



LSi

www.lsionline.com

DIGITAL  
EDITION

IN THIS ISSUE:

**On Tour: U2 in the US**  
Touring the Joshua Tree

**PLASA Gets its Buzz Back!**  
LSi reports from Olympia

**Tech Focus: GLP's GT-1**  
The hybrid fixture examined



# Motoring On

**BMW at the Frankfurt  
Motor Show**



+

SOURCE FOUR TURNS 25 • AUDIO ADVANCES: 360° SOUND • LEE FILTERS: 50 YEARS OF COLOUR  
LITTLE ANGEL THEATRE: MAGIC IN MINIATURE • WEDDING SINGER: PRODUCING A TOURING HIT  
AUDIO: KRAFTWERK'S SOUNDSCAPE • PROFILE: AUDIO PRECISION - AND MUCH MORE ...



# classic gear

The Wholehog | by Rob Halliday . . .



It was a bit like a Classic Gear time vortex had struck stand T61 at this year's PLASA Show: hanging from the truss, VL5s, Golden Scans and scrollers.

Controlling them: the original Flying Pig Systems Wholehog lighting console. Not actually a vortex, of course, but rather the Pigs' wonderful way of celebrating the 25th anniversary of the product's launch by re-creating their stand from the 1992 show.

The Pigs? Nick Archdale, Tom Thorne and Nils Thorjussen. Archdale and a school friend, Simon England, had already had one go at making a console, the DLD6502. However, they'd also been using Vari-Lites and other moving lights on college balls and raves, and Archdale really wanted a better way of dealing with this new wave of lighting technology. He had been renting lights from Peter Miles and Tim Baylis at SpotCo; they saw the need and the enthusiasm and backed the new outfit, which acquired the name Flying Pig Systems. Cheque in hand, the Pigs departed on a 'planning meeting' that involved a road trip across America . . .

The Wholehog was the result of that plus a lot of work in the attic at SpotCo's west London base. 6000 DMX outputs because a Golden Scan used 6 DMX slots per light, so the Hog could match the Vari-Lite console's ability to control 1000 lights. Physically wide, angled up to its operator, it had a line of 20 high-quality faders along the bottom, 12 encoder wheels on the right, and a master playback section complete with a T-bar crossfade handle. Plus what the brochure noted - pretty accurately - was 'the world's most comfortable elbow rest'.

Across the surface, 23 backlit LCD displays - above the playbacks, next to the encoders, and along the top between banks of buttons. The aim was a tactile, playable interface, but one where everything could be labelled with clear, natural language: 'Goldenscans', 'Red', 'Backlight'. When you needed more information, the monitor attached to the external computer 'brain' rack could detail what each light was doing, or even show a graphical representation of the rig.

The overriding goal was simplifying dealing with moving lights. So, in the patch the console had a fixture library that understood not just DMX mapping but also sensible home values. And for making

Rob has been working in and writing about lighting for more than 25 years, on shows around the world. He wonders if this makes him a classic... or just old!



the lights chase, there was a 'stack synth': the 33MHz 386 processor running things wasn't up to calculating wave effects in real time, so instead it could pre-generate suitable cue sequences for you.

'Revolutionary, not evolutionary' the PLASA award judges called it, and though sales were slow at first, programmers and designers with DMX lights or big shows or who'd just got tired of VL's rental-only policy eventually found it and used it - for Level42, Sting, Simply Red, Pink Floyd and others. In all, 24 were made and sold, each with a name ('Eeny' the first), each with, by all accounts, their own unique personality quirks.

Perhaps as important as what it could do were the problems the Wholehog identified: that hard drives aren't good at loud shows, that PCs don't stand up to touring, that you can never have enough buttons . . . All that informed the design of the Wholehog II, which appeared a couple of years later.

At the PLASA time vortex, there was a student watching a demonstration of the Wholehog. Too young to remember it first time around, I'm pretty sure he thought he was seeing a new product. It speaks volumes to the Wholehog's power that, 25 years after its launch, he still seemed to walk away impressed . . .

**Reminisces:**

▶ [www.facebook.com/flyingpigsystems](http://www.facebook.com/flyingpigsystems)

# CLF TOURCASES

## PROTECTION IN EVERY SITUATION

**LIFETIME WARRANTY\***

\* UNDER NORMAL USE

WWW.CLF-LIGHTING.COM

[f](#)
[i](#)
[t](#)
[v](#)

CLFLIGHTING