of-the-art at all times. In fact the latest Masterpiece 216 upgrade features an exciting development called "Chase Generator", an extremely quick and powerful way of creating complex chase from just a single Scene! It works by using mathematical functions to automatically calculate channel levels for pre defined lighting effects.



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Jands and Stage Technologies Form Alliance

Stage Technologies in London has joined forces with Jands Electronics in Sydney to supply high tech stage machinery and equipment to the region's staging industry.

The agreement allows Australian customers access to Stage Technologies' products through Jands Electronics. "We will be pooling our expertise, experience and knowledge," said Jands' managing director Paul Mulholland. "Stage Technologies has excellent credentials and is a worldwide leader in stage control systems. Coupled with our mechanical expertise and ability to source local materials, this will prove a very strong alliance." Stage Technologies' marketing director John Hastie added: "Together with Jands, the complete range of Stage Technologies equipment and solutions will be supplied and well supported in Australia."

The juggler 3D from Stage Technologies - part of its range of stage control systems



Photo: Chris Toulmin

Laser Magic Opens Bahrain Office

Laser Magic has opened an office in Bahrain, offering a full rental package which includes a wide range of laser systems, water screens, xenon projection and other special effects. The company has invested in lighting from Martin Professional (MAC 500s), Coemar (1200W washlights) as well as a range of smaller 250W and 300W intelligent fixtures from Coef. It has also bought in Sanyo XF10 projectors, the latest NEC plasma screens and high-quality active sound systems, giving the company a comprehensive range of product available for hire.

2001 Automated Lighting Academy

Flying Pig Systems and High End Systems have announced details of the 2001 Automated Lighting Academy - a comprehensive programme covering the fundamentals of automated lighting.

The goal of the six-week course is to give each student the necessary skills and knowledge to use automated lighting to create powerful lighting designs. Some theory will be covered, but the focus will be primarily 'hands-on'.

Students will be taught how to operate luminaires and consoles, with the focus gradually shifting to the effective use of these tools. Leading designers and programmers from the theatre, television and touring worlds will share their various approaches to lighting. Assignments will be evaluated, and high-performing students may be recommended for future programming jobs.

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Screenshot of the ShowMagic AV 512 control software interface. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Left Panel (Cue List):** Shows a list of cues with columns for 'Mas', 'Fdr', 'Cue', 'Seq', 'Snd', 'Ctrl', 'Mon', and 'Act'. Cues include 'A011 Freespace Demo', '006 029 MEMORY 5 le', '007 A008 Lectern lights', and '008 Null Step'. Below this are sections for 'MD' (SB Live! MIDI In [144]), 'TG' (String "A2"), and 'Grp: LA' (On/Off, 00:02:51.03).
- Central Panel:** Features a video preview window showing a close-up of a human eye. Below the video are 'Clear Cues', 'Clear Seqs', and 'Clear Snds' buttons. A 'Video' section contains various control buttons and sliders.
- Bottom Panel:** Contains a row of sliders for 'Black' and 'Video'. Below the sliders are buttons for '91 00 FL 00 00 00 75' and 'FL FL'. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Wv', 'Md', 'CD', 'Di', 'Ln', 'Mc', 'DV', 'In', 'AM', and 'GM'.

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People

Matthew Tonks has joined Stage Technologies as project manager. Tonks, formerly a project manager with Glantre Engineering and more recently with Impact AudioVisual, will concentrate on the company's growing cruise installation work.

Autograph Sales, the London-based distributor of professional audio and control system technology, has appointed **Rob Piddington** to its board of directors. Moving to Autograph Sales from Sennheiser UK, where he was sales manager, he will take up his new position as a director from the beginning of April, with new business development his prime area of responsibility. Piddington will be working closely with Autograph's existing team of sales engineers, alongside directors **Graham Paddon** and **Richard Barman**.



Rob Piddington (pictured centre) joins **Richard Barman** (left) and **Graham Paddon** at Autograph Sales

More news from PRG, which recently announced that industry veteran **Don Stern** has moved into the role of chairman emeritus of Fourth Phase. Stern is the former owner of Bash Theatrical Lighting, which was acquired by PRG in 1997, and has remained instrumental in the operation of the lighting group. He will remain active with Fourth Phase but his new position will leave him free to pursue additional interests outside the company.

High End's **Jeff Washburn** is now overseeing the architectural market for the company. He will continue his duties as regional sales manager for Central USA, whilst also taking on board responsibility for High End's architectural line of luminaires.

RS Pro Audio has appointed **Tony Rimkus** as retail sales director. Managing director **Roddy Stewart** welcomed the new addition: "Tony will add substantial experience to our expanding operations, include the organisation of our forthcoming move to our new custom-built superstore due to open this month."

Summit Steel has appointed **Chris Walker** to the senior role of project manager. Many will know Walker from his time at rigging.co.uk, his own company, which specialised in major rigging projects and counted amongst its clients Cisco Systems. In addition to major industrial

shows, Walker's rigging background also includes theatre and concert touring (including stints with Aerosmith, The Beautiful South and Riverdance).

Shuttlesound has welcomed two new recruits to its team in a move that will strengthen the sales department in the areas of marketing and permanent installations. **David Howe**, an experienced industry professional, takes on the mantle of permanent installation consultant, while **Yann Carbonnet**, formerly of Shuttlesound's parent company Telex EVI in Germany, has recently joined as marketing manager, where his responsibilities include both brand and company profile.

More recruitment news from AC Lighting: firstly, **Ian Ferguson** joins the company's UK sales division. Ferguson is well known to many people in the industry, having spent the past eight years as business manager with Playlight at their London office. With 24 years' industry experience, Ferguson has an encyclopaedic knowledge of equipment and its applications. Strengthening the corporate office staff,

meanwhile, is **Marie Kent**, who has been appointed personal assistant to MD **David Leggett**. Previously with banker UBS Warburg in London, she has an extensive background in senior roles, including nine years in Sydney with IBM.

Well-known industry figure **Linton Smeeton**, one of the founders of RCF UK, has been appointed to the role of commercial sales manager at Paso UK Ltd, the corporate office of Paso Spa (Italy). Linton joins up with fellow industry stalwart, **Bill Mackie**, to strengthen Paso's rapidly developing presence in the public address, voice evacuation and conference markets in the UK and Ireland.

Following lengthy negotiations, which actually began in the bar at the Live! Awards, The Event Safety Shop has appointed **Tim Roberts** as senior consultant. The Event Safety Shop is a partnership between well-known event managers **Dick Tee** and **Mike Richmond**, and has a rapidly growing client base of people looking for specialist safety advice. Roberts will oversee the day-to-day running of the company, including the presentation of safety policies and other paperwork for production companies and risk assessment for large-scale events.

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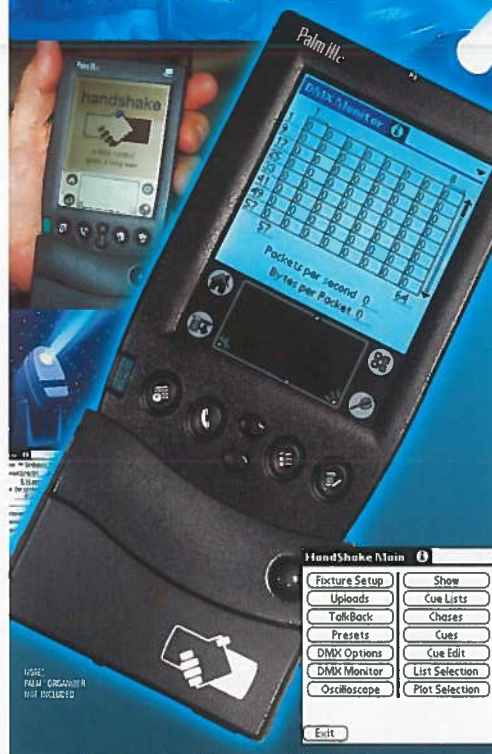
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EV's X-Line Debuts at Brixton

X-Line, the new line array system from ElectroVoice, made its UK debut recently with a series of dates from Richard Ashcroft at the Brixton Academy earlier this month.

Robbie McGrath engineered the nine-piece band on his console of choice, a Midas XL4, accompanied by his custom-built FOH and effects racks courtesy of ML Executives. The system used at the Brixton Academy was naturally slightly more modest, comprising a J-hang of five XVLS and three XVLT cabinets at a trim height of 25ft plus five ground-stacked sub bass units per side. Infills for close audience coverage were provided by a total of EV X-Array Xi-1152s, and the whole system was driven by EV P3000 amps. Processing was handled by three of Klark Teknik's DN9848 processors, while mic splitting requirements were dealt with by five DNI248s.

For Robbie McGrath, this was his first time with X-Line: "Although I've used line array systems before, it's not where the majority of my experience lies," he commented. The question was, after a day's rehearsal, two gigs and the requisite amount of tweaking in between, did the system deliver? The answer, after the inevitable minor teething problems that accompany every first show with a new system, was a big thumbs up.

"The first show we did with X-Line sounded pretty good," said Robbie, "but as with every first show, there were a couple of adjustments to make before it really started to purr the way I knew it



could. But the beauty of these systems is that the learning curve is so fast - we found we were flying along at Mach 2 getting the niggles resolved simply because the rig was so responsive to our solutions. With one gig and a day's re-adjustments under our belts, we'd all learned a huge amount about the character of the system."

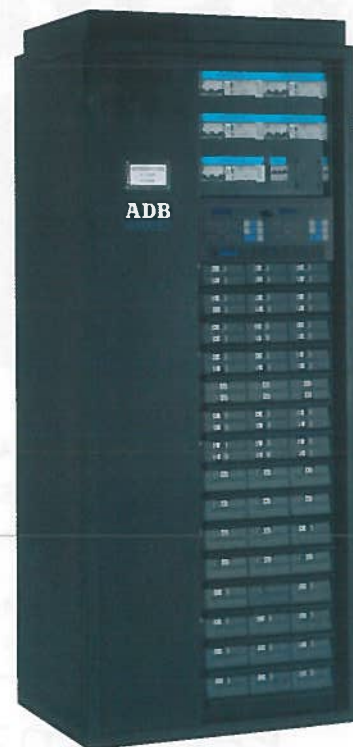
He continued: "The trick was learning to throw away all the tricks we used to disguise the defects of an inadequate PA, because X-Line is so efficient you simply don't need them. For the second night we made a few adjustments to the angle of some of the speakers and ran the house EQ virtually flat and approached the desk EQ from more of a 'studio' aspect, and immediately started hearing dimensions within the reverbs that hadn't been apparent before. Straight away the whole rig started to sound even more musical, and the bottom end was definitely better than anything I've heard from the competition - much rounder, much warmer yet still with plenty of punch to match the rest of the system."

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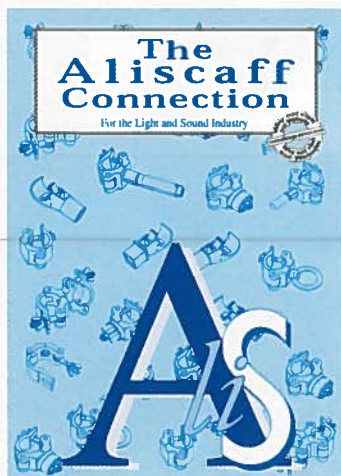
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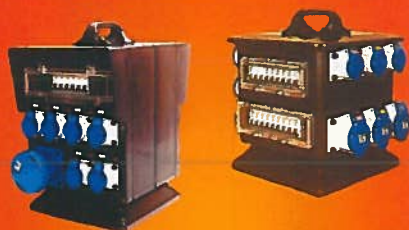
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Letters . . .

Dear Editor,

I read your feature on iLight in the March issue with interest. While in no way denigrating the contribution that David Kerr made to Electrosonic during his 19 years with the company, I must in fairness to my colleagues of the time take issue with the statement that he developed Rockboard, Daylight Linking and Scene Setting.

All these developments were team efforts. Electrosonic had a daylight linking system in its own factory prior to David joining the company. The Rockboard was a team effort, requiring a lot of customer feedback, as well as electronic design expertise. The idea of automatic scene selection was fundamental to Electrosonic's early days, and indeed arose out of the sterling work that Mike Ray did in developing automatic thyristor dimmers in the early 1960s. In practice it was people like Howard Brandston and Derek Philips who set the agenda for scene selection in the architectural market, and Electrosonic who had the electronics expertise and empathy with the idea to realise it.

Robert Simpson
Chairman, Electrosonic Ltd

Radio Spectrum

If you use radio mics or radio talkback systems, you should be aware of the Radiocommunications Agency's (RA) latest consultation document on Spectrum Pricing.

For most in the industry, there's good news in that the cost of licensing is to be reduced - a result that didn't seem likely when the first consultation document was released. A study published by Smith Nera on spectrum pricing, based on its calculation of the value of radio spectrum, would have made one radio mic channel worth about £80,000. However, following reaction from contractor JFMG and several users at the earlier stage, another round of consultation was announced. If all goes to plan, the technicalities of licensing will be simplified too.

Once the policy is adopted, a block of frequencies, such as UHF Channel 69 frequencies, would cost £75.00 per year. JFMG hopes that the price reduction will increase the number of licences issued to users. Plans are

already being made for the analogue TV switch-off, and mobile phone companies - apparently with limitless funds - are looking for more available spectrum.

The company is taking steps to increase the number of licence applications and now has a section working on licensing development. The aim is to educate users on the need for licensing. In the last few months, engineers from JFMG have visited a number of theatres, identifying some common problems along the way, including the use of unlicensed frequencies, the hiring-out of equipment without a hire licence, and the use of channel 68 without a licence.

If you are unsure about licensing, contact JFMG or look at its website. Essentially, there are five VHF frequencies that were made licence-exempt last year and there are some low-power UHF frequencies (not channel 69) that are also licence-exempt. Anything else needs a licence.

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A Question of Control

When Tony Hall of Essential Lighting took the brief for a recent annual sales convention at the Wembley conference centre, he was challenged with a large and complex 'gyroscopic' revolve that was to be a centrepiece of the show.

Whilst a mains feed could be run through the various slip rings, Hall needed to incorporate a minimum of 36 ways of generic control and three ways of dimmed neon in the revolve to enhance the main reveal sequence and create a variety of looks for the show. Aware of the existence of radio DMX technology, but unable to find it anywhere in the UK rental market, he called AC Lighting to help source the product.

The recommendation was to utilise a state-of-the-art RadioDMX system manufactured in the USA. This would provide a 'cableless' transmission permitting the control of lighting and other DMX-controlled devices in locations



that would be impractical or risk-prone to run cables to in the traditional manner. AC's Glyn O'Donoghue commented: "The use of RadioDMX opens up a wealth of new possibilities in the operation of equipment and makes the problem of getting control signals to difficult places a thing of the past." Operating at 2.4GHz using the latest in Digital Spread

Spectrum technology, the system provides a communication link with substantial range and high rejection of interference. Distances up to 1km can be reliably achieved in line-of-sight applications and up to 460 metres in a typical indoor/through obstacles environment. RadioDMX transmits and receives all 512 channels in a DMX data link and multiple receivers may be placed in different locations to receive DMX signals from a single transmitter.

Up to 16 transmitters, each sending a different DMX signal, can be used in the same area without interfering with each other. This feature allows wireless control of up to 8,192 channels. This system was the first to be deployed in the UK. Also used on the show were 12 MAC 2000s, 50 MAC 500s and 67 MAC 600s. The event was run from two Wholehog 2s and an Avolites Diamond 3.

ONLINE



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'can i come' she'd said for the fiftieth time.

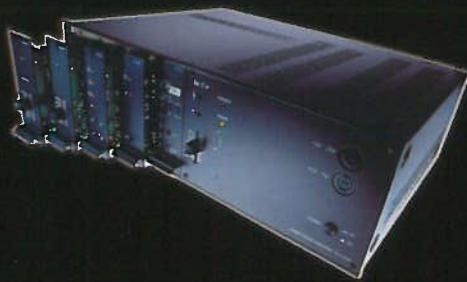
In the end, I gave in.

Half time. I was buying some drinks.
I only turned away for a few seconds. When I turned back...

she'd vanished.

'we'll put out an announcement for her'
the steward reassured me.

I had my doubts. **60,000** screaming fans - you couldn't even hear yourself think.



I was wrong ...

The voice **BOOMED** across the stadium.
LOUD AND CLEAR.

Anyway as it turned out, she'd just gone back to her seat.

'where have you been?'

she said, when I sat back down.

'you missed the goal'.

One nil away to Man U... and I was there!
well sort of.



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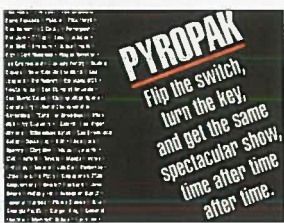
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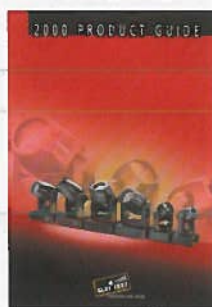
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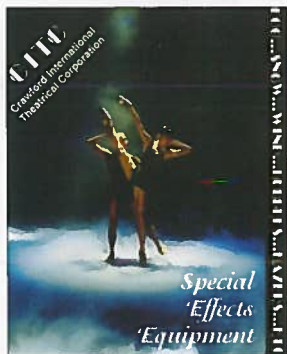
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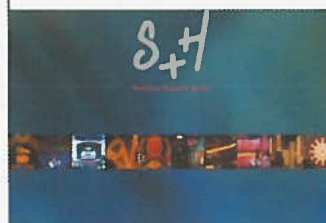
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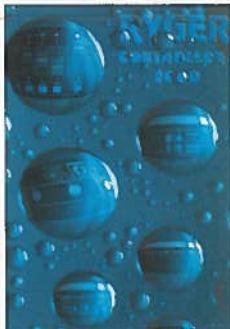
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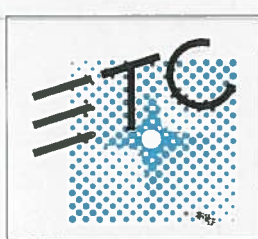
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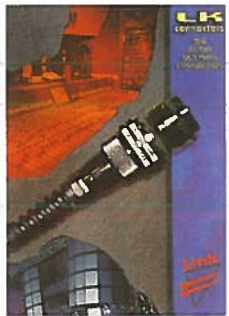
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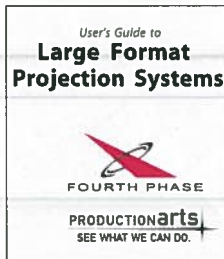
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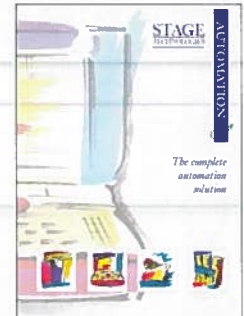
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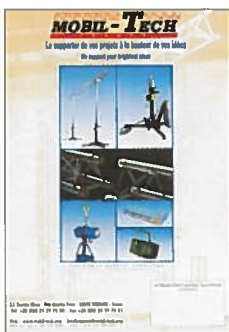
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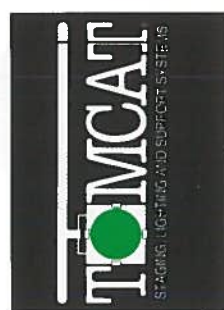
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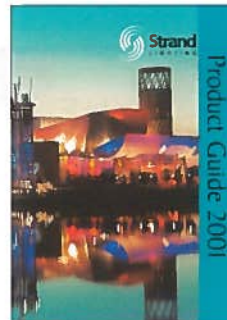
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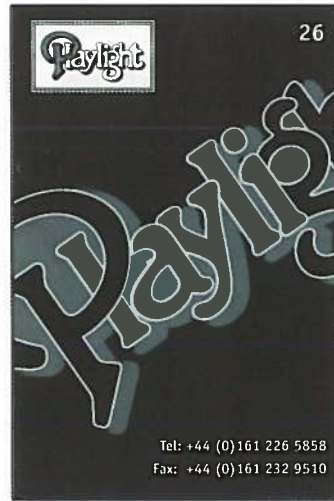
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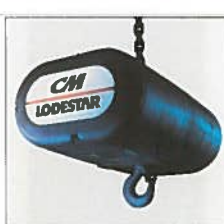
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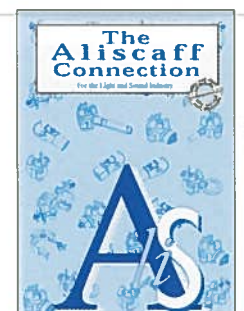
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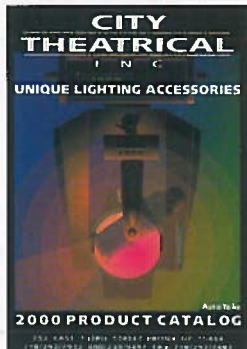
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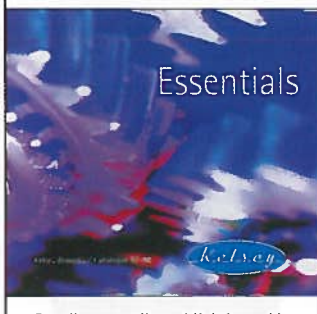
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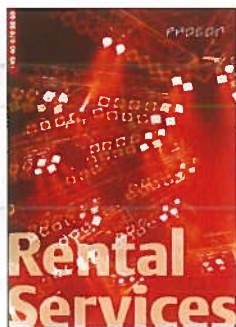
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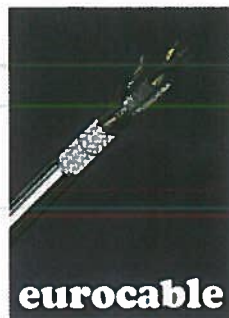
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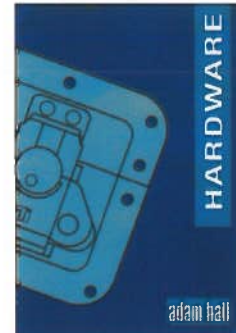
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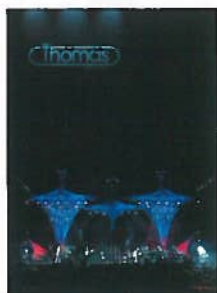
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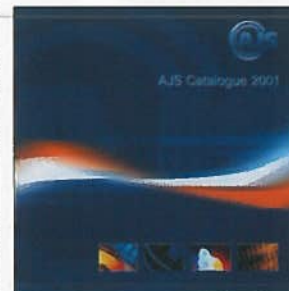
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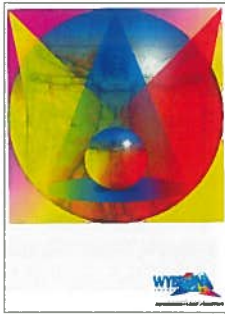
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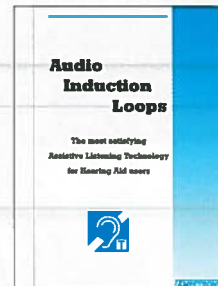
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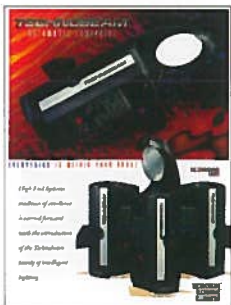
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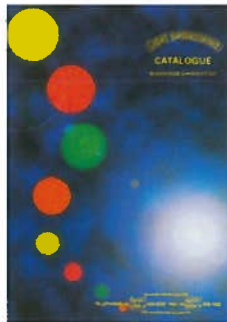
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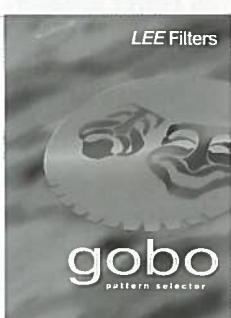
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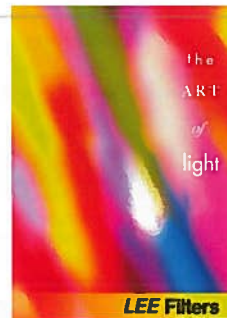
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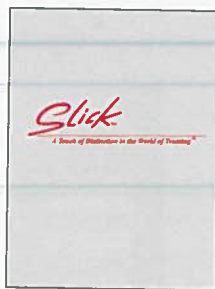


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Castaway

The Almeida Theatre Company's recent performance of *The Tempest* marks the end of an era.

Rob Halliday reviews the production

So, maybe people do sometimes actually read what we write here. Or maybe it's just co-incidence. Either way: in the December 1998 issue, covering Cirque du Soleil's spectacular watershow 'O' in Las Vegas, I commented that if the giant watertank with its hydraulic lifts allowing transformations from deep water to dry land wasn't being used by the circus company "it would make a fascinating set for a production of *The Tempest*." Two and a bit years on, that's almost exactly what the little Almeida Theatre in North London has done.

The Almeida is one of the remarkable success stories of British theatre. The Almeida building itself began life as the Islington Literary and Scientific Institute then went through phases as a music hall, Salvation Army Citadel and a factory for Beck's Carnival Novelties before being discovered and claimed as a theatre, an unusual but unique space with audience seating on two levels looking into an open acting area that extends right back to the building's striking curved brick wall, which has featured in many productions in the venue.

Almeida founder Pierre Audi ran the building during the eighties; the next stage of the company's development came in 1990 when the actors Jonathan Kent and Ian McDiarmid took over as artistic directors. Under their control, the Almeida has produced a spectacularly diverse range of hit shows; even the unusual ones have often sold out because of their directors' trick of luring big names (Ralph Fiennes, Diana Rigg, Juliette Binoche, Kevin Spacey, Michael Gambon) to appear at the theatre, paying them little, but giving them the thrill of working in the Almeida. As the company's reputation has grown, so it has often moved beyond the Almeida Theatre itself as the scale of shows has demanded: to the Hackney Empire in 1995 for a superb *Hamlet*, to the old Gainsborough Film Studios in London last year for a pairing of *Coriolanus* and *Richard II*, into the West End for a successful season at the Albery Theatre.

Part of the Almeida's quaint charm has always been the 'rough' feel to attending a show there: the slightly uncomfortable seats, open-air foyer, lack of creature comforts and the like; backstage follows a similar pattern, with the dressing rooms and work areas all cramped together below the building. The company became the very worthy winner of a £1.5million Lottery grant to refurbish and improve the building. This would inevitably require a period of closure, and so the idea arose of a valedictory production to celebrate the company's 10

years of success; *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's last play, directed by Jonathan Kent and starring his fellow artistic director Ian McDiarmid as Prospero, seemed an ideal choice as the final performance in the 'old' space.

The refurbishment would also mean a considerable amount of building work, which seems to have been the inspiration for director Jonathan Kent and his set designer Paul Brown. The story about an early meeting with the architects and theatre consultants, with relation to the production, reportedly goes something like this. The designer: 'So, you're going to be taking the roof off the building and replacing it, so it wouldn't matter if we wanted to make some holes in it to be able to fly people in and out from the stage?' Architects: 'Errr, ummm, errr'. Designer: 'And you're going to be taking the floor up, so it wouldn't matter if we wanted to, say, break through it and fill the basement with water to form a giant pool?' Architects: 'Errm' . . . (shuffle, pause, but not really any great dissent.)

A slightly exaggerated version of events, no doubt, but that is basically what came to pass. Brown's design for the show replaces the Almeida's stage with a giant pool in which Shakespeare's magic unfolds; the spirit Ariel appears and disappears from around the theatre, flying in from overhead then vanishing into the water. And, since there's a giant pool anyway, the spectacular storm sequences include the falling rain effects for which the Almeida has become famous over the years, but taken to new extremes - in particular, with water cascading down to create truly bedraggled sailors.

Turning Brown's concept into reality fell to the Almeida's long-serving production manager, James Crout, with some of the early work carried out by Steve Rebbeck (who oversaw the company's transformation of the Gainsborough Studios, and more recently the creation of their new temporary home at an old bus depot in the King's Cross area of London) while Crout was touring the company's *Richard III/Coriolanus* pairing around the world. Crout firstly had to persuade Jonathan Kent that, though the Lottery work would include taking the roof off, that didn't necessarily mean the Lottery could pay for that work as part of *The Tempest*. "But concessions were made on both sides," he recalls, "and on the premise that they could do, within reason, whatever they wanted, we have done, within reason, what they wanted!"

On stage, this included breaking through the floor and installing a 55,000 litre pool, with all of the ancillaries that implies. "The pool goes right the way down to the bottom



Title Page, artistic director Ian McDiarmid as Prospero; right, Aidan Gillen as Ariel. Inset, the Almeida's production manager James Crout on the set of *The Tempest*

of the basement - there's a large rectangle downstage which is 2.5 metres deep, then the upstage and side area are shallower. This means that Ariel can swim in deep water, and then on stage right there's an opening in the pool so that he can just appear or disappear - very pleasing the first time he disappears because most people are sitting there waiting for him to bob back up - but when he does next appear he flies in from the roof!"

The show's set was built by Souvenir, who subbed out the work on the pool to Clearwater. They created a steel frame lined with inch-ply. "Then we went to a roofing company who supplied a heavy duty plastic, which they stuck down and then welded together to create an instant pond with no hint of a leak. As always, it was a joy to have this juxtaposition of theatre and normal, outside-world trades: their guys were just standing in the middle of this stage, just getting on with it but no doubt thinking: 'What the f*** are they doing? They're all mad!'. Walking around the basement, the pool appears as just a series of wooden walls - albeit walls covered with large warnings that they 'must not be breached under any circumstances!' Also sitting in the pool are two hydraulic lifts, which are used to turn the downstage area of the pool into 'dry land', when required, as well as being used at one moment to allow Ariel to "explode out of the water, with the big lift coming up as fast as it can."

Crout is also now something of an expert on pool filtering (the pool is filtered, but a dye is in fact then added to the water to stop it being so clear that people could look straight into it) and heating. "Initially we had an electric heater, which might have been fine if we'd had time to get the water up to temperature. But because the shape of the pool meant that we have far more surface area to volume than you'd normally get, our heat loss is enormous - and in December the water was coming in (from the water main outside - we worked out that it would take a week and a half to fill the pool from the tap in the basement!) at about 5 degrees, and we needed to get it to 32 degrees. So we went to a company called Hot Water Hire, who provided us with a 72kW gas boiler that sits in the foyer. That kicks! We've kept this because we had huge problems with our electrical supply; we did lose shows through having no power all day and not having the time to get the water back up to temperature once the power did come back on." Crout also had to look for unusual qualifications when employing his show staff - since one of the stage managers also served as lifeguard!



Above the pool, hanging from the roof, is a scaffolding bridge, which is used to fly Ariel. The bridge

and wire winches used for the flying were installed by Summit Steel, with the winches provided by Stage One Creative Services. The manually-controlled motors provide individual control of traverse and raise/lower, allowing Aidan Gillen, playing the sprite, to swing around above the stage before nose-diving towards it. Installing the bridge was no easy feat, requiring breaking through the theatre's roof. Access was even harder: scaffolding was erected up the side of the building to provide access to the roof, and a hole had to be knocked in the theatre's previously-sacrosanct back wall to allow access out to this scaffolding, the scaffolding also following Jonathan Kent's brief to make sure that people knew that something was happening to the theatre. The back wall was also made to support a curved ramp that characters - including three boy sopranos - traverse, and the design also includes tracking gauzes, a ladder suspended from the roof, and rough industrial debris sitting on the two 'island' areas at either side of the pool.

LIGHTING

One of the most notable aspects of the Almeida's work over the last 10 years has been the consistency of their creative teams, with director Jonathan Kent being joined more often than not by lighting designer Mark Henderson and sound designer John A Leonard; *The Tempest* was no exception, even if, in his usual self-deprecating manner, Henderson does put this down to "Jonathan just putting up with me!" For Henderson, the show turned into something of a voyage of discovery. "Originally, I had an image of it in my head as a very 'beautiful' show, elegant pastel colours. But when we got into the building, that didn't seem to work with the 'roughness' of the building and its brickwork, and the set. I kept finding myself taking the colour out of the lights, so by the end most of it was in open white!"

The rig also evolved as practical constraints imposed themselves. "We wanted the rig to

follow the rough, slightly broken-down feeling of the rest of the building, so on my original plan we had lots of bars breaking the usual pattern of the grid, even dropping down at angles from the grid. Some of that is still there, but because they started selling the sides of the balcony, some of that had to go to improve the sightlines from there." He also avoided the temptation to fill the pool with lighting equipment: "we did talk about that early on, and we did investigate all kinds of underwater equipment, but I thought we'd save it and see if we needed it rather than installing it then finding we couldn't use it. In fact, with the dye they used to reduce the clarity of the pool, lighting in the pool probably wouldn't have been much use. Most of the lights that ended up in the pool are just spotting lights, so that Aidan Gillen could position himself on the lifts or find his underwater exit." The Almeida's electricians team, led by chief electrician Paul Skelton, were also kept busy by the show creating a collection of effects specifically for the production - including a ripple machine (to ripple the water, not just make a light look like rippling water!), and a smoke machine in a pressurised enclosure that could blow bubbles of smoke into the water, which would then rise up to give a low-lying mist on the water's surface.

Henderson delivered his initial rig plan ahead of the two-week fit-up period, so that the lights could be rigged while the theatre's floor was still in place. Focusing then took place "with wellington boots and a long, wooden ladder," this standing in the base of the pool which provided about the only level surface in the set. The rig uses the Almeida's full 'history' of lighting equipment, from CCT Silhouettes up to the newer ETC Source Fours that will form the rig in the refurbished theatre, but which were actually bought last year to form the rig at the temporary Gainsborough venue; control was from the Almeida's own Strand 500-series console. Henderson describes the process of lighting the show as a voyage of discovery, with the water often adding its own character to the lighting. "We found, for example, that if we came in at a low angle from the circle front, the light would bounce off the water and send huge ripple effects up around the back wall. That was

interesting, but not always desirable!" But, even though the final lighting did not match his original vision, he was pleased with the results, and with his contribution to the show as a whole, which provided a stunning end for the 'old' building.

SOUND

One of the little-discussed problems of a long career in theatre is the challenge of being able to take a fresh approach to a show you've worked on many times before. It is a mark of sound designer John A Leonard's success that he faces this challenge more often than most; the fact that he always produces something fresh shows why he's that successful. "I think this is the fifth *Tempest* I've done, and it's the best storm scene yet! It helped that it was different enough to make it interesting - the bosun swinging from the roof while people emptied wheelbarrows of water over him! But we were also helped by the Richmond Sound Design Audiobox, which allowed us to put really specific wave and crash and rain moments into the sequence. We even recorded the entire technical crew - including designer Paul Brown - as the sailor's drowning voices! This was a fast and tricky sequence, run off the script by Matt Berry, the Almeida's new sound technician. I think it is also the loudest storm I've ever done - we even made theatre critic Nicholas de Jong jump out his seat with the great big thunder clap that started the show!"

All of the equipment used to replay this sound montage is the Almeida's own, the result of Leonard's and his company Aura Sound's gentle nagging and shrewd management by the Almeida. "They've always listened when we've said that they should buy rather than hire - you can always sell the equipment at the end of the year, but if you need the equipment again then you've saved the rental costs and saved money overall." The sound rig for the refurbished Almeida was actually pre-bought to form the sound rig for the Gainsborough season: the company now possesses a Yamaha 02R mixing desk, the Richmond Audiobox controlled by Showman software for effects replay, and a selection of Meyer loudspeakers including UPA1P and UPM1P powered units and two MSL2s ("bought for the Gainsborough on the basis that the Almeida was too small to use them, but of course we did use them!"). A pair of USW subwoofers added bottom-end to the storm.

Unsurprisingly, Leonard's biggest battle during the show was with the water. "Jonathan Kent wanted Ariel to be radio-mic'd for his songs; since he spends much of the evening in the water that wasn't really possible. So we had PCC160s on either side of the pond; every now and again you'd bring the mic up and hear this very strange sound, the sound of a very wet mic. Which, of course, the director said he liked . . . The water also did very strange things to the acoustics: we got a lot of bounce off the water, so everything got to be fairly non-directional. It added a strangeness to the sound, which was actually very good for the production, though not something I particularly want to do again. Particularly in a really cold winter!"

ENTER THE NEW . . .

And so, the last curtain has come down on the 'old' Almeida. But the company which has occupied the building so well for so long is also the company refurbishing it, and they know that its essential character is too unique and important to be destroyed. The plan is to improve without really changing. As James Crout explains: "When we return here in 18 months time, apart from more comfortable seats to sit on, and silent heating and air-conditioning, most people won't think that much has changed inside the theatre, though in fact we'll have had a complete re-wire, re-roofed the building and squeezed in more dressing rooms by re-arranging the substage area. The back wall will stay as it is. But a huge amount will be spent on audience comfort - more toilets, an enclosed foyer. We'll have dry, warm people when they come into the auditorium!"

In the meantime, the company have adjourned to their temporary home, two theatres fitted into a former bus depot in Kings Cross. Quirky. Unusual. But somehow perfectly fitting this most unusual of theatre companies!

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Ian Herbert, Asleep in the Stalls...

Don't think Richard Eyre had had a chance to see the last Asleep in the Stalls when he delivered his own attack on West End theatre at last month's Theatre 2001 Conference, so it must simply have been a case of great minds thinking alike. More great minds were at it in the *Evening Standard* the same week, where several

leading producers were complaining about the awful state of the West End, not to mention the awful state of their January figures.

STILL, THE BIGGEST ever silver lining emerged from the theatre industry's clouds with the Arts Council of England's announcement of how it would distribute the extra £12 million coming to next year's budget, a more than healthy increase that will go up to a whopping £25 million the following year. That money will not just stabilise the survivors in the subsidised sector: it should have its effect in the commercial sphere, too, with large-scale productions back on the agenda at last and

(let's hope) a corresponding reduction in tours of one-set two-handers.

JUST AS WELL, SINCE IN THE SAME conference as Richard Eyre's remarks, came a warning from Apollo-SFX's Sam Shrouder that the commercial touring houses were getting a very raw deal from the Arts Council, who were on the one hand giving Lottery support to the building of rival venues like the Lowry, and on the other cutting the number of national touring weeks available from ACE-supported companies.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE A TASK SORTING out who should share in the theatre bonanza, so let's be grateful for the cheer it has brought to so many theatres and theatre people. It could even cheer up some technical departments - what a pity the Dome auction was held before the money rolled in.

ONE ELEMENT OF RICHARD EYRE'S SPEECH you might like to bear in mind when drooling over the increases, was his remark that most theatre directors burn out quickly in the same job, and should step down after seven years - a remark that sheds an interesting sidelight on the 10 years he spent at the National. Theatre directors don't often survive that long, but those that do might find a new lease of life in looking for a new challenge. The examples of John McGrath at 7:84 and Max Stafford-Clark at the Royal Court are instructive. Both took a long time a-going, but both found tremendous satisfaction in what they went on to do.

FUNNILY ENOUGH, THE LONG-STANDING teams that stand out among the funding winners come much more from the wacky experimental sector than the established producing theatres. Nobody's going to complain about excellent and newly-arrived companies like Improbable and Kaos getting on to the permanent funding merry-go-round but, well, more than 40% added to the admittedly niggardly budgets of Forced Entertainment and Forkbeard Fantasy? An extra

£120,000 for the two ladies of Doo Cot - not only a 300% increase, but also enough to put them in the same league as Northern BroadSides or the Watermill, Newbury? In the East England Arts sector (which rather curiously includes the Palace, Watford) although it's great to have the Wolsey back on the list, and the Mercury getting real support, should the Junction in Cambridge get three times as much as the debt-ridden Arts? And in London, it's marvellous to see the minuscule Gate getting a real grant at last: it looks as if they will actually be able to pay their actors in 2003, but does it seem right that by then they will be getting almost as much as the Donmar Warehouse, whose increase is a below-par 21%? I only ask.

IN THE AREA OF ETHNIC MINORITY THEATRES there are anomalies which suggest that political correctness may have triumphed over economic realism: we should all rejoice that Kali have come in from the cold, but their entire new grant is only the same as the increase given to Tara, who haven't done much obvious lately for the whacking quarter of a million they already get. Does it seem a fair reward for activity that the almost dormant Talawa should end up getting twice as much as the Drill Hall, or the lively Queens, Hornchurch?

SOUTH OF LONDON THERE IS GOOD NEWS and bad. That the Yvonne Arnaud should come back into the seriously subsidised fold is good news, as is the proposed half a million increase for struggling Chichester, but there's no reprieve for Farnham's Redgrave, no replacement for Leatherhead's Thorndike, and no increase for Westcliff's Palace, who are probably being punished for announcing an Agatha Christie Festival this summer. And the poor old Warehouse in Croydon, which has already had its Lottery application turned down, gets no help towards a move into the new space that is waiting for them.

IT'S QUEER UP NORTH, TOO. The Festival of that name has its grant almost trebled, and previously troubled theatres like Bolton's Octagon and Sheffield's Complex are well and truly stabilised - the latter getting an increase that puts them on a par with everybody's favourite, West Yorks. But why nothing for the delightful and well-programmed Theatre Royal in York? And why, while we're about it, is the community-conscious Leeds Council, which gives a lot of support to the aforementioned West Yorks, about to cut off its support for the Leeds Civic, home of some of the country's major amateur groups?

ENOUGH OF THIS NIT-PICKING. For once, the Government has listened to the arts sector's cries for help, and the Arts Council has acted just about in time to save many regional theatres from going under. How strange that the Opposition should choose this moment to suggest that Council should be scrapped!

And in London, it's marvellous to see the minuscule Gate getting a real grant at last: it looks as if they will actually be able to pay their actors in 2003, but does it seem right that by then they will be getting almost as much as the Donmar Warehouse, whose increase is a below-par 21%? I only ask."

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Making Waves



photo: Debby Beisford

Its many technical achievements aside, the Ocean Music Centre, East London's newest performance venue, is just a breath of fresh air. Louise Stickland inhales . . .

Ocean has been in conceptual gestation since the early nineties - and evolved greatly in that time. The venue that's now the Ocean Music Centre was formerly two buildings - Hackney Library, the Methodist Central Hall chapel and the space between them. What's now Ocean's main 2100 capacity auditorium had lain derelict for at least 20 years in 1993 when it was activated for a small performance project for that year's Hackney Festival.

The Ocean Music Trust was established in 1995 to develop the project. The £23 million funding for the venue has come from a broad range of public and private bodies including the Arts Council of England's Lottery Fund, the Single Regeneration Budget, the London Borough of Hackney, the ERDF and English Partnerships. The result of the commitment of the individuals and organisations involved is now a major contemporary venue, designed to promote all forms of music and performing arts.

The original architect was Paul Jenkins from Architecture For The Arts. The idea was to utilise as many of the building's original features and shapes as possible, representing them in a modern, open environment. Architecture For The Arts sadly went down some way into the Ocean project, and architects Burrell, Foley & Fischer took over, with interior design being handled by Mance Design & Architecture. Their combined aesthetic results are a fusion of swirling stairs and corridors, natural light, high ceilings and a mix of bold and neutral colours and natural surfaces.

The key word at Ocean is 'multi-functionality' - it underpins every area of the venue. Apart from the main auditorium, which can be configured in every conceivable way - as a conventional standing end-on venue, a seated cabaret/dining set up, conference mode, catwalk style, in-the-round, traverse or thrust stage - there's Ocean 2 and Ocean 3. Ocean 2 holds 300 people and can also be configured for end-on or side-on use, seated or standing, and is intended to stage cabaret and jazzy type events.

Ocean 3 holds a cosy 100 and will be used for experimental performances and smaller recitals and gatherings. It features acoustic rugs made by the local Kurdish community which can be wall hung for sound absorption or lain on the floor for sitting sessions.



The split level Atrium Bar can be run as a stand-alone space or as part of the main auditorium. With a DJ area along one side of the central void, it's expected to be popular for club nights. The DJ booth is fully equipped with the standard audio gear, and also gives budding VJs scratching access to Ocean's digital video network. They can view their work on the three large screens above the floor-level bar, also used to relay action from the main-stage so thirsty punters need not miss a moment of the performance while replenishing their glasses.

Technical and production elements were at the planning forefront for Ocean. At last, here's a live music venue where broadcast facilities aren't an afterthought. In all areas, flexibility rules - whether it's unloading trucks, setting up a production office, accessing the internet, crew laundry, catering, designing a lightshow or engineering the sound system - and meticulous thought has been applied.

Ocean's technical crew have been carefully chosen for their dedication to the venue's ethos as well as their experience and practical abilities. Stage manager Brian Concannon previously worked at The Forum in Kentish Town for eight years before joining Ocean. His role includes liaising between all visiting production personnel who are bringing shows into any of Ocean's spaces and seeing they have their required technical facilities. Chef Tai Rivera, the hub of the in-house catering facilities, also started his music-based career at the Forum before going global with Eat Your Heart Out and touring with Tina Turner, The Rolling Stones, et al - he understands the demands and quirks of crew gastronomy.

Three weeks before opening, Ocean was still very much a building site, but even then it had a surreal feel of calm before



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Left, the stage is set. Inset, Ocean's lighting team of Dan Cook, Dan Hardiman (LD) and Nick Whitehouse

video equipment and the building control system were all supplied and installed by Northern Light, project managed for them by Graham Hendry, working to Acoustic Dimensions' specification.

The grass roots needs and demands of the local Hackney community were always part of the Ocean vision. Once the project was up and running, focus groups and local research indicated that any initial ideas about it being an acoustic-only concert-hall type venue were misplaced. While acoustic performances definitely needed to be accommodated, the building also needed kick-ass amplified sound systems to handle all types of music, the most popular of which is currently a broad gamut of dance genres, hip hop, rap and DJ/MC-based performance - so a substantial change in audio direction of the project followed!

Acoustic Dimensions was involved in three interlinked areas - room acoustics, the amplified sound system and Ocean's AV (video) and communications systems. The company's Nick Edwards first worked on Ocean back in 1993. He discovered some of the early acoustic anomalies during the performance that year at the Hackney Festival, which included the sound focusing caused by the barrel vault roof of what's now the main auditorium. The acoustics have been designed to support a reinforced sound system, as well as to be adapted for non-amplified events.

To address the focusing problems, they've installed giant 'clam shells' full of sound absorbing material facing on to the stage to stop the monitor mix spewing out into the house, giving a cleaner mix for the FOH engineers to control. Onstage - around the stage itself - are acoustic panels on tracks that flip 180 degrees between 'sound absorbing' and 'sound reflecting' surfaces. There are more of these at the back of the room, and a double wall of panels provides acoustic separation between the auditorium and the foyer area/ Atrium bar. All spaces within Ocean either are or can be fully acoustically separated, allowing different events to be staged simultaneously in the different areas. The attic above the barrel vault is also filled with sound absorbing material to dampen noise and help ensure that no noise is audible outside the building.

The sound system itself was designed by Acoustic's Craig Janssen, primarily from EAW components with a few from JBL. EAW custom-built some of the elements for Ocean, with others coming off the shelf. The system was selected again to fulfil a wide brief and a need to be all things to all people - from dance to dub, string quartets to rave. Janssen needed a good, reliable system with enough power for the dB-freaks, suitable quality for the TV producers and balls for the live engineers - without busting the budget.

the storm. Everyone's schedules were intense leading up to lift-off, but they still had time to stop and talk, show me around and make me welcome - one of the underlying tenets of Ocean - accessibility to all.

Lighting designer and IT manager Dan Cook also came from the Forum. His initial involvement with Ocean started with him creating a VR model of the venue interior for the venue's website (www.ocean.org.uk). He then took on the lighting and found his Oceanic role grew organically from there, expanding to include video and also dealing with the integrated building control system. He came onboard full time a year ago.

Ocean's main room features 111sq.m of flexible stage space which can be decked at different levels or built flat as required. It's designed to accommodate a 90-piece orchestra, a 100-person choir, the most boisterous of live bands or anything in between. Above this and across the whole area - stage and auditorium - stretches a tensioned wire grid, containing an integral motor tracking system that running up and down. This makes rigging and de-rigging trusses and changing their shape and configuration very easy. While it's hoped that most visiting acts will be happy to use the copious facilities at Ocean, if they do want to bring in their own gear, rigging it is no problem.

In terms of stage and effects lighting, Cook again looked for maximum flexibility at every juncture. He consciously involved several companies in this, allowing rationalisation and further stretching of his not unlimited budget. Mushroom Lighting supplied a variety of equipment, including most of the conventional lanterns for the main space and Oceans 2 and 3, Slick trussing and internally-wired bars. AC Lighting supplied ChromaQ Par and 8-lite scrollers and ETC Source Fours. For key-lighting artists onstage, Source Fours and Source Four Zooms with colour scrollers are stationed out front and above the stage - giving three layers of illumination - front, rear and overhead - and producing an array of shadows and silhouettes.

After careful deliberation on the moving lights front, Cook picked High End's Studio Spot and



Studio Color 250s - 12 Spots and 10 Colors - supplied by Lightfactor Sales. In addition to these, he purchased 40 Abstract VR8rs, picked for their small size, versatility, expedient consumption of DMX channels and keen price. It is intended that these are moved between the spaces in different quantities as needed.

For control he chose Avolites desks for all areas. The main room features a Diamond III whilst Ocean 2 and 3 and the Atrium Bar are all run by Azure 2000s. Cook hasn't forgotten the time and facilities offered to him by Avolites when he was starting out in the business and needed to learn the consoles. For the main room, he needed a live console that had the power to control the reasonable-sized rig, that was highly flexible and easy to use, and the Diamond III proved perfect. The building's original dimmers - ADB EuroRacks - and data wiring scheme was designed by Charles Wass of Tech Plan International and installed by ADB's UK distributors LSI.

Ocean features a fully-integrated building control system developed by Acoustic Dimensions - audio designers and acoustic consultants for the Ocean project. A Crestron touch-screen controller enables the control of lighting - stage in Oceans 2 and 3, architectural and house - plus audio and video settings everywhere in the building from a central point. Breakout controllers can also be plugged in at numerous points around the building, allowing settings to be manipulated from anywhere for other areas of the building.

This very powerful device also interfaces with the AC system, the building management system, the ventilation, paging and fire alarm systems, providing an ultimate control vehicle. Contrasting with the lighting supply, audio and



Left: Greg Williams, venue manager

Below: Brian Concannon, stage manager



Like Cook with the lighting, he also wanted to specify equipment that was universally accepted by audio

professionals. The mix position in the main room is at balcony level - deemed perfect because, in reality, the building structure renders this virtually stage level. For those insisting on mixing at ground level, the move is quick and simple, with all the necessary cables and tie-lines for both departments ready and waiting.

The main auditorium system has three modes. Firstly for speech or announcements during more traditional-style performances, based on a centre cluster, very articulate and with good gain; then as a music system in stereo, and a third configuration that combines centre, left and right stacks. Plenty of knee-wobbling sub-bass (24 15" woofers) are secreted below stage.

Front-of-house console in Ocean is a 48-channel Midas Heritage 2000. The choice of FOH desk was left open for some time, during which, research suggested that the Heritage series had the popular edge with the touring fraternity. The monitor desk is a 40-input Crest LM12, and a wide range of EAW wedges and a good selection of mics are available. Processing has been kept standard - KT, BSS, Drawmer, DBX, as has effects - Lexicon, Yamaha, Roland, Alesis. Playback options include Denon CD and cassette players, Sony Minidisc and Panasonic DAT.

The hub of the audio system control is a Peavey Media Matrix MM950, chosen, naturally, for flexibility. It's possibly the most sophisticated Media Matrix system in the UK, because it interconnects with the lighting and the building systems via the Crestron touch-screen (all technical elements in Ocean have been designed to communicate with all others).

Different audio presets can be pre-recorded and changed from any location in the building via software and a few mouse clicks. Jansen explains that they chose the Media Matrix because it was the most user-friendly, reliable and cost-effective solution available.

Ocean's cabling infrastructure - also installed by Northern Light - weaves ubiquitously throughout the entire building, designed to offer every possible power and data option to all different technical mediums. Broadcast tie-lines and patch panels traverse the building and this aspect was brought into the mix early by venue manager Greg Williams, whose background is in mobile sound recording. Two totally separate 200 amp three-phase power supplies are available for broadcast and there's room to park trucks outside the building, as well as in the loading bay - which will accommodate two artics off the street. A service lift takes gear quickly and efficiently to whichever spaces it needs to be in. Enough power is not an issue at Ocean - even the smallest space has a three-phase 200 amp supply.

The video department also became Dan Cook's domain as the build gathered pace. Video screens are strategically placed around the building - without being intrusive. There are 13 screens - in the bars, foyers, the Aqua café at street level, and in Ocean's other public spaces - and a dozen 28" Sony video monitors for information streaming. Two roving video projectors stalk around the building - an NEC and a Sony - and there are another two fixed-position Sony projectors in the Atrium Bar. Eight Hitachi digital broadcast cameras on zoom mountings are scattered around Ocean's performance spaces. These can be remotely operated via the touch-screens.

All video inputs and outputs are connected via an AutoPatch 8YDM video switching matrix, so any of the 24 'ins' can be mated with any of the 32 'outs' - and it can also be remote operated through the Crestron. Other distribution gear includes a Panasonic MX50 mixer/switcher, three Vinegen Pro genlock synchronisers and a Procon video distribution amplifier. Other

inputs include Betacam and VHS players, DVD and Video CD decks, PCs and a Kramer video black generator.

Ocean's visual peak is perhaps Rhythm of Changes, the ambitious time-based art installation by artist Michael Brennand-Wood. It takes place on 10 of the front windows, and is a work responding to the history and function of the building. The two rows of five frosted glass windows each has a wider angle NEC projector beaming onto it, rigged within the venue. The system randomly samples pieces of video from gigs, shows, events and spaces happening inside the venue and then performs arbitrary effects on them - inverting or running in negative, running backwards, pixelated, etc. This is output to one of 10 computers, which then sends it to the projector - so each window has a unique image, evolving as the building evolves. Software programming for Rhythm of Changes was by Alistair Stray, and the piece is one of four by Brennand-Wood commissioned for Ocean.

Architectural lighting, including house lights in all auditoriums and concert platform lighting in the main auditorium, was designed by Greenwich-based Light & Design Associates. Their brief was to make it fun and to include elements of wackiness - which certainly captured their imagination, explains James Morse.

The 'wacky' elements include creating two different environmental lighting scenes for the main auditorium. One highlights the tensioned wire grid using low voltage battens fixed just below it to shoot light horizontally across the stainless steel shell, defining the ceiling. For concerts needing a larger acoustic space, they've installed dimmable blue fluorescent up-lighters which illuminate the barrelled ceiling. These are mounted in black boxes with clear polycarbonate tops, and can be pulsed or cycled up and down to alternate with the lights running across the grid.

Outside, they have used Gozzini window sill up-lighters and picked out the window reveals with radius luminaires fitted with special lenses to eliminate spillage into the sky or onto the building, so the reveals have a halo of light. The stone pilasters between the windows are lit with specialised up and down lighters with very narrow beams, mounted on the pilasters at first floor level. The stone cornices of these pilasters are drilled with fine holes so the luminaire is obscured, but it fires shafts of light up the building and pools down onto the pavement. Green metal halide Philips floodlights light the ends of the building.

Ocean kicked off with a hugely successful opening night, generating large amounts of excitement with performances by Add N to (X) and Soft Cell, followed by two public nights of the same bill and four nights with the Fun Lovin' Criminals - all sold out. Over the next month the performance menu embraces the diversity of the Brand New Heavies, Baluji Shrivastav - a Night of Sublime Classical Sitar, the Hexstatic Rewind AV set with Hefner and a Sizzla club night - among many others. All signs point to a positive and productive future.

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The Reviews Are In...



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Phil Ward.

... Audio File

Frankfurt has a strange effect on time. Or at least, your perception of time, which may or may not be the same thing. When you're standing in exactly the same spot, in exactly the same hall, listening to exactly the same executive describing - better be careful, here - admittedly exciting new products, it's hard to grasp that a whole year has gone by since you did it before.

"And then there are the unchanging haircuts, wafting from hall to hall in billows of accompanying smoke. Everybody smokes in the Messe. Even people who have given up years ago smoke."

PRO LIGHT & SOUND, resounding success that it is, has inherited Musik Messe's habit of planting exhibitors in the same location year on year, making them similar to my Uncle Ken and Auntie Edith who always holiday in Coniston, notwithstanding the well-advertised leaps and bounds in foreign travel facilities since 1970. Not only that, they always have a picnic on the same

spot overlooking Great Crag, or whatever it's called, on the first day.

I THINK OF THEM each time I see the 'Pic-nic' signs along the sides of Halls 4 and 5, which you can actually make out at an obtuse angle from the 'T' on the Turbosound stand. This also means that, hangover willing, you can focus each eye independently and make out the word 'Pic-nic',

which, if you say with a German accent, has many undertones.

IMAGINATION CAN DRIFT like this thanks to many features of the exhibition which add to the overall time warp. The loudspeakers along the escalators and walkways always play the same music, dominated by Kim Carnes. This is despite the fact that there is some sort of a DJ presenting something like 'Radio Musik Messe 2001', as opposed to 'Radio Musik Messe 1981', a detail even I could make out with my severely limited German.

THIS REVEALS that a succession of DJs are obliged to stick rigidly to a playlist first concocted in the Golden Age of Musical Instruments, when synthesizers challenged electric guitars in a gladiatorial battle for supremacy. So exciting were these times, that Messe authorities have attempted to maintain the atmosphere ever since, in the hope that distributors, retailers and musicians themselves will always feel good about being in Frankfurt.

THERE IS ALSO ALWAYS A YELLOW JCB-like digger parked in the central plaza, engaged in an eternal struggle to finish some kind of upgrade or refurbishment of the Messe infrastructure. You gaze at it from the walkways for hours on end, surrounded by those dead tree stumps, and realize that the daily absence of anybody to operate it explains the time it's taken to finish the job.

AND THEN THERE ARE the unchanging haircuts, wafting from hall to hall in billows of accompanying smoke. Everybody smokes in the Messe. Even people who have given up years ago smoke. Scientists have detected no fewer than 209 different types of tobacco in the Messe Turm air-conditioning system alone. Musik Messe is the

only place anywhere in the world anymore where you will see a youngish man smoking a pipe - and not any pipe. One of those curly ones like Sherlock Holmes had. With matching moustache.

ACCORDINGLY, you seize onto any outward signs of temporal shift. Has that particular sales and marketing executive always had a beard? If so, is it more - or, sinisterly, less - grey than before? How much weight has the press, as a whole, put on since the last time they were gathered together in the city of German kebabs? Wasn't the Tortelini mit Parmesan 25 pfenigs cheaper before?

ALCOHOL CONTRIBUTES less to the feeling of déjà-vu than you'd think. It's only through alcohol that Frankfurt takes on any fresh meaning at all, which is why most exhibitors have their own supply. These are often memorable, native and illegal representations of the local culture from which the technology on the booth sprang, and serve better to stimulate market forces than anything else available. They also stimulate considerations of the Universe as a whole, which is no bad thing.

IN THE PAST, it was always better to leave the Universe to its own devices in the press bar and set aside enough time to get to Hall 9 for a meeting. Amazingly, this is about to change. With a strange synergy, both Messe Frankfurt and Wembley Stadium are, quite literally in the case of Wembley, moving the goalposts this year and relocating institutions. The Cup Final will be in Cardiff, and next time around, if it's Fender Stratocasters you're after, you'll have to find Halls 1, 2 or 3.

WELL, THANK GOODNESS FOR THAT. I've always wondered what Halls 1, 2 and 3 were for. I mean, why do you have to traverse all that acreage of prime exhibition space to get to Pro Light & Sound anyway? Admittedly there is Eingang Congress, which allows quick access to Hall 4, but it took me years to figure that one out and, in any case, several Frankfurt taxi drivers cannot discriminate between 'Congress' and 'City', despite being fully up to speed on 'Eingang'.

ONE DAY, though, imagine this: the exhibition is so big that it has to return to Halls 8 and 9, while retaining 1, 2 and 3! And when that time comes, consider the echoes of time that will hit you as you take a deep breath, sip on a cold Becks and settle down to a software demo in 9.2 . . .

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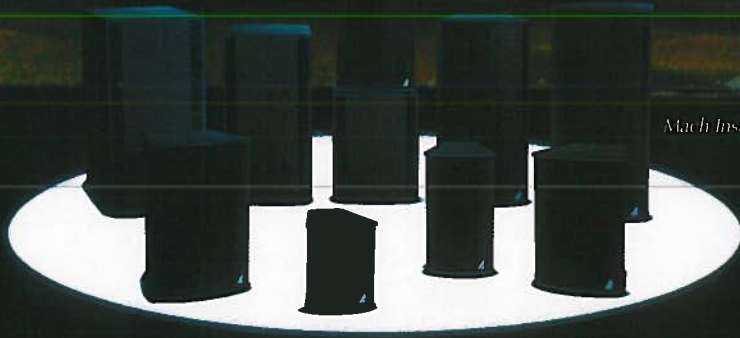


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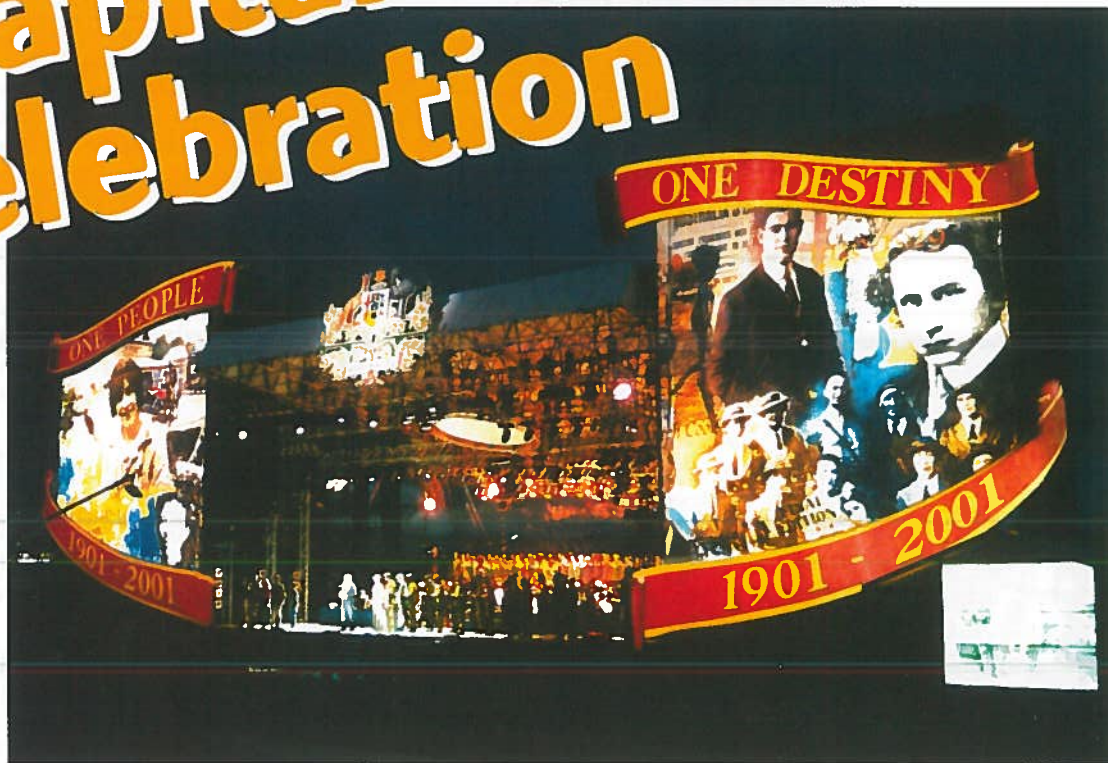
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A Capital Celebration

Federation Stage
with scrolling PIGI
projections



Australia is this year celebrating its Centenary of Federation, heralding major events throughout the country. These are a reference back to January 1st, 1901, when over 200,000 people gathered in Sydney's Centennial Park to watch the first Governor General and the first Prime Minister of Australia sign the document that would turn Australia from six separate British Colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia.

March 12th marks Canberra Day, a day on which the capital of Australia observes its birth - itself a result of Federation. This year, Canberrans celebrated with 'A Capital Celebration' with over 30,000 people partying at a spectacular outdoor concert in Australia's national capital. The show was an entertaining variety-style concert, utilising some of Australia's iconic artists and performers to project 100 years of Australian culture, history and hopes. Each segment to the show represented a decade.

The event organiser was The Showcorp Group with managing director Colin Baldwin as show producer. Baldwin formed his event management team for the project well over a year ago. "Our creative concepts for this project were reconstructed several times, as logistics and budget parameters unfolded during the past 12 months," said Colin. "From the outset, it was my intention to produce an event that not only concentrated on historical significance, but also on entertainment values. I wanted to produce a show that could celebrate the history of our Federation and at the same time give the audience an experience they would not forget for some time."

Catriona Strom joins the people of Canberra for their Centenary of Federation Celebrations

With high-quality sound reinforcement, spectacular lighting, large format moving slide projection, pyrotechnics, themed staging and historical video, Showcorp staged a spectacular event. The set-up took over a week and the night before the show the heavens opened and saturated the site: don't believe Australia is a dry, dusty country, because I've never seen this amount of torrential rain in England. At 10am on the morning of the show, God was still producing his own spectacular production of thunder and lightning. At lunchtime the sun appeared and by mid-afternoon it was blistering. The searchlights had a chance to dry out and the crew breathed a collective sigh of relief.

For the concert, four major sites in Canberra were integrated into the show. The stage site on the shores of Lake Burley-Griffin; Peace Park (where the 'International Tree of Peace' ceremony was celebrated); Old Parliament House; and the Australian War Memorial.

The 'Federation Stage' was located at the waters edge of Lake Burley Griffin, in sight of both Parliament Houses (the old and new buildings being located directly behind the audience with the War Memorial directly in front). "What better place to stage our Capital's Centenary of Federation?" notes Colin Baldwin. "The Federation stage site sits perfectly between both Parliament houses, with Anzac Parade on the other side of the lake leading up to the War Memorial with Mount Ainsley in the background."

LIGHTING

For technical direction and to call the show, Baldwin chose Peter Milne. Milne (who worked on the recent Sydney Paralympics Ceremonies as technical director) is regarded as one of Australia's foremost technical producers. His company, The Electric Canvas, also provided large format EITC PIGI projection for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Sydney Olympics. The Electric Canvas was the obvious choice for the large format moving slide projection, which was projected onto giant scrimms each side of the stage. "The PIGI projection imagery that Peter's team created was full of nostalgia, colour and movement and perfectly formed part of the overall themed staging," said Baldwin.

The Great Outdoor Lighting Company, which was formed two years ago to service this style of event with powerful and weatherproof lighting equipment, was employed to light the three main venues of 'A Capital Celebration'. For the Australian War Memorial, six 2.5k Griven Kolorstreams were used to saturate the unique building in vibrant colour. A further six Griven 4k xenon searchlights represented WW2 searchlight beams as part of the 1940s segment of the show. A veteran Douglas Dakota DC3 flew overhead as the searchlights and pyrotechnics explosions simulated a dramatic air raid effect. The DC3 then flew over Lake Burley Griffin and the Federation stage audience, where six 4k xenon Space Cannon

Main picture –
1950s: David
Campbell sings
'Shout!'

Below – 1990s:
Madison Avenue
perform
'Reminiscing'



Ireos colour-changing searchlights and six 2k xenon Space Cannon Easy searchlights continued the aircraft's pursuit as it disappeared behind the audience.

For the Federation stage lighting design, Baldwin chose renowned lighting designer Alan Stone (well known for his recent lighting of Sydney Opera House) who opted for a rig dominated by Martin Professional moving lights. Stone managed to create period-style looks for each segment: despite there being 62 moving lights, no movement was visible until the

1980s segment. "I kept it as true as I could," said Stone. "Overall, I'm very happy with the end result. It took a lot of work to unite all the technology - the video, live camera shots, PIGI projection, lighting and audio."

Showcorp and Bytcraft supplied the lighting equipment, which included 280 Par 64s, 16 8-lite DWEs with scrollers, 24 Martin MAC 600s and 36 MAC 500s, six High End Cyberlight Turbos and a Wholehog II control console. "I'm very impressed by the professionalism of the crew and the quality of the equipment," said Stone. "The rig consists of 140m of chromed Total Fabrication concert truss. There were 42 lighting points in the rig with 20 moving motors enabling the truss to move into different configurations throughout the show. We hung 22 of the points to get some weight out of the roof. I think there's about half a ton of weight left in the roof, which was a real challenge to erect!"

In keeping with the overall theme, the audience does not see any truss moving until near the end of the show. During the earlier 'Decades' of the show, the truss is moved between segments when the stage is blacked out and the audience is focused on the archival video footage that introduces each decade. Specials include a cluster of mirror balls that are lowered for 'The Funky Divas' during the 1940s segment and also 'Madison Avenue' for the 1990s segment.

"For the 1950s segment a mid truss, with eight chain motors and six hinges, forms a theatrical proscenium arch behind David Campbell and the dancers," described Stone. "For the 1960s, a scrimmed 3.9m diameter circle truss descends behind the artist. On to this, I project graphic gobos from the Cyberlights, which recreate the psychedelic

sixties oil wheel look. In the 1970s, we really introduce the Par cans with four truss fingers which come in from the horizontal to 45 degrees. The 1980s song is a ballad, so we didn't want truss moving. By the 1990s every piece of truss in the show consistently moves throughout the performance."

When it comes to choosing a moving light, Stone is fairly flexible, stating that they all have their pros and cons. "I don't believe any manufacturer has got it right," he said. "However, Martin is reliable and fitted within the budget. Considering the amount of moving lights we have, I'm amazed we haven't had one single problem with them."

AUDIO

The audio system design was by Garry Hall and Dave Rennie. Norwest Productions, who supplied the audio production for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Sydney 2000 Olympics and Paralympics, provided additional audio to complement Showcorp equipment for the Tree of Peace ceremony.

The main PA clusters were EAW KF860/861 line arrays in six-high festival configurations, with the top cabinet trimmed at 12 metres. The top four cabinets were KF860 (60°) and the two lower cabinets KF861 (90°). A three-high EAW KF750/755 cluster flew on the outside of the main left and right PA to cover outfill areas near the large video screens. Four EAW SB850 subs each side were fed off an auxiliary buss. Stage focus for VIP seating at the front centre was covered with two EAW KF650 cabinets, while two KF750 cabinets on the top deck (10m trim) of each delay tower provided coverage to the rear of the amphitheatre and filled in the acoustic shadow created by the tower.

To give maximum sightlines to the audience, a compromise was achieved with one tower directly in front of each main PA. FOH control for sound, lighting, video replay and show call was in a tent directly in front of the house left delay, followspot, PIGI projection and searchlight tower. The system measurement, analysis, alignment and tuning was carried out with Smaart Live. Equalisation and delay for the XTA DP226 processors was controlled via RS 485 using XTA's Dcore software.

FOH sound was mixed by Garry Hall on a Soundcraft Series 5/52 with a 16-channel Mackie desk handling orchestra and choir submixes from the broadcast facility. Front-of-house effects units included TC Electronic reverbs, DBX1046 compressors and Klark Teknik 1/3 Oct graphics. Des O'Neill was responsible for the playback of all music inserts, pre-recorded voice-overs and audio from pre-recorded video.

O'Neill was on headsets with the show caller listening for audio and video cues, leaving Garry Hall free to concentrate on the live music components and levels of the show. Two 360 Degree Systems Instant Replay machines, one for music inserts and the other for voice-overs worked perfectly for the tight cues and cross-fades



1960s: Normie Rowe
sings a medley of
hits from the decade

that were a characteristic of the show. Backup audio replay was on Tascam DAT and Denon 1050 minidisk.

Randy Frantz mixed the monitors on a Soundcraft SM 12/40 with DBX equalisers inserted on all mixes. The monitor system was designed to minimise spill into the orchestra and choir mics. Zeck Audio T52S 6"/1" speakers, mounted near ear level on heavy-duty mic stands for the conductor, electric bass, electric guitar and choir, minimised spill. EAW Sm200 wedges were used for the rhythm section drummer and electric keyboardist. Perspex screens enclosing the rhythm section provided some acoustic isolation to the sensitive orchestra mics nearby. EAW KF650 side-fill cabinets were mainly used with a full orchestra mix to give the feeling of wall reflections to the orchestra on the large outdoor stage.

Shure PCM-600 UHF in-ear monitors were specified for all solo artists to reduce the amount of sound from the EAW Sm200 frontline wedges, but most artists chose to go with the front wedges and natural sound of the orchestra on the day. 16 Shure UHF radio mics were used for solo artists with Shure SM

87s used for hand-held vocals. DPA headsets were used by the choreographed performers and Sennheiser lapel capsules for recital pieces and didgeridoo. John McFarlane was the radio mic technician.

Due to the limited audio facilities in the OB truck, George Gorga engineered the TV broadcast mix in an acoustically-treated shed situated near the stage and fed a stereo mix to the main OB truck for recording. Gorga and assistant engineer, Ian Cooper, designed and assembled the broadcast mixdown facility. The main solo mics, rhythm section, choir, lecterns, playback feeds and audience mics were mixed on one of Gorga's favourite consoles, a 56-input Recall by Langley

supplied by Audio & Recording. The on-board dynamics were programmed before the event and adjusted during sound checks and rehearsals. DBX 566 tube compressors were inserted across the rhythm section, orchestra, choir and vocal subgroups. A DBX 160s compressor was inserted on the left and right recording mix. TC Electronics and Lexicon reverbs were assigned to orchestra, choir, instruments and vocals.

Below, the 1980s: Todd McKenney sings 'I Still Call Australia Home' Right, the Grand Finale . . .



show. In all, over 30 crew, 180 performers, security officers and ushers, ACT Government personnel, and 32 various sub-contracted companies were engaged to work on what turned out to be a huge success.

The broadcast mix-down facility also contained a Midas XL3 to mix the orchestra mics for broadcast and provide low strings, high strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion sub-mixes to the FOH and monitors. XTA DS-800 active mic/line splitters provided the audio signal electrical isolation between broadcast, front-of-house and monitors.

System engineer Dave Finch was proud to see that all the warehouse preparation applied by Frantz and himself paid dividends, with a smooth set-up, on-time rehearsal and a great show. Finch even had time to help with the mixing of the pre-show afternoon entertainment. That can't be bad on a production of this scale.

"My 28 years in live event production has been full of exciting and challenging times," concluded Colin Baldwin. "A Capital Celebration has given me a few more grey hairs, I'm sure. Now that our involvement in Australia's Centenary of Federation Celebrations has come to an end, one cannot help but feel that emptiness that engulfs you when you finish a large project like this, as I'm sure many of the people reading this article have felt before. My sincerest appreciation to Sue Baker-Finch and her ACT Government team - one of the best clients I have had the pleasure to work for."

All photographs of the event taken by Catriona Strom



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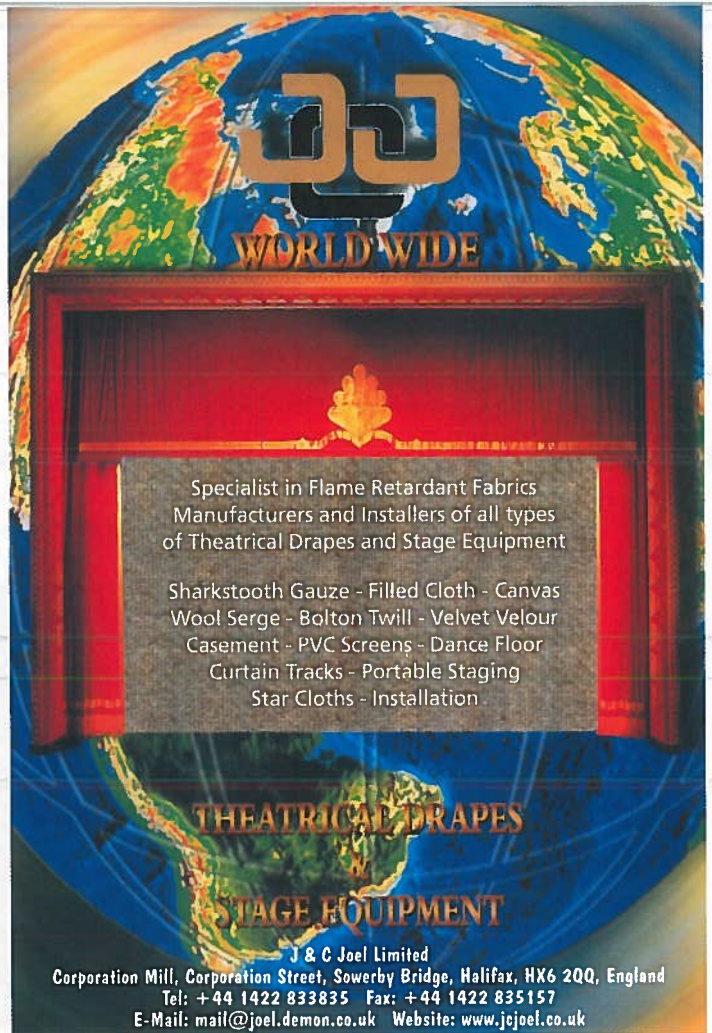
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ABTT 2001

The ABTT Show is proving to be one of the best networking events for the theatre industry. L&SI was at London's Horticultural Halls . . .

The show consolidated its core theatre roots, firstly by changing its name to the ABTT Theatre Show 2001, and secondly by widening its appeal to complementary sectors and actively targeting architects, consultants and specifiers of front-of-house services. This inevitably led to a broader range of products on the show floor and alongside the lighting, audio, AV and staging equipment, came front of house goods and services - principally seating, but also training, recruitment and licensing. This, in turn, led to more visitors and first indications are that the visitor figure was up a massive 72% over last year's registered numbers . . .

The talk on the AC stand was of the company's new HQ, the finishing touches to which, are being applied as we write and since we're heading to High Wycombe in the next few weeks, you can read all the statistics in the next issue of L&SI.

Flightcases remain ADDA's mainstay, but it has found a growing market in the range of all-weather protection systems that it distributes on behalf of OXO. The latest - Upside'Dome - has been modified since we saw it at PLASA and 34 were employed to protect the Vari-Lites at the Christmas illuminations of the London Eye.

Garwood's range of in-ear systems were on the Amber Promotions stand. Garwood has recently introduced a new wireless microphone system to its range, as well as the new Airstream custom earpiece/microphone.

Andolite introduced a system which allows for the custom-construction of dimmers. TD-CARCASS uses a collection of standard and custom modules to

photo: Chris Toulmin



enable the unit to be tailored to a specific requirement.

Specifically for theatre users, the **Avolites Azure Shadow** incorporates a suite of theatrical programming and playback functions, and can control a mixture of up to 200 intelligent fixtures and 200 dimmer channels.

AVW Controls was announcing recent success for its stage automation control system at the prestigious Glyndebourne Opera House, where the company's Impressario system is used to control the opera's three electrical bridges.

Anybody who attended Siel in February would know that **Blackout Triple E** has been appointed the UK distributor for Amelia's ShowLED starcloth. And what better way to demonstrate the new product than by sponsoring the ABTT Dinner and using a massive starcloth to



Above, Technical Marketing's Andy Collier and Jan de Jonge of IES who announced a major contract with RNT. Below, Product of the Year - the Headlock - with designer Nigel Hollowell. Bottom, Enlightenment's Paul Swansborough (left) and Mark Evans (right) with ADB's Sascha Sahakoglu



add a little sparkle to the event? **CCT Lighting** launched the Freeway radio dimming system - the finished version of a product we first saw in prototype form at PLASA. This is essentially a stand-alone battery-operated dimmer which relies on wireless technology utilizing 433MHz radio signalling. The hand-held control unit can control luminaires up to 100m away.

Making its debut on the **d&b audiotechnik** stand was the third generation E-PAC power amplifier controller, which offers full control of all functions via a digital rotary encoder (a knob!) and a liquid crystal display integrated in the front panel. E-PAC uses a switched mode power supply with power factor compensation that enables worldwide use without the need for mains voltage switching or conversion (85-265V). There are also additional set-ups to enable E-PAC to drive all d&b C, CI and E-series loudspeakers.

Enlightenment's ABTT Show debut provided a chance for them to demonstrate their commitment to the ADB range of luminaires, control desks and dimmers. The focus of the stand lay very much with the Phoenix 10, ADB's latest arrival, which features full ethernet networking and a touch-screen to aid moving light programming.

The ABTT Product of the Year Award went to the Headlock from **Flint Hire & Supply**.

Designed by Nigel Hollowell to

prevent the pan locking bolt rotating independently of a lantern's trunion arm, the Headlock can be fitted quickly to most current luminaires. The objective is to eliminate the need for a second tool when locking off the pan element of focusing.

Good news for **IES** whose dimmers have been chosen by The Royal National Theatre to replace those in its Lyttelton Theatre. The order is for 962 channels of 2.5kW ITEC IGBT reverse-phase dimming and 132 channels of 5kW Isine Sinewave dimming. This is the IES's second major project at the RNT: 600 ways of ITEC IGBT reverse-phase dimming were installed at the Cottesloe Theatre in 1998. It also represents the largest order of Isine sinewave dimmers so far, and the first order in the UK.

James Thomas Engineering shared a stand with PCM, with whom they are also actively engaged in the ongoing training programme of Motor and Rigging Schools. JTE showed its new Moving Light Truss (MLT) - exactly the same dimensions as the standard pre-rigged truss, but designed to house three moving yoke lighting fixtures per section.

Lightfactor's stand had a range of new products. **LDR** launched two new ranges at the show - the budget-priced 650W

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Top: Mike Lowe of ETC Europe (left) with the Northern Light team of Mike Smyth, Gregor Joy, Ken Christie and Linda Sherratt.

Top right: Fraser Keogh and James Eade of Chamtech with Terry and Siobhan Hitchen of Rope Assemblies (answers on a postcard, please).

Centre: Orbital's John Shemming, Chris Headlam, Tania Archibald, Drew Mollison and Dan Parton show off the Yamaha PM1D.

Bottom: MDG's Mark Gringas demonstrates the Touring 5000 to visitors, including Michael Scott and John Charlton from the Royal Opera House.



Tempo and 1000W Aria ranges. These fixtures have been completely redesigned to create the new-style Tempo Plus and Aria Plus. New **LightProcessor** products on stand included the Power Station II installation dimmer.

Since the last ABTT, **Le Mark** has expanded its printed product division to include the etching of steel custom gobos and more recently an ability to offer custom glass gobos. **Lee Filters** continues to add to its Designer range of colours and in recent weeks LDs Chris Ellis and Chris Davey have made the trip to Andover to create colours which we will see officially launched at PLASA.

The lads from Yorkshire had nothing to be bitter about, **Litestructures** and **J&C Joel**, won the award for Stand of the Year, thanks to their collaboration on the Yorkshire Bar area in Hall 2.

Visitors to the **LMC Audio** stand could see the new Midas Venice console (more in our Frankfurt review starting on page 83). The company also had Radio Pro's range of Z-Line speakers intended for AV and architectural applications. According to the US manufacturer, Z-Line is the only production planar professional speaker in the world. **Maltbury** had its new lightweight (7kg) demountable staging system, Aerodeck. Interchangeable legs also make the system height adjustable.

Megahertz Co traditionally plies its trade in the broadcast market, but its return to ABTT for a second year is proof of the growing convergence between this and the

wider theatre market. The company, which distributes cables and connectors, and manufactures a range of audio monitoring and mains distribution systems, had a new addition to the latter category - a mains distro unit that has 12 individually-fused outlets and uses LEDs in place of the more traditional neons.

Modelbox, the pioneer of CAD for the entertainment industry, has recently found its services called upon by Broadway. The company has been commissioned to provide drawings of the Winter Gardens in New York, for use by the hit musical *Mamma Mia* which is to take up residence there later in the year.

PCM had a new range of Beta Electric Wire Rope winches. The winches are quick, silent and therefore ideal for moving scenery and props in theatrical applications. With its special safety features, these are ideal for flying people - as demonstrated by PCM's on-stand acrobat, Lucy. The company also showed a newly-developed variable-speed Lodestar controller. The new Minipiece 54 controller from **Pulsar** has been designed to cater for applications where up to 54 DMX control channels are required. The unit is ideal for small theatres and architectural applications, in fact anywhere a compact, easy-to-use memory desk is required.

Rope Assemblies was raising safety awareness with its 'weakest link' competition (in which visitors had to spot which of an array of rigging accessories was unsafe), and its leaflet explaining the points of the LOLER regulations pertinent to rigging. Also on the stand was **Chamtech's** range of DMX tools. **Rosco** has recently added 24 colours to its e-colour+ range and repackaged it in a new swatchbook, supplemented by a useful user guide, currently being mailed to LDs across Europe.

Stagetec was promoting new developments from Comulite and LSC. Comulite has recently released the CompuDIM 2000 touring version of its modular digital

dimming system. This compact system includes many advanced features including two DMX and Ethernet inputs, full status reporting, RCD protection per module and the option of hard wire bypass switches for powering moving lights. LSC, meanwhile, are currently previewing the new **maXim** range of control desks, intended for official launch later in the year.

The news from **TeleStage Associates**, following its acquisition in 1998 by Waagner Biro, is the appointment of a new MD. Iain Forbester, formerly with Read Holdings, has come in to head up the company, whilst Fred Maeder of Waagner Biro, becomes Telestage's new technical director.

Unusual Rigging was showing the new ShowPro hoist, manufactured by the Columbus McKinnon-owned Coffing Hoists. Unusual is the exclusive UK distributor of this no-frills (but lightweight) workhorse hoist.

Visitors to the show also had the chance to take the controls of **Vari-Lite's** recently-launched Virtuoso DX console, which was first launched at LDI in Las Vegas last year. Free copies of the Visionary 3D software for Apple Macs were available.

Yamaha's PM1D digital mixing desk was the main focus of its stand, and also made a striking appearance on the **Orbital** stand. Orbital gave the desk its first UK outing when they supplied one for the RSC's 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' at Sadler's Wells.

One final launch worthy of mention - Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment, a publication driven by the ABTT, in conjunction with the District Surveyors Association, which covers the technical regulations affecting all theatres, cinemas, nightclubs and other places of entertainment. Get yourself a copy.

A more detailed report, together with further photos from the event, can be found on the PLASA Website at www.plasa.org/events/abtt

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John Watt

Second Take...

John Watt's view from beside the camera

Given the amount of real lighting activity around these parts, maybe it's time to come clean and admit to what you've long suspected - this column has very little to do with lighting. I've taken to trying to watch a bit of television again to find more to comment on, but it's a fairly fruitless exercise. There are plenty of game shows well lit in a formulaic sort of way, but otherwise an awful lot of dross.

"Anyway, they're all about hospitals or cops and robbers, and I try to keep as much distance between me and hospitals as possible. As for the cops, the same applies."

THERE IS SOME PASSABLE drama on film, though the universal opinion held by producers that shooting on film is a guarantee of quality doesn't hold much water with me. Anyway, they're all about hospitals or cops and robbers, and I try to keep as much distance between me and hospitals as possible.

AS FOR THE COPS, the same applies. If they hadn't taken up photography just when television has abandoned it as an

outdated concept, I could concentrate on looking where I'm going. Who designed those ugly grey boxes big brothing over us as we go about our daily business? The same lot that designed the Newsnight set, I wouldn't wonder. As for the robbers, well you can see them more imaginatively lit at the BAFTA awards.

BY WAY OF A HEALTH WARNING (the health of your bank balance that is), I had the predicted

call from Crossroads. It was offering a few days' work on a show that it was once rumoured would run without the benefit of highfalutin' lighting directors at all! Well it may have to, as the rates on offer are derisory to say the least, so low that they fall into the category of those "up with which I will not put". Others - either hobbyists on a healthy pension, or those driven by desperation - may decide to subsidise poor old Carlton, but it ain't going to be me. There has been much hype about high production standards, so just you wait for the double shadows on the window wall to appear.

VISITING THE DENTIST LAST WEEK, I was reminded that built-in obsolescence is not a new idea, though I hadn't expected it to arrive this quickly with my satellite kit. The latest letter from Ian Shepherd, customer marketing director at Sky, uses the English language in a way that leaves me gasping with envy at their lateral thinking. They write to tell me of important changes to my analogue service, namely that they are going to switch it off! Quite an important change it's true, though the word service leaves a bit to be desired. The word 'free' is used liberally; for instance, I can have a free minidish and digibox, but must pay £20 or £80 installation costs.

ARE THEY ANY GOOD TO ME un-installed, I wonder? If not, they are not free. The old analogue box and dish become scrap and once again I feel trampled on by Mr Murdoch, who it seems can do, and charge, whatever he likes. Dennis Potter was right, Mrs Thatcher wasn't! Incidentally, their lighting directors have, allegedly, been given the run-around too, being expected to work very long hours without food or breaks - I would be interested to hear more on this.

A COUPLE OF WEEKS BACK I visited an old friend, John Henshall, in his mission control centre in Oxfordshire. There he teaches 'the art and science of Digital Imaging'. You thought I didn't

understand this sort of thing; damn right I don't, but he does, and as you know, if you spend long enough close to a real expert something rubs off. It's a bit like being in a hot phone box with a wet dog. John spent 15 years as a cameraman at the Beeb before moving in to lighting.

HIS CREDITS ARE LEGION, especially in the breadth of stuff he has tackled in his own very individual way. He has always used still photography as an adjunct to his work and now divides his time between consultancy, writing on photography and digital imaging, teaching, lighting and photography. He is a fellow of the The Royal Photographic Society and of the British Institute of Professional Photography, of which he was president in '91.

HE WRITES A LESS JOKEY, but more technically accurate, column than this in The Photographer, through which he gets to road-test the most recent and mouth-watering digital cameras which, if they've passed you by as they have me, are now producing images second to none. Conventional 'enlargements' 20" across were quite stunning in terms of colour rendition and sharpness from a three-million pixel chip. I had to go and sit down for a bit when he showed me one that produces moving pictures too. As if that wasn't enough, you can listen to your favourite music for two hours on the thing as well. And, as he says, you'll never have to buy another film! Have a look at www.epicentre.co.uk for information on digital photography.

IN VIEW OF THE FACT that it's snowing hard as I write, I'm particularly gratified to hear from LCA (Lights, Camera, Action) that they would like me to receive an LCA fleece, plus six bottles of champagne (second prize, two LCA fleeces, or should it be fleeci?) providing only that my name comes out of their corporate hat. This is a fur one stolen by Nick Shapley on his last trip to Munich. He could only get one, so the team have to share it; on cold days only one salesman can go out on calls. In spite of which, they are successfully selling a wide range of equipment including the Mole Richardson stuff, which till now, seems to have been absent in the UK.

MY FINAL WORD must be for Showlight. The 2001 event approaches (May 21st to 23rd) and with it the opportunity to rub shoulders with a remarkable collection of lighting people from around the world, as well as a few of the old faithfuls from nearer to home. I'm Chairman this time, but have had to promise my committee to keep a low profile. The variety of subjects to be embraced are second to none (he would say that wouldn't he?) and the après show activities are worth the price of admission alone. Details on www.showlight.org.uk.

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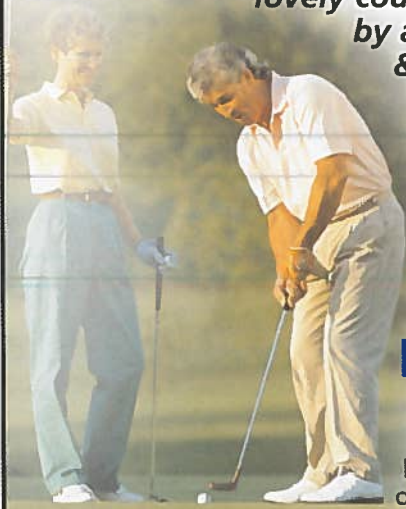
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West is Best? . . .

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There are some startling statistics about this Westlife tour, not least the fact that other than a few rinky-dink shows here and there, this is their first proper tour - yet they're performing 54 arena shows, all complete sell-outs. "And I don't mean fill the gaps with guests," says Steve Levitt of Productions North, "there are no guests on these shows." One wonders what Mr & Mrs Westlife think about that back in Dublin.

The other factor is movement: this is not a production you'd want to do back-to-backs with, "nor could you," says Levitt, "everything's motorised." By his own admission it's the most complex show, movement technology-wise, he's ever toured. The four main set trucks turn and track up and down stage frequently, pods in the lighting rig drop in and out, and there's a 100ft long contraption to fly our heroes out over the crowd.

The set trucks not only include an LED screen, but a lighting rig, which besides those panny-tilty things, supports over 300 Pars, and yet Levitt has the whole thing packed into just nine trailers from relative trucking interlopers, McGuinness. That said, McGuinness must have got something right, besides being Dublin-based (no need for driver hotels for a fortnight must look good on the accounts). I clocked several 'famous' drivers, formerly with other companies, driving for them. Either way, nine trucks for such a production is an achievement, especially when you consider the five other opening acts. Oh, OK, I confess, they're vocal 'mime' acts, not a stick of back-line gear between them, but that still adds a few props and wardrobe cases. Trucking aside, this all smacks of quantity over quality. The question is, can the latest phenomenon to emerge from the Emerald Isle overcome their surroundings and project?

AUDIO

Being a Levitt production, the fact that Wigwam supply the PA may seem a foregone conclusion, but Canegreen will be pleased (or chagrined) to learn they lost the bid at the last hurdle, not on price, but on truck space. Take that as you will, the fact that cost considerations for transport (particularly diesel) take precedent over and above the constituent parts of a production does not bode well for the health of the arena circuit. With fresh air being the major constituent part of speaker boxes, as well as trussing, one wonders what the alternatives are?

Chris 'Privet' Hedge is the lucky man with his fingers at the faders for this tour. I say lucky because Wigwam have bought him a spanking new Midas XL4 (more a symptom of how busy they are, rather than largesse), and a rack-full of some shiny blue dbx gear. "I suppose I might have got one of those new PM1Ds - what with all the success they're having," said Hedge. "Nah, give me the old grey desk anytime." Not that this stopped him having a Yamaha O2R nestling alongside for opening acts and effects returns.

Despite what I assume are Hedge's ironic remarks about Yamaha's latest progeny, the desk feature that drove him to the Midas is the automation: "It's like the old heavy metal band trick; if the mic's not in use then turn it off." Naturally he subordinates a whole lot more to automation than mere muting, but you get the picture.

However, his statement, made in the cold quiet of the afternoon, I found a little curious: "But everyone's on in-ears?" I quizzed. "That's right, the whole band, all vocals, everything, the whole show is run on Sennheiser radio systems - most mics, and all the in-ear systems. It's the noise from the room I'm concerned with." Though this might be Hedge's first foray into the realms of the sub-teen screamers, he does not fall into the trap of fighting room noise with level. "110dB, and no further, that's where I draw the line." True to form, it's three songs into the show before the girls calm down enough to actually listen.

The system is based around dBb C4s, the biggest I've ever seen for an end-on presentation. Six-wide, eight-deep clusters are flown each side, which, when you include floor stacks, fills and delays, system engineer Eric Simpson has separated into a busy 23 zones. He's using BSS Soundweb system control for this job, complete with radio remote, two units at the stage end and one unit FOH linked to the PC by a VDC Cat 5 cable. "Bomb proof," said Simpson of the digital connection. "As for the Web, with this sort of show, it's much faster to set up than the dBb RIB/Rope system. The remote is beyond useful. I've got seven zones in the air each side alone. When you're out walking the room during the show if you didn't have this sort of remote, by the time you get back to the desk area to tweak something, chances are you've forgotten what you wanted to do." One word of warning from Simpson on that count: "If I do fall over in the dark, there's the potential I could turn the whole system off."





The ideal model of a systems man, Simpson is a perfectionist: besides a commitment to fine-tuning the system during the early numbers of the show, he has made significant plans to make the delivery system consistent. "I use a hi-pass filter on the top rows of the cluster, and I have the wider angle C7s positioned every other box on the bottom row to cover the mid-front rows. Personally, I think the C7 running at about 70% is better than a MAX (the more conventional cabinet for under-hung front fill) running at 100%."

Fair comment for the musical genre, though for a band like Flaccid Whacker, the MAXs would probably win out. As for the hi-pass filter, I'm uneasy, it sounded a little brittle to me up top of the bleachers. Simpson, ever attentive to detail, places C6s atop the B2 subs on the floor stacks - a small short-throw box, his reason is sightlines; there is nothing of the PA on the floor that interferes with sightlines to the stage, a major consideration for an audience that averages four feet tall. Finally, for those who use the MAN Transformer flying system (and I know there are several beyond just dBb users) Simpson has developed a technique for getting the top row of cabinets to tip up above horizontal, and as a bonus still keeps all the cabinet fronts in line.

As for Hedge's new dbx compressors, it's the 160SLs that take pride of place, but he has mixed feelings about them. "I know the Summit is a bit noisy," he has a pair of TLA100s, "and the dbx is definitely cleaner, but you can hear it suck in. There's a certain something that the Summits add, I can't define it, that the SL doesn't." So it is that Hedge uses the two Summits on Shane and Bryan, "the more bluesy of the vocals," and the SLs on the other three - Mark, Nicky and Kian. "I keep the vocals hot and dry, and right out front. I use a bit of reverse gate from an H3000 to fatten the BVs, and I also have a Lexicon 480 for the vocals so I can develop their sound from the poppy to the pompous - you know - those big symphonic sounds? Either way I keep the effects close to the voice, just short reverbs, and the pop songs especially light."

Hedge also has a TC Finalyser across the BVs, "thanks to Mr Levitt. I use it to smoothe the samples." Levitt himself was more explicit: "It's good for correcting stereo signals that change from song to song without having to do anything. The backing vocals need to be consistent. When you consider that Hedge has just two channels coming at him, but with material from 15 different studios and half a dozen different producers, he needs something that will correct for all those different mixes. For some songs, of course, it does nothing." The

Right: FOH engineer
Chris 'Privet' Hedge

Below: Lighting op' Barry Halpin



boys, it should be pointed out, record all their own backing vocals, and sing them live while one or two of take the lead, so Hedge is blending recording to live.

John 'LJ' Evans takes honours on monitors. As mentioned above, everyone's on Sennheiser in-ear systems, the affable Aussie Jock Bain being king of radios, "or audio'robe, as they call me," a reference to the intimate relationship Bain has with the five boys' nether regions. Not a lot to report on monitors, other than Evans has given all the musicians a Nexo LS500 beneath their riser for a touch of physicality in the low end.

SET & VIDEO

The stage set for the show was conceived by Kim Gavin (a Svengali-like figure we've read of before in these pages - 911 and Take That, for

example). All the equipment used in the stage set was designed, built and supplied by Litestructures, in a period of only four weeks from start to finish. Their experience in these matters tells, for this is a complex piece of kit: the sub-stage, which is dropped on top of the arena stage, measures 60ft wide by 40ft deep, and is locked together and levelled from the top, thanks to a nifty little gadget developed by the company. A tracking system guides all the riser movements up and downstage, whilst two motors in the central towers drive the set pieces up and downstage, and rotate the towers stage left and stage right. All the motorised moving elements of the stage set are controlled by a single operator with stop positions for the towers determined by sensors assigned to them. And get this, the stopping positions are accurate to plus or minus 4mm - not bad considering the size and mass of the towers being moved! The flying device mentioned in the intro' is provided by Star Rigging, who also rig for the entire production.

The main towers of the stage set support modules of Belgian-made XL LED screen, sub-hired in by Nocturne Europe who are the main video contractors. The modules contain single-unit RGB LEDs, with a 10mm pitch, which for type are very high definition, purposefully designed for indoor use. The modules are relatively small, approximately 500 x 400mm, barely 100mm deep and very lightweight. With data signal daisy-chained via BNC connectors, and relatively low mains requirements, they're also easy to rig.

"Basically, the four pieces of the screen (that inhabit the four stage trucks) go together to form a regular 16:9 format," explained video

director Blue Leach, "though you'll see there's nothing regular about it." Unfinished Flemish-bond is probably the best way to describe it, for those of you familiar with bricklaying. Stepped block edge might be another - judge for yourself from the photos, it certainly breaks that dominant TV screen mould.

"What I put on the LED is mostly pre-recorded stuff," says Leach, "stock footage put together by Done & Dusted, whilst the intro' footage is a specially commissioned piece, also by D&D." Leach has a pair of 16:12 side-screens fed by Barco 92 Realities, and it's here he plays most of his live coverage. "I'm doing what I like best on the sides, dividing iso' shots to each screen. I've got three cameras to work with, plus the mini-cam fixed downstage left. There are times when I'll take an enormous close-up and use it to fill the LED screen, putting maybe just one singer's face stage left, the whole band stage right."

Which all sounds rather random, but when you watch the actual show, it's apparent Leach has done his homework; the five singers frequently alternate lead lines on any given song, it's rare



for Leach not to have the right head with the right voice at the right time. "I spend a couple of weeks listening to the songs before the tour, but basically I learn the calls over the first few weeks of the tour."

Considering the tour had barely started at this juncture, he learns bloody fast. "I take a safe formula, and then elaborate as I learn more - that's the great advantage of man-operated cameras," at which point Leach broke off to offer a glowing tribute to his operators. As the oft-maligned vidiots rarely get a name-check, they're John Shrimpton, Mark Antonuik and Ed Moore, with the enigmatically named 'My Way' (he's from Belgium) looking after the LED screen.

LIGHTING

The lighting design is by that larger-than-life character Phay McMahon, and it shows. Loads of trussing, and despite a preponderance of moving lights, plenty of Pars up there too. With the McMahon connection, the services of Bandit Lites are inevitable, but the show operator, Barry Halpin, also hails from the Emerald Isle. "I do a lot of work with Phay in Ireland," he explained, "though this is the first show I've programmed and operated for Westlife." That said, Halpin spent four tours out with Feet of Flames so he's no stranger to the



arena circuit. "I approach it the same way anyone else would, I listen to the music and give a page per song," he said, without guile.

In confirmation of Halpin's ability (he looks awfully young, but then so do policemen these days), McMahon has given him two new tools to play with - a five-man system of Martin's Track Pods, and a small battery of MAC 2000s. "The MACs are great," he said. "They're not much bigger than any other moving head, but when it comes to smoothness, and speed of movement, there's no comparison between them and, say, a MAC 500, and the brightness is much better." This is the MAC 2000's first tour outing apparently.

The Track Pods are a great idea, something resembling a camera plate on a tripod, these

simple pointing devices make the on-truss followspot operators job so much easier. Halpin explained: "The operators just keep their man in their sights and software takes care of the rest." Essentially, Halpin has zoned the stage: as the moving lights he's assigned to each Track operator follow their target, if that target moves into another zone, new lights take over.

Perhaps what's of most interest is that Halpin can instantly re-assign lamps, "thanks to a driver from APR that Lee House from Flying Pig (Halpin has a Hog II) installed, giving me direct access from the Hog to the Track Pod." It also only takes the shortest of briefings to get local operators up to speed on using the Pod devices; they all have TelRad sights fitted, so really it's just a matter of keeping on target, though one wonders if operator boredom becomes an issue? I know how much we old lags became bored when the Carbon Arc Troupers were finally replaced by the Xenons.

So, was the show good? Well, in answer to the question posed at the beginning, yes the boys project, but no that's not enough. They're great vocalists, arguably better than Take7/StepZones, but they lack a certain something. There's no danger and ultimately Westlife are boring. Sorry guys.



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It is not so easy to comment on the break up of Gearhouse, except that it is obvious that their bankers were calling the shots when the Administrative Receivers were called in. The speed with which things happened after that indicates that the corporate disposals, subsequently revealed, were already in the pipeline, so it is clear

that the bank had had enough when the group's gearing went from 105% to 159% within six months, and at the same time a pre tax loss for the same period of £1.02m was announced. Gearhouse was capitalised at £5.6m.

THE WRITING was on the wall on the 19th of October last year when the Board announced that it was 'reviewing the financial structure' and when subsequently trading in the group's shares was suspended on the 28th of December, following a failure to deliver overdue figures.

ONE COULD ARGUE that this is another case where 'world domination' and acquisitiveness has failed to pay off in our sector; as soon as the going gets tough, such companies are hugely exposed by their high level of debt. And, they can't be nimble on their feet - Gearhouse consisted of no less than 49 separate, subsidiary and associated companies. While we already know about the sale of some of those to Avesco

and the MBO involving Gary Davis and others, there has been no announcement yet regarding the numerous overseas subsidiaries.

THIS MEANS THAT, technically, Gearhouse Group PLC continues to exist, albeit in a diminished form. Thus, I find it a little strange that Avesco has already taken over the Gearhouse.com website so that consequently the rest of us will have to rely on newspaper reports of announcements from Ernst and Young, the administrators, to keep pace with developments.

IN THE AUTUMN of last year I wrote a piece entitled 'Net Assets', coincident with the PLASA Show, and while some of the 'futurology' I predicted then has already been stunted due to the indiscriminate collapse in confidence of dotcom businesses across the board (they'll be back when the dust has settled and the market can be realistic about values), I was pleased to see at least one of my predictions coming good.

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSFUL legal action by the record industry in the US against Napster, whatever the rights and wrongs, it is good to see music companies finally responding in a positive way. Vivendi Universal and Sony Music have announced a joint on-line subscription venture called Duet that will be marketed through Yahoo. (Don't bother to look for the Duet.com website, it belongs to someone else!) Meanwhile, EMI, Bertelsmann and AOL Time Warner have formed a consortium to launch MusicNet, also a digital subscription service. Both will eventually allow music swapping, streaming and downloading. Or, as one record company executive says: "At last we are able to make buying music as easy as stealing it." All players realise that it is essential that such services are non-exclusive, as the punters will expect a full catalogue, so there is an open invitation between the consortia to join forces.

I AM NOT SURE HOW they have resolved the artist's royalty issue, nor what the tariffs will be, but let's hope they have learned the Napster lesson. In the future, such on-line digital music platforms will be licensed to others, with MusicNet even contemplating licensing Napster. Launches are planned in the USA, in the summer and autumn.

ONCE AGAIN I made a visit to that venerable institution the ABTT, for their annual Show and awards dinner. I love this exhibition: with its standard shell scheme stands, one can't imagine that anyone ever sells anything there (though Andy Collier's Technical Marketing has proved the reverse to be true), but it is a wonderful occasion for gentle networking and socialising with old industry buddies. For the same reason I am greatly looking forward to Showlight 2001 in May.

THIS YEAR'S DINNER, sponsored by Blackout Triple E, at Westminster College, was considerably enlivened by a controversial, not to say hilarious, speech by Raymond Gubbay, whose views on the subsidised sector are well known. Poor David Harvey from the Royal Opera House, and a guest of White Light's, understandably found his blood pressure rising during Gubbay's diatribe: "I was tempted to throw my bread roll," he told me afterwards, "but thought better of it!"

WHEN OUR EDITRICE suggested that I should write something about Foot and Mouth, I at first thought that she had lost the plot and swallowed her blue pencil at the same time. Then came the announcement that it is estimated that the ravaging disease is going to cost the tourist industry in the UK as much as £5 billion. Some of this will be due to cancelled events, and cancelled events means cancelled rental and production contracts.

A NUMBER OF COMPANIES have already reported losses as the result of the cloven-hoofed nightmare, and whilst these are reasonably nominal at the moment, the fear is that these could escalate. L&SI would be glad to hear of any others, so that they can collate the information and pass it on to the DTI.

ON BEHALF of Light Relief, I wish to express gratitude to Fourth Phase, for allowing the fund to reflect in the glory of the Group's sponsorship for the official reception at Showlight 2001. At the same time I am delighted to confirm that Light Relief has acquired a new logo that will be officially unveiled in May, at the aforementioned Colloquium in Edinburgh.

"A number of companies have already reported losses as the result of the cloven-hoofed nightmare, and L&SI would be glad to hear of any others, so that they can collate the information and pass it on to the DTI."

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JBL's Doug Daniel (far right) with Holger Schader and Wolfgang Neumann of Sirius, and Gerd Gruss and Hanns Hommen of Crystal Sound, in front of JBL's Vertec system

Roland de Groot of Stage Accompany with the new F9 System

Tim Chapman of Meyer with the company's new M3D line array system

Martin Audio's Rob Lingfield with Jason Baird and the AM604, part of the new Stadium series



which will be available from May 2001. The PM-100 features one universal input module which is configurable to accept inputs from low-impedance balanced mic, stereo line and phono (RIAA) input sources. This is switchable to two inputs from the front panel via a rapid action lever switch. Other features include internal gain trim controls fitted to all inputs, two stereo aux busses selectable to pre- or post-fader send from channels, three-band EQ on all inputs and a VCA-controlled crossfader which features a punch-button and variable contour control.

JBL was showing new additions to its EON range. These include the EON10 G2 compact powered speaker and the EONSUB G2 powered subwoofer. The EON10 G2 shares the styling and features of the EON15 G2, including the built-in mini-mixer with three inputs. The EON10 G2 also features increased power with 125W for low frequencies and 50W for the highs. The EONSUB, meanwhile, offers 250W of power and includes JBL's patented Neodymium Differential Drive woofer design and Thermomaster cooling system. Also available are EON G2 systems featuring the above components. JBL has also sold Vertec line array systems to two German pro audio rental companies, Sirius and Crystal Sound who, aside from the acoustic qualities of the Vertec system, cited its light weight and ease of rigging as major considerations in their choice. Each has purchased 32 Vertec cabinets.



LA Audio was showing the PubMix, a stereo zone mixer designed to route one microphone input and three stereo source inputs to any of four mono or two stereo zones, plus one mono distribution amp output. Additional Expander units provide for up to 23 zones. The software controlled system allows installers to set up an audio system in minutes. All parameters - routing, EQ, levels, priority ducking and phantom power - are set from the front panel without the need for internal hardware configuration. A unique feature of the PubMix is the ability to adapt EQ according to the output volume. This gives the installer the ability to define more bass rich EQ for low levels with less accentuation at high levels: the system modifies the EQ for all volume settings in-between.

Acoustics is the MTD108a passive coaxial system, which is aimed at applications such as small format distributed systems and floor monitoring, or for front-fill and under-balcony installation. The company is also developing, in conjunction with CATT-Acoustic, a DLL Directivity Interface (DDI) for modeling L-Acoustics Wavefront Sculpture Technology (WST)-based line array systems. The WST DDI allows the user to make accurate SPL predictions for WST-based line source arrays in either a venue (including the effects of room acoustics) or in open air situations. L-Acoustics is also currently working with

EASE to develop the same modeling capability for the industry-standard program. Level Control Systems (LCS) unveiled a CobraNet audio module for Matrix3. The LX-CBR CobraNet module allows an LX-300 frame to interface 16 inputs and 16 outputs to a CobraNet network. Each LX-300 frame in a Matrix3 system can accommodate one CobraNet module. The expandable Matrix3 system is now possible with all audio I/O supplied over Ethernet. Other available I/O options are balanced line-level input/output modules and a digital ADAT Lightpipe module, while an AES/EBU module is scheduled for release later this year.

Mackie Designs had a lot to say for themselves, with a number of new Mackie-branded products and a whole new range of transducers under the banner of 'RCF Precision'. Mackie introduced the D8W Integrator, a software/card package which provides integration of the D8B console and the HDR24/96 hard disk recorder/editor, and adds support for the Mackie Universal Time Synchronizer. The first of Mackie's product developments with Emagic (acquired by the company in January) is the Logic Control hardware interface for Emagic's Logic Audio 5 software.

L-Acoustics introduced the dV-Sub, the companion subwoofer to the dV-dosc system. This compact, triple-15" transducer design cabinet is compatible with all L-Acoustics products, and is aimed at both touring and fixed installation applications. The dV-Sub includes dedicated presets for digital signal processors, and is optimised for 40-150Hz. Also new from L-

Mackie announced the availability of its entire range of contractor products for the European market - these include Mackie Industrial's (formerly RCF-branded) Vision Series, ART Series, Monitor Series and Sound Palette Series loudspeakers, as well as the associated amplification, products such as the UP Series of installation amplifiers and the 4000 Series of integrated mixer/amplifiers. Also announced was the introduction of the Digital DX8 - the first DSP-based digital audio mixer for the contractor market.

Adding to the Active Loudspeaker product line were the SA-1232 three-way and the SA-1521 two-way speakers. The 1232 is tri-amplified (1100W LF, 100W Mid, 100W HF), and the 1521 is bi-amplified (400W LF, 100W HF). Both speakers include components from the new, re-engineered and improved RCF Precision line of transducers, which was also unveiled at the show. This range offers 11 newly-engineered products,

including three families of compression drivers (3", 2.5" and 1.75"), three new 18" woofers, two new 15" woofers, a new 15" mid-bass, a 12" woofer and a 12" mid-bass.

Mackie's other proprietary loudspeaker interest,

EAW, launched the KF760 Series line array, which consists of the KF760 (long-throw >70ft) and KF761 (short-throw <100ft) cabinets. Aimed at a variety of applications including arenas, ballrooms, music venues, auditoria and outdoor events, the KF760 Series has been developed in conjunction with a number of development partner sound companies, such as MassAV and Maryland Sound. The 760 and 761 cabinets are horn-loaded, three-way boxes used in multiples to create a curved line source. The KF760, say EAW, requires minimal signal processing, and is quick and easy to rig, while the system offers

uniform SPLs, frequency response (45Hz - 16kHz) and sonic character to the entire audience.

Martin Audio gave a preview of its new, highly-configurable Stadium Series of architectural speakers developed especially for large-scale installations. All of these lightweight, composite models feature a port-assisted, large format 10" mid

horn with a 1.4" exit high frequency horn, and provide constant directivity in both planes. In addition, the AS118 folded horn bass system utilises a single 18" LF driver, and boasts an efficiency of 108dB. Applications include stadiums, arenas and exhibition halls. Also new from Martin is the latest addition to the Blackline range: the F215 is a two-way passive, vented trapezoidal enclosure with twin 15" LF drivers and a 1.4" exit compression driver with a

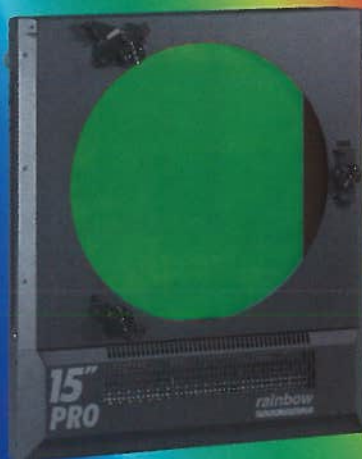


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Main picture, RCF Precision makes its first appearance

Joe Olenski (left) and Paul Adamson of Ohm (right) with Chinese distributor Lin Zhuo Mao

David Cooper of Midas with the Venice 240

Matthew Foord of Next Two with the new Sound 20 ceiling speaker



rotatable 80° x 50° horn. Finally, Martin also introduced the LE12JB two-way active/passive low profile stage monitor.

Matrix Audio Developments, better known as an amplifier manufacturer, launched the F1 loudspeaker system, designed specifically for the commercial installation market. The system comprises the extremely compact (17cm x 10cm x 8cm) mid/high F1 cabinet and the B1 bass cabinet, which can be free-standing or incorporated into fixtures and fittings. The F1 cabinets incorporate a unique ball-joint mounting system, which also contains all electrical wiring, so that no wires are visible after installation. When combined, one B1 and two F1 cabinets are capable of producing 100Wpc RMS at a frequency of 35Hz - 18kHz.

One of the latest to join the growing list of line array system manufacturers is **Meyer Sound**, which was demonstrating its new M3D self-powered line array venues aimed at medium- to large-scale sound reinforcement applications. M3D incorporates Meyer's BroadbandQ technology, which it claims gives unprecedented control of coverage in both planes, across the full audio bandwidth from 40Hz to 18kHz. The M3D-Sub extends this level of control down to 30Hz. The full-range cabinet uses both main elements of BroadbandQ technology: the cardioid subwoofer concept and the new REM (Ribbon Emulation Manifold) for precise directivity control at high frequencies. The LF section employs four 15" drivers, with two powerful neodymium magnet MS-415N (4" voice coil) drivers facing forward and two rear-facing MS-815 drivers that combine with the front facing drivers and help maintain the directional pattern in the low frequencies.

For the high-frequency section (500Hz to 18kHz), Meyer Sound engineers devised REM to create the coherent wavefront characteristic of a ribbon driver, yet with the high SPLs of compression drivers. One of the first sales of the M3D system has been to the new Vienna Museumsquartier performing arts centre. Also

new from Meyer were the DF-4 self-powered dedicated down-fill loudspeaker, and the latest addition to the UltraSeries, the UMP-2P, a bi-amplified three-way system housed in a compact low-profile cabinet. Though similar to the UMP-1P, the 2P offers a tighter 45° x 45° coverage pattern than the 1P's 100° x 100° pattern.

Midas was introducing the new Venice series of smaller mixers to Europe on the vast **EVI** stand. Seen in the UK recently at the Live! Show in London, these mixers bring the renowned Midas quality marque to a whole new range of smaller applications, including conferences or live band applications, for effects returns or additional inputs in



large multi-console applications, in installation/contracting work, or as part of a small mobile system. The Venice is available in three versions: Venice 160 (8 mono/line + 4 stereo-line/mono-mic inputs); Venice 240 (16 mono/line + 4 stereo-line/mono-mic inputs); and the Venice 320 (24 mono/line + 4 stereo-line/mono-mic inputs).

Next Two had a new ceiling speaker - Sound 20. This 20W 100V line (30W 8 ohm) dual driver speaker is primarily aimed at installations which require something more than just a standard coaxial ceiling speaker. Its high performance is achieved by using a mid range driver and tweeter combination connected by a PCB mounted crossover to give a reliable wide range operation. A B55839 part 8 compliant option is available for voice evacuation requirements. This version comes with thermal fuses, high temperature wiring, ceramic terminals and steel fire-dome.

Cheshire-based **Ohm Industries** has enjoyed an increased presence in the touring system market over the past 12 months with hire companies such as Wigwam, VME, Blue Audio and Artco China. Events have included the Chinese Grammys, T in the Park, Glam, the Polish leg of

the Ministry of Sound tour and the Love Parades in both Germany and Poland. The TRS-218 subwoofer has recently been upgraded with proprietary speakers, offering reduced power compression and greater power handling and SPLs. Ohm has also made several enhancements to its CRED digital system controller, including computer control via SIA SMAART software, 24-bit DA converters, increased dynamic range and upgrades available via the internet.

Outline launched a new bass system and subwoofer unit, thereby adding further products to its Movie range intended for cinema applications. The MVB-115 is a compact bass enclosure fitted with a 15" woofer, whilst the MVS-118 subwoofer uses an 18" speaker.

Italian audio manufacturer **Proel** introduced the new XS series of mixers and powered mixers aimed at the professional live mixing market. Constructed from steel, the XS series features an ergonomic control surface where all functions are easy to read and to reach, with each knob of Proel's own proprietary design. There are three non-powered models available: the XS8 (4 mono + 2 stereo), the XS16 (8 mono + 4 stereo) and the XS20 (12 mono + 4 stereo). Each is equipped



with a custom digital multi-effect 24-bit DSP with numeric display with 50 presets and 50 programmable user programs. The XS powered range is also available in three models: the XS8A (2 x 150W rms/4 ohm), the XS16A (2 x 250W rms/4 ohm) and the XS20A (2

x 350W rms/4 ohm). The low-profile power amplifiers are equipped with toroidal transformers and cooling is effected through variable speed fans, thermally controlled for low-noise operation. Protection is guaranteed against DC Voltage, short circuit, thermal overload and clipping.

From **Rane** came the MP 44 - a 5U, four-bus mixer with a host of features to satisfy DJs, club owners and installers. For the DJ - three-band Accelerated Slope full-cut tone controls on each bus, FlexFX flexible effects loop, A-side, B-side or Post crossfader assign on each input bus, VCAs on the crossfader and channel faders and two automatic crossfader CD triggers; for club owners - a remote DC master level volume control and an automatic emergency page input; and for the installer - a high-performance master limiter on booth and master outs and an optional remote DC master level control.

Renkus-Heinz unveiled the flagship CT Series of 19 high-power sound reinforcement speakers for high-end install and touring speakers. The CT Series features all of R-H's latest proprietary technologies - CoEntrant transducers, Complex Conic horn topology and True Array Principle (TRAP). The latest addition is a range of horn options for the CT10, allowing precise matching of arrays or individual speakers to specific venues. Also shown by R-H was the new Reflex series, previewed at PLASA last year, which features the company's Complex Conic horn

topology and TRAP technologies. A range of user-friendly options to make them suitable for both touring and fixed install applications. Typical markets will include theatre, club, small-to-medium arena distributed systems, compact live sound PA systems and portable or installed conference and PA.

Sennheiser added the e865 condenser microphone to its successful evolution series.

This is the first condenser model in the series, and boasts high feedback rejection and accurate, transparent sound reproduction, say Sennheiser, making it suitable for detailed acoustic instruments such as piano, guitar and saxophone - as well as for vocals.

New products from **Shure** included the latest addition to its studio microphone range, the KSM44, as well as a new line of sub-miniature lavalier microphones designed for theatre, broadcast and event production applications. The WL50 omnidirectional lavaliers measure just 5.8mm in diameter. Also from Shure came the Auxpander - an auxiliary send expander for mixing consoles, aimed at touring musicians and sound engineers, which allows users to turn any mixer into an 8-bus console.

Stage Accompany, from the Netherlands, premiered the Friend Series of loudspeakers aimed at the installation and smaller rental markets. There are four models in the series, the F1, F5, F7 and F9, which will be suitable for full-range speech and music reinforcement, as well as fill duties. SA highlight the Series' excellent build quality, including component selection, filtering and highly-tuned cabinet design. A comprehensive range of mounting accessories is available, and the cabinets can be supplied in any colour.

Studiomaster introduced the 162BP mixer, designed for professional installations. With 16 channels and all connections on the rear

panel, for added security, this compact (6U) rackmount package looks and feels like a serious, professional workhorse. Features include 16 locking XLR microphone inputs with 48V phantom power, two stereo inputs, two auxiliaries, inserts and direct outputs, Studiomaster's renowned EQ, balanced XLR outputs and internal power supply. As you would expect from Studiomaster, the 162BP is internally modular.

The Studiomaster Fusion is the first of a new generation of high quality karaoke/DJ mixers, suitable for mobile and club installations. Combining studio quality electronics with a unique and impressive feature list, the Fusion is available in black or silver. Features include three



Karl-Gustaf Kahlau of Renkus-Heinz with the new Reflex Series of loudspeakers for both touring and fixed installations

Teresa Jarrett, Martin Reid and Nick Wood with Turbosound's TQ range

Tecno Star's Vicente Signes Druvay and Carmen Muñoz with the TRC system

David Lyth of Volt Loudspeakers demonstrating the cool-running of the company's Radial range



professional mic channels on combo XLR/jack inputs, three-band mid-sweep EQ with HPF, four stereo channels - two with dual inputs and two with RIAA available - 36db Kill controls, 32 bit digital effects processing, replaceable VCA crossfader, crossfade taper controls, video switching and more.

Also from Studiomaster, the Trilogly 406 is the latest product to join the successful Trilogly range of multi-purpose mixers. With an impressive 32 channels (and a total of 48 inputs), the Trilogly 406 is perfectly suited to front-of-house or stage monitoring and more than capable in a variety of recording applications.

Tannoy staged the worldwide launch of the new iQ10 PowerDual reinforcement loudspeaker, with its complementary iQ18B bass unit. Other

introductions to Tannoy's loudspeaker range include the CMS50 ICT ceiling monitor system, the compact i5AW all-weather installation speaker and the i5 MP active loudspeaker - the latest addition to Tannoy's multi-purpose range of active installation loudspeakers. In addition, Tannoy's new microphone range further strengthens its position as a total system supplier in the fixed installation and sound reinforcement markets and features the TDM27 desktop paging microphone and the TGM33 and TGM35 gooseneck microphones for use in conferencing and lecturing applications. The TBM57 is a boundary device for use on a flat surface, such as a table or lectern and TFM65 is a low profile microphone for discreet flush mounting. The



TSM85 is a general purpose stage microphone with a dynamic capsule and on/off switch, which can be used in a wide range of installations requiring live vocal performance.

The PR-TRC system is a new range of professional loudspeakers developed by Promaster and to be found on the **Tecno Star** stand. Designed for high precision applications, TRC's double compression driver and diffusion system makes it a very effective pro audio system for major events. The company has also recently released the new PR series of speakers - a range of smaller sub bass units, and Series E power amplifiers.

On show from **Turbosound** were three new additions to the Qlight Series aimed at the theatre, corporate and audio-visual markets, which are now available alongside the popular TQ-440SP and the TQ-425SP. The TQ-220 is a compact passive two-way loudspeaker based around two 5" LF drivers and an HF tweeter, while the TQ-230 features the same LF section but with a 100°H x 60°V HF compression driver. Both speakers are magnetically-shielded for use in close proximity to computer monitors and screens in AV applications. The TQ-259 is a trapezoidal passive two-way loudspeaker (12" + 1") for corporate shows and theatre applications. The latest additions to the TCS contractor series are the TCS-108, a compact front-loaded 8" subwoofer configurable as multiple units to suit available venue space, and the trapezoidal TCS-35 background and surround sound loudspeaker featuring an 8" LF driver and 1" titanium tweeter.

Turbosound also showed its latest power amplifier and a new loudspeaker management system. The TMC-T1000 twin-channel,

class AB power amplifier comes in a 2U package for use with the company's Q-Light, HiLight, TFM, TCS and Impact Series loudspeakers. The LMS-A6 is a two-input, six-output analogue crossover/limiter with model-specific, factory-supplied internal frequency cards.

David Lyth of **Volt Loudspeakers** was demonstrating the cool-running of the company's innovative Radial range of loudspeaker drivers, which will shortly be added to with a 10" and an 8" version. A display of two speakers, one a Radial and one a conventional speaker with a vented magnet, with both receiving the same voltage at 20Hz from the same amplifier, ably showed the difference in temperature of the two. The front-mounted chassis which acts as a heatsink reduces heat in the voice coil, with the resulting lower impedance meaning the Radial produces up to 3dB more output than the conventional.

Wharfedale Pro introduced the VS Series of loudspeaker enclosures comprising six models, including two woofers. Intended for a range of portable PA and installation applications, the VS Series are ruggedly-constructed with hard-wearing carpet finish and steel front grilles. Also introduced was the Link 800 two-way active full-range speaker aimed at applications including home recording, multimedia, conference, music

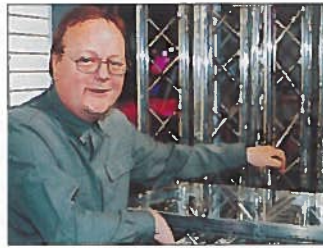


playback and paging. Finally, Wharfedale introduced three new additions to its WPG range of graphic equalisers and electronic crossovers. These are the EQ215 and EQ31 high quality constant Q equalisers, and the WPG331, a dual 31-band graphic equaliser.

German manufacturer **Zeck Audio** introduced the Twister system, a system of subwoofer cabinets, each with two pole-mounted top boxes. The pole mount

automatically provides all connections between the cabinets, eliminating the need for cabling. The top cabinets can be fully panned, allowing one per side to be used for monitors if required, and adapter cables are available if the cabinets need to be mounted away from the stand. Two additional packages are available: Twistermix adds a Profiler power mixer with effects unit, and Twisteramp offers an additional Champ four-channel amplifier with built-in active crossover.

And finally, a handful of non-audio news . . . **Lite Structures'** Adrian Brooks was proud of the ingenious new staging system which allows platform modules to be easily connected and disconnected from above, via a clever turn-and-lock key system (see feature on Westlife, p77). He was also highly amused by the total lack of interest in the innovation demonstrated by many of the visitors to his stand, which seemed inversely proportionate to the usefulness of the



Far left, Spirit's Trevor Coley with the Spirit M Series

LiteStructures' Adrian Brooks demonstrates the company's new stage locking system

system. As two visitors are shown over to the system, Brooks stands back,

laughing, and says: "Watch. Let's see how uninterested this pair are." Foibles of the viewing trade aside, this really is a clever system, which will make building and striking stage platforms a far more straightforward job.

The latest addition to **Doughty Engineering's** range of clamps is the Quick Trigger (QT) range, which allows one person to hang heavy luminaires on any size of tube from 38mm to 51mm. The jaws of the clamps are spring-loaded in the open position, and the weight of the fixture then automatically closes the clamp. The fixtures can be securely locked off using the large tree handle. The QT clamps are tested with TÜV approval and have a safe working load of 250kg.

US lighting control manufacturer **Elektralite** (part of Group One), for whom Keith Dale became international sales and marketing manager at the tail-end of last year, had their full

range of controllers on show in Frankfurt. These products are designed to cover a broad cross-section of lighting applications including

entertainment and architectural environments such as clubs, retail stores, live shows and television. New for 2001 is the CP20xt and CP20 - a controller/console designed for both club and live situations, featuring up to 512 DMX channels, 960 cues, 96 chases, 48 macros and 96 positional focuses on-board.

Philips Lighting's investment in new technology promises users of halogen lamps a better lighting product for entertainment application. The lamps now incorporate a new technology called P3, which involves coating the pinch leads with a protective coating which results in greater reliability, by reducing early lamp failure caused by overheating. In addition, it allows for more freedom and flexibility of the lamp burning position. All lamps with this new technology are now clearly identified with a distinctive P3 logo. To mark the launch, new packaging has also been designed and the whole rebranded 'Broadway'.

A longer online report and photos, can be found at www.plasa.org/events/musikmesse

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Location: Gloucester Salary: £17-22k

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Location: Northampton Salary: £15k

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Salary: £20 -£25k

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Location: London and SE Salary: £15 -£20k

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To apply for this position e-mail or call Julie Kirby quoting Job Ref: TP506/2

Bench Service Engineer

Location: London Salary £15-20k

Job Ref: 506/3

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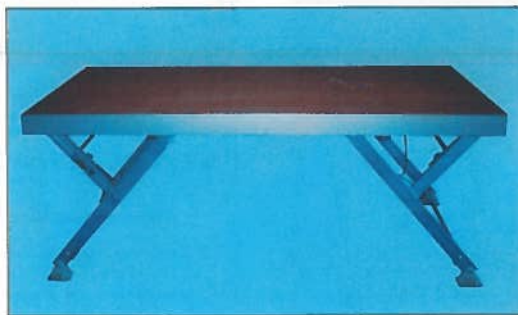
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In Profile...

L&SI Talks to the Industry Trend-setters

A visual artist in residence at a radio station might sound like a contradiction in terms - but mixed and new media artist and composer Charles Kriel has taken live video making, mixing and scratching to new extremes in his work with Radio 1. He's also established himself at the cutting edge of live internet streaming, buzzing his high-energy visuals around the universe live for three hours each Friday on Pete Tong's Essential Selection.



Louise Stickland talks to mixed media artist **Charles Kriel**

American-born Kriel is intense, highly intelligent, imaginative and has a natural sense of rhythm and fun. The latter is highly visible in his current video visuals. Born into a circus family, he has been creative since his schooldays. He ran away from home at 15, before blasting around three states in a Cadillac, sound system in the back, eagle eye on the rear-view mirror - DJ'ing as he went. Between then and art school in Atlanta at the age of 24, many jobs and adventures - mostly creative - followed, including work as a photographer and a TV and radio presenter.

Fine Art came into the mix during his degree course at Atlanta College of Art. He loved his time there, and says that it gave him a good technical, as well as intellectual, base to work from in both arts and humanities. This was in the 1980s and was also where he first experimented with video as an art medium. He left Atlanta, formed a performance art pop band and also wrote his first piece of software during this period - to enable what he then called 'live video scratching' - the term 'VJ'ing' was yet to be coined. The programme took video files and individual images and converted them into

animation files assignable as video 'cues'. The idea was way ahead of its time and didn't work out because the hardware and processing power wasn't yet available to support it, so the project was abandoned - as was the art house band.

Kriel moved on, accepted a commission to write an electronic opera and found the space to tussle with his own complex psyche about whether what he was doing at the time was "intelligent or pop" and what he was and wasn't comfortable with. In the early 1990s he went to Prague, where he worked as a journalist and continued creating art. Then he returned to the US and tended a strip club bar which earned him the money to get to London and enrol for an MA in Fine Arts and Combined Media at Chelsea College of Art & design in 1996.

There he produced several technology-based pieces of work, including, for his degree show, the renowned CC Kriel's All Squirrel Band - five stuffed squirrels each of which plays a musical instrument, controlled via motors and a central computer. It went on to be exhibited at the ICA's Art & Innovation Exhibition. At Chelsea he also started working on multi-media pieces and received a grant from the London Arts Board to continue this work after he left. He invested the money in computing, photography and sound equipment and, ever resourceful, taught himself how to use a Mac. Then came the invitation to apply for the Radio 1 placement.

The plan was that he document a year of the station's events and projects in photographs, to be published as a book this summer, including coverage of a selection of the 300 live events Radio 1 produces each year. Then he suggested the video scratching and mixing - in the same way that a turntablist works with decks - and how he could get involved with the production of visuals for both the live events and their massively popular website. Radio 1 were up for it, and the rest - as they say - is art.

Kriel shoots his footage on DV cam, much of it in clubland, a lot of it lighting effects, throbbing dance moments, people, bodies, faces, expressions. He works exhaustively on this footage - using standard software packages like Adobe After Effects, manipulating, until he's happy with the resulting samples, which are then stored on disk, ready for recall.

His playback system consists of three Mac PowerBooks, a Panasonic MX50 vision mixer, two MIDI keyboards used to trigger the video samples and a Korg Kaoss pad. Since arriving at Radio 1, Kriel has performed at all the station's major outdoor events including the Love Parade in Manchester, Creamfields festival, Ibiza, and One Live in Cardiff. He's met and worked alongside some of the best including Tong, Paul Oakenfold, Erik Morillo, Darren Emerson, Norman Cook, Sasha, Seb Fontaine, Paul Van Dyk, Judge Jules and Timo Maas.

He enjoys webcasting for Tong's intense three-hour Essential Selection, although working a studio show is totally different, more structured experience. But there's still a serious vibe in the basement of Yalding House as the phone lines hum, the PAs frantically scribble messages, download the e-mail bombardment and relay the messages to Tong as he pumps out the sounds - with Kriel adding his own magic visual touch to the mix blasting out into the ether.

His high energy levels have certainly stayed with him - Kriel is currently writing a PhD in digital imaging at Central St Martins. ■

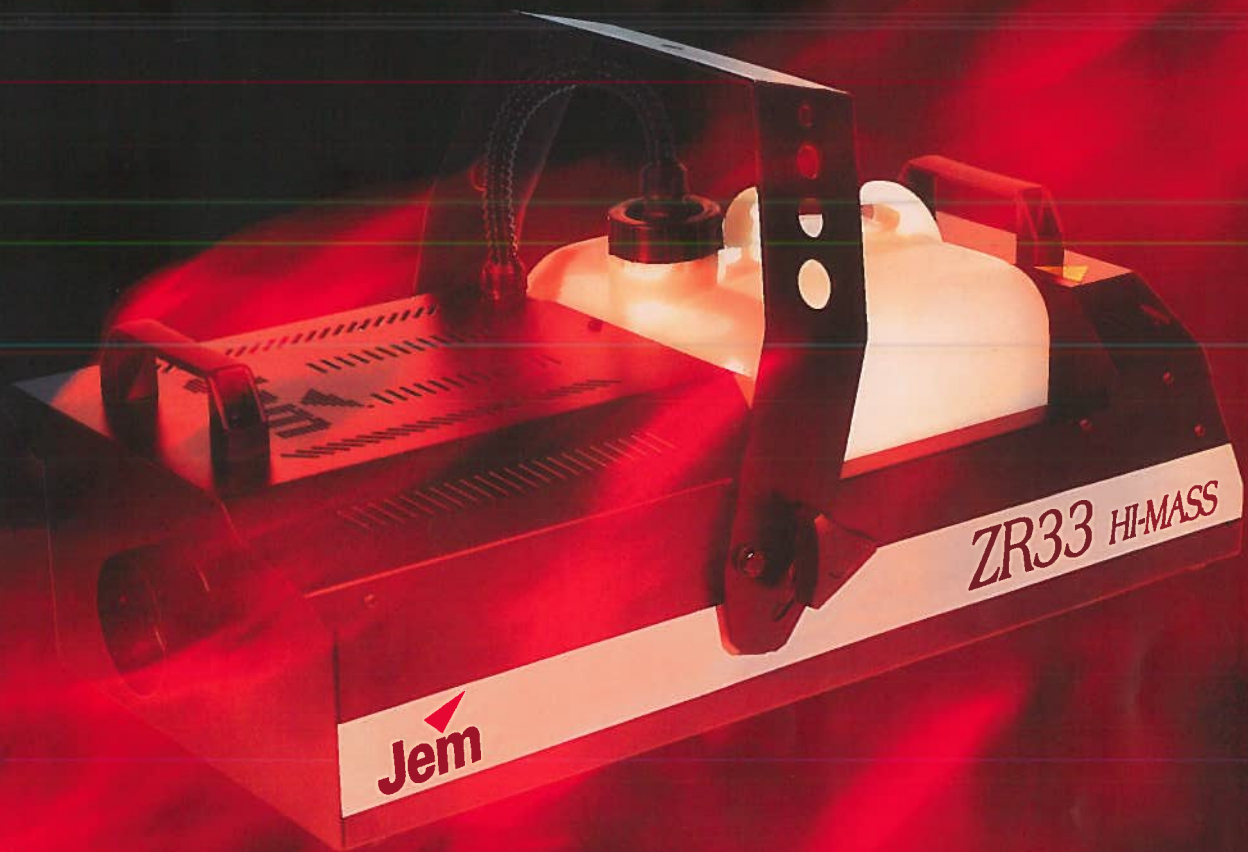
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