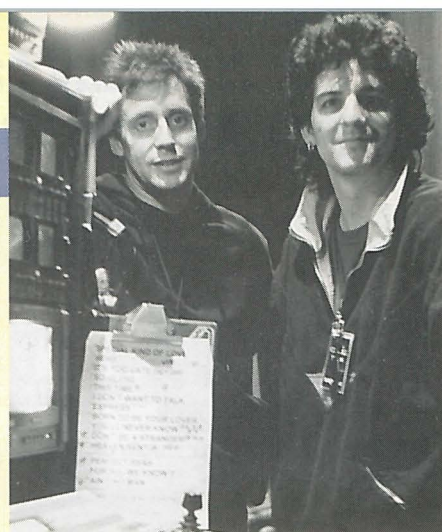


# PIXEL POWER



PETER BARNES (L) AND DICK CARRUTHERS



DINA CARROLL'S RECENT SHOWS MADE EXTENSIVE USE OF VIDEO. MARK CUNNINGHAM INVESTIGATES THIS GROWING TREND

**F**irst there was sound, then there was light ... and now video is fighting for recognition as another vital piece in the concert production jigsaw.

Although Pink Floyd demonstrated the power of film projections at their *Dark Side Of The Moon* shows back in 1973, the integration of the moving image into the live scene has until recently eluded all but the wealthiest of acts.

Audiences who have witnessed many of the latest big budget concerts have been blessed by video screens showing magnified views of what would otherwise remain almost anonymous, pin-head characters bathed in light. But to freelance video director and mixer, Dick Carruthers, simply providing a close-up view is missing the point.

Dick, a veteran of four Take That tours, says: "Although the video that was used with Michael Jackson and, to some extent, U2 was great, the remainder was appallingly dull. I knew that there was so much more that could be done with this medium. People who watch *The Chart Show* and MTV have become so

accustomed to dynamic visual images that they'd be disappointed by boring images on the screens. They want action. With access to promo footage, purpose-shot scenes, video library footage and special effects, there's a whole world of possibilities that has largely been untapped."

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## BIG BREAK

A dead ringer for EastEnder Nick Cotton, Dick began his career in corporate video

production and his interest in developing the live video concept came as a result of his experiences on "the odd pop promo shoot". He identified LDs as the people to approach with his ideas because, even now, most managers will pay for video out of a lighting budget.

Dick was still covering conferences and car launches as a freelance director when his big break came on a Gary Glitter tour. He says: "Jef Hanlon, Gary's manager, had the wonderful idea of bridging the two halves of the show with a video, instead of having a support band. In the middle of a bunch of oldie footage and promos, there was a section where I would make a new video everyday in the location we were in to

screen that night. I would go out in the afternoon for a couple of hours and shoot a 'Rough Guide To' the city we were in. As soon as the audience saw their local landmarks on the screen, they'd just go 'Whoooooay!'. I'd return and frantically edit the stuff on the beat, then as the audience came in at about 7.30pm, we'd go out with a camera and get shots of some of the more animated members of the crowd. Of course, with Glitter, everyone dresses up in their appropriate finery and goes mad, chanting 'Leeeader!', so it was a doddle!

"When Gary eventually came on stage, we'd leg it back to our little edit suite and spool through all the audience shots to find the best bits for the middle video. That was my break into using live video in a different, entertaining way."

Dick has since worked with top chart acts such as George Benson, Michelle Gayle, UB40, D:Ream, East 17, Chaka Demus & Pliers, and, most notably, Take That. "Thanks to my work with Gary Glitter and Take That, people really began to take notice and I got asked to do a couple of big festivals where a lot of bands played. They were showcase opportunities for me and word got around. Consequently, a number of those bands wanted to incorporate live video into their production. Take That will always use live video because they appreciate the value of it. It's very important to me that the video interprets the music and adds a dimension to it. If it adds nothing to the show, it shouldn't be there" says Dick.

## WORKING WITH LDS

I met Dick at Wembley Arena during one of Dina Carroll's pre-Christmas tour dates where his positive relationship with LD Peter Barnes demonstrated how video works best when everyone is on the same side. Although most conventional lights are 32K, 56K follow spots are considerably more powerful. The video cameras are white balanced to 32K with a portion of blue removed to provide an extra stop or two and better depth of field.