



## LETTER FROM ITALY

Generally speaking, 1994 was definitely not the rosiest year of the century as far as concert attendance figures (and consequently production budgets) were concerned, but to get to the point of view those living with the problem all the year round, I spoke to sound engineer Vittorio de Amicia, director and founder of Aquila-based Agorà, one of the country's leading rental and production companies.

The firm, founded just five years ago, has a permanent staff structure made up of three 'work groups', each made up of a Team Manager, Stage Manager, Artist Assistant, PA Manager, Lighting Manager and Sound Engineer, responsible for selecting the remaining staff for the various tours the firm works on. As far as the general recession is concerned, Vittorio said: "If an outsider was to judge this by the amount of work we did in 1994, then apparently things went very well for us, since we handled both equipment rental and production for tours by some of Italy's top artists, including Riccardo Cocciante, Umberto Tozzi, Gianni Morandi, Enrico Ruggeri and Laura

Pausini. The problem stems from the fact that budgets available for tours were lower, so to avoid coming to any compromises on safety of staff quality (which some firms don't hesitate to do!), the company itself has to resign itself to a very low or in some cases, non-existent profit margin to get a contract.

"This situation is aggravated by the fact that we are obliged to constantly up-date our equipment, so as well as maintaining four full tour rigs complete with staging, our 'shopping list' has recently included a Midas XL3 / 48, Lexicon gear, more monitors for our Meyer Sound PA systems and added to our ear monitor systems. As these are all imported products, the Lira's poor exchange rate doesn't help matters either, and this is also badly felt when the tours we work on go abroad."

Another complaint frequently heard from all concerned in the Italian concert sector is the country's lack of venues, and Vittorio has no hesitation in expressing his opinion on that as well.

"Rather than being faced with a complete lack of venues, the situation is that suitable venues do in fact exist, but are managed in such an absurd way as to make their use for musical events virtually impossible! As well as that, nobody apparently takes into consideration the fact that concerts could be held in venues when they're at the drawing board stage, so even the newer facilities we're able to use are anything but ideal as far as both acoustics and access are concerned."

Although Agorà already has contracts for the whole of 1995, there's plenty of room for improvement, apart from the economic situation, one of the reasons behind the drop in overall standards and cashflow in our market – totally unreliable and unprofessional, they're often at the head of organisations which only exist on paper and have no structural back-up as far as equipment is concerned. To make a fast buck, they run the risk of ruining the market by compelling the real pros to lower their rates dangerously."

**"IF I HAD A MAGIC WAND,  
THE FIRST THING I'D DO  
WOULD BE TO WIPE OUT THE  
TRADE'S COWBOYS"**

**MIKE CLARK**

## 64-BOX COENTRANT SYSTEM FOR MOSCOW

Renkus-Heinz has made its biggest sale to date of the new CoEntrant arena system – to Moscow's second-largest PA company, Autograph Sound.

The 64-box rig, comprising 16 CE-3T, 12 CE-3T MH, 12 CE-3T LOW and 24 C-3 SUB cabinets, along with 16 racks of controllers and amplifiers, was delivered in time for a Red Square concert for 100,000 people in December. Renkus-Heinz international sales manager Robert Lingfield flew to Moscow to assist in the set-up. Afterwards Autograph's spokesperson said the event had given Muscovites "The sound best sound they've ever heard".



## TOURING AWARD FOR ROCKSOUND

Rocksound, the Hannover rentals company, became the first European firm to win the Live Sound! award for Best International Touring Company.

The gong was handed over to Rocksound's Olaf Schröter (pictured, above, with Ralf Ambrosius and Gerd Knüttel) in a ceremony at AES San Francisco in November.

Among Rocksound's forthcoming projects is a stadium tour of Westernhagen as well as sound for several VW Polo presentations, Die Toten Hosen, currently on tour in Europe, and the NUR Gala.

## LOBO AWARD

Lobo were the only German company to win accolades at this year's American ILDA Awards and they won two prizes – the first for the laser show 1250 Jahre Fulda (for product presentations), and the second for the beam show Mission, in the beam / atmospheric display category.

**PATRICK MORIN**

## FRANCE

### CLAY PAKY & PULSAR OPEN NEW PARIS SHOWROOM



## DIABOLO DÉBUT

French manufacturer Ariane has launched Diabolo, a twin-head dichroic beam affect, including gobos and strobe, fitted with two 120V 250W ENH lamps. The second model in the new low budget range, it incorporates dichroic filters, powerful axial fan, thermal protection, high-reflection mirror and aluminium case. Diabolo is sound-activated by an inbuilt microphone, and is available for distribution. Contact: Patrick Boyer on (33) 50 68 18 12 or by fax on 50 58 25 27.

**PATRICK MORIN**



## GSL GEARS UP IN PARIS

Gemini Sound Products has announced the formation of GSL, a Paris-based office through which the company will import and distribute Gemini and LiteQuest products in France.

The new facility will be run by the well-known and experienced figure of Patrice Vandebussche (pictured above), former marketing manager of J Collins. Patrice Vandebussche can be reached on (1) 69 56 92 02.

Clay Paky & Pulsar France – who distributed the eponymous brands as well as Le Maitre and Eurotruss – have opened a spacious new showroom in the Parisian suburb of Villejuif.

Their full product ranges are on show at Villejuif and the building is equipped for the free seminars which the company intends to offer in future.

Meanwhile, the management remains as before: Bruno Souchard, Michel Lameyse and Pierre-Louis Delaby.

Clay Paky & Pulsar can be contacted on Tel: (1) 49 58 86 86. Fax: (1) 49 58 86 87.