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LIVE!

Noel, noel

(WHAT'S THE STORY?) MARGARET MOUZAKITIS



LIVE! show & awards

don't miss out!

future shock:

on the road in 2015

live shows:

stone roses, foo fighters & more

structural guide row

PSA fights back

ISSUE 40 - OUR FIRST EVER CHRISTMAS ISSUE!

reviews soundcraft k3 theatre ● midas XL200

December 95

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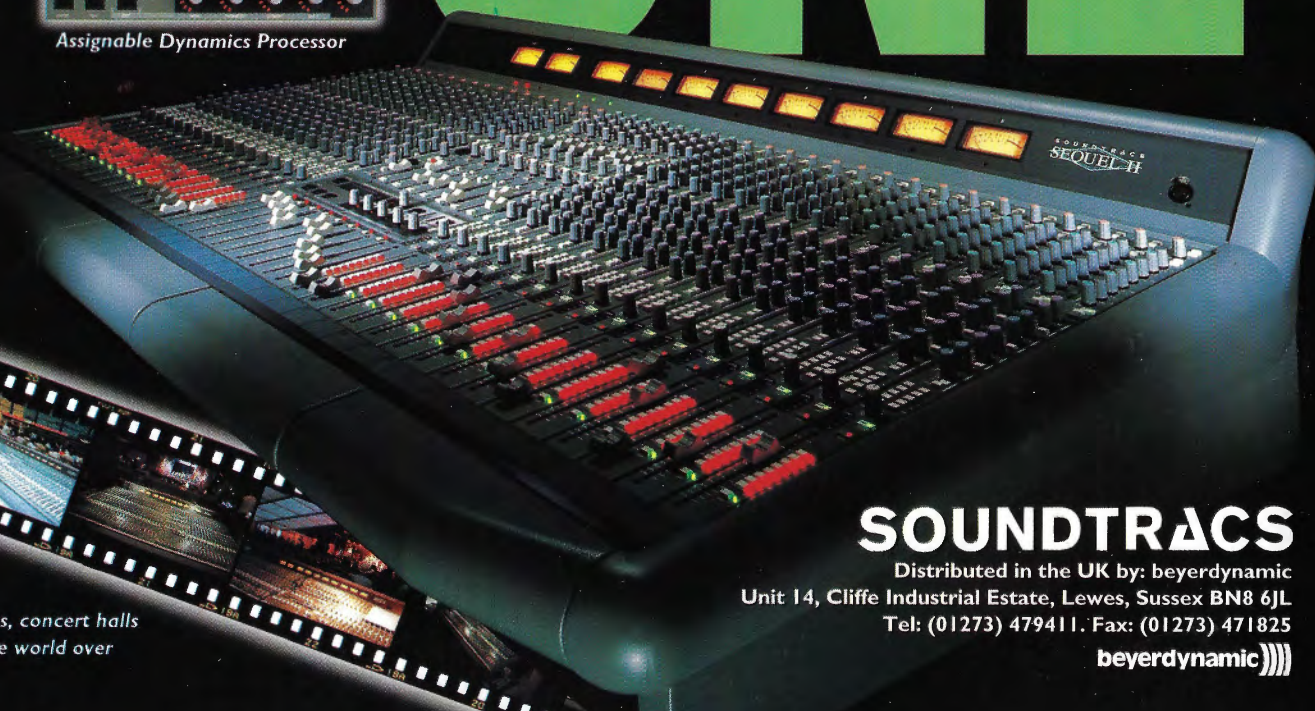
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live!

INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE PRODUCTION

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU!

December 1995

Issue 40

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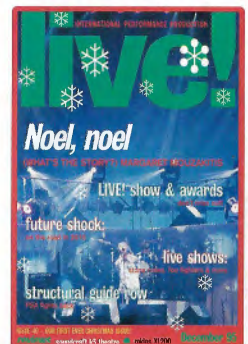
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Theatre **50 UP THE TRUSS:** Stitch

up your mates and win an exclusive

LIVE! MAGLITE...



DON'T MISS THE LIVE! SHOW & AWARDS • JANUARY 15 & 16 • LONDON



• FAX OR POST YOUR AWARDS POLL FORM NOW! SEE PAGE XX! •

By the standards of 2015, this will be an average-sized club gig with a nice, intimate feel. See page 24 for our report from the future



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COVER PHOTO: Oasis' Noel Gallagher at Earl's Court. BY PHIL DENT courtesy of Pulsar Light of Cambridge

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show & awards

December 95

no sleep till hammersmith!

The networking event of the year

We're gearing-up fast and furious for the *only* trade show in the world *specifically and exclusively* for the live music industry – the LIVE! Show – on January 15-16 at the Novotel, Hammersmith, west London.

Which means that with the bigger, brighter LIVE! Show, *and* for the first time ever under the same roof, the 1996 LIVE! Awards Dinner, it really will be 'no sleep till Hammersmith' for the LIVE! team!

- Already there are a number of worldwide product launches – and two major company announcements confirmed for the Show.
- A significant list of 'first time' exhibitors will be there too.
- There's a bar within the exhibition area.
- There's an Exhibitors', VIP & Press Suite alongside, where you can relax in privacy and enjoy a cup of tea, a drink, a snack or a full lunch, courtesy of our own high quality caterers.

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So don't miss out on the industry networking event of the year – phone to book your Stand & Awards package NOW and be part of the party!

THE 1996 LIVE! AWARDS DINNER...

What can we say about the Dinner that's become the industry party of the year? Only that the 1996 LIVE! Awards Dinner will be bigger, sharper and more of a blast than ever. With slimmed-down Awards categories and a few surprises along the way, we'll be opening the bars and partying much earlier than before. But tables and seats are in short supply, and those not allocated to exhibitors will be released on a first-come, first-served basis. So be sure to complete the application form (see below) or ring Andy Lenthall ASAP on +44 (0)1322 660070 for details.

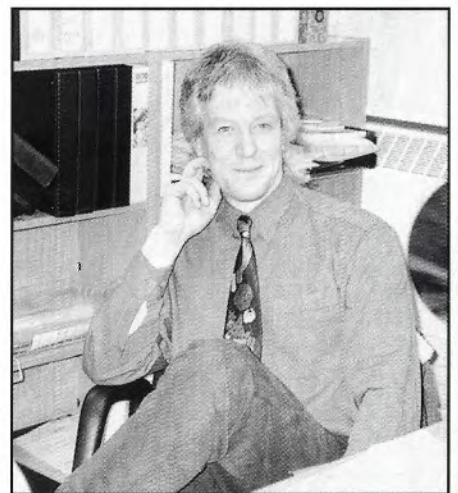
Bar opens at 7.30 pm – Awards Dinner starts at 8.30 pm...PROMPT!

1996 LIVE! AWARDS

POLL FORM ON PAGE 45

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THE LIVE! SHOW • JANUARY 15 &
16 1996 • LONDON HAMMERSMITH
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THE LIVE! AWARDS DINNER •
MONDAY JANUARY 15 1996 •
LONDON HAMMERSMITH NOVOTEL •
7.30 BAR OPENS • 8.30 AWARDS
START • BAR OPEN UNTIL LATE



Mike Lethby – with an unidentified object around his neck

Jools Holland to present 1996 LIVE! Awards

The fourth *LIVE!* Awards night, on January 15 at the Hammersmith Novotel, will welcome Jools Holland as Awards guest presenter for the first time. The news has accelerated the rush for tickets and with less than a month to go it seems certain that the Awards night will be completely sold-out.

Jools will present the 26 Awards – slimmed down from last year's total of 36 – which range from *Tour Manager of the Year* to *Best New Lighting Product*, and from *Festival of the Year* to the *Up The Truss Award*, the latter honouring 1995's greatest touring *faux-pas*.

Commented *LIVE!* editor Mike Lethby: "It's brilliant news that Jools is coming in as guest presenter – I'm delighted, and he'll be great for the occasion. Production on the Awards is already beginning to outstrip the last three Pink Floyd tours put together, so it should be a fun night. We've got some surprises up our sleeves, too – the format's changed quite a bit from the last Awards." Consultant production manager Mick Kluczynski of MJK Productions is working with Mike Lethby and LD Durham Marengi on the format and design of the event. ■



'Shaky' report clouds MPI celebrations

Last month three dance agents and over fifty acts and DJs moved from Concorde International Artistes to rock-based agency Miracle Prestige International. The news was naturally the occasion for celebration at MPI – but there have been reverberations following the way some quarters of the trade press reported the information.

MPI was happy to publicise the news that they have moved into the dance market, picking up Alex Hardee, Cris Hearn and Tom Symmons from CIA with their artists, including Underworld and Gregory Isaacs. This broadens MPI's traditionally rock-based agency, whose other clients include Sting, Jeff Beck, Belinda Carlisle and The Human League.

MPI managing director Steve Parker says: "I have wanted MPI to get into the dance side of the business for some time ... finding the right people to set up a comprehensive dance division has taken some time, but it's been worth it."

However, the impression left by a subsequent article in *Music Week*, which ran MPI's press release without comment from CIA, was that Concorde had virtually lost its dance department and best bookers, a perception that "greatly concerned" CIA managing director Louis Parker. He says the release "does Concorde down to make MPI look good" and doesn't reflect the loss of what he calls: "three junior bookers out of 22 people." Concorde, Louis Parker points out, still has seven agents and around 200 acts.

"The reprinted roster was incorrect and shaky," maintains Louis Parker. Megadog was mistakenly included (an act with Dan Silver at VAT) and, according to Louis Parker, at least 95 per cent of the artists which MPI now claim, are non-exclusive – in other words, they have more than one agency working for them: a situation particularly common with DJs and dance acts.

Steve Parker says: "There's no question that more than 50 of the acts moved from Concorde with the agents. We have not claimed exclusivity, but the agents tell me that there are more than 50 which are exclusive to them."

Further, Louis Parker maintains that the agents are contracted to CIA until January 1996. Asked if he intended to take any action over this, Parker replied: "Watch me."

Louis Parker, who has been in the agency business for over 20 years and whose current roster includes East 17, PJ and Duncan, Prodigy and Boyzone is bullish about the company's prospects. With £3 million in bookings already confirmed for 1996, the man who made the Royal Albert Hall first play pop, and whose agency had 13 of the 17 *Smash Hits Roadshow* acts, says he will announce a couple of major new clients in the new year.

Fiona Harley

shaking the tree

with Fiona Harley

Dan Silver at VAT agency has taken on a new agent in the shape of Adam Saunders, previously with October Agency, who has brought Scanner, Elevate and Furball with him. "He's very capable and fits very well into our team", says Silver, who adds the company is moving from strength to strength in the dance market with recent new clients William Orbit's *Strange Cargo* and *Sunscream*. A recharged *Megadog* ("a really good vehicle for the whole dance movement") will be doing indoor UK venues through till May then some fairly major festival type situations in the summer.

Winter is taking its usual toll on the tonsils of various bands; a Munich show by *Radiohead* saw singer Thom Yorke storm off stage after losing his voice. *Morrissey* agent Mike Hinc can't be Mr Happy this month after Morrissey's throat problems. Those winter colds affected even rock god Liam Gallagher, whose vocals and presence were cut from *Later with Jools Holland*...

Along with the cold and flu bugs; talks, plans and projects are in the air at Paperclip agency in Holland, where Rob Berends' response to a possible merger was 'Yo' – a way of saying yes and no, apparently. Not in America... Paperclip are booking *Goodbye Mr McKenzie* in Holland in January, although, sadly: "nobody knows them". Other Paperclip gigs include some of those in the 'whatever-happened-to?' category: *The Godfathers* and *UK Subs* play Holland in January, *Test Department* play this month. Plus Alan Vega, the main man of *Suicide*, has dates in April/May, booked by Ruud Berends. Vega apparently is close to finalising a major new record deal. (Isn't it about time for a *Suicide* revival, trend-spotters?)

In Amsterdam, the *Milky Way* has opened a new, bigger, 1,000-capacity hall alongside the existing one. Called the *Max*, it's sponsored by *Pepsi*. Since some bands are still adamant that they won't play where there is sponsorship attached to a building, it may not be quite so free to bag any and all clients. And we hear that Amsterdam's other famous rock club, the *Paradiso*, is hot under the collar about its new competition – though they're not saying so, of course.

John Northcote, director of the music side of *Break For The Border* says the company's new bar, *Howl At The Moon*, was initiated into after-gig celebrity with *Oasis*' end-of-tour party. "It was a bit manic, as these things are," Northcote added – and extra fun was had when *Oasis* member *Bonehead* had a very hard time persuading a disbelieving manager that such were his credentials, he should in fact be allowed entry...

Nigel Kerr, who must have been praying his thanks that the *Stone Roses* finally went out and played some shows this year, says he may well be looking at one or two new acts in the new year, if he gets the time off from the *Roses*, of course...

News that *Break For The Border* stepped in to save the fate of the *Academy* becoming the haunt of a religious cult has been generally welcomed by agents around town. The most commonly expressed view was "it makes a change from the *Mean Fiddler*..."

A slightly weary Salomon Hazot at French promoters *Garance* has been coping with the breakdown in the French infrastructure as best he can, with some gigs being cancelled and others opening to very reduced audiences. He says much is covered by insurance but, says this man-of-the-people, "even if I am losing money, I agree with them."

Your correspondent was lately soaking up the sun and a few bands in Los Angeles. In a peculiar display of nationalism I surveyed a swatch of British bands, seeing the wonderful *Incognito* at a packed *House of Blues* – by the end almost lifting the roof off it. Apparently *Take That* and *Omar* were in the audience that night, a fact which didn't seem to impress the audience any. Also *Supergrass* in the Marquee-like, dingy *Whisky A Go Go*, who were quite fab and occasioned some of the most cheerfully aggressive and excitable audience response I've seen since, ooo, ages ... I also caught *B.A.D.* at the *Viper Rooms* and discovered it wasn't just *me* being nostalgic ... Although they've added a couple of cheeky young chappies to pump up the presentation it's more of the same, and if the highlight of the set is still the simple but supercharged *E = MC2*, well I can think of another equation that might be suitable.

Red faces behind the scenes after a press release blamed the cancellation of a *Rod Stewart* show at Wembley on the "automated lighting system". LSD, responsible for the Icon system out with the act, were none too happy. Commented MD Dave Keighley: "Although some people would have liked that to have been the case, I can assure you it most definitely wasn't." So what was it all about? Surely not ticket sales?

London Docklands Arena has just appointed a new marketing manager, taking over from Bob Schwartz who, we hear, is returning Stateside to do marketing at the *Spectrum* in Philadelphia...

Jef Hanlon, manager of Gary Glitter is happy that he correctly anticipated a demand for *Gazza Glitter* in the East as well as Wembley, with a 12,000 capacity show going into *Docklands* – marketed heavily in Essex and other suburbs – without affecting the sales at Wembley.

Peter Grant 1935-1995

Peter Grant, manager of Led Zeppelin and Bad Company, died on 21st November of a heart attack while travelling to his home in southern England. He was 60.

One of the cornerstones of the modern music business, Grant was influential in the careers of acts as diverse as Gene Vincent, Little Richard, The Everly Brothers and Chuck Berry, but achieved legendary status as the manager of Led Zeppelin. In one of the fantasy sequences in Zeppelin's live performance movie *The Song Remains The Same* Grant chose to be portrayed as a Mafioso-type figure, although those close to him say a warm man of great integrity was nearer to the truth. Robert Plant said: "He was larger than life...a giant who turned the game upside down. Fierce, uncompromising, with great humour, I owe him much. My heart goes out to his family." Led Zep bassist John Paul Jones added: "His integrity, sense of timing and business acumen, coupled with complete trust in our music making, made him one of the finest of managers."

Born in London in 1935, Grant spent most of his time in the services before making his way into the music business in the late 1950s. From the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, Grant managed Led Zeppelin, one of the most successful rock bands of all time, as well as developing their record label, Swansong, with artists such as Bad Company, The Pretty Things and Dave Edmunds. Among his achievements was a re-writing of the rules on artists' contractors and performers' percentages. He bowed out of public life at the very top, following the untimely death of Led Zep drummer John Bonham. He was recently awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual dinner of the International Managers' Forum for services to the world of music. Peter is survived by a son, Warren, and a daughter, Helen.

Mike Lethby

Peter Grant with his Pierce Arrow. Picture courtesy of Top Gear magazine/Jim Forrest



Border break for Birmingham

Break For the Border, flushed with the success of its bid for the Brixton Academy, has announced the acquisition of a new 1,500-capacity venue in Birmingham.

In a move which sees the company expanding its regional base, the new venue, the Birmingham Empire, is being constructed in an old cinema. Planning permission has been received from Birmingham City Council and licensing is currently being sought. The venue is due for completion in June next year.

John Northcote, Break For The Border director, says: "If you look at the tours which route around the country, nothing goes into Birmingham, the second largest city. They'll go to Wolverhampton or Nottingham, so it was an obvious hole in the market." The group is talking to a major audio company regarding sound installation.

Along with various bars and restaurants, the company now has small, medium and large London-based venues in the Borderline, Empire and Academy, enabling them to build acts from showcase to major shows. Booking for all four music venues will be overseen by the company's Martin Creaney. BFTB has also just announced the acquisition of catering company Lawson Beaumont.

Fiona Harley

martin audio equipment stolen

On 2nd October 1995, a consignment containing Martin Audio products was stolen in the Romford area of Essex.

The consignment included:

- 2 x Martin Audio ICS300 loudspeakers (Serial Nos: 1005 and 1025)
- 3 x Martin Audio WX3 Controllers (S/N: 1303, 1304, 1305)
- 10 x Martin Audio W0.5 loudspeakers (S/N: 1007, 1011, 1012, 1014, 1016, 1019, 1040, 1044, 1052, 1054)
- 2 x Martin Audio W3P loudspeakers (S/N: 1029, 1032)
- 20 x Martin Audio EM25 loudspeakers (S/N: 3496, 3497, 3498, 3499, 3500, 3501, 3502, 3503, 3504, 3532, 3533, 3534, 3535, 3536, 3537, 3538, 3539, 3540, 3541, 3542) - plus various spare parts.

If you have information regarding the whereabouts of any of these products please contact Martin Audio. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. *Sally Milne, Martin Audio on +44 (0)1494 535312.*

first symphonic concert rocks the internet

Cyberian Rhapsody, featuring the Seattle Symphony's versions of the "Seattle sound", was broadcast live over the Internet on November 10 - the first event of its kind to integrate live music and stage images for synchronized viewing on the World Wide Web.

Members of Seattle rock bands and new age pianist David Lanz joined the Seattle Symphony and conductor Gerard Schwarz at Seattle's Paramount Theater to perform their music, arranged by William Thomas McKinley.

To experience the event, netsurfers downloaded Xing Technology Corp's Stream Works from CompuServe's home page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.compuServe.com>. The performance has been archived and will be accessible through CompuServe until February under the "Spotlight" section on the CompuServe home page.

PEOPLE *brief*

- **Christine Monkton** has joined JFB, Metro Video's officially registered recruitment agency as Agency Manager after eight years at ITN as Senior Personnel Officer. Tel: +44 (0)171 928 2088
- **John Carroll** has been appointed as Managing Director at Spondor Audio Systems Ltd, the subsidiary company of Soundtracs plc. The company commented: "Spondor Audio is entering a period of ambitious expansion, requiring someone with John Carroll's experience to firmly establish the distribution and promotion of the extended range of Spondor Monitors and hi-fi loudspeakers due to be introduced in Spring '96." Tel: +44 (0)1323 843474
- **Jonathon King** has joined visual communications specialists Metro Video Ltd. as Director Designate to the Presentation Hire Group. Tel: +44 (0)171 928 2088



- **Rob Buckler** (left) has been named Technical Manager in charge of the service department at HHB Communications. Rob joins HHB after more than five years' at Strongroom Studios. Commenting on the new appointment, HHB Director of Operations Richard Kershaw said: "We're delighted to have Rob on board. He's well known and respected on all sides of the industry." Tel: +44 (0)181 962 5000

- **Tom Kinnersly** has joined Brilliant Stages Ltd. to take over the rental side of Brilliant's activities. Tom suffered a baptism of fire from the first day with the MTV awards, one of Brilliant Stages' biggest-ever hire jobs. Tel: +44 (0)181 575 6666
- **Tony 'The Pig' Matthews** has completed ten years' service with MAN Flying Systems - and has been appointed to the board as Works Director, in addition to his normal rôle as general manager. MAN: +44 (0)1268 695201

Corrections

Chameleon Technology's telephone number is 01932 880519, and not as quoted in *News In Brief* (November). (The number we printed was actually that of our very own Domineditrix Louise Stickland, who has been inundated with enquires about laser desks. Oops!)

Unusual Rigging have moved to The Wharf in Northamptonshire and the correct contact number is +44 (0)1604 830083.

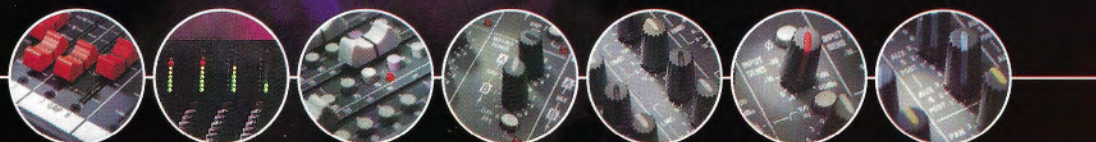


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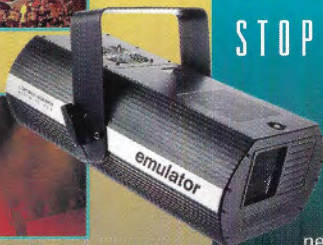
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INNOVATION IN 1996



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BRILLIANT EFFECTS

PROVEN CROWD PLEASERS

RUGGED CONSTRUCTION

BRILLIANT EFFECTS

SUPERIOR ENGINEERING

BRILLIANT EFFECTS

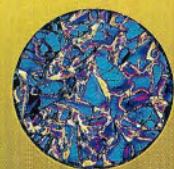
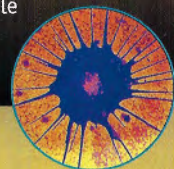
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PROVEN CROWD PLEASERS



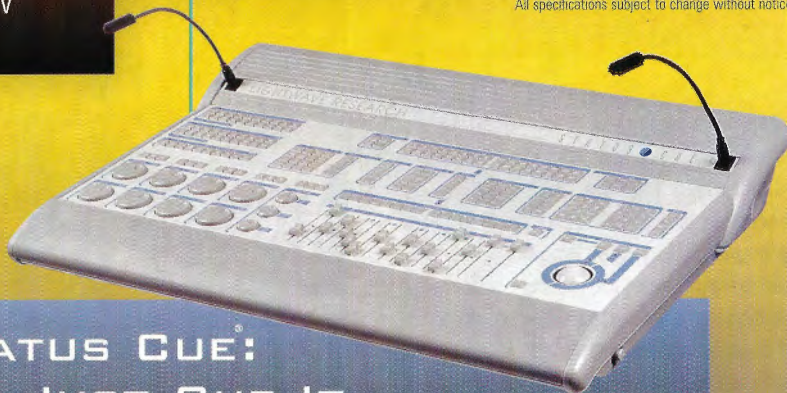
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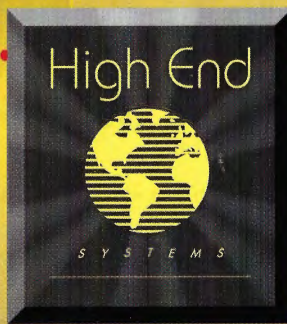


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rank make the live connection

While promoters continue to bemoan the lack of suitable tour venues, Rank Leisure are taking a lead by marketing some of their large-capacity dance venues as a mainstream tour circuit.

Already Silk are inked-in for a Christmas tour of Rank clubs, following a year when their flagship venue, the London Palais, has played host to bands like Oasis, Suede, Massive Attack and Supergrass.

Other venues have proved their worth this year, such as the Maestro in Bradford (with acts like Shabba Ranks and Apache Indian), the Event II in Brighton (Pulp and Black Grape), Birmingham Tower and Manchester Ritz.

"A lot of these venues are multifunctional, with capacities of between 1,200 and 3,000," stated Rank Leisure's private bookings manager, Chrissie Cremore. "When I joined the Rank Organisation I was surprised to discover that their live concert activity – especially the contemporary scene – had dwindled to nothing," she added.

While acknowledging that not all artists will be suited to a nightclub presentation, she feels promoters may have overlooked the value of the famous 'Hammie Palais' as a live venue. She says it was seeing bands like Suede and Oasis – and hearing their

reactions – that sparked the idea for a Rank tour circuit. "It was a joy to experience the atmosphere and then have people thanking you for a great night as they left."

Rank Leisure now operate nine venues on their national matrix, fully-fitted and offering maximum facilities for minimum effort – and highly competitive booking fees. "These are already being used for major functions, and offer an untapped route for tour-



Chrissie Cremore

ing," comments Chrissie Cremore.

Rank also highlight a policy of regular technology upgrades to their state-of-the-art sound, lighting and house system stage effects, which can be used to complement bands' existing productions. ■ **live!**
Chrissie Cremore: Tel +44 (0)181 748 2812. Fax +44 (0)181 748 8995.

Jerry Gilbert

the rank tour circuit

VENUE DETAILS IN BRIEF

BIRMINGHAM TOWER Cap: 1,200. Revolving stage. 3-phase power. One level. Dressing rooms. Large stage. Easy access. Parking. Carry own production. Good sightlines. No sound restrictions. 2am curfew.

SWANSEA RITZY Cap: 1,800. 3-phase. Large stage and dressing rooms. Easy access. No sound restrictions. Two levels. 2am curfew.

MANCHESTER RITZ Cap: 1,500. Good stage, dressing rooms (below) and sight lines (from two levels). No sound restrictions. 3-phase. Club lights. Good access. Close parking. 2am curfew.

NEWCASTLE MAYFAIR Cap: 2,000. Revolving stage. 3-phase. Easy access. Two levels with perfect sightlines. Backstage dressing rooms. Large stage. Lighting and mixing desk. Loading bay. Local parking. 2am curfew.

BRADFORD MAESTROS Cap: 3,000. 3-phase. Revolving stage. Two levels. Backstage dressing

rooms. Lighting and desk. Easy access and parking. No sound restrictions. 3am curfew.

BRIGHTON EVENT II Cap: 1,800. 3-phase. Two levels. Club lighting. Carry own production. Street parking. Easy access. Big stage. Good sight to stage and dressing rooms. No sound restrictions. 2am curfew.

LONDON PALAIS Cap: 2,230. 3-phase. Two levels and VIP room. Club lighting. Carry own production. Street parking. Easy access. Room for tour bus. Good sightlines to large stage. Five backstage dressing rooms. Large video screen. No sound restrictions. 2am curfew.

STOCKTON VISAGE Cap: 1,550. 3-phase. Good sightlines. Large stage. Dressing rooms. Mezz-type/four levels. Private party room. Club lighting. No sound restrictions. Easy access. Parking opposite.

NOTTINGHAM RITZY Cap: 1,900. 3-phase. Raised dancefloor, stage and dressing rooms. Two floors. Easy access. Good sightlines. Street parking. Carry own production. No sound restrictions. 2am curfew.

Ministry wakes up the neighbours

There were raised eyebrows when the Ministry of Sound announced plans to stage their biggest club event ever at Wembley Exhibition Centre – for the Finale of their UK tour. The sheer enormity and harsh surfaces in the hall made this event a particularly tough one to stage in an acoustic nightmare, and it was up to Shepperton-based Entec to supply three sound systems for the respective rooms.

The mammoth system included Klark Teknik DN360s and the BSS Omnidrive controller, while loudspeaker enclosures were exclusively JBL, with TCB sub bass cabinets and 44 full-range boxes in the two main rooms. Despite

snide remarks in the consumer press to the contrary, the sound in all the rooms was very good, although it wasn't a 'club' sound.

It certainly blew the minds of guests in the neighbouring Hilton Hotel. Following complaints from the third floor of the adjacent hostelry, organisers were instructed to turn down or shut down – hence a slightly less punchy sound than clubbers had hoped for.

The Spot Co used 16 award-winning Golden Scan 3s for effects in one room, designed by Chris Craig and Ben Sullivan. Chris operated the effects during the gig on a Wholehog. The other main room utilised 12 of Clay Paky's other award-winning product, the Golden Scan



ministry finale: mammoth system

HPE, designed and operated by Gerry Caulderhead on a Wholehog II. Because the HPEs didn't arrive until the day of the gig, Gerry programmed the previous night using Wysiwig. The end result was a real showcase for trade sponsors Clay Paky and Pulsar. ■ **live!**

Paul Fowler

Combicolor 300

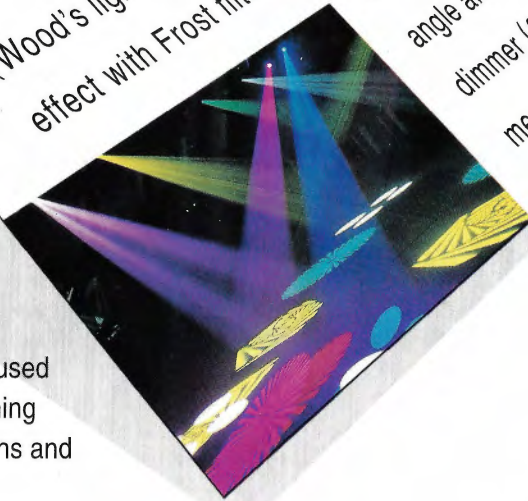
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PROFESSIONAL SHOW LIGHTING

all access

following the festive fiesta
with Carmen Allestun

The inevitable slide into the festive period has been preceded by frantic activity on the touring front, and if there's one thing the hire companies have the rave scene to thank for, it's the amount of business generated between Xmas and New Year!

It was also good to see some of the music business dinosaurs at the **MTV Awards in Paris** including **Bono**, joining the ranks of common sense and concern in the world, by condemning the French government for their outrageous nuclear testing policies, boldly treading where the British government whimpers and kow-tows!

I owe **Celco** an apology for stating in last month's *All Access* that Colin Jones of The Orb was the first person to use a Celco Navigator - of course, I meant to say a Celco Explorer! Oops those gremlins will just have to brush-up on their vocabulary!

On the more domestic front, **Skans Pete Howard** hits the news with his brand new go-faster kidney. The moment that Pete had been waiting for arrived the day after the **Underworld** tour finished, in a four-hour operation to insert the new organ. Pete, under strict instructions to take it easy, is already back to work in the afternoons in the office, although he will be taking a break from the road until next spring...

Skans are busy with **Ozric Tentacles** (with their new 48-channel **Midas XL200**) and **Sabre Tooth Dog** tours, some **Gavin Friday** shows and a frantic festive period. One confirmed New Year event is **ESP** at **Shepton Mallet**, for which they are supplying 60K of Floodlight. Skans are also now able to provide **trucking**, and have four excellent HGV Class drivers at their disposal!

Entec Lighting have **Pulp** in Europe (operated by **Phydeaux**) and **Blur** in the UK (**LD Dave Byars**), **Soda** (**LD Pete Sarson**) on the tour where the band are allegedly doing more photo shoots than gigs! **Gene** are out in Europe (**LD Pip Rhodes**) and **The Stranglers** (**LD Lawrence Dwyer**). Across the warehouse, **Entec Sound** have **Blur** (**FOH Matt Butcher**) and **Pulp** (**FOH Jon Burton**). They have officially now purchased the **new d & b system**, have raves coming up for **Westway Events** at the **Adrenaline Village, Battersea Park**, an Xmas Party at **Teddington TV studios** and the **Michael Ball TV show** in Nottingham for **Central TV**.

'**Light Alternative 20 : Wigwam Acoustics 10**' was all I could elicit from a joyful **Jon Greaves** at **Lite Alternative**. It appears that the lampies royally thrashed the noyz boyz in the recent 5-a-side championships! **Lite Alternative's Paul Normandale** LD'ing **Morrissey** on the Bowie tour (with **LSD** as main lighting contractors) before going to Japan with Morrissey for their own shows. Lite Alternative also have equipment out on **PJ Harvey** in Europe, and **PJ & Duncan** (**LD Greg Szabo**). Christmas shows are on the horizon with **Massive Attack** (**LD Andy Pole**) and the contrasting ambiances of conferences and raves are also keeping Heywood buzzing with life and business.

Next door, **Wigwam's Chris Hill** refused point blank to comment on the humiliating football defeat. However he did reveal that they've bought so much new gear lately that the warehouse is full of cardboard boxes! Their gear is out with **The Stone Roses, PJ Harvey, PJ & Duncan** and **The Smash Hits** tour, and **Scrooge, Great Expectations, A Christmas Carol, Pickwick, Carmen Jones** and **Singing In The Rain** on the theatre circuit - plus a host of conferences.

The Spot Co are bracing themselves for festive junketing. So far confirmed raves for New Year's Eve include **World Dance, Universe, Revelation, Rezerection, Geogle, Pushka, Desire** and **Battersea Wharf**. The Christmas party front is sizzling too with the Spotties doing the lights for **Delta**

Displays, Capital Radio, Fat Cat Records and **Roast** to name but a few! They provide full lighting production for **The Prodigy** at **Brixton** in December and in **Dublin** on **New Year's Eve** (**LD Gary Howard**) and are lighting the dance floor area for the **Stone Roses** at Brixton Academy, as well as having moving lights on **Therapy?**, various pantomimes and **Nutcracker on Ice**.

Neg Earth have **Zucchero** (**LDs Vince Foster and Bill Surtees**), **Therapy?** (**LD Nick Ealy**), **The Blues Brothers Revue** (**LD Rene**), **Paradise Lost** (**LD Nick Thornton**), **Curtis Stelgers** (**John Dipple**), **Ozzy Osbourne, Riverdance** (**LD Rupert Murray**), **Toto** (**LD Dave Hill**). The Neg Earth Christmas will be a working one as they have **Circus du Soleil** in the Albert Hall loading out on **Xmas Day** and the **Nutcracker on Ice** tour following suit on **Boxing Day**. A second **WholeHog II** has been added to the equipment inventory!

Capital Sound have just finished the epic **Simple Minds** tour, **The Charlatans, Squeeze** and **Take That** in the Far East. **Status Quo** and **Gary Glitter** dust of the pension books for yet more Christmas campaigns, with sound provided by Capital, while on the more decorous front **the Beauty and The Beast** ice show starts off with a charity performance at The RAH with a Capital system. New Years Eve looks busy for Capital, with plenty of events verbally confirmed.

Most of **Fineline's** tours return to the warehouse in December, only to be turned round for the non-stop succession of parties and college balls throughout the festive month. With most academies now doing a rave style event for the extroverts as well as a formal black tie event for the more socially conservative, again this is a lucrative outlet for the hire companies. Fineline's **Darren Wring** comments that he's looking forward to a very busy January's conference season. Contrary to popular myth, January is the busiest time of the year for Fineline!

SSE's Chris Beale philosophises that late confirmation is becoming increasingly common with events in the late 20th century. He conjectures that this is down to what people perceive as the immediacy of global communications - the belief that everything can be done instantaneously - which as we know, isn't necessarily the case! **SSE's** current work is very diverse, ranging from supplying PA to Belfast City Council in conjunction with Dimension Audio for **Bill Clinton's address** to **Wet Wet Wet** to the **Hotel Babylon** and **The White Room** TV series. They also have a monitor system with **AC/DC** for their rehearsals in Wembley and are servicing the **BBC Good Food show** and **The Clothes Show** at the NEC. **Curly Jobson** (long renowned in the production world) has joined the SSE team, and Chris Beale reports that the set construction business is going well. SSE are manufacturing a versatile, modular set system that can be tailored to individual needs and desires, but constructed from standard sized components. The set made its first large scale appearance with **Oasis** at **Earls Court**.

Back 2 Front have been busy painting backdrops for **Oasis** (now on their 3rd), **Kim Wilde** and the **Wembley Conference Centre Christmas pantomime**. They have also logo'd the latest padded crowd-restrainers from **Pit Stop Barriers**, and are painting a mural at **Aylesbury Museum** for their Roald Dahl exhibition.

Phase 5 are doing a boxing tournament, **Roy Castle's Hope Appeal** at Liverpool Empire and continuing with the **Joe Longthorne** tour. **Audlease** have **Therapy?** (**FOH Chris Leckle**) and **Paradise Lost** (**FOH Martin Walker**) out.

Supermick have lots of one-offs, parties and Christmas balls in the offing. **Peter Clarke** himself has been doing the lights for **Tina Turner's** recent press launches. Touring-wise they have out **Run Rig** (**LD Alec Nissac**) and **Joan Armatrading** (**LD Nell Kirby**) and **Nanci Griffiths** (**LD Rob Jones**) in the US. Concert Sound have systems on **East 17** (**FOH Paul Boothroyd**), **Allison Moyet** (**Stuart Kerryson**), **Diana King**, the **London Towers** Basketball Team and **Curtis Stelgers** (**FOH Dave Dixon**)

Var-Lite Europe have rigs out with **Oasis** (**LD Milkey Howard**, operator **Peter Mackay**), **Simply Red** (**LD Patrick Woodroffe**), **David Bowie** (**LD Roy Bennett**), **Therapy?**, the **Chippendales** and a host of television shows.

Concert Production Lighting are main lighting contractors on **Radiohead** (**LD Andi Watson**), **Yanni** (**LD David 'Gurn' Kaniski**, **VL op Tim Pauer**), **M-People** (**LD Patrick Woodroffe**, **VL op John Sinden**), **Human League** (**LD / set designer Jonathan Smeeton**, **VL op Liz Berry**), **Cliff Richard** (**LD Jerry Mott**), **The Prodigy** (with Spotco, **LD Gary Howard**) and touring ice show **Beauty & The Beast** (**LD Mick Healy**, **VL op Sandy Imire**).

Brilliant Stages have sets on **Quo, M-People, Twix Mix** in Birmingham, **Zucchero, Simply Red, The Cure's** 1996 dates, **AC/DC**, and **dry hire** to many others....

Golden Scan. Winner again.



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BULLETIN BOARD

live! UPDATE FROM THE PSA DECEMBER 1995



PSA PREPARES TO FIGHT ISE STRUCTURAL GUIDE

The Institution of Structural Engineers' new guidance document on temporary structures has serious implications for the live performance industry. Star Hire's Roger Barrett outlines the PSA position on this burning issue

Back in 1992 a huge temporary seating grandstand collapsed during a football match in Corsica, killing 17 people and injuring over 2,000. The incident worried so many people in this country that a question was asked in the House of Commons about what measures were in place to stop it happening here.

The short answer was that nothing was happening, and so the UK's Department of the Environment asked the Institution of Structural Engineers to draw up a guidance document on the subject.

This has just been published, and without warning it has also embraced many of the structures used at concerts. These include stages, front-of-house towers, lighting towers, PA fly towers, supports for video screens and front-of-stage

crush barriers. Any promoter who hires these, any production manager who specifies these, and anyone who builds them, is seriously affected by this guide.

Whilst this guide was being written, the Home Office and the Health & Safety Executive published the 'Pop Code', which lays down standards for the organisation of concerts. Although not everyone agrees with everything in it, it is widely accepted as a good starting point and has been successfully used for two years.

It will come as no surprise to the cynics amongst you that the two guides contradict each other in several important areas. The new seating guide has lots of good information, but is badly let-down by the additions which relate to staging issues. We feel it is very obvious that no-one involved in writing the guide knows anything about building stages.

Current research into public safety and the causes of accidents constantly focuses on confusion as a key problem.

The PSA believes that to avoid potentially dangerous confusion, the new seat-

ing guide must be withdrawn and re-issued – without the contradictions and without the references to stages. A new chapter should then be added to deal specifically with stages and similar structures, written by the people that design them and understand them.

All the main builders of large concert stages in the UK belong to the PSA, and are supporting the call to resolve this matter as quickly as possible. However, it should be stressed that the guide does not differentiate stages and temporary structures by size. Consequently every stage and temporary structure, no matter how small, indoors or out, is affected.

The PSA are currently in correspondence with the Department of the Environment and the Institution of Structural Engineers in an attempt to renegotiate the terms laid down in the new guide. Meanwhile, the Home Office has responded to criticism by offering to host a seminar in February 1996.

If you want more information or to offer your support, please call the PSA now.

SPECIAL NOTICE: 1996 AGM & CONFERENCE

The PSA 1996 AGM and Conference will be held on Saturday 20th January at the New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, London WC2.

This month's bulletin page shows that the PSA is even now acting as our industry voice. A report to government, that could have far-reaching implications for all those involved in producing and staging live events, is being challenged. With so many issues needing our attention, the conference in January should prove to be a stimulating event.

A new council will be elected by the membership to continue the good work set in motion in April at our first conference. There will also be major sessions on the conference agenda to consider progress to date, along with future action on items such as National Vocational Qualifications and health and safety at the venue.

It is also hoped to have a special panel of

guest speakers to participate in a special session entitled: "Our Industry – A View From All Sides". The guests to include: 1) Artist Manager, 2) Agent, 3) Promoter, 4) Venue Manager, 5) Environmental Health Officer.

This session could offer a greater understanding of the special problems faced by all. Definitely not to be missed!

The full conference programme will be published on the PSA Bulletin page in the January issue of LIVE!. In the meantime, all members are asked to phone or fax the office to let us know if you will be attending. Please don't leave it to the last minute, as it costs the association more money to send out reminders. Hope to see you all there.

Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all from the council and the PSA office.

Keith Ferguson
General Manager

ON THE AGENDA...

DIARY DATES

THURSDAY DECEMBER 14

PSA Council Meeting – Westway.
Pre-Christmas Open Meeting from 7.00pm, for members and prospective members.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 15

First Meeting of new PSA Council – Westway Studio – 2.00pm.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 29

PSA Catering Forum.

To be held at Westway Studio, London W12.

To include update on Health and Safety practices for caterers and general forum on catering issues within the industry.

THURSDAY MARCH 14

PSA Council Meeting – Details TBA.

FRIDAY MARCH 28

PSA Seminar on National Vocational Qualifications.

Details TBA.

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Captain Sensible

Sensible Music founder and director Jeff Allen's opening gambit is: "We're trying hard not to become a sound reinforcement rental company".

A little disingenuous, maybe? No – because that would be too strong a response to level at a company whose commitment to its portfolio of distribution and service rôles has been steadily rewarded – and often unexpectedly driven – by its growing array of pan-European contacts and contracts.

Jeff's unconventional career path stood him in good stead as an admitted late-comer to the professional music industry: on leaving school in the 60s he joined a travelling fair in his native Scotland, developing an interest in music and drumming. A subsequent stint in advertising confirmed that an R&B band drummer could have more fun and earn better money. Moving to London as a session drummer, he joined East Of Eden who went on to share world tour bills with the likes of Pink Floyd and Yes. After their 1975 split his session work featured Bonnie Tyler, Barbara Dickson and John

Jeff Allen throws down the gauntlet

Martyn. Setting out to earn extra income, Allen also began hiring sound equipment under the name of Sensible Music – since when his company has become a successful supplier and studio installer of pro-audio equipment.

It's been a hectic year for the North London company's new audio division, headed by Colin Barton and Claude Taylor. He says Sensible are regularly called upon to provide sound for showcases – "always in tiny basements down three flights of spiral stairs," he laughs.

"Our first club gig was a showcase with Aswad and Yaz using two P4s a side in a fairly large room; since then People have taken them apart to find out how they sound so good." Also on the current and recent contract list are tours with Neil Sedaka and the Royal Philharmonia, and typical one-offs including the IMF Awards, Queen's album

release bash at Blenheim Palace, the Beatles Anthology release and Michael Barymore's shows. Clairs themselves have recently completed installation contracts for Disneyland and Mexico City Stadium following their R2 cabinets winning a PA 'shoot-out'".

"It's difficult and competitive for sound companies out there; I've been able to avoid a lot of that because our Clair Brothers systems are so specialised. We have a good working relationship with Jurg Hugin at Audio Rent in Switzerland which helps us get into European markets. We support his touring clients and vice-versa. For next year the group's production side is already filling up with bookings, and in other rental areas, our Garwood IEM and radio mic systems are working all the time, even though many artists are now buying their own systems. From our IEM and radio systems right through to our large collection of vintage guitars, the rental business is usually very busy."

Finally, he throws down a gauntlet to the live sound business: "Let's set up an A-B competition, a blind test in a theatre. Other popular compact systems, versus the R411s and P4s. I'd love to do it. I wonder if anyone else would." Any takers? ■ **live!**

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Mike Lethby



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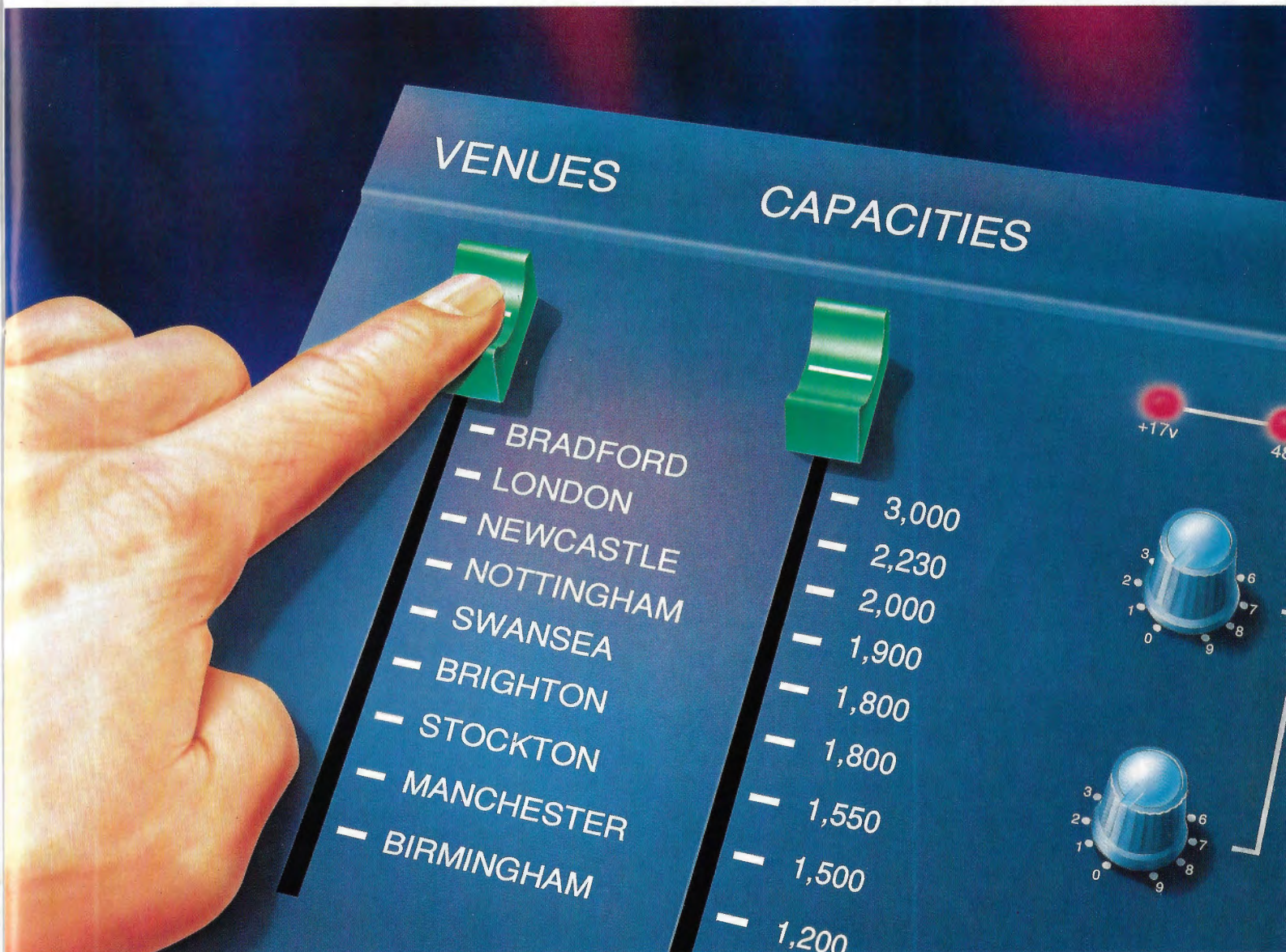


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Tower

NOTTINGHAM
Ritzy

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alive!

come

Their early success became mired in a five-year legal nightmare. Free at last, can the Stone Roses muster the old Mancunian magic? Louise Stickland quizzed LD Simon Sidi about those light bulbs, and Wigwam engineer Simon Dawson about his Recall, at Brighton Centre. Mike Lethby tried hard to focus

The Stone Roses, one of the most controversial and creative bands of the late eighties Manchester acid house epoch, have been making the most eagerly awaited 'comeback' tour of the decade. Their characteristically contrasting career imploded from the intense hyperbole of 1989/90 to relative seclusion from the public eye for the next five years, while the legal wrangles of trying to free themselves from their then record company ran their course.

During these intervening years there was no new music released, no performances, no interviews or press and plenty of conjecture ... until the capriciously-titled *Second Coming* album appeared in the record shops at the end of 1994. When the publicity and marketing machines started to crank up for forthcoming activity in the Roses camp, the band made a classically-defiant gesture to the corporate music press by giving their first interview exclusively to *The Big Issue*.

The tour kicked off in April in Europe to mixed reviews, and last summer saw the band's first ever shows in America. Their scheduled headline Saturday night performance on the main stage at Glastonbury had to be cancelled due to personal injury, and the by-now salivating British public had to wait until November to see the live reincarnation of The Stone Roses. (Except those who got wind of their 'secret' appearance at the Pilton Village Fair in September, where Michael Eavis persuaded them to play the after-fair party, a challenge they rose to with characteristic aplomb.)

Lighting: maximum unorthodoxy

As might be expected, the stage has a strange appearance. Lighting designer is Simon Sidi, a great believer in minimalism, and it comes to lighting instruments.

Film lights on long thin stands strut across it like arrogant struts and a 40ft wide silver slash drape demurely glistens upstage. It's an immediate confrontation with paraphernalia from opposing environments – the glitz of seedy cabaret and the dream-like facade of the film set – both compacted onto an unmistakably rock 'n' roll stage dominated by a massive drum riser. The unorthodoxy is further enhanced by the space-age presence of Icon hulks on the floor.

Twelve Icons form the core of the rig, eight on the floor and four on Manfrotto stands up-stage. The 'film' lights are D. P. Lowell Photofloods with gold reflectors and barn doors, mounted on push-up stands. Up above there are two trusses – one upstage for the slash drape and one down-stage for front stage PAR washes. At the rear of

again



'A billowing, spectacular mass of fog, beams and lighting effects'

stage, cyc lights and 5K fresnels with colour changers act as dramatic silhouette lights for the whole 'set, an effect Simon uses with great sensitivity and impact.

Five songs into the set, for *Daybreak*, Simon unleashes his *pièce-de-resistance* – the hanging light bulbs. Sixteen large screw-fitting 1K bulbs suspended on varying-length thin steels from the rear truss and a mid-stage scaffold pipe sway from side to side, their light trails snaking across the silver slash in curved, psychedelic white lines. Further inquiry reveals that the lighting crew are hauling on ropes backstage to make the metalwork move, bell-ringers'-style.

Sidi runs the show from an Icon console. A keen exponent of the desk, he claims it's the simplest console he has ever used, and says he "wouldn't use anything else" at present. He also mentions that with easy access to the software designer, Mark Hunt, making modifications or custom adaptations to the desk to suit individual shows is very easy.

His use of Icons and the other lighting is well thought-out, intelligent and different, with virtually all the moving light clichés absent from this show and some refreshing new colour combinations too. By mid-set, he is clearly determined to rival the Sisters of Mercy in the 'most-smoke-on-stage' stakes. The stage is a billowing, spectacular mass of fog, beams and lighting effects and the band are engulfed to the point of oblivion.

Sound: Meyer, Amek Recall and Dynamics

But this is of no consequence to the power and charisma of the Stone Roses as they streak through their anthemic set, which lingers in the brain long after the final chord has been absorbed into the concrete dullness of the night.

Front of house engineer Simon Dawson also co-produced *The Second Coming* with Neil Schroeder. He first met the Roses while engineering the *One Love* session at Rockfield Studios. They had just completed *The Power of Love*, where they attacked a major record label head with white and blue paint for releasing an early single and an "embarrassing" video, and came to the studio with wet paint still on their shoes.

This is the first time Simon has mixed live sound since he 'retired' from the road in 1987, but he relished the chance to return to the buzz of live engineering. As he was so closely ➔ p20

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← p19 involved in the creation of the album, it seemed a natural progression to follow-on with the tour. He already had a good dialogue with the band, and knew how they wanted to sound: "The main thing they want is a good vibe," he elucidates. He is very much into the concept of mixing by feel, feeding off the natural vibes of the show and audience and imbibing the emotional builds and drops of the set – and influencing them accordingly with the PA sound.

During the most obvious of these dynamic points throughout the set, he 'rides' the guitar, commenting that there are other places where the bass and kick-drum create a "nice, big, fat" synergy. He shies-away from over-using effects, but emphasises that dynamics are important in pushing forward certain parts of the set.

Wigwam's PA features Meyer MSL-3s, which Simon Dawson really likes: "They have a nice, warm bottom end and great sub-bass," he says.

The main effects are delays and reverbs, and all delays are programmed to the speed of the song. For guitarist John Squire's main effect, an SPX 1000, he uses a short delay that he rides, and a longer one for the more moody stuff. An Eventide H 3000 is used mainly on the acoustic set and for Ian Brown's vocals on *I Wanna Be Adored*. Simon says his main problem with Ian's vocal is getting it above an extremely bolshie, in-



Sixteen 1K bulbs snaked across the silver slash

your-face volume mix, but there was no evidence of any difficulties on this score at Brighton.

The FOH desk is a pristine 40-channel Amek Recall. Dawson praises its compact size and EQ – used to using Neve equipment in the studio, he feels very comfortable with its layout. He is also running the ShowTime software which accompanies the desk. Amongst other functions, this allows the engineer to record all mutes, desk and outboard effects settings for each song and play them back as a series of cues (as on a lighting desk). Thus, all effects for the next song can be changed at the touch of one button on the desk – freeing the engineer to concentrate on the mix. A monitor provides a graphical interface, allowing the songs to be rearranged in the set list at will, with full access to any effect as and when necessary. On stage, a Soundcraft SM24 provides the monitor mix.

It's a system that works out very well. The Roses' Brighton sound emerges as a delicious blend of strength and richness that consumes the otherwise soul-less chasm of the room.

And despite those early reviews, this show's combination of powerful performance, visual gymnastics and a dynamic mix points to a return to form on home soil – five years on. ■ live!

CREDITS

Tour Manager: *Steve Atherton*
Production Manager: *Chris Griffiths*
FOH engineer: *Simon Dawson*
Monitor engineer: *Damian Foster*
Lighting designer: *Simon Sidi*
Sound crew: *Steve Phillips, Mark Littlewood*
Lighting crew: *Daniel Bocking, Ellen Pitton*
Backline crew: *Ben Knot, Phil Smith, Martin Herbert, Hugh Caulder*
Sound equipment: *Wigwam*
Lighting equipment: *LSD*
Catering: *Cat 'n' Mouse*
Trucking: *Eurotrux*
Buses: *Star Rider*

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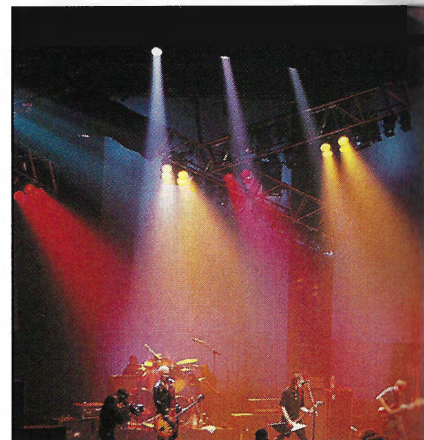
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Fuelled by awesome power chords, screaming guitars, abrasive vocals, bottomless energy, full-on punk assaulting your sensory devices, the Foo Fighters' message is clear and in your face. No fancy dressing, no pretensions, no shit.

On lead guitar and vocals, Dave Grohl is defying those who have cynically labelled him as 'the drummer from Nirvana'. The Foo Fighters are battling for their own identity and integrity. This is something that surely can no longer be denied them. The past is the past and the future is, well, huge and bright, I would think.

Following their triumphant appearance in the Melody Maker tent at this year's Reading festival, when a riot nearly ensued because of the bottleneck of people trying to cram in, the Foo Fighters are playing a short but high-profile European tour. Brixton Academy is the largest venue on that tour, and the two shows here are also being filmed for MTV.

Witness first hand a different class of crowd surfers! Maniacally grinning, exuberant punters kept clambering on-stage and launching themselves back into their peers in a life-and-death competition to jettison themselves the furthest.



Loz Upton, lighting designer for the Brixton Academy shows, recorded for MTV

The tour is picking up local lighting production, but for these Brixton shows LD Loz Upton (Smashing Pumpkins, Beastie Boys, White Zombie, *et al*) has been brought in to cast his anti-regularity spell on the stage. Upton, renowned for flying in the face of conventional lighting aestheticism, left the essential arrangement of the trussing until they were actually rigging it in the Academy the previous day.

Four non-symmetrical runs of truss are flown in loose V shapes on stage left, and two vertical pre-rig truss towers provide lamps for cross stage washes. The front truss and audience trusses (3 in total) are also raked and hung at different angles, with the front truss trimmed right out at 50ft. Instruments are scattered around in random fashion, which, when the show starts, give a crazy but fairly evenly-spaced look.

He uses all the primary and most of the major secondary colours, many of them grouped together in blocks of four PARs, two underneath each other. This gives a venomous punch to the proceedings on stage – as well as looking cool on camera.

cameras

In order to isolate the stage from the building and avoid seeing tatty building paraphernalia in the background shots, Upton draped the entire area surrounding the band with grey scrims. These were also lit with Moles to provide relief from the main beam-orientated light-show.

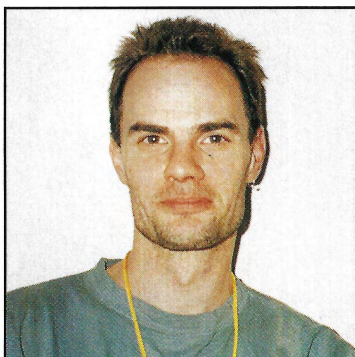
Because time was tight Upton opted not to use any moving lights on-stage (although an Icon system was lighting the auditorium architecture for camera), so it's all PAR cans and Moles with Mags. He operates from a Celco Gold desk and comments, "The big issue with these one-offs is that you can spend so much time putting it together that it kills your execution, which no good for the show".

He admits that this is a brighter show than he would normally produce, because of the 'TV factor'. Despite the extra requirements, he managed to ditch (at the band's request) three FOH spots, and cover the shortfall with two others almost directly above them on

the front truss, and by brightening-up the front truss washes.

Front of house sound engineer Craig Overbay also did that job for Nirvana, and I was originally due to interview him on the ill-fated *In Utero* tour. They have been carrying a predominantly Flashlight (with some Floodlight) sound rig for the European tour, which was beefed up for Brixton – the first time they have flown the system.

Overbay states that the band are all experienced and accomplished musicians, concerned with the sound that comes from them, which is, he says, "half the battle. We're looking for a finished product here, not an ego". They play very loud on-stage, which creates its own problems for him out front, especially during quieter songs, when he finds he can often turn the kick drum off entirely in the smaller venues.



Craig Overbay, FOH engineer and production manager

Overbay reckons the key to getting a guitar band sounding its best is in the choice of microphones. For the Foo Fighters he uses three on each guitar - a Sennheiser 409, an Audix D3 and Red Box DI's. He is mixing through a Midas XL3, chosen for its compact size.

Vocals are important but the Foo Fighters are primarily a guitar band, so he says it's quite acceptable for the former to dip below the guitars occasionally, although this rarely happens tonight. He uses minimal effects; an Eventide harmoniser on vocals during the poppier numbers, and in rooms that allow it, a touch of reverb to add warmth and roundness. Similarly, on the guitars, there's nothing at all apart from auto-pan effects on the solos. ■ **live!**

CREDITS

Tour Manager: Peter Banta **Production Manager/FOH engineer:** Craig Overbay **Monitor Engineer:** Ian Beveridge **Lighting Designer (for Brixton):** Loz Upton **Lighting Equipment (Brixton):** Light & Sound Design **Sound Equipment:** Britannia Row Productions **Sound riggers:** John Shearman, Simon Thomas **Guitar Maestro:** Earnie Bailey **Backline technicians:** Jimmy Swanson, Matt Conlon **Catering:** Snakatack **Trucking:** Transam **Buses:** Phoenix

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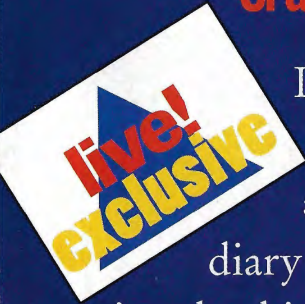
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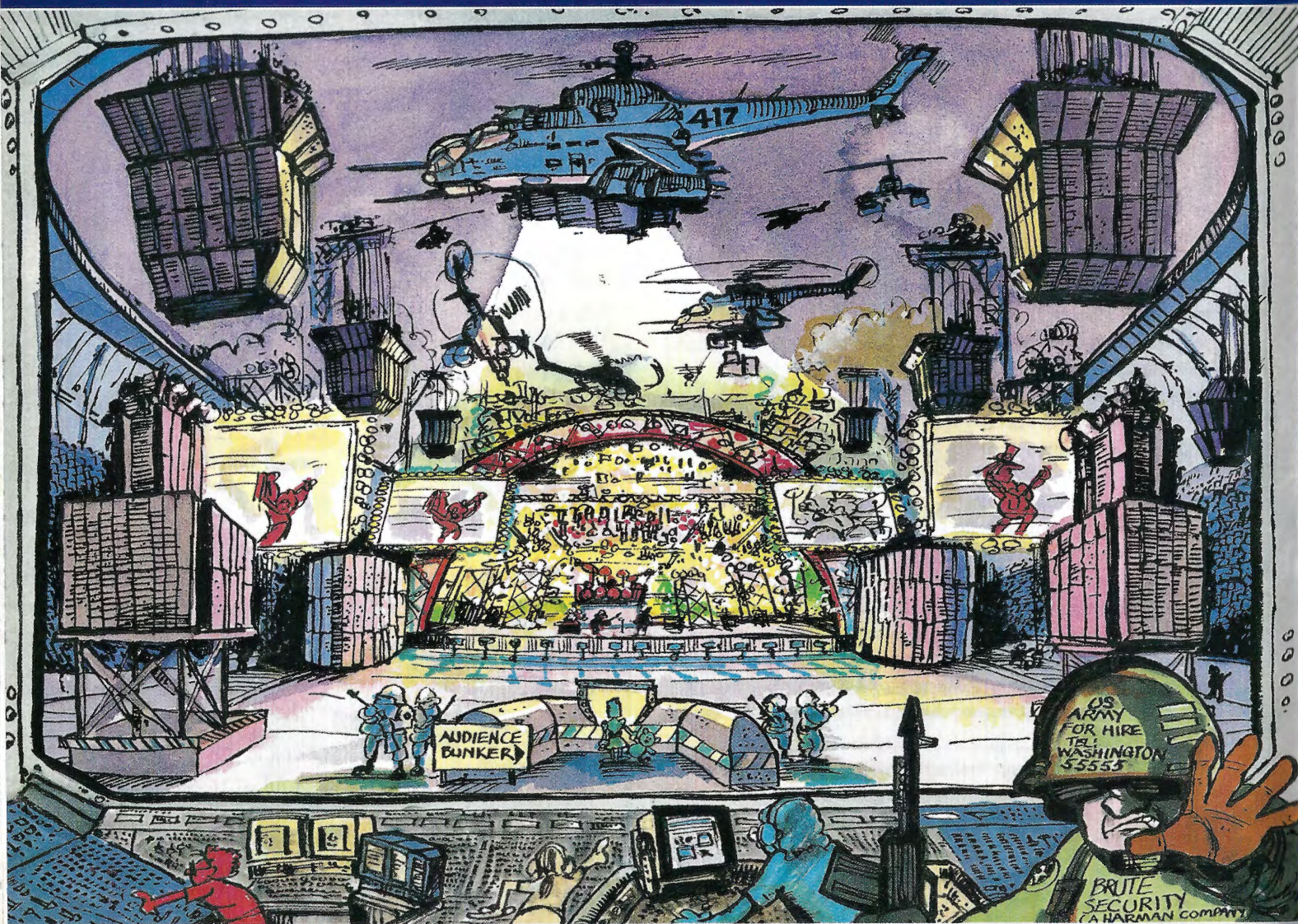
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live! exclusive review: the
Crashing Bores at Wembley

On the



In 1974, ex-student Martin Bradley became roadie for a Dixieland jazzband with a 100w HH PA and an intensive diary of one-nighters and foreign trips. Two decades on, he's still involved in live music, running small, simple Turbosound and Bose PAs and lighting rigs. However, by his own admission, each edition of this magazine brings a deluge of high tech news from the sharp end of the touring world that makes his head spin. Projecting his febrile imagination twenty years into the future, he contemplates the gig scene of 2015, and isn't sure he likes what he sees...



road in 2015

Old hands in the live music game may remember the situation before the turn of the century at what was the national football stadium. Noise restrictions limited concerts to a handful a year. Then entertainment conglomerate Chris Evans plc bought the place, concreted-over the roof and it became the familiar intimate club venue every band likes to play when their tour hits London.

Since coming off the road in 1999, I have done many concert write-ups for this magazine. Few, however, surpass the technical wizardry and logistical achievements of the latest (and maybe the last) tour by those grizzled Goliaths of grunge, the Crashing Bores. Recently for the *LIVE!* review I went to Wembley Astrodome to meet the crew during the Bores' annual two-week residency, promoted by Allied MCP Fiddler plc (a Harman Company).

THE SOUND OF THE BORES

I met FOH man George Twiddle at his familiar position behind four Yamaha (a Harman Company) PM88000s, and asked about his approach. "For this show, I'm using 235 channels only – this is after all meant to be an informal gig! I always prefer vintage mics. For example, here I'm using an SM57, 58 and 59, an AKG451, 535, 405, a 414, a 421 and a couple of Neumann tube jobs. That combination gives me the snare sound I like." While George rambled on about the mixing of each of the 22 other drums, I spoke to Billy Bazooka, the laconic Texan from Showco (a Harman company) in charge of the 800-cabinet array forming the impressive 650 ton, 100m wide x 20m high, monolith flown above the two-acre stage.

"I'm using the new Death Rattle 2000 cab. I'm not supposed to tell you what's inside it, but you might guess that there's a 21", an 18", a 15", a 12", a 10"...er...an 8", and six compression drivers. Plus bullets. And piezos. All active. This unit is of course half the size and weight of the old Death Rattle 1000, which being a two year old design, is real primitive technology that I wouldn't spit

on. However, in order to make my balls seem bigger than they actually are, I've ordered twice as many boxes, so the array doesn't look any smaller. This cab produces 379db at a thousand feet, and this is therefore ideal for an intimate venue like this, particularly now global regulations prevent live shows exceeding 68db LEQ. We like plenty of headroom." The stage system was fairly modest too, with monitor engineer Tina Tonedead providing the band with just 1,426 hexaphonic ambisonic surround mixes via the Garwood (a Harman Company) in-brain psychosomatic virtual audio system, 720 Showco Vulcan 6600 50kW sidefills and an array of 84 5kW 4x24" MegaWedges, "Cos the guys like their sound to have a bit of presence up there."

LIGHTING

Over on the lighting consoles I asked Jason Dazzle, the band's 16-year-old LD, how he tackled his brief. "I had a tiny **TINY** budget and had to call in a few favours. I got hold of my dad, who's a director at Spotco plc (a Harman Company) and asked what they could do for such a pitiful amount of Ecus. In the end I secured 300 Tigercleverbishbosh-mirrorwagglescans and a gross of Cyber-hypergoldenshowers. Via my mum, who's on the board at Neg Earth plc (a Harman Company) I scraped up a couple of hundred Vari*Lite (a Har*man Company) triple-head VL69s and I'm running it all off just five Utterhogs controlled by my wrist-top computer, which though I say it myself is a masterstroke of programming and compromise. To give the show some kind of dimension and scale – despite the piddling budget – the 24 followspots are mounted on a squadron of US Air Force helicopter gunships, hovering above the stage....I suppose we'll get some sort of show out of it," he remarked ruefully, and wandered off to supervise diverting the output of the new Neasden nuclear power station into backstage.

Computer boffin Clive Sinclair Jr talked me through the tour's automation features. "We run the usual MIDI-assignable remote alpha-beta-gamma-mississippi-delta-numer-

ic self-addressing, self-programming, self-monitoring, self-employed, self-congratulatory, self-abusing proShowGoLoMoPlayDo program package, of course. However, I've modified it to drive not only the desks, the effects, stage-to-FOH UHF wireless fibre optic VHF multicore, the synthesised voice followspot cues, the helicopters **and** most of the lighting – although the lampies probably haven't realised yet – but also the wardrobe man's sewing machine and the microwaves over in catering. The people at Eat Your Hearts Out To The Beat plc (a Harman Company) are delighted that they don't even have to get out of bed now. Neither, in fact, does anyone."

Trucking for this tour was provided by Redburn Stardes TransAm Shirley plc (a Harman Company) and thank to the compact nature of today's modern systems, required only 87 60-footer artics, a 30-car Police escort from the warehouse and the demolition of just three bridges on the North Circular Autobahn. Unusual Hercules Miracles plc (not a Harman Company) supplied two crew, the set being self-erecting. All of the 1.4 million tickets sold out in seventeen minutes, thanks to the computerised ticket allocation and the credit card charging system running off spare capacity in one of the SPX900000's neural network artificial intelligence micro-processors. Brute International supplied security, cattle prod and baton charges being needed only three times a night, on average. Deaths in the bashing-each-other pit were negligible.

And how were the band themselves? The renowned Seattle duo didn't turn up, because the production office comsat interface uplink downlink to their hotel across the road went down, so their alarm clocks never went off. However, no-on noticed and each night the crowd indulged in a frenzy of T-shirt and hologram poster buying that made three times more money than the gate. All in all, the perfect gig for the 21st century. Strange to think that way back in the 1900s, what the band actually **did** on stage had the slightest relevance to the SHOW!

© Martin Bradley 1995



Photos courtesy of Pulsar Light of Cambridge

(What's the story?)

In a shade under two years Oasis have risen from the clubs to the stars. Their record-busting London shows involved friends old and new in a landmark weekend. Louise Stickland interviewed tour manager Margaret Mouzakitis and the show's designers; Phil Dent took the pictures; and Mike Lethby checked out the sound

It's back-stage at the Oasis' second record-breaking November gig at Earl's Court: the largest indoor concerts yet staged in the UK and, probably, Europe. (20,000 punters each night, promoted by MCP and, with the arena floor standing-only.) Production Portacabins and catering facilities are next door in Earl's Court 2. An electric buzz of excitement – and an awesome sense of enormity – filters throughout the cavernous, empty, grey hulk of a building.

It's a relaxed Sunday afternoon. Various production personnel are scanning the papers in catering, tinkering with their equipment or chatting. A couple of the band are zipping about on a set of classic Lambrettas to die-for that Noel Gallagher had shipped-in from Italy. And all are secure in the knowledge that the previous night's show, Oasis' highest-profile date in their short but spectacular career, had been a

resounding success.

The whole whirlwind Oasis story has been one of full-on success and fanatical activity, spanning the last 18 months, and growing exponentially as the hits have come thick and fast. But the last few months haven't been easy for the band. A series of unfortunate circumstances led to this becoming one of the most rescheduled tours in history. This, plus the fact that their often exuberant

Margaret Mouzakitis



and rowdy off-stage behaviour has led to them being branded les enfants terribles of Britpop by the press, has merely added fuel to the Oasis enigma.

The person responsible for keeping the whole road-show together is tour manager Margaret Mouzakitis. After an hour sitting in the production office with Margaret, you realise that this capable, charismatic and friendly young woman commands the respect and confidence of everyone in the building and on the tour.

Born in New York 26 years ago of Greek parents, Margaret started her career in the music industry when she was 19. Her first job was doing college radio promotions for a New York management company which represented UK artists in the US. She laughs and recalls: "I hated it! I'm not a naturally pushy person, and basically it was a plugging job.

College radio in America is very, very Indie, and I would be going: 'Well, how about the new Erasure single?'" She moved within the company onto artist liaison and tour co-ordination and stuck with this for the next five years. It gave her the first taste of touring, and a chance for her clearly-visible communication and organisational skills to flourish. During this time, she also self-financed her way through college at evening classes to gain a BA in History. Studying is dear to Margaret's heart and she intends to do post-graduate work in the future. "Going to University gets you into the mentality of researching things properly, which is invaluable to me now," she says.

At the end of her press and promotion role on Depeche Mode's long *Devotional* tour, Margaret decided to up-sticks and come to London. Once settled-in she was approached by Marcus Russell from Ignition Management, with whom she had worked on the *Electronic*

tour in the US. "Marcus had this new young band doing pub and small club gigs who were just about to release their first single," she explains, "and he needed someone to look after them on the road." That single was *Supersonic* and the rest is history!

Her first show with Oasis was in April '94 at Windsor's Old Trout, in the days when Bonehead (rhythm guitar) drove them and all their gear in a nine-seater minibus. She admits to being "very nervous" and concerned about what the band would think of her – but they obviously haven't looked back since.

Thus Earl's Court represented the biggest shows that Margaret has worked on to date, involving more than 140 personnel and three months of preparation. For much of that time both she and production manager Trigger were on tour, so they brought in Robbie Williams (the production impresario, rather than the 'ex' of *Take That!*) to production-direct the London event and to take care of any necessities during their

absence. "He opened many, many doors for us in dealing with this venue," she comments.

People enthuse that it is a pleasure to work with Margaret. Her relaxed attitude and forthright manner are complemented by an acute sense of humour; a Southern Mediterranean affability combines with New York freneticism to produce the motivational psychology that makes this, the highest-profile of tours, work every day, whatever the mood or the circumstances. Although a very serious person when the occasion demands, Margaret's face is never far away from a smile during our interview.

She admits that Marcus had taken a risk in employing someone who had never tour-managed before, particularly as the bands' ascendancy to stardom became so meteoric. But it's axiomatic from the whole vibe on the tour that he had made a good decision. "If the band come off-stage saying 'Wow, that was great'," she says, "and everyone is happy, then you know you've done your job".

➔ p28

Margaret Mouzakis

LD Mikey Howard: 88 Icons and 50 VL5s lit the Geoff Grainger/Total Fabs set



← p27 She adds that Oasis, as a band, are much easier to organise on the road than their press image would allude to. "They're never late for sound-check or show-time. Even getting them organised for interviews, TV's or photo shoots is pretty easy. Sometimes they are the first people downstairs in the hotel lobby in the morning. They know they have to graft and are certainly not afraid of hard work." Oasis are renowned for feeling very responsible to their fans, and their primary concern, with the upheavals of the last few months, has been to get back out there and reschedule and play their shows at the earliest opportunity.

Being young and female, I wondered, had she ever encountered any attitude problems over the past 18 months? "Not really. I think people feel refreshed to see new faces, specially if you are doing the job well. I'm also the first person to admit if I don't know something. I won't try and bluff my way through. The idea is that I surround myself with the right people on the production team". Oasis endeavour to work with people in the same age group, which reduces the occurrence of 'old school' attitudes at the outset. Margaret feels it is actually a distinct advantage being female with this band. There are, she says, certain circumstances where they listen to her when they most definitely wouldn't listen to a guy!

The last 18 months' learning curve has been massive for her, and she feels very fortunate to have had the opportunity to benefit from this fund of experience. "I'm a lot more confident now about making the right decisions," she affirms.

But it has also meant very little time to her-

12 Golden Scan HPEs provided gobo projections



self: it's rare for a tour manager to have a day off on tour, even when there's no show; and when she does manage to steal a few hours away, she can normally be found in the local museum or shopping. The current punishing touring schedule ends in January, although it wouldn't surprise anybody if it continued into 1996. In the one month's break since she started with the band, Margaret managed to satiate one of her other loves – travelling – by going trekking in China.

In the longer term, she envisions pursuing her current career path for five or six years. While she is keen to continue tour managing, her interest in production has been stimulated in the process, so this is an area she intends to explore.

It's also not easy keeping a personal life together when constantly on tour. "What personal life?" she quips with a large grin. "I'm having a lot of fun doing this, but I do want to settle down one day – have a family, go to school, etc.

However, the entertainment business has always been an important part of my life, and I don't see myself ever letting go entirely." ■ **live!**

CREDITS

Tour manager: Margaret Mouzakis
Production manager: Trigger
Production director: Robbie Williams
Lighting designer: Mikey Howard
Icon operator: Frank Shields
Vari*Lite operator: Pete MacKay
Lighting crew chief: Mike O'Connor
Video Production & Cameras: Creative Technology
Jumbotrons: Screenco
FOH engineer: Hw Richards
Monitor engineer: John Jackson
Audio crew chief: Steve Spencer
Stage set: Total Fabrications
Head rigger: Pete the Greek
Trucking: Stardes
Buses: Stardes
Catering: Cat'n'Mouse
Promoters: MCP & SJM



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Automation in Live Sound...

'AMEK have broken the technology barrier with their Recall by Langley console. Having used the Recall exclusively for remixing the Phil Collins Far Side of The World Tour, I'm more than satisfied that there can be no return to manual operation. The Showtime automation package is easy to use and allows me to spend much more time listening to the mix rather than operating the console. AMEK's onboard VIRTUAL DYNAMICS package met all my gain processing requirements and the console EQ surpasses expectations. I was so impressed I even bought one.'

Rob 'Cubby' Colby



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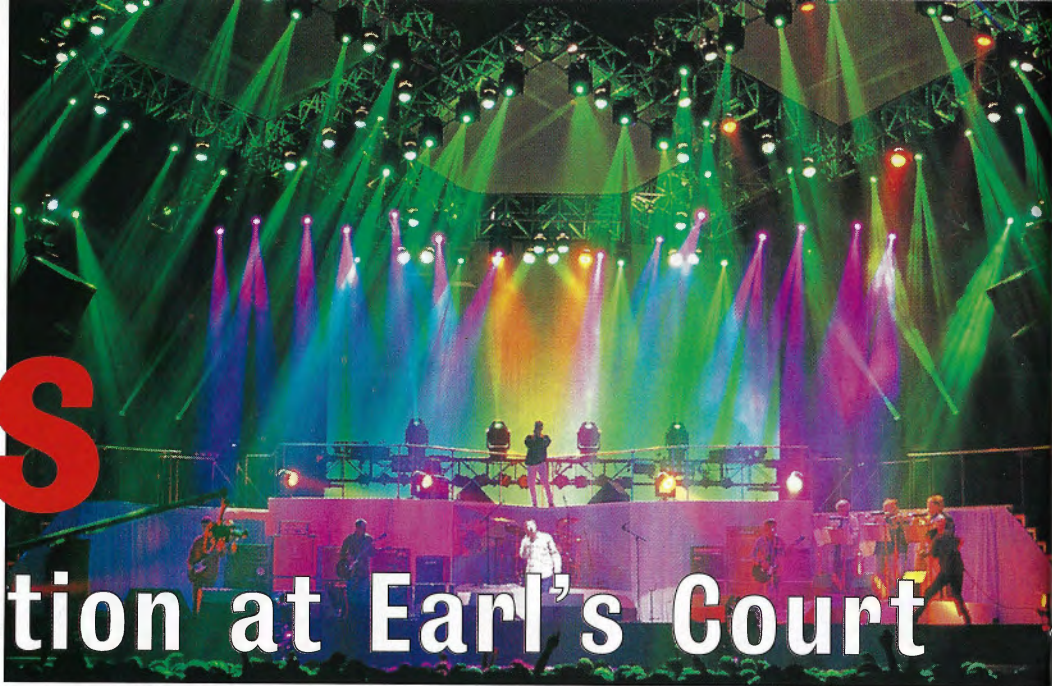
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... is the future

oasis

in production at Earl's Court



For those who came and saw, the enormous Earl's Court experience depended, as always, on where the luck of the draw saw you standing (or seated). A lot of effort in a short space of time had gone into creating a quality experience for the fans (witness the major draping effort to quell reverb, Britannia Row's multiple distributed delays, high-quality Jumbotron video content and a feisty, energetic lighting design).

These helped to make it a compelling gig for most, while the most notable shortcoming concerned the bafflingly inadequate bar facilities for 20,000 thirsty Oasites. Highlights included the sheer drive of the band themselves, who carried all before them, and the shining crispness of the Jumbotrons which conveyed their deadpan faces to the farthest balconies. Weirdly, it was the second Brit Row job to attract press reports of "earthquakes" (*Madstock* in Finsbury Park was the first). Sure, they were loud – but not *that* loud. But such is rock-'n'-roll mythology.

Tour production manager Trigger had been working in advance with the erudite figure of Robbie Williams, who helped prepare Earl's Court and the local authority for the shows. Says Williams: "I just got the building ready for Trigger to roll in with a beefed-up production." He also cut through a lot of the attendant red tape, dealt with the local authority's concerns – "they were very worried about people tripping over," he says – and brought in the Jumbotrons.

This was the first time the band had used a stage set, and while they weren't keen on it looking too 'glitzy', they realised a stage this big had to be filled with something other than themselves. Lighting designer Mikey Howard has known Noel Gallagher for some years, and has worked for Oasis since sum-

By Mike Lethby and Louise Stickland

mer 1994. Following a similar trajectory to the band, he quickly found himself designing larger more elaborate and spectacular rigs as the tour progressed.

LSD's Geoff Grainger designed the set, which was built by Total Fabrications, and with LSD providing the gear Icons played a pivotal role in Mikey Howard's design. 88 of them adorned the stage and rig, together with 50 VL5s, and 12 Golden Scan HPEs which projected gobos onto the set and over-stage screens. There was a glut of generics too. Three pods – two trapezoidal and one pentagonal – formed an interesting trussing sculpture over the stage, with screens stretched across their centres. These were lit by instruments mounted on three floor trusses upstage of the set walkway. Mikey was again teamed-up with Frank Shields on Icons and Peter MacKay on Vari*Lites – the latter a former cohort on the Happy Mondays.

Two large Jumbotron screens – flown unusually in portrait format – were provided by Screenco, while a five-camera video production unit came from Creative Technology. The portrait screen format worked well for a band who are as static on-stage as they come, and the video camerawork of John Steele and Matt Lewns also deserves praise, as does director Dick Carruthers.

Britannia Row's Steve Spencer, who deputised for FOH man Huw Richards on some of the US dates (see *LIVE!*, November) spec'd a Turbosound system of unusual design. Besides main stereo clusters and a central delay he placed smaller pods of Flashlight further back and to the sides to reach into the upper tiers, run, as per Brit

Row practice, via BSS Varicurves.

Spencer: "Between the angling of the system and the draping we achieved a good restriction of reflections, although the H&S people wouldn't let us do carpeting for fear of punters tripping or aquaplaning on spilt beer! We spent a lot of time and money draping the place, including the swimming pool, loosely based around the design for Floyd here. The system was controlled by LMS-700s, with close attention to time-alignment."

Two 8x3 hangs of Flashlight main system highs covered the first half of the floor and lower balconies, angled down to reduce reflections. A large ground stack of 30 bass a side used Underhung cabinet infills and centre fills on the thrust. Behind the mix riser, an 8x3 main delay array of 16 highs and 8 bass was aimed to avoid the sparsely-filled rear arena floor. Upper balconies were covered with eight separate flown full-range delay arrays, plus Floodlights on the outer edges of of the Jumbotrons.

Vocal mics were Shure SM58s (not Betas) for Noel Gallagher's characteristic sing-up-to-the-mic stance and brother Liam. On stage, where the band likes high volume, monitoring, adds Spencer, was "interesting" – a lot of wedges plus four Flashlight cabs and six bass per side; and a truss flown behind the lighting truss with Flashlight front fills, one pair each in front of Noel, Liam and the band at stage-right. Again, Oasis' immobility on the boards makes this a viable option.

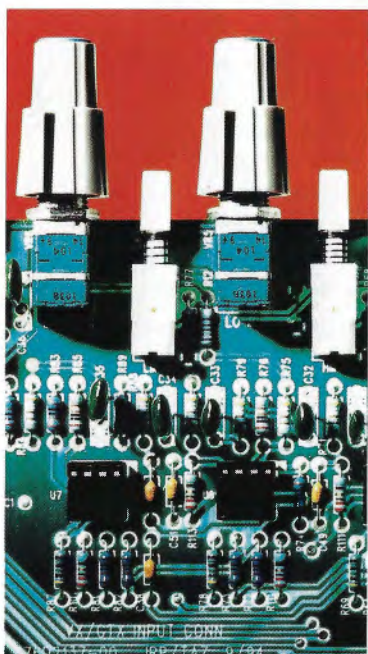
From our privileged eyrie on the packed mix riser the show gelled superbly, shot through with the dynamism and paid-their-dues tightness of the band. Rarely has a pop band hit the big time so fast; the burning question on the lips of the music business is: having conquered Britannia, can they achieve the same in the New World? ■ **live!**



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The Cecil B De Mille of vibe

After Megadog's recent 10th birthday celebrations, Louise Stickland profiles Bob Dog – one of the pioneering partners in this unique live dance-oriented movement

Megadog recently celebrated their 10th birthday, and as you might expect, the two guys behind this expressive anarchy are no ordinary people. Michael Dog (the canine family moniker is adopted by all involved) was busy DJ'ing at the first night of their Brixton Academy birthday bash when partner Bob Dog took up the story.

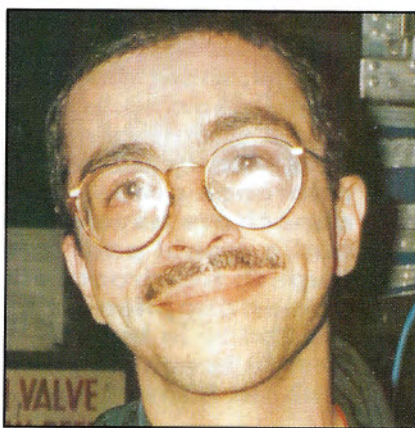
The organisation has grown into one of the most successful, diverse and respected dance music phenomena of the last decade. Megadog events themselves are characterised by the transformation of rock 'n' roll venues into creative, chaotic and provocative-ly-visual environments, alive with friendly, stimulating, interactive experiences and superlative music; Megadog shows offer it all.

But Megadog has also been responsible for touring, and breaking, many contemporary techno artists (including Eat Static, Banco de Gaia, Drum Club and System Seven) – and then backing them with the full Megadog imaginative inventory. A surrealist, multi-textured blend of lighting, sound, decor, scenery and other production elements forms the unique characteristic of Megadog shows.

Apart from large helpings of charisma, Bob Dog is eloquent and sincere and exudes a tremendous warmth.

Son of the millionaire owner of the Brentford Nylons empire, he was expelled from Westminster School at the age of 15 for managing a punk band – and for taking a month off to do recording sessions. Ten years ago, while restoring antique books, he started working for Michael. "Michael had this house rule about keeping straight," recalls Bob, "and I was constantly subverting this and getting stoned, as well as rattling on about music, because that was my roots."

Humour, a continuous theme throughout Dog history (and still very evident in the presentation of Megadog events), first surfaced in Bob and Michael's earliest foray into music. They formed a spoof heavy metal band, Bludgeon, and staged a gig in north London. To their surprise, 200 people came and had a very good time. "It was madness," he muses, "we were throwing fish around in



Bob Dog

condoms and all that kind of thing!"

That marked the birth of Dead Dog Promotions, a name which emanated from the *If* cartoon series in the *Guardian* newspaper. After the success of the first few gigs, ideas started gathering momentum and the pair opened their first 'Club Dog', originally based on their local following from the Finchley/Hendon area of north London. It was soon attracting people from far and wide as a place where hippies, crusties, eccentrics and all who were anathema to the banal club scene of the mid-80s were welcomed. They were playing Gong, Can, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Zappa and Captain Beefheart, with Monkey Pilot (of Whirl-y-Gig fame) as their original DJ.

"Up to that point Michael and I had been going to clubs," continues Bob, "where if we even got in there was a very hostile atmosphere. We felt excluded and debarred – and we thought we'd never meet any girls who'd be interested in us because we just didn't fit into the neat pigeon-holes! But we figured we weren't actually so different from a lot of people, so we decided to create somewhere for ourselves."

For the first seven years, Club Dog also worked closely with the Festival Information Network and various squatters' groups, helping them organise shows and consciousness-raising events. Thus it's no surprise to learn that Bob was also a veteran of the Stonehenge free festivals, and has 'done his time' being chased from pillar to post by

police out for hippie blood. "All this kind of thing has coloured our view of life quite heavily," he reflects.

In 1987 Club Dog started playing acid house music, which combined fun with excellent music to listen and dance to. From there they realised Club Dog needed to expand to incorporate their ever-ambitious ideas. "I'm a bit of a Cecil B De Mille," he laughs. "If I could have a cast of 10,000, I would. I'd like to bring the scale and intensity of opera into rock 'n' roll production."

So it was that while enjoying a vibe-tastic and prolific run at The Rocket in north London four years ago, Megadog was conceived to accommodate that desire to present bigger shows. This in turn spawned the techno production platform and trail-blazing tours, both as a club and with bands, that others have followed but rarely surpassed.

Bob feels their organisation has pioneered: "a presentation technique for artists who produce superb, technically-challenging music, but who are unstimulating for the eye". There might be nothing exciting about watching people tweaking keyboards, samplers and computers, he says, but combined with Megadog's retinal pageantry and ambience, the experience takes on a different meaning.

A confirmed idealist at heart, he maintains that their gigs still encompass a "very moral" perspective. They don't exclude anybody, and aim for an atmosphere that is genuinely fun to be involved in, where people feel comfortable and relaxed – rather than somewhere that the style magazines say is cool.

Though the words 'commercial success' have been bandied about after reaching the ten-year mark, Megadog still ploughs 40-50% of each show's budget back into production and the partners remain modestly unprophetic about the future. "We don't do this to make a lot of money," Bob emphasises. "In as much as it's anything, it's a giving. We do it to make life better for everyone, and this is something we believe in as much now as we did 10 years ago." An impish grin spreads across his face at this point. "I never did get off with anyone at Club Dog – so that bit didn't work!" ■ **live!**

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St Albans' Turbo first



The old 800-1000 capacity city halls, once the backbone of the '60s tour circuit, have made way for a new form of touring and a new style of venue

One venue that has survived the test of time, largely because it was only constructed in 1968, is St. Albans City Hall, newly reincarnated as a multi-purpose theatre this summer with a sound system that its forbears could never have dreamed of.

A local production of *Godspell* was in progress when we assessed the flexibility of Marquee Audio's refit of a venue that must host a broad range of public entertainment (including cinema, with Dolby surround sound), trade conventions, and even Asian weddings ... all with fast changover times. That's how versatile the modern civic venue has to be.

Technical manager Tony Ayre and deputy Dave Mead recall that when the refurbishment was first flagged five years ago, part of the brief was to improve the building's acoustics. Instead they looked at electronic enhancement systems, settling for the Dutch system *SIAP* (System for Improved Acoustic Performance), which didn't alter the shape of the hall but rather treated the reverberant surfaces.

The PA system was 15 years old and comprised a Court system, the famous HHV-800 amplification and reference Klark Teknik graphics. Other famous archive brands were also strewn around the theatre – some on active duty, some remaindered, some reconditioned and reassigned to lesser duties.

The new look owes much to a progressive policy following a management buyout several years back. Part of the council's contract with the new company, Relaxion plc, required that a new PA system be installed. To his credit, Marquee's Spencer Brooks pursued the contract from the first speculative phone call to his office two years previously; since he was the only one of the original four companies to do so, he was awarded the contract.

The budget ended up in excess of £75K for what evolved into a design and build contract, incorporating useful community aids such as a Sennheiser infra-red system for assisted hearing. More importantly from a marketing aspect, this is the first Turbosound TCS installation in the UK and one of the first theatrical installations of the Varicurve and Omnidrive system control devices.

Marquee demonstrated three alternative configurations – an EAW JF set-up, JBL Array and Turbosound TCS. So how was the decision reached?

Spencer Brooks: "We designed the system generically, using eight speakers and two bass bins for coverage, but the thing that won it for the Turbosound was its performance at low level – it just sounded like a studio monitor. When we had the eight TCS speakers all turned on together we knew we'd made the right decision."

By this time Soundcraft sound desks – a theatre input version of the K3 with full matrix, a K1 for spot announcements in the control room and tiny Folio for the foyer cabaret had already been spec'd, along with the Omnidrive. Tony Ayre had already cannily done his own research, visiting other venues, contacting reconing companies and so on to ascertain reliability. To get in and out of the system at a stroke required "a pretty serious patchbay" up in the control room. "With one-nighters you have only got about two hours to set up so it has to be fast," he says. "But you also need to know that all you have to do is switch on, plug in a mic and it works."

The system is driven by C-Audio RA series amps, the old V800s now driving the monitors. Four Court columns have been reused – two refurbished and used for permanent side-fill, two for portable monitoring – while a tiny

Yamaha quad amp drives four Electro-Voice S40s, used for spot monitoring). S40s feature again in the foyer, this time driven by Carvers.

After waiting two years, the system went in in two weeks during the Arena's normal August close-down for general maintenance. It is to their credit that they retained a place on the budget for the Stethosets. "There's still an attitude that deaf people don't go out and although these are more visible than a discreet loop, a two-channel infra-red system enables them to receive stereo." The blind can also receive a running commentary through the same means – converting a live play into a radio play.

The Alban Arena will hold 858 people with the orchestra pit, and 1,100 with all seating out, when it will convert into a large exhibition space.

It's a serious spec alright and a first class install, with all splits contained, the cabling neatly loomed and routed "to go anywhere". And the presence of a Zero 88 Eclipse lighting desk and Stanton cartridges fitted to the Technics DJ decks showed that they are supporting their local suppliers, since both Zero 88 and Stanton's UK agents are based in the city. ■ **live!**

by Jerry Gilbert

SOUND SPEC: PRINCIPLE COMPONENTS

Tascam DA20 DAT player; six AKG Tri-Power mics; Sennheiser headphones; BSS AR116 and AR117 DI boxes; Soundcraft K3 and K1 and Folio desk; Denon DN990R Minidisc; Technics SL1210 turntable fitted with Stanton AL500 cartridge; two Drawmer DL441 eight-channel quad/limiters; Yamaha SPX990 processor; BSS FCS926 Varicurve; BSS FDS360 electronic crossover; Turbosound LMS700 Omnidrive; five C-Audio RA2001s and five RA3001s; eight Turbosound TCS612 top boxes, two TCS618 bass and two TMI102 cinema; Yamaha P4050 quad amp; four EV S40s; two Turbosound TMW212 wedge monitors; seven Tecpro BP111 comms system with Beyer DT108 headsets; two-channel Sennheiser infra-red assisted hearing system

1995 INTRO...

King Constantine of Greece • *Barbara Dickson* • Legs 'Larry Smith' - drums • *Sony Music* • *Isle of Calf Festival* • Sam Spoons - rhythm pole • *Diane Farris* • *Glastonbury Festival* • Vernon Dudley Bohay - Nowell - bass guitar • *Tina Arena* • *Roskilde Festival* • Neil Innes - piano • *Out in the Green Festival* • *Brownstone* • Rodney Slater - saxophone • *General Public* • *Julia Iglesias* • Roger Ruskin Spear - tenor Sax • *Tears for Fears* • *Oasis* • Vivian Stanshall - trumpet • *Groove Theory* • A big hello to big John Wayne - xylophone • *Equinox* • *Diana Ross* • Robert Morley - guitar • *Slayer* • *Sheryl Crow* • *Hank Marvin* • Billy Butlin - spoons • *The Feile* • *Elvis Costello* • *Garbage* • Adolph Hitler - vibes (nice) • *Musica No Coracao* • *The Cranberries* • Princess Anne - suzaphone (mmm) • *Jamiroquai* • *Rod Stewart* • Liberace - clarinet • *Bryan Ferry* • *Neil Young* • *Twix Mix* • Gardener Ted Armstrong - Vocals • *Sir Cliff Richard* • *Reading Festival* • Lord Snooty and his pals - tap dancing • *Cyndi Lauper* • *El Ultimo de la Fila* • Harold Wilson - Violin • *MTV* • *Jimmy Nail* • Franklyn McCormack - harmonica • *Morrissey* • *Zucchero* • Eric Clapton - Ukelele (Hi! Eric) • *Beastie Boys* • Sir Kenneth Clark - bass saxophone • *AZKA (Symbol/Prince)* • *Iron Maiden* • *LEM* • A Sessions Gorilla - bocksunara • *Chris Isaaks* • *The Four Tops* • The Incredible Shrinking Man - Euphonium • *Art Angel* • *Hole* • Sir Peter Scott - duck call • *Jodeci* • *Machinehead* • Hearing From You Later Casanover - Accordion • *The Charlatans* • *Equality* • Roy Rodgers on Trigger • *The Sultan of Oman* • *James Last* • The Wild Man of Borneo - bongoes • *Yanni* • *The Rugby League* • Count Basie and his Orchestra - triangle • *Ricky Lee Jones* • *U.E. Day Celebrations* • The Rawlinsons - trombone • *Foo Fighters* • *U.I. Day Celebrations* • Dan Druff - harp • *M People* • *The Pasadenas* • Quasimodo - bells • *Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis* • Brainic - banjo • *The Royal Variety Show* • *The Cure* • Val Doonican - himself • *The Levellers* • *Sophie B Hawkins* • *Max Jaffa* • *Chico and The Gipsies* • *Madness* • Zebra Kid & Horace Bachelor* - percussion • *Erasure* • *Believe Organisation/Disney* • *Soul Asylum* • *Simply Red* •
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This advertisement is dedicated to Vivian Stanshall, who pulled out this year. * If you can remember Horace, you're probably ready to pull out yourself, but don't let that thought spoil your Christmas. With love from Lord Snooty and his Pals...xxx.

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on the rig

the live! monthly update on what's new in performance technology

season's greetings & BEST WISHES to Pete Howard - get well soon!

December 1995

This month . . .

- NEW PRODUCTS
- LDI REPORT
- MIDAS XL200 REVIEW
- SOUNDCRAFT K3 THEATRE REVIEW

live! show exclusive

Allen & Heath launches GL3000

STOP PRESS: Allen & Heath has announced the worldwide launch of its latest 8-bus consoles aimed at live performance, theatre and club applications – the GL3000 range – at the LIVE! Show on January 15 & 16. Allen & Heath promises: “a desk with a price tag that belies its feature set and performance”. Prices start at £2199 for the 16-input GL3000-16, with 16 mono input channels, and go up to £4999 for the GL3000-40 (36 mono and 4 stereo inputs).

With 8 buses and 8 auxes, the GL3000 includes A&H's SYS-LINK for further expansion. It also has dual-function capabilities – allowing use in FOH and/or monitoring (with matrix outputs), as well as dedicated facilities for theatre sound. For the latter task, the master section can be configured to give 13 individually-controllable speaker outputs. **For more details, see our preview next month.**
Harman Audio: +44 (0)181 207 5050

live! show exclusive

Cadac reveals monitor console details

STOP PRESS: Clive Green & Company will reveal to the world details of its forthcoming monitor console – the first ever stage monitoring board to carry the prestigious Cadac logo – at the LIVE! Show in January. On the stand, Cadac will be showing its Concert sound reinforcement desk. **For more details, see our preview next month.**

Clive Green & Company: +44 (0)1582 404202

live! show exclusive

First UK showing for Soundcraft Broadway

Another first for the LIVE! Show in January is the UK premiere of Soundcraft's digitally-controlled-analogue 'surface console', Broadway, unveiled at the New York AES show and aimed initially at the upper echelons of the theatre sound market. (*First reviewed in LIVE! last month.*) A major step development of the digital technology concepts premiered in the DC2000 and DC2020 recording desks, the prototype is still under development – but, says David Harman, Soundcraft's theatre specialist, its layout is now “very close” to the final version scheduled for mid-1996 launch. The control and display software, too, will give a good flavour of Broadway's powerful user interface. Its potential as a totally-recallable FOH desk, which drew a lot of attention from mainstream PA engineers at AES, also hints at the company's intentions for the pro live sound market.

Soundcraft: +44 (0)1707 665000

Entec takes first d&b 402 system

Entec has purchased its first d&b 402 PA system. The new system, consisting of six B2 subs and sixteen 402 subs and mid/highs, features an excess of B2s, says Entec's Dick Hayes, “to satisfy those customers who ask for a sub-heavy system, and to allow us to split the system.”

He adds: “When I started here in May, one of my requirements was to look at a new system. I wanted something that was a bit special and was on the rise in the market. Apart from the awesome sound that the d&b system offers, it is also incredibly compact – which means you've a good sales pitch to the band's production as it takes up so little space in the truck in comparison with other rigs. The sound is very much ‘in your face’, and I think it has one of the most efficient subs I've ever heard, with great projection and smooth coverage from the mid/high dual concentric package. I'm confident that it's going to gain Entec a lot of work in the future.”

Entec: +44 (0)181 842 4004

PRODUCTS in brief

BSS Audio's remote control for the Varicurve EQ system has been expanded to provide control of both the Omnidrive and Varicurve systems simultaneously. New software, released at the AES in New York, allows the FPC-900 to control delay times, band gains and mutes on any of the Omnidrive band outputs. As well as the FPC-900 Remote Controller, operators can now use a PC running Windows to control any Varicurve unit via the graphic interface, Soundbench. BSS's Omnidrive Loudspeaker Management System has cropped up in some less conventional places too. It was used at the Notting Hill Carnival this year as part of a system used by Europa to drive 2 Community Sound Leviathan full range monster-sized drivers. The latest manufacturers to purchase Omnidrive systems are UK-based Cray Acoustics and L Acoustics of Paris. BSS has now released its general product catalogue in several languages to assist international distribution. The catalogue is now printed in German, French, Spanish, Czech and Japanese as well as English. Tel: +44 (0)1707 660667

C-Audio XR Series amplifiers have been specified by Marquee Audio to power the 17K JBL system recently installed in north London venue The Rocket. The XR 3801 delivers 1200W into 4 ohms. Harman Audio: +44 (0)181 207 5050

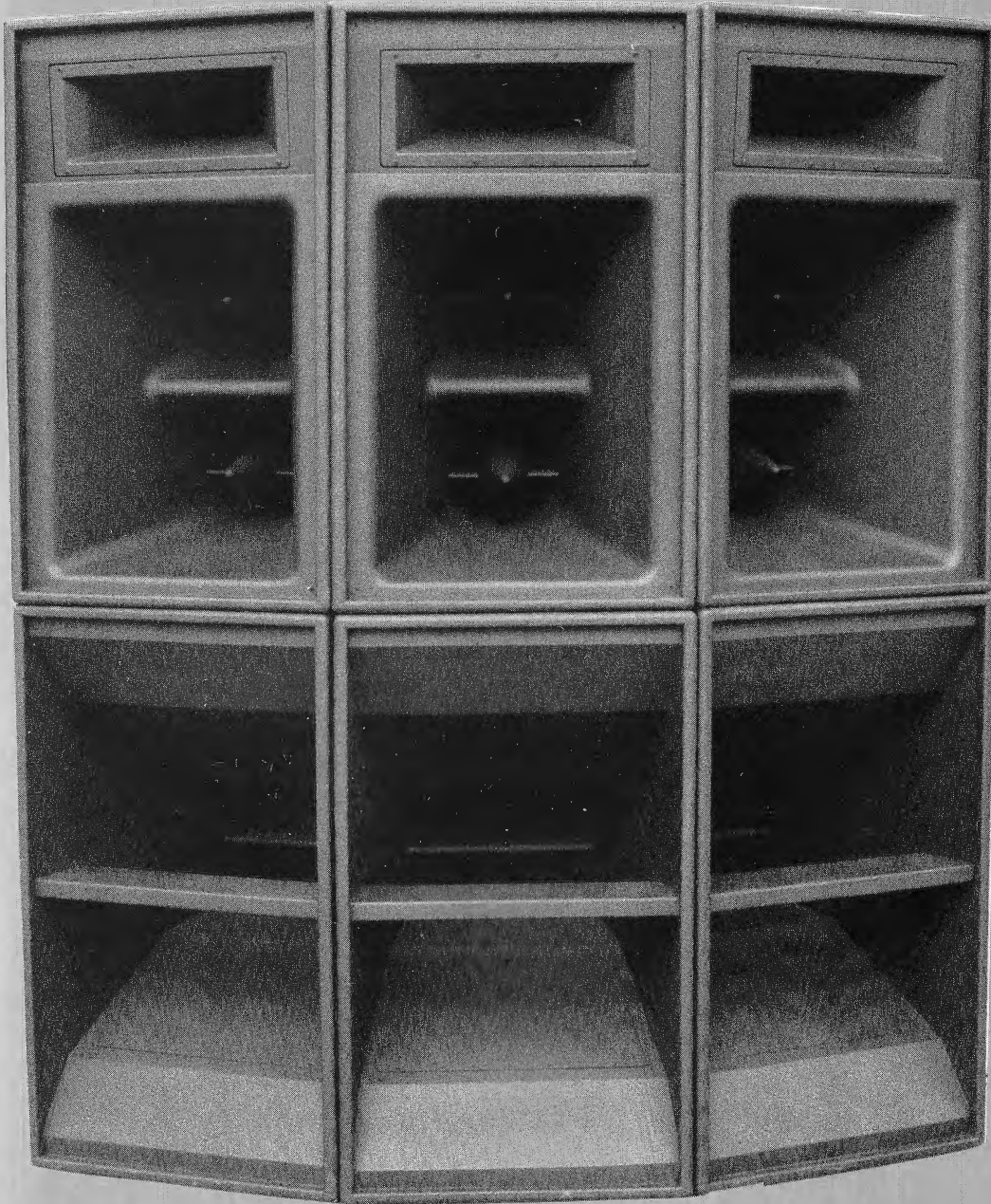
Creative Technology launches SEOS soft edge video blending: The Intel stand at Telecom '95 saw the successful launch of the unique SEOS soft edge blending system into the commercial world. Three of Barco's new 1109 projectors were used to project images onto a curved screen. The three images were then soft edge blended to produce a single, seamless 38ft x 12ft picture using the SEOS flight simulation display technology. Creative Technology: +44 (0)181 874 7227

EAW Introduces FL103 for theatre and AV: EAW has now introduced its FL103 High Output Ultimate Fidelity System. Engineered for theatrical sound design, multimedia presentations – and any other applications that demand utterly natural reproduction and high SPLs. The FL103 is a 3-way design with a dedicated subsystem covering the entire vocal range, which features a 6.5-in cone driver in a vented sub-enclosure. It's matched to a 1-in compression driver (on a WGP waveguide for 100-degree conical dispersion) and the box produces 124dB peak SPL. EAW: +1 508 234 6158

PSP Electronics' EP and AP Series of high-power audio connectors, manufactured by Alcatel, feature a rugged design that makes them ideal for use in live performance applications. The connectors incorporate a latch-lock system and a quick-release facility for simple disconnection, and are available in both cable and panel-mounting versions. The EP Series uses a rugged, zinc die-cast shell for maximum durability, while the AP Series features a durable thermoplastic shell capable of withstanding the roughest treatment. PSP Electronics: +44 (0)181 903 9061

TL Audios' Valve compressors and equalisers are on tour with Concert Sound, for East 17's Christmas European tour. Comments engineer Paul Boothroyd: “The TL Audio units sound really smooth and their sonic quality is excellent. We're using both on vocals – the compressor has a great ‘binding’ quality, helping vocals to sit perfectly in the mix, and the equaliser is ideal for ‘sweetening’ the compressed vocal sound. We're very impressed.” TL Audio: +44 (0)1462 490600

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TRADE NEWS *in brief*

ABEE Limited is the new name for the A B Consultancy, which has followed "a hectic few months installing sound and lighting from small systems to major rigs" at University Students' Unions with a move to new premises that embraces a 700 sq ft demo room and a comprehensive service department. Equipment installed includes Martin Pro, High End, Pulsar, Jands – and Martin Audio F1 and Wavefront.
Tel: +44 (0)1203 653900

Apogee Sound to move: Apogee Sound are building a new home for themselves in Petaluma, California which will be completed this month. The new facility will house Engineering, Research & Development, Administration, Sales & Marketing and a vastly increased Manufacturing space. Apogee plans to be fully operational in this new facility on 2nd January 1996.
Tel: (001) 707 778 6923

ARX Systems recently appointed Seoul-based Young Rak Instrument Co Ltd as its exclusive distributor for Korea.
Young Rak Tel: +82 2 744 6630

ATI has appointed The UK Office, whose team is headed by pro-audio stalwart Charlie Day, to handle European distribution of its successful Pro6 Multi-Mode Signal Processor. ATI President Larry Droppa says the Pro6 Processor (1U rackspace) is based on the company's legendary Paragon mixing console's input module. Six stages of audio control feature Mic Preamp, High/Low Pass filters, 4-band parametric EQ, Ducker, Noise Gate and Compressor.
Tel: +44 (0)1442 870103

Cadac has installed a J-Type console at the Latvian National Opera in Riga, supplied by Amptown Sound & Communications (ASC) of Hamburg, as the centrepiece of an all-new sound system at the 130-year-old venue's massive five-year restoration project. Two more J-Types have gone to the Shiki Theatrical company of Yokohama, Japan.
Tel: +444 (0)1582 404202

Crest go east: Crest Audio have announced the appointment of World Marketing Associates as their representatives for Eastern Europe. Jochen Frohn, Head of Sales and Marketing Crest Audio Europe said: "With the phenomenal success of Crest Audio in the US, Western Europe and the Far East, we felt it vital that we address the developing market of Eastern Europe as positively." Jochen Frohn - Crest Audio Europe.
Tel: +49 (2173) 915450

Entech, the Entertainment Technology Trade Show and Conference down under, will take place on April 23-25 1996 in Sydney. The show is organised by *Connections* magazine owners Caroline and Julius Grafton.
Tel: +61 2 876 3530

news is compiled by **Robyn Pierce**
tel: 01322 660070/fax: 01322 615636

HELL: Howard Eaton Lighting Limited has experienced a flurry of orders in the run up to Christmas. Jeff Salmon of the Coliseum has bought one of HELL's new radio control systems, as seen at PLASA. The system, which includes a customised six-way transmitter with three receivers and three PWM dimmers, is to be permanently installed and controlled by the existing Galaxy desk. Other recent customers include Phantom Tours in America, Gatwick Airport Theatre, the Victoria Palace in London and the Welsh National Opera. As well as all this, HELL has recreated the silent film sequence in the Really Useful Group's production of *Sunset Boulevard*, due to open in the Rhein-Main Theatre, Niederhausen sometime this month. In order to most faithfully recreate the scene in which Norma Desmond watches her old silent movies, HELL manufactured a copy of a 16mm cine projector and used a DF 50 fogger to provide haze that is ducted to allow the projector beam to be more highly visible.
Tel: +44 (0)1273 400670

Meteorites Productions head the list of companies based at Millenium Studios' Elstree facilities – now prospering as both a 'production village' and a versatile shooting stage – who are reporting booming business this month, with lighting for the *NEC Clothes Show* exhibition and recent BBC OBs including *The Good Food Show* and *Children In Need*. Elstree Light and Power has the lighting contract for Planet 24's *Hotel Babylon* series for Channel 4, filming at Mentmore Towers.
Tel: 0181 207 5111

Mushroom Lighting has opened a new London office to meet the dual demands of its existing customers and growing business in and around the capital area. The new premises, 10 minutes from the heart of the city, are at 637 Tower Bridge Business Centre, Clements Rd, London SE16 4DG.
Tel: Alex Johnston at +44 (0)171 237 3030

PAG Direct announces board: Following the recent formation of PAG Direct to look after sales of the Klark Teknik product range across the UK and Southern Ireland, the following have been appointed to the board of Directors: Mark Burgin, (Chairman), Graham Allen, (Managing Director), Dave Webster, Bill Woods, Hugo Roche and Jasper Whitaker. PAG Direct.
Tel: +44 (0)181 645 6060

Peavey's European headquarters have moved to larger premises. You can now contact them at Peavey Electronics Ltd., Great Folds Road, Oakley Hay, Corby, Northants, NN18 9ET, England. Peavey have also announced the appointment of a new member to their team. Louise Wojnicki joins as European Media Co-ordinator. Peavey Electronics Ltd: Tel: +44 (0)1536 461234

PSL Power Amplification held their second annual sound week in the first week of December, at their new manufacturing facility in Middlesborough. Also on view were the company's new Ef 2000 and Ef 3000.
Tel: +44 (0)1642 254225

Raycom has moved its expanding production, modification and development operations into new, larger premises. While its regular postal address, postcode and telephone/fax numbers remain unchanged, deliveries and collections should now be addressed to: Raycom Ltd, Technology House, Tything Rd, Arden Forest Industrial Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6EP.
Tel: +44 (0)1789 400600

Sennheiser UK moved to new, larger premises on December 8 to accommodate the expansion resulting from a doubling of its turnover in the past five years. The address is 3 Century Point Halifax Rd, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 3SL, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1494 551551

Shermann systems were used exclusively at the recent World Congress Conference – reported to be one of the largest conferences in Europe – at Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall. Specified by the RCH's chief sound technician and supplied by GB Professional Audio, the Sherman Cubs and 208s served the main venue and various fringe seminars. And Reading-based Sound Foundation's Sherman systems have been out with Right Said Fred, D. Influence and others.
Tel: +44 (0)1686 622997

Shure, announced H.W. International, have reduced their prices on a number of models in the Shure range of microphones, including the Prologue 10L and all of the Beta Green range.
Tel: +44 (0)181 808 2222

Technomad Inc, manufacturers of Technomad loudspeakers in Massachusetts, USA, has introduced a World Wide Web page. You can reach it at: <http://www.technomad.com>.

Templine head five suppliers who have temporarily teamed up to share a stand (67) at the Outdoor Event Exhibition in January. Their partners in the venture are **Screenco, LSD, Serious Structures** and **Eat To The Beat/Chevalier**.
Templine: +44 (0)117 923 5950

Theatre Projects Lighting Services won a prestige contract to light the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Education show in Muscat's Sultan Qaboss Stadium on November 19. LD Durham Marengi specified 22 Sky Arts, 18 Megalites with Gargantuan colour scrollers, 12 3KW Gladiator searchlights and 500 PAR cans. A 12-strong lighting team was headed by crew chief John Trehwella, assisted by Andy Cave, in a punishing series of daily rehearsals in temperatures of up to 47 degrees. 44 tonnes of equipment were flown to Oman, and TP Managing Director Alan Thomson commented: "We are honoured to have won the contract; it has been a pleasure to work with Mr Iqbal A Sultan and his General Manger Mr Akbar Haji on this exciting project – and with our friends Chris Monsour and Chris Hey at Britannia Row."
Tel: +44 (0)181 575 5555

GENERAL NEWS

the camden crawl

On the 16th of November, 15 bands got together for The Camden Crawl, a new festival concept organised by North London club promoters and Sub Pop. 1000 people troughed merrily in a diverse music stew, at 5 different venues, for the just £5 – which even included a free 15-track CD featuring all the Camden Crawl bands. Among the bands taking part were Blumfeld (Germany), Donkey (Holland), Long Fin Killie (Glasgow) and The Wedding Present (Leeds).

Camden Crawl stages were set up at Dingwalls, The Monarch, Castlehaven Community Centre, The Laurel Tree and the Dublin Castle. The CD package featured a Camden Crawler's guide map and timetable to help festival-goers plan their evening's strategy. Tel: Lisa Paulon at Sub Pop. +44 (0)171 704 2990

national trust acquires beatles' birthplace

The National Trust has acquired one of the most important buildings in the early history of the Beatles. The terraced house in Forthlin Road, Allerton, Liverpool, home to Paul McCartney from the mid-1950s until 1964, came on to the market earlier this year. It was here that the Beatles got together to rehearse, and much of their early material was written there including their first single, *Love Me Do*. Paul McCartney said about the National Trust's action: "My Mum would have been dead chuffed to think that our little council house would end up with the National Trust. It's a fantastic honour for me and my family."

Commenting on the purchase of the Liverpool house, Martin Drury, Director-General Designate of the National Trust explained: "This house is unquestionably of historic interest. The music that took shape here touched the lives of millions of people all over the world. We will be liaising closely with other interested parties on options for preserving and presenting the house." Tel: +44 (0)171 227 4929

sheffield arena news

Meat Loaf has added an extra Sheffield date to his tour due to the sell out success of his 23rd April performance at the venue. He will now also be appearing on 7th April, 1996. And Pulp are to play on home soil when they perform at the Sheffield Arena on 29th February. The Sheffield band played to a sell-out crowd at the Arena last year when they stepped in to support Oasis.

They then cross the Pennines to perform at Manchester's Nynex Arena on February 23. Tel: +44 (0)114 256 2002

sensible sedaka

Sensible Music will be supplying the PA system for Neil Sedaka and The Philharmonics Orchestra's UK tour. Sensible will be flying the PA, which consists of Clair Brothers R4 III full range speaker systems, Clair Brothers P4 piston cabinets, Clair Brothers 12AM floor monitors, Crest and Carver amp racks, a Yamaha PM4000 mixing console and a Soundcraft monitor desk. In addition to the PA, the company will also be supplying a selection of backline equipment including Accusound mics for the 40 piece orchestra. Tel: +44 (0)171 700 6655

Hendrix's favourite guitar takes a bow:

After 25 years as caretaker of the Hendrix legacy, Monika Dannemann has given permission for Jimi Hendrix's most famous guitar, the black Fender Stratocaster to be displayed on the *Guitarist* magazine stand at the London Music Show, Wembley, on Sunday 3rd December. Hendrix obtained the guitar in October 1968 - it was last seen in his hands at the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival. 'Black Beauty' is currently valued at 1/2 million pounds making it probably the most highly-valued guitar in the world.

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INDEPENDENT - INTERNATIONAL - INTO MUSIC

LDI95 lighting the beach

the live! snapshot from miami beach convention centre



After hours: all quiet after a hard day's work at LDI

November's LDI Show in Miami highlighted the event's steady evolution towards a PLASA-style sound'n'lights'n'staging'n'smoke'etc show – as opposed to its origins as a lighting-only spectacle. Lighting, of course, remains its bedrock but it also increasingly serves the audio fraternity as an important regional alternative to the high-tech environs of AES Conventions.

But the show was buzzing: in the halls themselves, in the seminar and demonstration suites, and in the bars and parties afterwards around Miami, there was an up-beat mood. With so much on show and so little space to talk about it, what follows is necessarily a small, hand-picked snapshot from around the show...

Avolites' Steve Warren was enjoying a fine time with plenty of interest and a constant stream of people stopping by to talk.

Clay Paky's Sales & Marketing Director **Enrico Caironi** and Technical Director **Angelo Cavenati** explained how hard the company has been working to meet the **EC's EMS directive**. The target – which they intend to meet – is to have the entire product line EMC-compatible by the end of this year. Another set of high standards which the range meets are the Italian safety loading rules for the stage and TV, and Enrico notes: "We're also fighting to try to change some of these standards – we do comply with them all, but some of them are crazy."

Dominator, distributed by National Event Marketing in the USA (fax +1 210 497 5378) is cited as "the most advanced searchlight in the world." Powered by a 12kW HMI lamp, it has 360-degree rotation, variable speed control and is fully automated.

Hardware

Xenon was showing off its **projector control system**, capable of synch'ing up to 56 pro-

jectors from a single control console. Said **Alan Bardouil**: "We make equipment which is simple, reliable and easy to use by inexperienced technicians." The company is now developing a rotating yoke for its 5kW projectors.

High End Systems' **Bruce Jordahl** told LIVE! that the company intends "to go even higher". He points to the unique **litho-etched** (and super high resolution) gobo system as an example of High End's technological developments. "**Cyberlight** has virtually all of



Zero 88's David Catterall with the Linebacker

the features we want; the rest of the products effectively round-out the range." The new lamp for the **Emulator** "really transforms it," added Jordahl. "It's 100% brighter when new – and 100% brighter after 1000 hours, too. We have a great relationship with Philips, who developed the new lamp in conjunction with us. The difference is like night and day." Also now ready is the **AMX100** DMX strobe. Capable of being used in a variety of different ways, its potential is further enhanced by a new custom programming tool which interfaces with Status Cue, called WinFlash. Colours and gobos can be added, and there's a feature ('Latch On') which provides a 30-second wash at 50% intensity.

Lightning Strikes get brighter. The new

Lightning Strike beats their 'previous punchiest' by around three times – to a massive 200kW (possibly even 250kW by the time it enters full production). And the company has a new **DMX converter** for the beasts, too.

MA Lighting Technology showed its Lightcommander II and Scanc Commander ranges. the company now has 13 dealers around the States and say their market across the pond has "increased enormously."

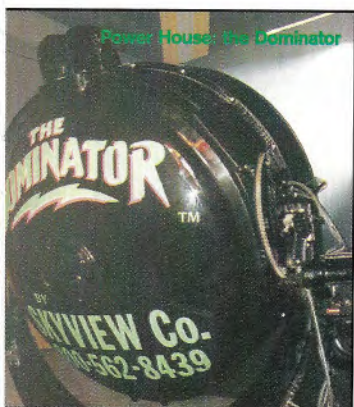
Martin Professional got off to a difficult start when power to their Peter Morse-designed extravaganza, which featured a clown, an amazing trick cyclist and a choir of dummy heads, failed to materialise from LDI. All of which made the usual queues even longer when the demo finally got going on Saturday afternoon...

Optikinetics' **Neil Rice** said the order book for the new and rather sexy **K2** projector is "absolutely full", which doesn't actually mean that he's turning away orders – simply that the company is selling them as fast as they can make 'em.

See Factor has introduced the **Mini Coordinator**, which runs the same software as its larger **Light Coordinator** progenitor – the only major difference, apart from its size, is that it only provides 10 submasters instead of 20. Modules within the console's control surface can be re-configured - for example, to suit a left-handed operator. Light Coordinator itself has been given a number of software and hardware upgrades and improvements.

Slick's stand bristled with great ideas. Quietly impressive was the jam-free chain guide system for its latest **Rigstar** motor, which the company says is designed expressly for theatre and touring rather than industrial use. It has compression fittings so that picking the motor up by its mains cable won't damage anything, and the beast's gearbox is filled with oil, not grease, with magnetic plugs fitted at the sides to draw metal particles out of the oil. The **Rigsmart** optional module provides compatibility with European and Asian four-wire control systems. European distributors "are being appointed."

Vari-Lite sister company **Irideon** was showing a translucent version of the stunning new **AR5** mini architectural light, which brings VL5 technology to the wider world... **live!**





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Midas keep the touch

A year after its preview at AES 1994, Zenon Schoepe looks at how the first fruits of Mark IV's pro-audio networking has created a 'Midas for the masses'

It should by now be drilled into the minds of all prospective console buyers that the XL200 desk is a Midas that ordinary people can afford. Its introduction was, perhaps, a predictable move – but also one that had been long overdue.

However it has to be said that, steeped as Midas has been in the tradition of making the very best live sound boards, regardless of cost, it was the Mark IV connection that enabled the prospect of building a lower-end desk to become a reality.

Curiously, the arrival of the new flagship XL4 has also eased the XL200's introduction. But while the former reinforces the company's commitment to the top end, the XL200 should not, says Midas, be seen as a change of emphasis towards the lower end – merely a response to customer demand.

The appeal of the desk is broad. Besides satisfying the aspirational

Midas wish-factor for hire companies on tight budgets, it also solves the familiar problem for multiple XL3 and XL4 owners who need more Midas channels – but can't really afford that extra capital.

While the premise for the creation of the XL4 was "this is what you asked for; here it is, and this is how much it costs," the XL200 comes to you proclaiming: "you wanted a Midas for this amount of money and this is what we can do for you." Thus the XL200's design has necessitated a prioritisation of features, but fundamental performance has remained of paramount importance and in most respects it stacks up virtually-identically against the XL3 and XL4: there are simply just a lot fewer of its progenitors' features.

The biggest sacrifices made to keep the XL200 within budget concern flexibility, and while there isn't much that you can't do with an XL3 or XL4 without

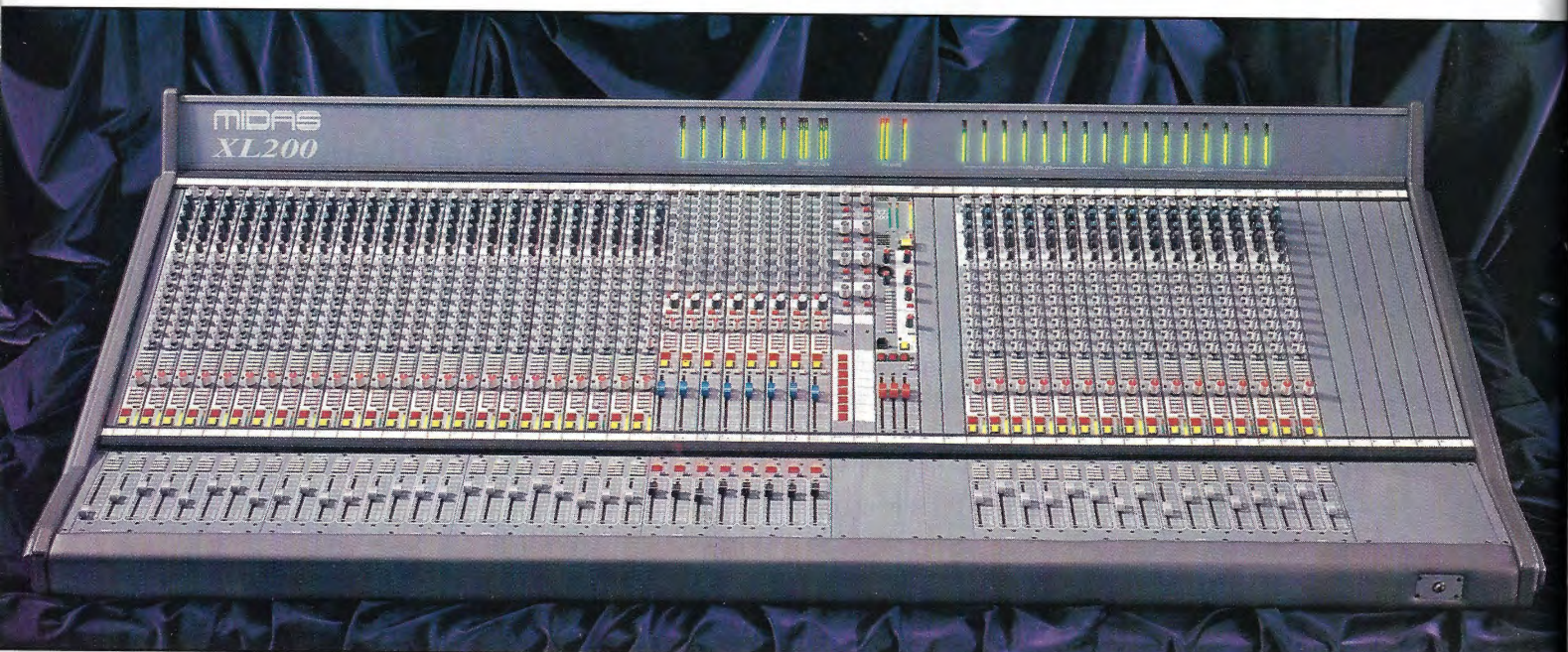
customising them, what you see is very much what you get with the XL200 – and it has a limit. Even so, you can fit an automation system (MIDI muting makes most sense) and link consoles together.

While, by Midas' own admission, you're not looking at anywhere near the sort of flexibility and facilities offered by their other modern creations, you're certainly not getting short-changed – as this is by any standard still a remarkably able and very approachable desk.

XL200s first started shipping in February 1995 and demand has exceeded supply to such an extent that Midas says it has had to scale-up its manufacture.

Overview

The XL200 is genetically-linked to the XL3 and XL4. In particular, the summing stages and output drivers use the same technology – the best, they say, ➔ p44



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◀ p42 that they can do in the areas that Midas are not prepared to compromise in. Switches are identical and pots and faders are very similar; you can realistically expect the same durability as any other Midas board and it would not be daft to predict that the resale value of this new desk will also be good.

Available sizes are 40, 32, 24 and 16 input modules, all with two stereos and six blanks that can be filled as you like. Channels have 4-band EQ, eight auxes, with routing to six mono groups, two stereo groups, the stereo master and mono master, plus eight auto mutes, eight VCA masters, and a 13x8 matrix.

Inputs are inherent to the module construction which means less (and quicker) wiring and also permits pre-testing of modules prior to the usual total frame test.

There are also stereo modules which are very similar in presentation to the mono modules, but permit the left or right legs to feed both signal paths or to be mono'ed. Auxes 1 to 4 are mono with individual pre/post switching, but the remainder function as stereo auxes using pan/level dual concentric controls.

Stereo and mono group modules provide pots for each of the groups' inputs to the matrix, plus the two stereo subgroups, the main stereo and mono. The matrix itself can be muted, solo'd and talked to, and group sends can also be switched pre/post and have a switchable insert. Group signals can of course be routed to the main stereo via a pan pot or to the main mono; and the whole lot is capped-off with a mute, solo and 'talk to group' output switch.

Aux masters have individual solo and mutes and are lumped-together with the eight large auto mute master switches which operate on the channels and mono and stereo group modules. As with anything else 'Midas', "if it exists it can be interconnected", and linked desks can be run together for solo logic, automute buses and VCA group buses. The Solo switches function in two different ways – strike one quickly and it latches; press and hold and the switch becomes momentary. Priceless!

But if the XL200 is built to a price then you wouldn't guess it from the master panel, as this is a definitive study in conservative presentation and efficiency.

Three faders handle the left and right main stereo and the mono output, all with mutes; the mono can be derived

from the main stereo, pre or post their faders. Pink noise (or a 1kHz tone) can be routed along with talkback to the paired aux buses, paired groups and mono and stereo outputs on a latching or momentary switch. An external input is routable to the main stereo, which can also be solo'd along with the main and mono outputs to local and headphones circuits - each of which has a mute and level pot. A small panel handles global PFL and AFL selection, offering an 'add solo' mode in addition to the usual cancelling sort. There's also LED indication for input and output solo activity – with the qualification that when in 'cancelling solo mode', inputs take priority over outputs and pressing an input solo cancels any selected output solos. The section is completed by a solo clear button and a protected 'solo to masters' (solo in place) switch.

Impressions

The use of the word 'affordable' in connection with the XL200 will amuse some, as the price tag still means it doesn't fall into the area where most people use the word easily. However, it is undoubtedly affordable for a Midas, which is an achievement in itself – and lines it up smartly alongside other 'starting-to-get-very-serious' desks.

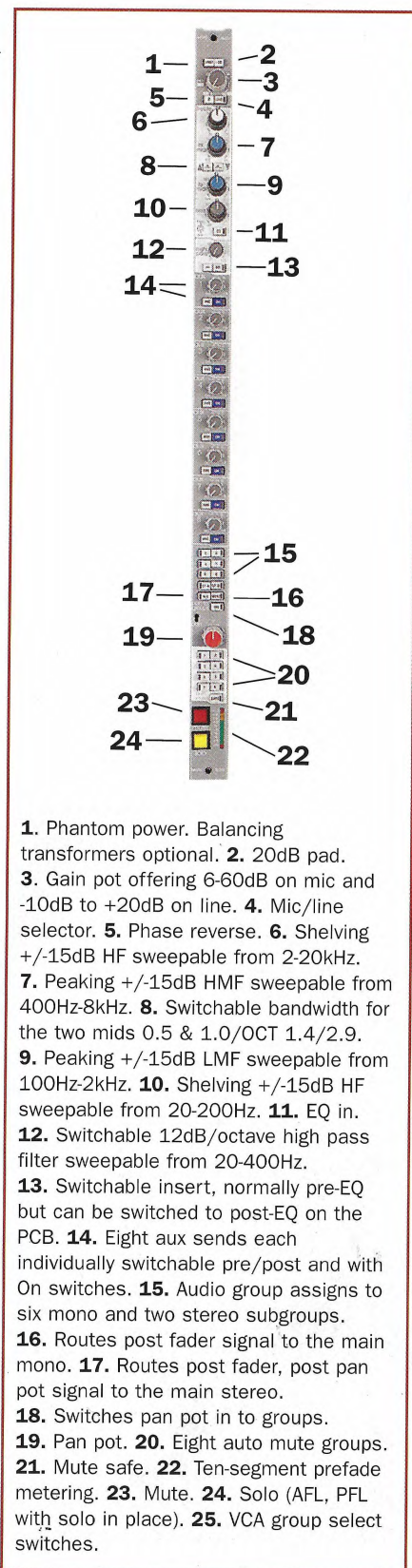
Any suspicions that Midas can't possibly build a serious board for this sort of money are immediately alleviated by a closer inspection of what the XL200 offers. Whilst the cynical might suspect it to be severely stripped-down and sold entirely on the Midas brand name, the reality is completely different.

Most impressively, it does not, in practical terms, fall short of the serious features you might expect to find elsewhere for this kind of money. You get the VCAs, decent grouping abilities, decent matrixing, powerful EQ (with sweepable high pass), uncompromised auxes and a layout that's optimised for live work. In short, this is a damned good board, very able and well-stacked with facilities – and it can really only be seen as lacking when compared to its bigger Midas brethren.

Given that a large percentage of the price, as far as most buyers will be concerned, pays for what the company terms 'the Midas touch' (i.e., the prospect of build quality and inherent longevity – which has to be worth something, after all), then what you get for the

remainder of the bill is actually very good value.

I can't imagine that Midas will have any problem selling XL200s. More likely, they're only just realising that the limitation is whether they can build them fast enough to meet the expectations they've raised. ■ **live!**



1. Phantom power. Balancing transformers optional.
2. 20dB pad.
3. Gain pot offering 6-60dB on mic and -10dB to +20dB on line.
4. Mic/line selector.
5. Phase reverse.
6. Shelving +/-15dB HF sweepable from 2-20kHz.
7. Peaking +/-15dB HMF sweepable from 400Hz-8kHz.
8. Switchable bandwidth for the two mids 0.5 & 1.0/OCT 1.4/2.9.
9. Peaking +/-15dB LMF sweepable from 100Hz-2kHz.
10. Shelving +/-15dB HF sweepable from 20-200Hz.
11. EQ in.
12. Switchable 12dB/octave high pass filter sweepable from 20-400Hz.
13. Switchable insert, normally pre-EQ but can be switched to post-EQ on the PCB.
14. Eight aux sends each individually switchable pre/post and with On switches.
15. Audio group assigns to six mono and two stereo subgroups.
16. Routes post fader signal to the main mono.
17. Routes post fader, post pan pot signal to the main stereo.
18. Switches pan pot in to groups.
19. Pan pot.
20. Eight auto mute groups.
21. Mute safe.
22. Ten-segment prefade metering.
23. Mute.
24. Solo (AFL, PFL with solo in place).
25. VCA group select switches.



1996 awards poll form

THE CATEGORIES...AND PRESENTATION ORDER

In each category, there will be **one Gold Award** (presented on stage) and a minimum of two **Silver Awards**. **Certificates** will also be presented to **all key crew and companies** involved in the Silver and Gold-winning **Show & Event Categories** (Numbers 22-26). After last year's marathon awards evening we've reduced the number of categories by a third – but endeavoured to ensure that it's not just those tours with the biggest bangs'n'bucks that scoop all the credits.

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- 11 International production company
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- 12 Catering company
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- 13 Trucking company
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- 14 Tour bus company
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- 15 Video production (Tour or Event)
.....

- 16 Live music on screen (TV Show or Film)
.....

THE PRODUCTS...

(Please note: These categories are for products which began their working life on the road in the last 12 months – trade show preview models or development prototypes are not eligible)

- 17 New audio product
.....
- 18 New lighting product
.....
- 19 Any other new technology
.....

VENUES AND PRODUCTIONS...

- 20 Top Venue (Club or Student)
.....
- 21 Top Venue (Arena)
.....
- 22 Theatre production*
.....
- 23 Festival or outdoor event*
.....
- 24 New event or performance concept*
.....
- 25 Small/medium tour production of the year*
.....
- 26 Arena tour production of the year*
.....
- 27 Up The Truss Award (Foul-Up of the year)
.....

**Tour/Event Awards (Nos. 22-26) reflect those gigs that in your opinion gave their audiences the best deal – including performance and production*

- Please pre-register a visitor ticket in my name
- Please send me information on awards dinner booking

- Please send me information on exhibiting at the Live! show

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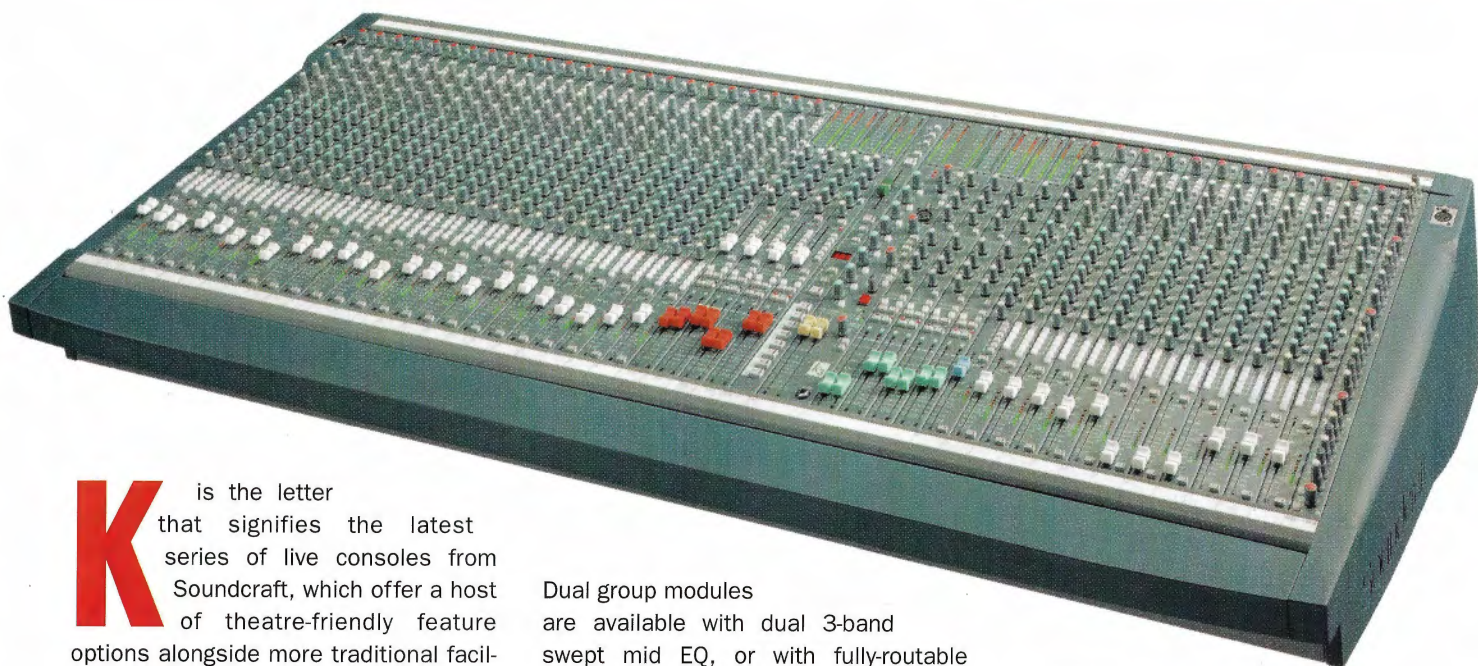
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K is for Theatre

The Soundcraft K3 offers a host of theatre-friendly features and versatile MIDI Scene Set facilities in an affordable mid-range console. Zenon Schoepe checks out your options



K is the letter that signifies the latest series of live consoles from Soundcraft, which offer a host of theatre-friendly feature options alongside more traditional facilities. While live sound is an area that the company has always looked after, recent developments have seen a decided slant towards the requirements of theatre applications, embellished with this autumn's launch of the revolutionary digitally-controlled-analogue Broadway desk.

The recently-launched K3 is available in two subtly different variants – the 'Standard' and 'Theatre' versions. These are distinguished only by the type of input module chosen, and by the relative proportions of the other modules available on this fully modular desk to better suit the intended application.

The frames and general appearance of the two K3 types are the same, and it's possible to mix Standard and Theatre input modules in the same frame to produce a hybrid desk – although it's worth pointing out that the Theatre variant is predictably more expensive.

Sizes start at 16 channels and jump in eight-channel steps to a maximum of 48 channels for this eight-group desk, which has 4-band EQ and eight auxes with main stereo and mono outputs.

Dual group modules are available with dual 3-band swept mid EQ, or with fully-routable stereo effects returns with 2-band EQ and two auxes; but all desk variants include a 128 MIDI mute scene module as standard.

Further options include stereo inputs and a quad matrix module that can easily be slotted-into the free module space provided on each frame size. Another interesting twist is that the eight aux master rotary pots can be by-passed internally and replaced by an eight-fader panel, for applications where this arrangement would make life easier. Most connectors are balanced, with the option of transformer balancing, parallel multi-pin connectors and balanced insert sends.

Channel strips

The **Theatre input module** has a padless dual range gain control covering -70 to +10dBu, switchable phantom, a phase switch and 100Hz 12dB/octave high pass filter, and is followed by four sweepable bands of +/-15dB EQ with switchable HF and LF bell (Q 1.5) or shelf and high/low Q switches (Q 2.6 or 1.3) for both mid bands. Frequency

ranges are 1-16kHz (HF), 27-500Hz (LF), and 70Hz-1.1kHz and 400Hz-7kHz on the two mids. The eight auxes are switchable pre/post in pairs, with switchable direct-out routing from the Aux 8 pot.

Inputs can be routed to the main and mono mix, and the eight groups individually via a pan. Channels can be soloed and cut – and provide eight-segment input metering, plus peak, in the vicinity of the fader.

The **Standard input module** has only four-segment LED input metering, and a four-band EQ section that's fixed at 12kHz and 60Hz and swept between 110Hz-2.5kHz and 500Hz-10kHz on the mids. Groups are accessed via paired switches.

Stereo modules can access two sets of stereo input with left-leg phase reverse, a width control, three-band EQ with a swept mid, and mono access to the auxes – with the last two switchable internally for stereo operation. The **quad matrix module** uses dual concentric pots to draw signals individually from the ➔ p48



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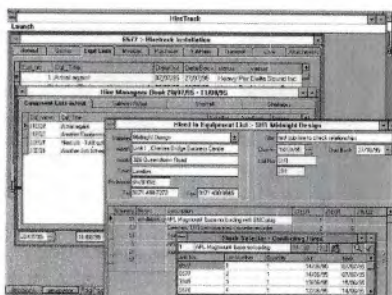
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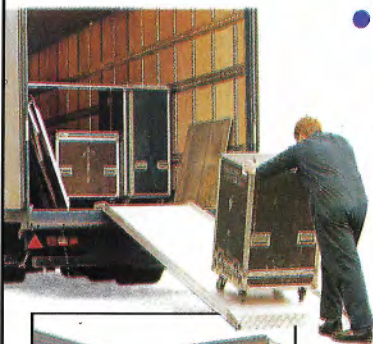
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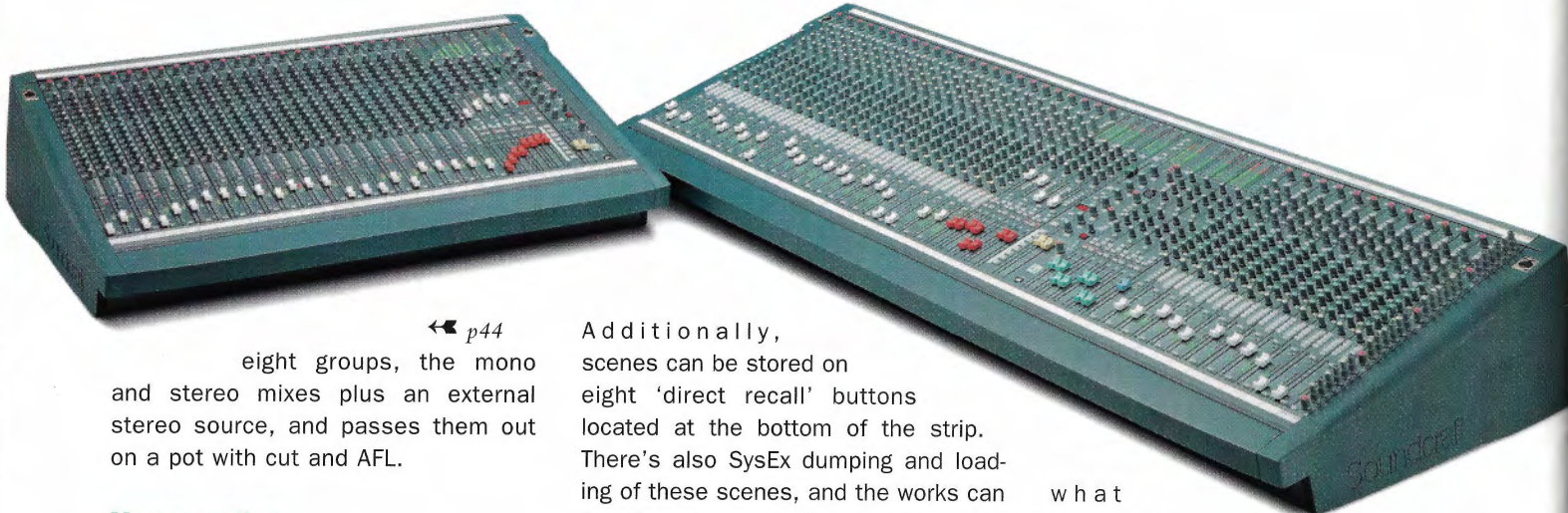


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← p44

eight groups, the mono and stereo mixes plus an external stereo source, and passes them out on a pot with cut and AFL.

Master section

Whatever the type of group module chosen, both have LED bargraph output metering, and this is supplemented on the master section by similar arrangements for the main stereo and mono mixes. There's also a VU meter bridge option with a three-position switch flicking between group, matrix and aux outputs. You also get an elaborate oscillator with pink noise plus talkback to the groups, auxes and an external bus for direct 2-way comms to other Soundcraft desks.

There's a 2-track return circuit to the main mix, selectable from two sources and (unusually on such a desk) summing or auto-cancelling solo-in-place with a large, illuminated Solo Clear.

Despite the fact that there are main stereo and mono outputs from the K3, only two faders are provided. These default to controlling the left and right signals with the mono mix going out at unity; but a press of a recessed switch re-configures these faders as one stereo fader controlling the stereo mix while the other is assigned to controlling the mono output. That's an intelligent twist which will be appreciated by many.

Power in the Midi department

It's in the department of the 5-pin DIN that the K3's **MIDI Scene Set module** differentiates itself most strongly from the competition. Firstly, it offers 128 mute scenes, with each of these constituting a map of the console's mutes.

Scenes are selected on up/down buttons and are fired on a press of Recall, but there's also a 'Preview' mode whereby a scene can be viewed before actually committing the action.

Additionally, scenes can be stored on eight 'direct recall' buttons located at the bottom of the strip. There's also SysEx dumping and loading of these scenes, and the works can be triggered externally via MIDI. Each scene change also includes a user-programmable MIDI patch change command, which is sent on the MIDI channel of your choice.

However, perhaps the most wonderful thing about the K3 is the inclusion of a MIDI Datafader in this module, which can be assigned on a per-scene basis to generate user-defined continuous controller information on a selected MIDI channel. Thus it's possible to alter an effect parameter in real-time on an outboard device, and obvious applications include things like tweaking reverb time or delay time on a slap-back echo to match the tempo of a song.

Although you can't null the value of this fader it is calibrated and linear, allowing you to make a guess at roughly where it ought to be at the front of a scene change. This is clever – and the K3 is the first desk I've ever seen with a dedicated controller provided for just this function. Equally smart is the fact that each channel mute button is permanently mapped to generate a MIDI note number; so if you have a sampler adjusted to respond to that note number connected to an input channel, then you will be able to fire the sound effect or atmosphere at the same time as you unmute the channel.

MIDI channel number for the mutes can also be changed as part of a scene change, which means that with a bit of planning, different effects can be fired from the same mute in different scenes.

Conclusion

Do I like it? Yes, I do. The K3 manages to combine traditionally strong desk features in a highly-adaptable package, with

what is fairly advanced MIDI control for such a desk. The EQ on the Theatre input strip is very elaborate, and the ability to mix and match modules precisely to an application or for all general eventualities is planned into the K3's architecture. The matrix is splendidly compact and there's a choice of group modules, depending on whether you need group EQ for general live sound tasks or the extra stereo effects returns for theatre work – you could even mix both.

The MIDI implementation as it stands is good, although I feel that having only one MIDI channel's-worth of patch change command per scene is an oversight – sure, you can map all your outboard to respond to a single command, but it's a pain. Ideally you'd want the full 16 MIDI channels of patch change capability per scene and I don't think it would be beyond the K3's ability or architecture to provide this.

The Mute MIDI note command is ingenious, and will be indispensable for theatre sound effects triggering; as indeed is the truly excellent Datafader, which puts real-time control onto the mixer work surface, where it ought to be. (Greedy people might want more of these Datafaders because they're such a good idea, but one will be enough for general live work.)

On balance, it's a stonking desk whichever configuration you choose: substantially more intelligent than its price tag might suggest and built to last. While the Broadway signposts Soundcraft's ideas for high-end theatre sound, K3 is a solid and clever contender with broad appeal – and you can buy it now. ■ **live!**

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up the truss



with Tim Roberts

Dig out the toxic mock-snow and deck the hall with bits of Molly, it's Christmas once again! Everyone here at Truss Towers would like to send you the warmest greetings for this, coldest season. Xmas 1995 brings a major new project for Trussco plc, the production arm of Truss Holdings International, who are proud to announce a new collaboration with the Bloody Odd Rigging Co. of Lapland. The secretive nature of the client means little detail of the project can be revealed at this stage but keep your eyes peeled for some major aerial rigging towards the end of the month.

I must say I was highly chuffed to be recognised in public the other day. There I was in a local electrical shop when this chap came up to me and pointed at my *Up The Truss* T-shirt. "Here, I read that too," he said. "Oh, great," I replied. "It's always good to meet one of the readers." "Yeah – bloody excellent magazine, that *Light & Sound International*," he exclaimed happily, striding from the shop. What should have been an ego-boosting encounter became an exercise in self-doubt which left me wondering whether my faxes were being intercepted by The Auld Enemy.

Despite this dismal setback I'm absolutely thrilled to announce that *UTT* has gained its first sponsor – Vari*Lite Europe. Each month we'll be offering a STUNNING PRIZE to the best story sent in. Yes, folks, a hand-engraved Mini MagLite bearing your name and theirs – and ours – (how romantic) could be had for nothing more than shopping your mates to *Up The Truss*. Not only that, but they'll be giving away a fabulous huge Mega Mag to the best Truss Tale of the year at the LIVE! Awards in January. Rumour has it the ultra lightweight torch will boast a 5K Xenon bulb, full dichronic colour mixing and twelve "Truss-o-matic" rotatable gobos (three-phase mains adapter not supplied).

Like most sponsorship deals I guess I'll have to think up some snappy one-liners to promote the happy collaboration: how about "The ultimate light for people on the move from the ultimate moving light people", or "Let Vari*Light shift your beam!"? On second thoughts....

So, get scribbling you lot, and you could win an exclusive *UTT* T-shirt, a personalised Mini MagLite **and** the envy of your peers. Of course other manufacturers out there are equally welcome to show-er *Truss* Heroes with lavish gifts. You know, a mixing desk, a flight-case full of mics, or perhaps a lifetime supply of gaffa tape – anything to associate your name with the greatest column in the land.

Despite the prevailing meteorology a warm glow was recently brought to my cockles by a certain Mr Ewan, who is the top technical bod at a well known West Country venue. Mr E. related one of the funniest tales I've heard for ages and in the spirit of the sea-

WISHING YOU A HAPPY TRUSSMASS

son I've decided to share it with you, being a generous sort of geezer – not to mention chronically short of copy. Like all the best stories, this one deserves a modicum of discretion to protect the guilty from open ridicule on the streets, so let us just say that Once upon a time there was a show at a certain theatre in England that required the installation of something like a dozen sets of Bose 802 speakers in the roof of the venue. The speaker positions were a long way from the amps and cabling up each of the cabs was going to be a real pain in the jack plugs. The resourceful PA crew got to thinking about lashing up some kind of speaker multicore. They hit upon the idea of using lengths of 6-way lighting multi featuring a nifty 15 amp to 3-pin cannon breakout.

They worked overnight to create this hybrid system and finally crashed out, exhausted but well contented the problem had been solved. On arrival at the venue the following day a couple of fundamental flaws in system design became apparent. The lighting crew had turned up nice and early, and were a bit surprised to find a spare multicore trailing from the grid. "Best just flash it through and see what it is", they reasoned.

Approximately 1/50th of a second later 96 4" speaker cones did their impression of the Chinese New Year. Oh! I wish I'd been there, just to hear the delicious sound of vaporising cardboard. Do you think they did it a circuit at a time:

"Channel 1..." BANG! "What the hell was that?"

"Dunno. I can't see anything. Try number 2..." BANG! "Yeah. It did it again."

"Weird. Try number 3..." BANG!

"Hhmm. There's definitely a pattern here. What does number 4 do?..." BANG! and so on.

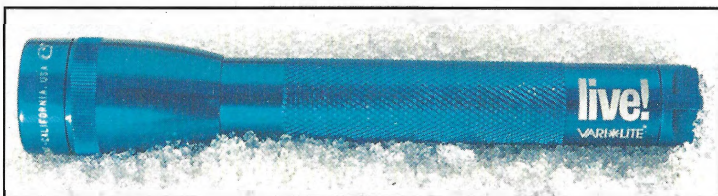
Despite the fine quality of their audio products I don't recall that the Bose guarantee extends to putting a power station across the terminals of their voice coils. Someone, somewhere was severely out of pocket. So, you have been warned.

The moral of the tale: always label your cable ends – especially when you're doing something a bit unorthodox with them. Failing that, try to find a speaker with something bigger than a four inch cone – they make a much better noise.

Well, that's it for another year. I hope yours has been as much fun as mine. Remember to send your *Truss* moments to *UTT*, LIVE!, Nexus House, Swanley, Kent, BR8 8HY. Alternatively, Fax me on: 01322 615636.

Have a great Christmas, everyone. See you at the LIVE! Show and Awards on January 15 and 16!

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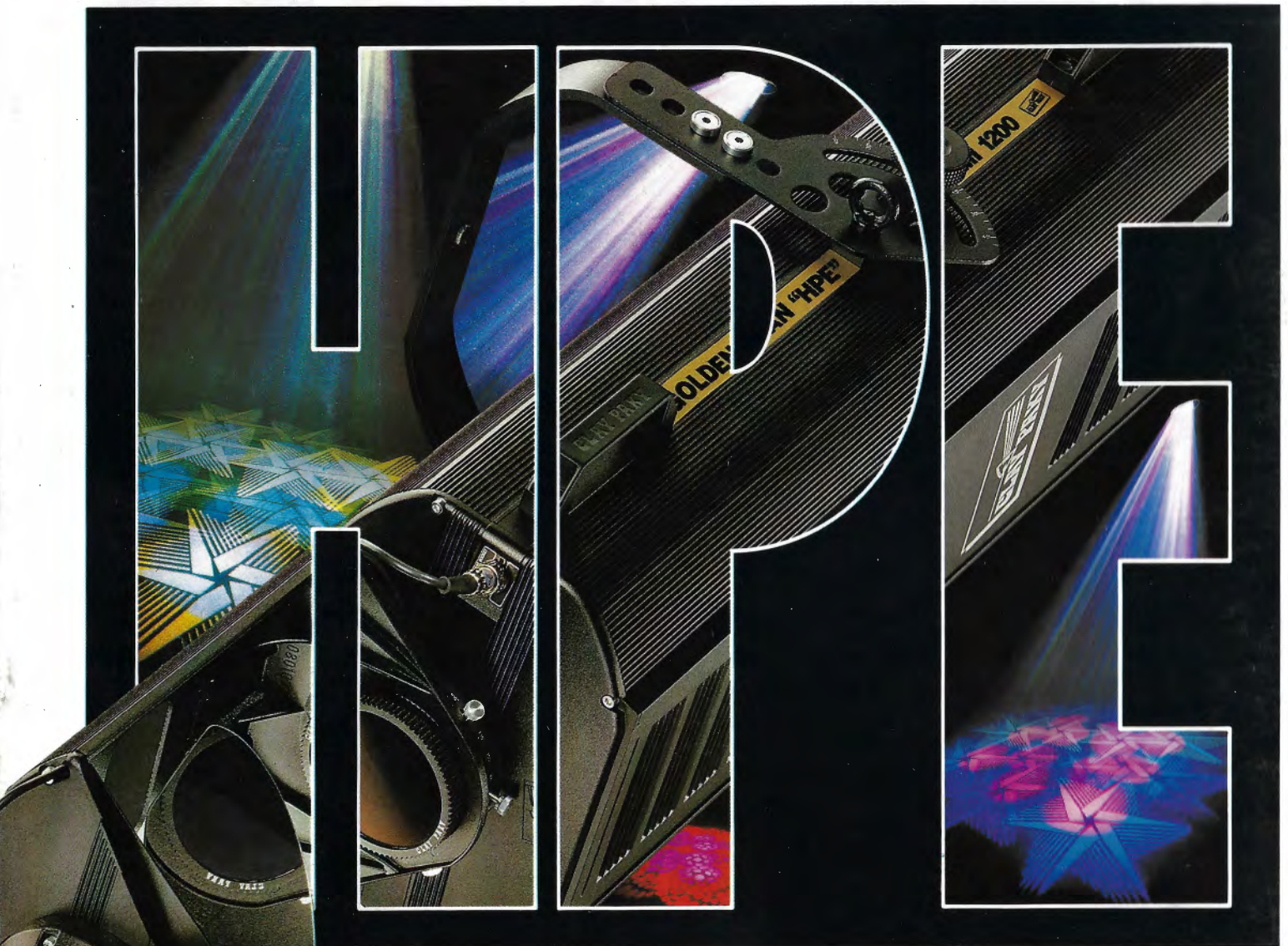
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