INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE PRODUCTION

LIVE!

pulp among the common people

LIVE! show & awards
let's rock

shows:
cats on tour, world dance's new year

LIVE! exclusive
electrotec audio lease launched

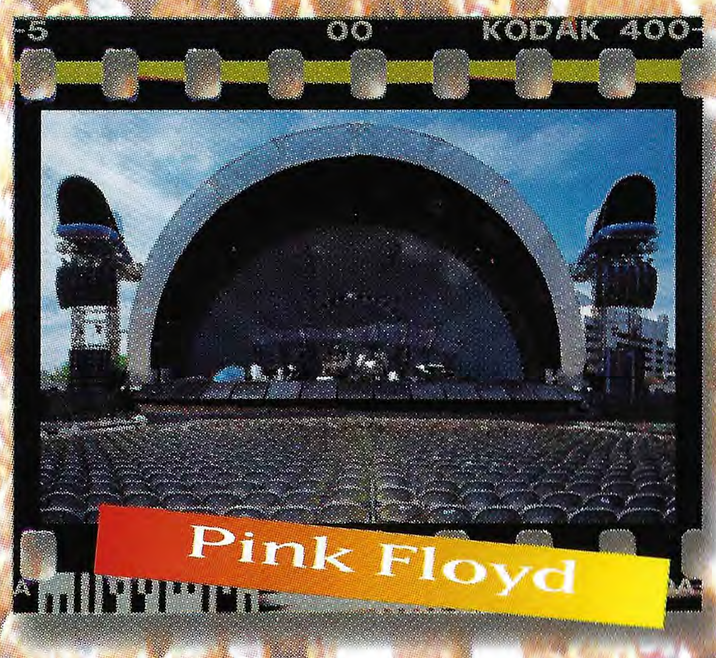
m people
dance it big

eddie izzard
a story of comic production

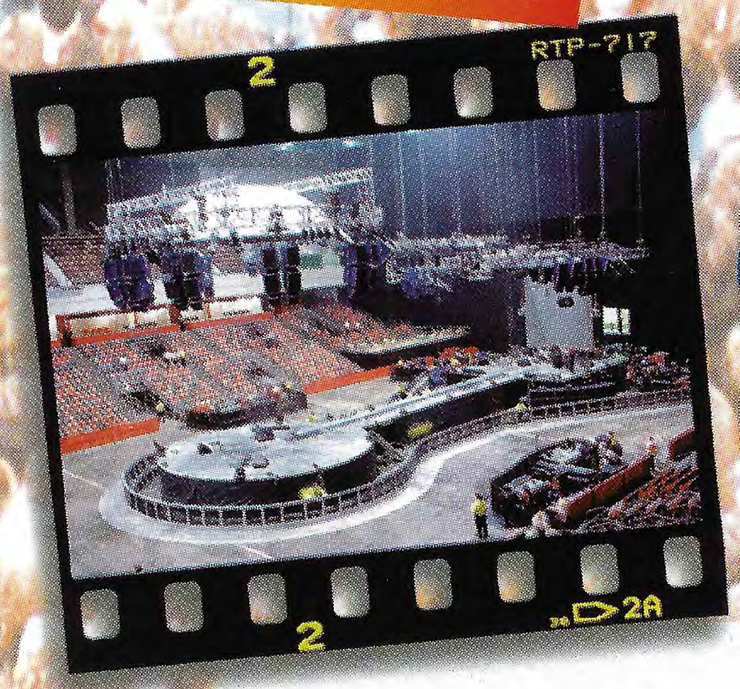
mick upton
no pass necessary

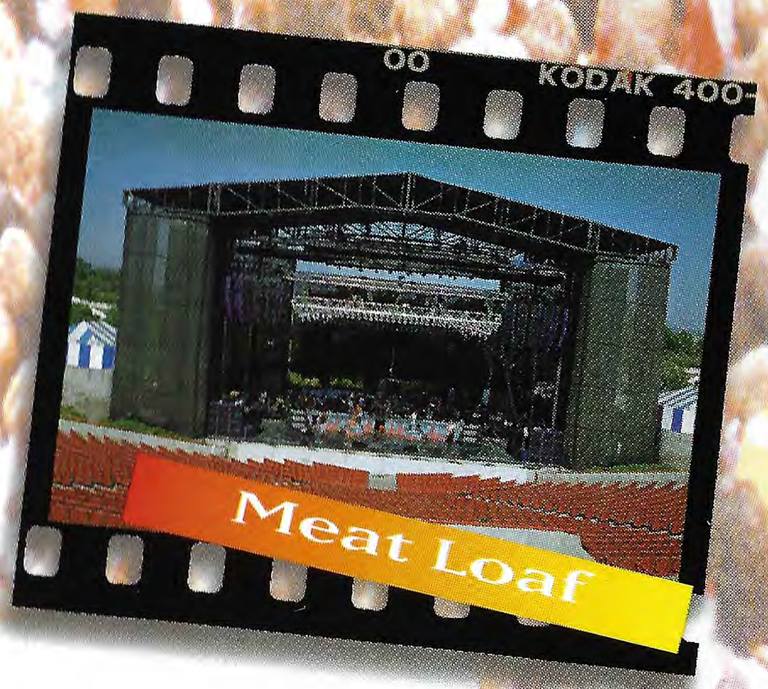
reviews the rent book • optikinetics K2 • spirit 8 • thinking digital: amek's automated future

January 96



IT'S ALL IN THE COMPANY WE KEEP





From **Pink Floyd** to **Peter Gabriel**; **Depêche Mode** to **Duran Duran**; **Meat Loaf** to **Randy Travis**; **Eros Ramazzotti** to **Bryan Ferry**; **Simply Red** to the artist formerly known as... more major artists tour with **Turbosound Flashlight & Floodlight** systems than any other turnkey sound system.

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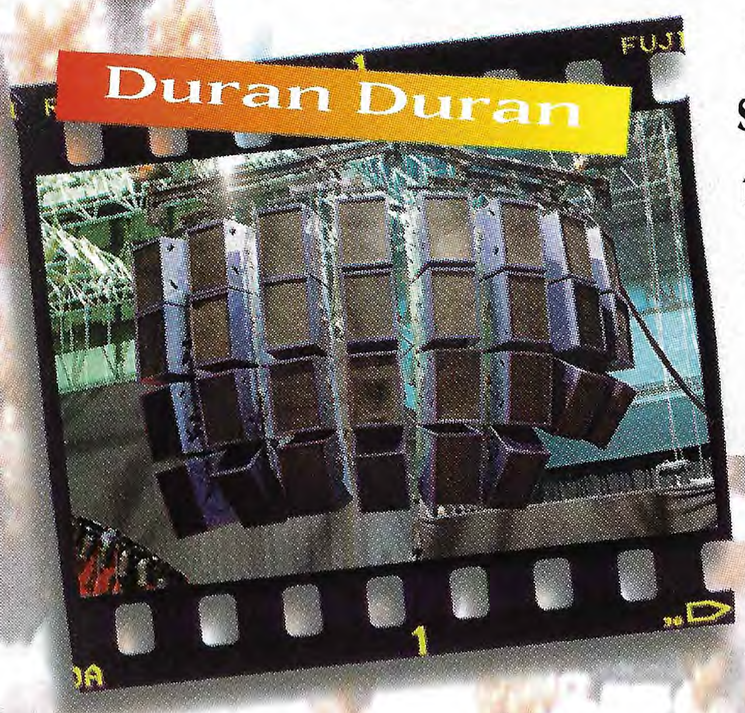

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live!

INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE PRODUCTION

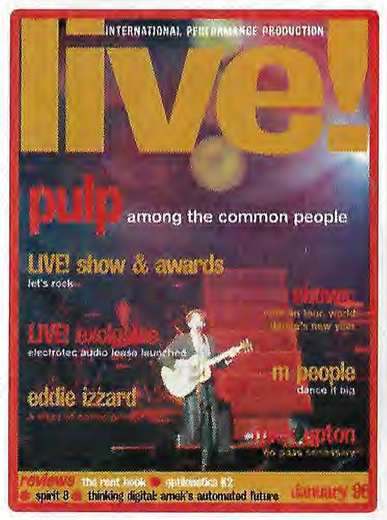
January 1996

Issue 41

Itinerary

4 NEWS: The LIVE! monthly update on companies, services, contracts and people **12 PSA BULLETIN:** Announcing the PSA's 1996 AGM and Conference **14 ALL ACCESS:** Carmen Allestun on what's grooving – and who's grooving with it **18 THE 1996 LIVE! SHOW GUIDE:** The exhibitors, their services and products in full **24 EXCLUSIVE:**

ELECTROTEC MERGE WITH AUDIOLEASE Steve Sunderland interview **26 M PEOPLE:** Dance it big **28 CATS ON TOUR:** The fur flies…all over Europe **34 WORLD DANCE:** New Year's ravers on the big night out **36 PULP:** Too sexy for his shirt? **40 NO PASS NECESSARY:** Fiona Harley profiles Mr Security, ShowSec's Mick Upton **44 THINKING DIGITAL:** The LIVE! interview with Nick Franks and Graham Langley **52 REVIEW:** Zenon Schoepe checks out the Spirit 8 **54 REVIEW:** Optikinetics K2 **58 UP THE TRUSS:** The first LIVE! MagLite Award for loose talk, and more tales of woe from the road



M People dance it big at Wembley Arena. Photography: Phil Dent

PHOTOS:
Pulp's Jarvis Cocker at Brixton Academy
Photo by Phil Dent

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PRODUCTION SERVICES ASSOCIATION PSA

Health & Safety – a burden or an asset?

A report from Steve Dudley (Symonds Travers Morgan) on the first PSA Health & Safety seminar held on 11th December

Mention Health & Safety and you are likely to hear groans and murmurs of "woo more red tape". With the plethora of legislation on safety, fiscal matters and seemingly everything else nowadays, it is hardly surprising.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons for giving due consideration to health and safety – your own and that of others. Firstly, nobody wants to intentionally cause harm or injury and reasonable attention to some basic issues and sensible planning and organisation can go a long way towards preventing accidents.

Secondly, the entertainment industry is subject to scrutiny by the enforcement agencies (Health & Safety Executive and Local Authority Environmental Health Officers). Publications such as the Pop Code and a history of crowd related incidents at events and sports stadia have raised awareness and licensing conditions are zealously enforced.

Thirdly, there is a trend towards requiring everyone with safety responsibilities to be able to demonstrate that they have taken all reasonably practical steps to comply with the law and appropriate good practice. Compliance in practical terms is required, not just "lip service", much of the recent EC driven legislation is geared towards that approach, setting end-points to be achieved but not specifying too much detail. This leaves the methods of compliance more flexible but also means people can be unsure of what they need to do.

Lastly, there are very sound economic reasons to do all this – for every reportable injury or accident, there will be many which are more minor, and still more "near misses". The official statistics are only the tip of the iceberg, many minor accidents not being reported by individuals or organisations. Lots of near misses indicate a need for action and cannot be ignored. Nationally, the insured (and uninsured) losses are enormous. Remember that losses drive up premiums, whereas a good accident record can lower them.

It is beyond the scope of this introductory article to go into depth or detail on specific legislation and requirements. However, at the recent PSA seminar hosted by VARILITE at Greenford, the need was strongly expressed for some basic guidance about how to prepare documents, carrying out risk assessments, and who exactly was responsible for what in the often unclear relationships which exist between promoters, venue owners, production people and the whole army of sub-contractors who work to put on events.

There are duties placed on most people and organisations regarding work activities. Briefly, these concern:

Duties of employers towards their employees
Duties of employers towards persons not employed (customers, public, other contractors etc)
Duties of self-employed persons to themselves and others (workers, public etc)
Duties of employees towards themselves, their employer and others (other workers, the public etc)
Duties of persons or organisations when they make available a workplace for others to use (eg. a sports stadium hired out to a promoter for a concert event).

Some definitions of the terms used helps to clarify these duties.

"Employee" means an individual who works under a contract of employment (this can be written, verbal or implied) – hence temporary staff hired in as crew, for example, might be considered as employees even if they are self employed individuals. Where these individuals rely on the hirer's liability insurance and do not carry their own, this strengthens the view that they are employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 require appropriate information on safety to be given to temporary staff (this would include an agency typist etc)

Risk assessment must be carried out by individuals (including self-employed) and organisations. Significant findings have to be recorded and passed on to appropriate persons whose safety could be affected.

Employees whose undertaking (not premises) employ five or more people need a written Safety Policy which includes a general statement, the organisation in place to carry it out, and arrangements for actually putting it into effect. Since it is the overall undertaking which matters, an employer with four premises, each with four people working there, would still be required to produce a Safety Policy.

It is intended to publish further guidance on these matters via the PSA, to try to clarify some of the more confusing issues and to assist readers with finding out exactly where they stand regarding the various duties and relationships across the entertainment industry.

Updates about safety topics of interest are also planned. For example, it is now understood that the enforcement agencies do not feel that construction site specific legislation will apply to our industry. Official confirmation is awaited. However, a word of caution is required – although particular regulations may not be deemed to apply, the general standard of safety set for construction sites – head protection, lifting operations, scaffolding safety, and so-on, will still be enforced by virtue of the more general, all-embracing legislation which covers all workplaces.

UK summer schedule filling up

Following the news of Glastonbury's 'year off' in 1996, other major promoters are poised to take up any slack in the UK's summer schedule. Apart from the The Mean Fiddler's established festivals – Reading, Phoenix, The Fleadh and Tribal Gathering – both the Isle of Wight festival and Knebworth, the latter promoted by Andrew Miller Concerts, are being mooted.

Glastonbury organisers Michael and Jean Eavis say: "1995 was such a spectacular success for all concerned that we felt we had reached a natural point to rest, reflect on the past and make plans for the future. We have had years off in 1988 and 1991 following problems in the festival in the preceding year. In 1995 the well publicised event of the fence coming down led to some problems and these will have to be resolved for future years."

Eavis completely rejected the idea that his Labour Party candidacy had anything to do with the festival not happening. He stressed: "The main thing for me was the fence. You can't run the thing without the fence."

Melvin Benn of the Mean Fiddler Organisation says: "Potentially we could have an increase in ticket sales because of Glastonbury, which we would obviously welcome. Reading always sells out anyway and Phoenix was only a couple of thousand short of its capacity last year, so it shouldn't impact phenomenally on us. But it will inevitably give a boost to Phoenix. There should be a bit more focus on it and we'll be very pleased." He adds that main stage headliners for Phoenix are already in place.

MFO has an as-yet unannounced artist in Finsbury Park on June 23, and is also considering an additional open-air dance music show.

Other promoters, including MCP, Marshall Arts and Scotland's Regular Music, are also considering one-off festivals or outdoor concerts and a licence is being sought for a festival planned for Winchester. ■

1996 FESTIVAL DETAILS UPDATE

UK

Tribal Gathering: May 4, Fleadh: June 8, T in the Park: July 13-14, Phoenix: July 18-21, Donington Monsters of Rock: August 17 (tbc), Reading: August 23-25, Glastonbury: June 27-29, 1997

EUROPE

Pinkpop, Holland: May 27, Sonoria, Italy: June 1-2, Hultsfred, Sweden: June 13-15, Halfway, Holland: June 16, Roskilde, Denmark: June 27-30, Nantes, France (new): June 29 (and 30 tbc), Midtfyns, Denmark: July 3-7, Torhout-Werchter, Belgium: July 6-7, Dr Music Festival, Spain (new): July 12-14, Tallin, Estonia: July 11-14, North Sea Jazz, Holland: July 13-14, Lowlands, Holland: August 23-25

NEC's 4,000-seat Academy

The National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham has created an expandable 4,000 capacity seated facility within the complex, giving the venue the flexibility to stage a larger range of concerts. The NEC's Events Division has launched the new hall, called The Academy, within the National Indoor Arena. Linda Barrow, director of events says the Academy format was developed, "to meet increasing requests from both entertainment events and business presentations for an auditorium between the 2,200 seats of Symphony Hall and the 12,000 seats at each of Birmingham's two arenas."

The Academy can offer a proscenium or open stage amphitheatre. Floor to roof clearance is 19 metres and stage width and depth can accomodate requirements for most types of show.

Promoter MCP is staging the first show, with k.d. lang, on April 23. Barrow adds that another two shows are currently pencilled. ■

VAT survey shows rulings inconsistent

A Production Services Association seminar, held on January 10, heard the results of a comprehensive survey of members as part of the PSA's ongoing campaign on European VAT.

The PSA is concerned that one of the results of the harmonisation of VAT laws in the EC is that its members, making certain types of supplies, may be required to register and charge local VAT in each country where they have work. At its extreme, a PA company on a two-month European tour may have to register, charge local VAT and submit VAT returns in 14 countries, in addition to the UK. The substantial costs would have to be absorbed by the supplier or passed to the consumer.

The survey aimed to find out the service offered by each member so these could be classified for VAT purposes. The 'type' of supply determines where it takes place for VAT purposes, the alternatives being where the show takes place or where the customer has their place of business. A crucial difference of VAT treatment arises between dry hire of equipment and hire with operating staff.

The experience of PSA members in rulings received from their local VAT offices indicated that a large number of VAT offices do not understand the rules of supply affecting the live entertainment industry. Accountants Touche Ross, who co-ordinated the survey in conjunction with the PSA, hope to assist members in obtaining consistent rulings from their local VAT offices. ■

shaking the tree with Fiona Harley

Michael Eavis was pretty annoyed that the British press has been suggesting that his political career has something to do with Glastonbury not happening this year, with headlines like 'Closes shop and goes for votes'. He says that it is only in the four weeks before an election that the work begins and he doesn't think that likely until 1997. The tonsurally-challenged one is standing as a **Labour candidate** for his Wells constituency and likely has a fight on his hands in what has traditionally been a strong Tory seat.

Normally people complain when a promoter doesn't sell **enough** tickets, but what about when they sell too many? This **Bizarre** story comes courtesy of **Chris Brosch** who promoted **Oasis** in Germany this month. With ticket sales fast outstripping the capacity venue originally earmarked for them, Brosch was keen to move the show to Munich's 3,500 Terminal 1, but one answer machine message (which Brosch tried vainly to ignore) and call to agent **Ben Winchester** later (which he couldn't), Brosch was disappointed to discover the band would only do the smaller show at the 1,800 Wuppertal and even after three days of argument no amount of convincing would **change their minds**. Brosch was last heard sadly muttering "It's going too well", and making arrangements to refund tickets or offer ticket holders the option of a second confirmed Oasis date on March 27.

There were a lot of **burnt-out** people in Scotland towards the end of last year, - no, not the celebrations, but a rather nasty fire which destroyed the offices of around ten different companies including promoter **Regular Music**, **Rock Steady Security** and various other music and management companies in Edinburgh. Regular's **Barry Wright** hasn't quite sorted out the bugs in the temporary telephone system, installed in their refuge-premises above The Venue. But nothing could keep away the smiles of pleasure at the success of the Hogmanay celebrations in Edinburgh which Mr Wright runs with his ex-Regular partner **Pete Irvine** under Unique Events. "Europe's biggest street party" attracted 300,000 visitors with 50 different events, ranging from triathalons to concerts, street theatre and kids shows. So busy was the city that the nearest available hotel rooms were in Dundee. (Shudder...)

Better news regarding Wembley's **Charlie Shun** who has been in hospital for the last couple of months. We hear he's responding well to treatment and we look forward to seeing him up and about again soon.

London shows **Riverman** is promoting include **Garbage** in March, **Green Day** in April and **Smashing Pumpkins** at Wembley Arena (no less) in May. But Riverman's **Dave McLean** seems more excited by the company's recent move into management with new act Placebo. Like a nerd with a new hard drive Dave enthuses: "It's a lot more fun than promoting". Wonder how many **other** managers were so enthusiastic until the band got famous and lost its lead guitarist/had near overdose or split up?

Mick Hucknall, interviewed in the UK's paper for the homeless, *The Big Issue*, was fulminating about the unfairness of record companies owning artists' masters, how much money his record company makes from him and threatening to take it to the European Court of Human Rights. He spilled his concern for 17-year-olds coming into the business and getting burnt by the standard contracts. When asked whether contracts for **Blood & Fire**, the label he is co-founder and adviser to, are any different, however, La Hucknall suddenly lost interest in the issue and muttered vaguely that he "hadn't got the faintest idea. I'm not a businessman. In an ideal world of course it would, but I haven't got a clue." That's clear, then.

Marshall Arts is getting funky with **R. Kelly** dates in February at Nynex, NEC and Wembley arenas and back with old friend **Tina Turner** for stadium dates in June and July. Whether in response to the hole left by Glastonbury or not, Marshall Arts is considering a move into a possible "festival situation" plus a more definite planning of one-off open airs.

MCP's Paul Flower says MCP may do a new festival event this year, depending on availability of artists. He ran an MCP-party line down the phone: "If there are a great amount of artists looking to perform and if we can perceive there is a gap - it will become a viable option." Fine, but not too **inspiring**, is it?

The Academy's **Simon Parkes**, taking a much needed break from exhaustive deal-making, is also rapping "watch this space" as regards involvement in a festival.

The market is **awash** with potential summer events but as they say, many are called and very few hear...

This year's Hultsfred festival has been moved from its usual August slot to June 13 - 15. Motor-promoter **Petri 'Dish' Lunden** says: "Historically, we've always had problems getting American headliners in August - and we compete with Lollapalooza - so we decided to move it." It's obviously been a good move as instead of straining to find three worthy headliners, they've already been offered **seven** potential biggies from the UK and US. Petri also promises a refurbished festival, with new stages and site organisation...

Which music act sold most tickets in the UK last year? The Rolling Stones? Take That? Er... guess again. **Wet Wet Wet**, that's who - a staggering half -million over two UK tours, plus another 300,000-odd in the rest of the world...

Mike Hinc at ATB says his agent **Rob Lockhart** (the spit of Geoff Meall, apparently, and thus causing Hinc some *deja vu*) has been active with some very new bands lately. Rob himself, who manages Lion's Den, is pumping up The All New Accelerators (riding the wave of the still pretty-underground nu punk revival), Auratone, Earl Brutus and Silverheel... if you feel like dropping names almost nobody's heard of yet.

Serious' **David Jones**, sorry pretty-cheerful David Jones, says they dropped the 'Speakout' part of their name after Americans proved to have difficulty with it, though one American managed to hear the revised name as Cyril. The eclectic **Serious** has such names as **Paolo Conte** and **Robben Ford** out in February, and **Ensemble Modern** doing a multimedia extravaganza - *Frank Zappa: The Yellow Shark,* at the Royal Festival Hall, also next month, a national tour with **Le Mystere Des Voix Bulgares**, a **Leo Kottke** national tour and dates with the **Chick Corea Acoustic Quartet** and **Mathilde Santing** in March, plus **Paco De Lucia** in April.

What with Germany making it nigh-on **impossible** for non-German acts to tour there, a state of affairs decidedly against the spirit of the EC and the French putting up **linguistic barriers** with government legislation compelling radio stations to play a minimum of 40 per cent French language records, the European community seems in danger of **destroying** the enjoyment of cultural diversity for all of us, not to mention **endangering** record sales and tours by UK and other foriegn artists in those markets, it seems a shame that the European Concert Promoters Association collapsed as it did last year. The IDKV's **Jens Michow**, who was charged with rejuvenating it, tells us that although support was forthcoming for the ECPA around Europe, **Harvey Goldsmith**, the chairman of the UK's promoters asssociation, indicated they were not convinced it was necessary, questioning whether there were sufficient issues pressing for all promoters. Michow was disappointed not to be **allowed** to convene a board meeting to discuss it, and much work he'd put in was in vain. But perhaps a Europe-wide association would be quite **useful** in view of the above?

New Garwood radio

The Radio Station IDS is a UHF stereo wireless system, which uses frequency synthesis to provide true international frequency management.

The flagship product in Garwood's in-ear monitoring range thus addresses the key requirements of international touring, while audio quality and user-friendliness make it suitable for permanent installation.

The unit is comprised of three elements: a 1U rack-mounted processor, an active antenna and a stereo receiver to be worn on the belt-pack. The system requires in-ear monitors to deliver a stereo monitor mix direct to the user's ear. The processor is pre-programmed to operate in the UHF band on frequencies between 510-900MHz, and the pre-selected frequencies are intermodulation-free. The Active Antenna removes the RF from the transmitter unit and makes it integral to the antenna; it has a broadcasting range of over 100 metres.

The receiver unit is a robust, cast aluminium belt-pack, containing a 9V battery, with a Mode switch on the rearoffering Program and Operation settings.

Priced at £3,995, systems will deliver in March.

Garwood Communications. Tel: +44 181 452 4635 ■ *Jerry Gilbert*

Tibbetts takes Le Circuit to Europe

Martin Tibbetts, who recently left his position as agent at Solo Agency and Promotions after nearly eight years, hopes to announce the first two acts to tour Europe under Le Circuit at the end of this month. Le Circuit is the European arm of the successful Circuit organisation, set up in September 1994 by ex tour manager Richard Ames and partners. With a budget from the record label, Circuit aims to market and help promote up and coming live acts at 2-300 capacity venues.

Circuit supplies promoters with fliers, artwork, photographs and biographies, and co-ordinates advertising, competition tickets and the labels' ticket buy. It will also provide the acts with venue's technical details, location map and contact numbers. Over 30 acts in the UK have used Circuit since its inception, including Supergrass, Skunk Anansie, Moist, Blameless and Whale. Always intending to take the concept into Europe, Le Circuit has been set up specifically to do so.

Tibbetts says the concept of Le Circuit is to take out packages of two bands from different labels plus have a local label's act, "to give the promoter a better shot at filling the club."

He adds: "One of the most valuable things Circuit has done in the UK is getting labels, promoters and agents to work together. We're using the live side as a tool for selling the band's product - and we are able to tie in promotion for both. In Europe the promoters are on board and waiting. The record companies have seen us do it in the UK and they see we can make it work in Europe." ■ *Fiona Harley*

EAW busy with rental firm JHE

John Henry Enterprises, Europe's biggest backline rental company reports an extremely successful past year. The company has six rehearsal rooms ranging in size from 400 to 1,500 square feet. Pepin Clout of JHE says: "Not only are the rooms fully equipped but by having a large specialist audio company and shop under the same roof we can cater to all bands' monitoring, audio and backline demands. We also have storage facilities and flightcase manufacture on site." Recent clients of the rehearsal facility include The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Madness, Soul II Soul, D:Ream, Tori Amos, Galliano and Matt Bianco. JHE holds a large stock of EAW and EV product. ■

Buck joins the Agency

The Agency Group has gained two new agents this month. Paul Buck, formerly of Asgard, moved to The Agency on January 5, taking with him Bandulu, Catatonia, Robert Forster, Grant McLennan, Lightning Seeds, McAlmont, 60FT Dolls and Ultramarine. Neil Warnock, managing director of The Agency, says: "I'm delighted to have him here. He fits in very well wih Geoff (Meall) and Russell (Warby) and strengthens the contemporary side, which is what I wanted." ■

FAB looks for Strange replacement

Steve Strange, who joined FAB Agency in 1993, is settling into his new role at Solo Agency and Promotions, to which he moved at the end of last year, taking with him acts Ash, Placebo, Out Of My Hair and Anne Clark, among others

Though rumours in the industry placed him as joining ITB, Strange says: "I was talking to them but there was no confirmation at either end. I ended up making a decision based on what I thought was going to benefit my roster more. I feel I can go to John (Giddings, managing director of Solo) for advice. He's very supportive of me and my bands."

Rob Challice, managing director of FAB, says he will want a new agent in the next few months: "either someone who's done a bit of club booking, or even someone older who can bring a roster with them." ■ *Fiona Harley*

Ogden takes share in Apollo Group

Leading worldwide venue operators Ogden Entertainment Services and the UK's Apollo Leisure Group are finalising a deal whereby Ogden acquires a 25 per cent stake in the Apollo Leisure group. John Lord, Ogden's new European facilities director says both parties are doing their due diligence at the moment.

Lord adds: "It's a synergy that works for both companies. We're essentially in the same business and we found ourselves bumping heads on occasion and thought it might be better to look at options together."

The Ogden connection will facilitate Apollo's interest in expanding into Europe and America, while Apollo will give Ogden the benefits of its product purchasing power.

The Apollo chain runs to 21 theatre venues across the UK and a significant interest in cinemas and multiplexes. Ogden operates more than 130 venues worldwide. ■ *Fiona Harley*

German tax endangers European touring

The end of Germany as one of the most lucrative markets for touring British artists is feared as the revised law relating to the taxation of foreign artists' earnings came into force on January 1. The live music industry has expressed a unanimous sense of outrage, and representatives from the UK's major agencies and promoters endorsed the demands of the steering committee at a recent emergency meeting in December. One immediate result is a likely huge reduction in foreign artists touring Germany, with implications for the business of touring in Europe as a whole.

The German withholding tax, previously at 17.25 per cent for groups and 18.54 for individual performers, (including VAT) has been raised to around 29 and 32 per cent respectively. The tax is calculated on gross revenues without any permitted deductions for production costs and other expenses. Not only has it become increasingly difficult to get exemptions, the German tax authorities are now revoking, on an indiscriminate basis, exemption certificates granted within the previous six years. Artists who have toured the country in that period could be hit with unexpected tax demands.

A steering committee will approach the German Finance Ministry, the European Commission, the Department of Trade and Industry and other relevant bodies to demand the German tax authorities put a stop to practices including "the potential discriminatory effect of the manner in which taxes are imposed on gross fees paid to visiting performers, the unfair reclassification of performers as employees", [thus increasing their tax liability] and to cease their retrospective withdrawal of exemption certificates.

Not only German promoters and venues will suffer. With Germany the economic lynchpin for many tours, the potential fall-off for European touring has ramifications for both the live and recording industry.

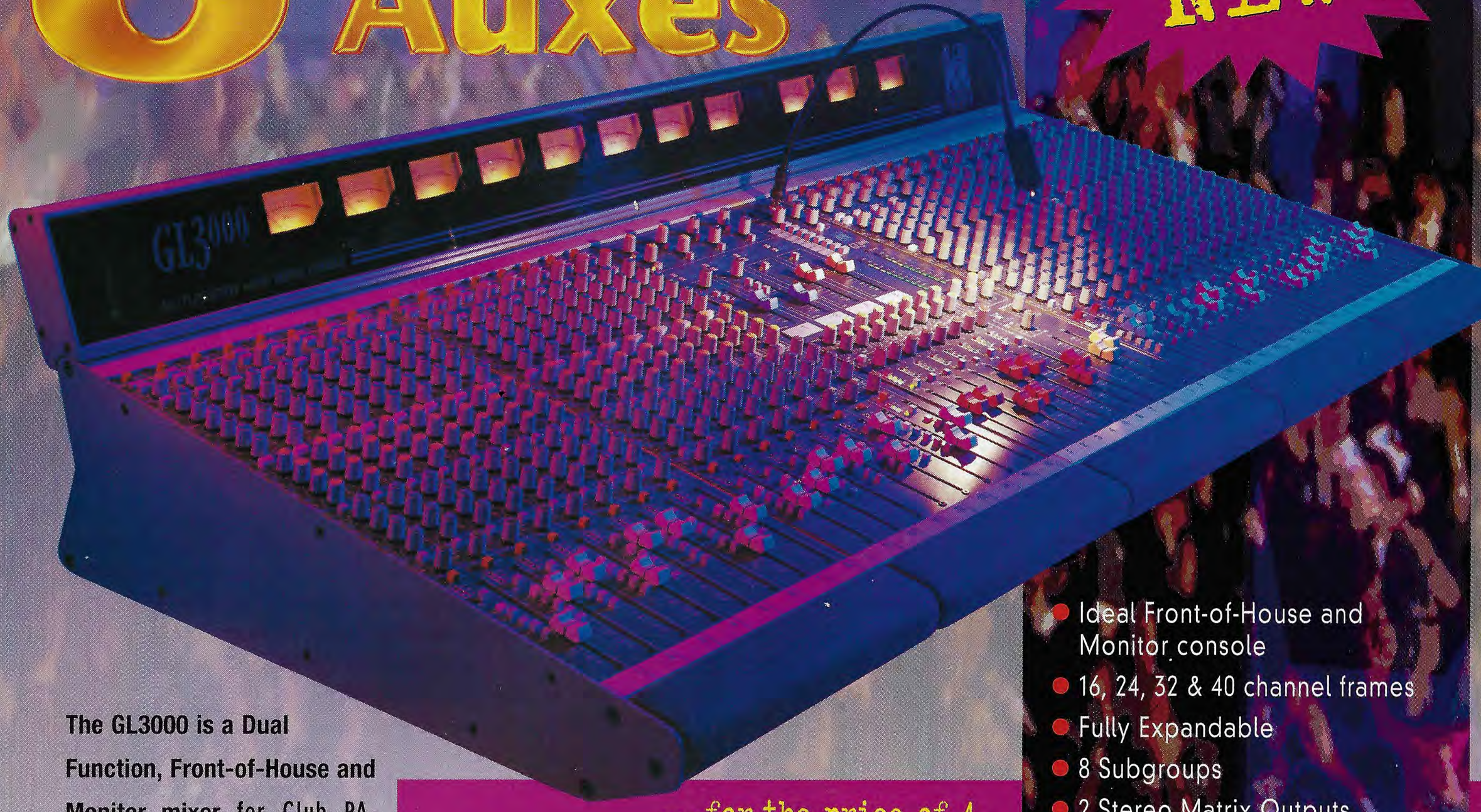
The rulings also raise the question of the homogeneity of European community harmonisation, since the law is at odds with most other countries within the EC and is also discriminatory, affecting, as it does, foreign rather than domestic artists.

Agent Steve Parker, managing director of MPI, comments: "The most outrageous aspect is that they specifically penalise non-German members of the EC. I guess the intention is to raise badly-needed additional tax revenue, or perhaps it's to deter non-German artists and sports people from working in Germany, thereby creating more work for Germans. Perhaps it is a little of both. Either way, it surely goes against everything the EC is supposed to stand for."

Jens Michow who runs the IDKV, the German association of promoters and agents, says of the German tax authorities: "I'm still confident we can open their eyes." He added that the classical and theatre market have already managed to come to an agreement which has lowered their tax liability to around 30 per cent instead of a threatened 55 per cent. ■ *Fiona Harley*

8 Groups Auxes

NEW



The GL3000 is a Dual Function, Front-of-House and Monitor mixer for Club PA, Band PA and Hire Companies alike. It boasts an exceptional feature set - typical of all Allen & Heath consoles.

Because the GL3000 has 8 Groups and 8 Aux busses; on one night the console can be a stand alone 8-2 mix monitor board, another night a single engineer can mix any number of bands for a showcase performance. It is that easy with the GL3000 because everything you need is in front of you.

The flexibility goes even further. The console can be expanded in two ways; either bolt on another mono or stereo expander module (installation takes minutes), or install the unique SYS-LINK™ buss interconnect system which links independent consoles together as if they were one.

Add this flexibility to the superb quality of the audio performance, the visual clarity of the control surface, the solid metal beam construction and you will know that only Allen & Heath could have achieved such versatility.

...for the price of 4 without cutting our features in half!

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*Except on the 16 channel GL3000

GL3000

Looking at how engineers produce their shows requires an unusual understanding of the business. Everybody wants to work in a slightly different way. Bringing together all the different dreams and wishes is now a hallmark of the Allen & Heath approach. The GL3000 represents our commitment to finding cost effective solutions for your requirements.

THE 1996 live! show

Stand No 61

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1995

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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New festivals planned for Europe

Two major European promoters are entering the festival market with the announcement of two newly-created festivals in France and Spain.

Spanish promoter Neo Sala, managing director of Dr Music, is planning a three-day event (July 12-14) near the French border north of Barcelona.

The Dr Music Festival will mark the culmination of Sala's desire to bring to Spain the equivalent of a Roskilde or a Glastonbury. Sala will book a variety of musical styles on three or four main stages plus a jazz cafe and theatre and film tents. A dance tent will be booked in conjunction with local dance party specialists Producciones Animadas.

No large-scale festival has yet been successfully established in the country. Sala says: "We have been thinking about this since 1991/92. I went to Woodstock in 1993, then I saw Glastonbury and Roskilde. I thought, we must do something in Spain."

In Nantes, France, Salomon Hazot, managing director of promoter Garance, is also staging his first festival in conjunction with his 'dream team' partners. Dates are June 29 with an option on the 30th in what Hazot describes as "possibly the nicest site for a festival in Europe," on a grass-covered island containing a natural ampitheatre. Twelve bands a day are planned and Red Hot Chili Peppers are possible headliners. ■

NYNEX News

Michael Bolton is to appear at Manchester's NYNEX Arena on Tuesday 19th March celebrating ten years in the music industry with his 'Greatest Hits Tour'. Also appearing as part of the Spring '96 line-up is Barry Manilow who will perform at the arena on Tuesday 9th April. ■ Tel: +44 (0)161 950 5000

NEC's Musical Ice Ballet

Beauty & The Beast On Ice makes its debut world tour and plays the NEC Arena from May 31 to June 2 The £3 million production will be performed by the Russian All Stars who include former European, Olympic and World Champion skaters. Music and lyrics are by David Essex. ■ Tel: +44 (0)121 780 4141

Sarner On The Wirral

London based Sarner International Limited has recently completed the installation of a massive multi-media presentation system for Wirral Metropolitan College's new campus, International Business Management Centre, located at Birkenhead. ■ Tel: +44 (0)181 743 1288

PEOPLE *brief*

● **Martin Capp**, formally of DDA, has been appointed as International Sales and Marketing Manager at Nexo International. **Peter Jones** also joins NEXO International as Service Manager. Tel: +44 (0)1932 886007

Mushroom Lighting's Paul Butler (left) and Alex Johnston

● **Alex Johnston** has been appointed as General Manager for Mushroom Lighting's new London office at Tower Bridge. She previously worked for White Light as Assistant Hire Manager. Tel: +44 (0)171 237 3030

● **Mike Mann** has been appointed as Head of Sales for Europe at Clive Green & Co Ltd, the manufacturer of Cadac live and theatre mixing consoles. Formally Product Marketing Manager at Soundcraft, Mike's career also encompasses hands-on experience as a sound operator at The Royal Opera House. Tel: +44 (0)1582 404202

● **David Beesley** has joined HHB Communications to head the company's Advanced Media Projects Division. David joins HHB from Sony. Tel: +44 (0)181 962 5000

● **Daniel Bonitsky** has joined Vari-Lite New York as Account Manager. Dan's professional experience includes six years as Lighting Supervisor for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. Tel: (001) 212 645 5400

● **Gary Hardesty** has joined EAW to manage its newly enlarged engineering team. Gary joins EAW from Harman/JBL Professional where he worked as Director, Systems Group JBL. **David Guiness** also joins as Senior Engineer/Custom & New Products Team Leader. Tel: (001) 508 234 6158

Dreamscape live video link

One of the more technically-adventurous moments of the New Year revelry was witnessed at the twin-sited Dreamscape dance events, when the sites at Milton Keynes Sanctuary and the Bath & West Show-ground, Shepton Mallet, were linked with live video and audio via an ISDN line at midnight.

This was made possible by Subvision and The Virtual Light Company (VLC). Two Barcos projected images from the other venue on to 20 x 15ft screens, and the MCa at both venues were able to talk to each other. This was followed, in both venues, by animation produced by Subvision/VLC and video playback mixed live from the two locations.

This is the first time that a dance event has been linked in this way, and Subvisions Stefan Wernik comments that the whole exercise went like clockwork. He thinks that this type of exercise is a strong portent of the shape entertainment technology will take in the future. Subvision are committed to pushing their high-impact visual images and graphics forward as a live effect and art form. Wernik sees this as the next logical progression from moving light shows.

Production management for the Shepton Mallet end of the event was handled by Chris Hannam. CAV provided lighting for both venues. Lighting designer for MK was Giles Mayall, who shared the operating with Selvin, and Dan Dalton designed the main room at Shepton Mallet that was operated by Neil Whitehorn and Simon Watson. CAV also did sound at Milton Keynes with Skan letting it groove down at Shepton Mallet.

Other regulars from the Glastonbury team at the West Country end included Templine doing the power, Serious Structures the staging and Festival Medical Services catering for the overwhelmed. The visual line up was completed by Laserplay. ■ *Louise Stickland*

Letter to the editor

Dear Sir,

With respect to your article "Ministry wakes up the neighbours" in the December edition, I would like to set the record straight regarding several assertions made.

As sound consultants employed by Wembley, we were surprised to hear that complaints had been received from residents at the Hilton. The hotel management is not aware of any complaints being made and neither are the London Borough of Brent, the enforcing authority. If such complaints were received from another source they were not brought to our attention and we would be obliged if you could tell us were they originated. There was certainly never any instruction to shut down the event.

As part of the sound control programme, frequency content and overall levels were monitored continuously and adjusted throughout the event. At no point did a representative of the promoter or sound crew suggest to ourselves that the sound in any of the rooms was unsatisfactory and a good working relationship was maintained throughout the night.

Our view of the event was that all parties were satisfied with the manner in which the sound was controlled and no complaints were made.

Yours faithfully

DC Leversedge
Symonds Travers Morgan Ltd

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QUIET

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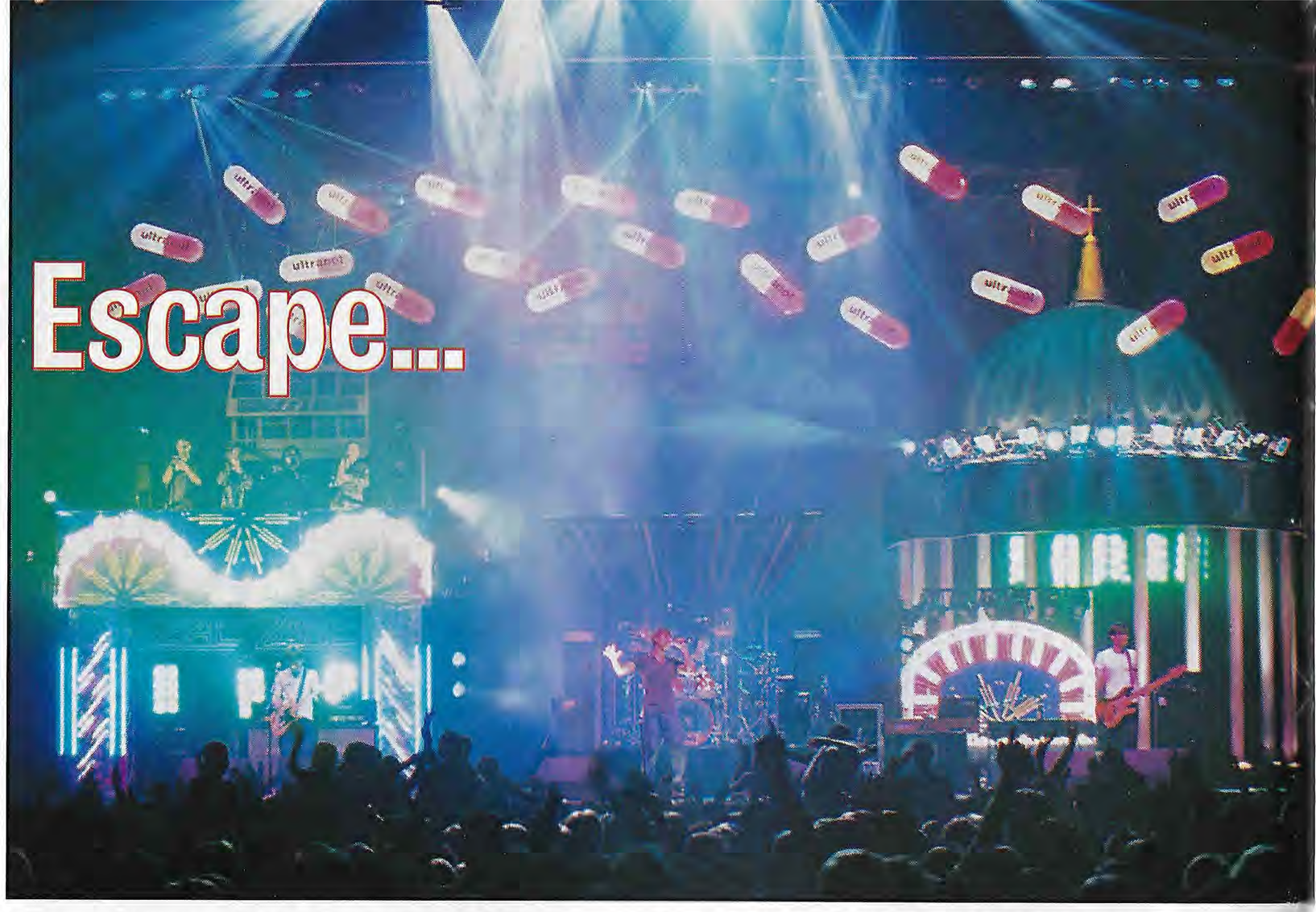
Blur's Great Escape... to Wembley



The finale's 'Ultranol' pills parody a certain well-known anti-depressant – anonymous by decree

Blur's *Great Escape* tour has been one of the most visually-exciting set-and-lighting designs of 1995. Created by the active imagination, verve and wit of Dave Byars, it combines monoliths of classic art (e.g. St Paul's Cathedral) with seedy seaside B&B culture, all rolled into a numerous and futuristic theme-park nightmare, with lighting and sound production from Entec.

The giant burgers that made their début at London's Mile End Stadium in the summer are back – this time dancing in foramtion. A new addition are the 20 flashing red and white 'Ultranol' pills which slide into view in the finale, *The Universal* – parodying a much-hyped anti-depressant whose name, the makers had insisted, should not be emblazoned on the set.

The set is packed, Byars-style, with architectural and generic lights – necessitating over 400 channels of the Avolites Diamond II for control. Primary intelligent fixtures include eight Golden Scan HPEs, eight Mark 3s and eight Coemar NATs, controlled by Dave's operating partner Andy Emmerson from a WholeHog II. Scenery movement is controlled by Rob McKenzie from a Jands desk, interfaced to a motor control system.

The sold-out tour, show and production has received widespread critical acclaim, and launches Blur into a new league of ever-energetic, dynamic presentations. ■ **live!**

Louise Stickland

JBL star at MTV

To the professional blue-chip marketeer, the pro sound industry must appear to lag somewhere behind the Robin Reliant in its scope. Trade marketing to the trade – a safe option which breaks no boundaries.

It was thus something of a breakthrough when JBL Professional announced its comprehensive brand-building programme via MTV Music Television, putting the JBL name in front of an estimated 260 million television viewers worldwide and providing JBL Professional dealers outside the US with a powerful in-store promotion programme.

The ground-breaking deal centred around the 1995 MTV European Music Awards, held in Paris during November, and included branding at the end of the live broadcast and the provision of a full JBL sound system for the after-show party, held in a huge custom-built marquee opposite Le Zenith, home to the Awards.

Joining co-sponsors Apple Computers, Burger King, Lee Jeans, Mitsubishi and Jose Cuervo Tequila, JBL took centre-stage at the party for 4500 guests, artists, presenters and industry executives from around the world with a huge Sound Power Touring 'T' sound system – one of the largest ever seen in Europe.

Supplied by Copenhagen-based DPA SoundCo A/S and designed by DPA's Michael Meisner and JBL Pro Europe's Guy Hawley - who had to change their first flown-design with only two weeks to go as the original Grand Halle venue was considered a security risk - 80 boxes were placed in eight stacks around the room, with one stack in each corner and a further four arrayed around the central dancefloor.

Incorporating 40 boxes of T771 full-range cabinets, 24 T749 twin 18" subs and 16 Triple Chamber Bypass (TCB) sub boxes split between the eight stacks, the main system was Amcron Machrotech and JBL amplifier driven and controlled by a JBL C232 controller, and was capable of producing SPL's of up to 110dB giving the quality 'club' sound as specified by MTV.

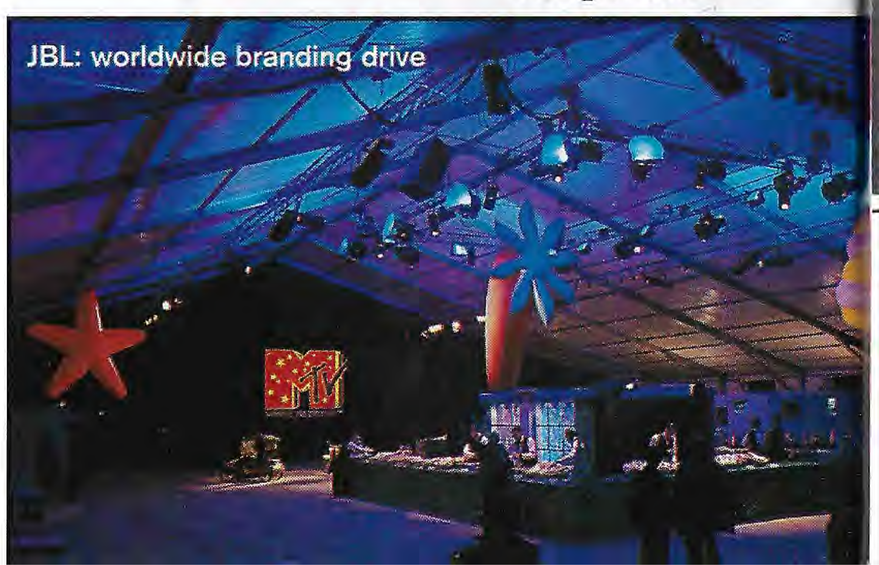
Indeed, so efficient was the system, that when tested an hour before the start of the party, comms links with the Awards across the canal buzzed as the subs were causing some of the television cameras to reverberate during the live broadcast!

The DJ's, who included the UK's Paul Oakenfold and Jeremy Healey, used three JBL P723 wedges for monitoring plus a Klark Teknik DN360 EQ for their own use. The DJ feeds plus those for video screens and emergency messages then went into a Yamaha PM1800A console, with a BSS Varicurve for the main system EQ, plus a TC Electronic M5000 which was used as a system compressor.

JBL's latest EON systems were also present with eight powered full-range systems relaying the main room programme to the VIP lounge, plus a further EON system in JBL's hospitality area behind the DJ riser again fed by the main mix.

Viewed as a resounding success from both a marketing and technological angle Mark Spector, JBL's Director of Marketing Worldwide commented, "We're proud to continue our association with MTV Europe. We hope to increasingly develop our market awareness using this type of high-profile promotion and will continue to do so on a global basis." ■ **live!**

Andy Wood



JBL: worldwide branding drive

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BULLETIN BOARD

live! UPDATE FROM THE PSA JANUARY 1996

THE 1996 PSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

to be held at

The New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, London WC2

Saturday 20th January 1996

09.00 registration for 09.30 start

AGENDA

09.30-10.45 Annual General Meeting
10.45-11.05 Council Elections
11.45-13.00 Council Reports
13.00-14.00 Lunch
14.00-15.00 NVQ's and Training
15.00-16.00 Health and Safety
16.30-17.45 "Our Industry - a view from all sides"
17.45-18.45 Priorities for 1996-97
18.45-18.50 Election Result
18.50-19.00 Closing of Conference
19.00-21.00 Social

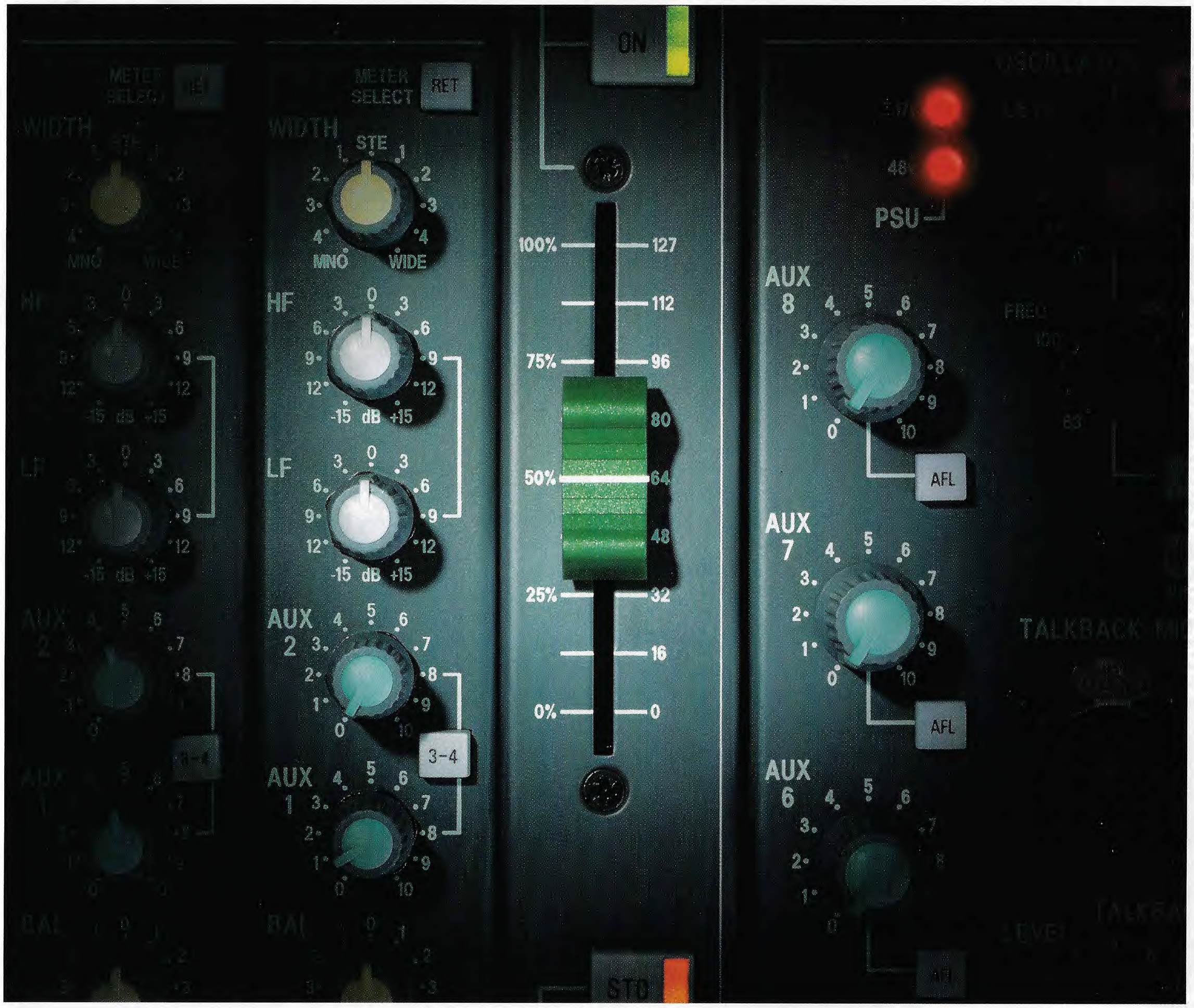
The cost is £50.00 per person

This includes morning coffee, buffet lunch and afternoon tea. There will be a pay bar available in the evening.

All nominations for election to the new council to be sent to the general manager as soon as possible

Please telephone or fax the PSA office immediately to reserve your place

The Association of Personnel and Companies working in the Production, Design, Touring, Technical and Support Services in the Live Entertainment Industry
Unit 5, 193 Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4LZ.
Tel: 0181 335 3323. Fax: 0181 335 3725.



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Carmen Allestun: the piper at the gates of dawn of a brave new year... [*enough, enough-ed.*]

The tales of festive high jinks are gradually clawing their way out of the rubble of the end of 1995.

It is rumoured that even our upstanding and dignified editor partook in a little revelry at the **Creative Technology Christmas Party** – which took place at the **Cobham Hilton** hotel, featuring the hot and hyped CT/Dimension Audio in-house band, currently seeking a record contract. **Mr Lethby**, harbouring his long-repressed desire to be a **lighting designer**, was let loose with an antique 12-channel, two-preset desk and copious amounts of imagination-enhancing liquid refreshment (look out **Patrick Woodroffe, Roy Bennett**, *et al*) Sound was from **Dimension Audio**. Comments about the performance included: "It was better as a memory that a video!" – but a thoroughly good time was had by all...

Reports are also coming in alleging that certain crew members engaged in bus surfing following the highly-acclaimed **Prodigy** gig in **Dublin** on **New Year's Eve**. Apparently the incident took place once the bus had disembarked from the ferry back in the UK, and the local **constabulary** were obliged to intervene and calm this capricious New Year behaviour! It would come as no surprise if that show had been audible from the mainland as, according to **Concert Systems' Kevin Bannerman,** the PA, featuring a mere **96 EAW** boxes was "Awesome!" (**FOH engineer Nick Warren**). Concert Systems were also doing a number of other New Year events, including **Rezerection** in Scotland, and have a healthy crop of events in January, ranging from the **100 Years Of The Motor Car** celebration at the ICC in Birmingham to the **NME Brats** tour, featuring **The Bluetones** (hotly tipped for success in 96), **The Cardigans, Heavy Stereo** and **Fluffy**.

The Spot Co are recovering from their usual New Year overkill, when they serviced most of the major parties in the metropolis. These included the totally-cool **World Dance** show and **Georgie's** in Park Royal Studios, where the **Party Posse** (see World Dance feature) rounded off the evening's grooving. Spot Co's January work includes various stands for **Microsoft** and **Apple** at the **BETT '96** show, bits of the **Boat Show**, exhibition stands as far afield as **Cuba** and **Frankfurt,** lighting for the opening of the **World Cricket Cup** in **Calcutta** and the European **Pepsi Max** promotion tour.

CPL are providing lights for the **Beauty and the Beast** UK ice show (**LD Mick Healy**) with set built by **Brilliant Stages**, while **Varl*Lite** have systems on **Simply Red** (**Lighting design by Partick Woodroffe and Mark Payne** (see feature next month), **David Bowie** (**LD Roy Bennett**), **Toto** in Europe (**Lighting director Andy Doig, Varl*Lite programming by Dave Hill**), **The Chippendales** plus lots of **TV** work. As well as the aforementioned, Brilliant also have constructions on **Simply Red, Status Quo** and **AC/DC**'s world tour.

SSE are busy despite the traditional seasonal lull for the time of year. **Chris Beale** has just departed for the US to oversee the commencement of the **AC/DC** tour, which SSE are doing in conjunction with **DB Sound** (**FOH engineer Pablo Boothroyd**).

They also have **The White Room** and **Hotel Babylon** TV shows ongoing, in addition to the **Holstein Pils** tour featuring **PWEI** and **The Lightening Seeds**.

Neg Earth are providing extra gear to **Cirque du Soleil** for their month's residency at the **Albert Hall. The Nutcracker on Ice** finishes half way through the month and then there's the on-going work with **The Blues Brothers Revue** (now in its third touring year), **Riverdance** and the **London Towers** basketball team. Touring-wise, Neg Earth supply the above-mentioned **Holstein Pils tour** (**LDs Oscar Harris and Graham**), with **Carl Burnett** as baby-sitter, and **Toto**'s European tour.

Fineline have a series of corporate 'motivate the staff' conferences for January, and will soon have their own newly-employed staff and computer system to monitor and help organise the ever-growing hire stock. **Back 2 Front** are taking a deep breath after the festive period where the dressing side of the business went 'particularly haywire'. This included dressing the **KLP Christmas Party** by turning **Studio 101** completely white! Current backdrops include **Blare**, PA scrim for **Serious Stages** and one for **The Mean Fiddler**.

Canegreen did sound for the other major London New Year's Eve dance show, **Ravelation** at Wembley (lighting also by **Spot Co**), as well as others in **Heston** and **Reading**. For the latter they pulled a system off the **Nutcracker on Ice** which is now back out (looked after by **Pete Hughes**). This is the first time that Canegreen have flown a **self-powered Meyer system** (no amp racks). With the get-out taking just 40 minutes, it's definitely not a gig for crews with high boredom thresholds. They also have a system on **Cirque du Soleil** at the **RAH**, which loaded in on 19th December, even though it doesn't open until the first week of January – with the austere interior of the RAH transformed into a circus tent. The new year also sees more gigs with **Van Morrison**, **The Rankin Family** and preparations for an installation at the **Birmingham Empire**.

LSD have a diverse selection of jobs on the agenda, including the **Autosport** exhibition at the NEC, **The Travel Industry Globe Awards** at the Grosvenor House Hotel, **Oasis** in Europe (**LD Mikey Howard**), **David Bowie**, **Black Grape** (**LD Mikey Howard**) and **The White Room** (**LD Eugene O'Connor**).

White Light's recent and forthcoming shows include **The Who's Tommy** at **The Shaftesbury** (**LD Chris Parry**), **Fields of Ambrosia** at **The Aldwych** (**LD Nick Richings**), **The Glass Menagerie** at **The Comedy Theatre** (**LD David Hersey**), **Hysteria** at **The Duke of York's** (**LD Rick Fisher**), **Wind In The Willows** at the **Old Vic,** and then on tour, and the **Copacabana** tour, starting in Blackpool (**LD Gerry Amies**).

Capital Sound are doing the **Beauty and The Beast on Ice** tour that runs until August with an F2/W2 mixture in a variety of venues, touring their own ice rink! (**Systems engineer Dave Wells**). Capital are also sending gear and personnel out to **Calcutta** for the **World Cricket Cup** and have an up-coming charity show for **Music Therapy** at **Brixton Academy**.

Phase 5 had an emergency call out over Christmas to light **Porchester Castle** near **Portsmouth**. The requirement was for the side of the castle to be illuminated so it was clearly visible from the nearby motorway. Phase 5 received the call one day and had the battlements shimmering the next! Their January shows include the **MIDEM** festival.

Tiger Hire's Jim Parsons is back in the office (and vowing to spend more time there this year) after a busy autumn with the likes of **Menswe@r**, **Echobelly**, **Radiohead** and **Teenage Fanclub** (the latter took him to Australia and Japan).

With summer festival conjecture in abundance, all the signs are pointing towards an excellent year for the live performance industry.

However, the words hot on everyone's lips at the moment are the **LIVE! Awards**. We are standing by for the flattening of any post New Year blues, and for any of you who didn't quite get your fill of revelry, then here's the chance to do it once again – with feeling!

SPIRIT

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The LIVE! Show 1996

The 1996 LIVE! Show and Awards will bring the touring industry under one roof over 48 hours. Some 40 manufacturers and distributors will exhibit their wares between 10am and 6pm on Monday, January 15 and 10am and 5pm on Tuesday, January 16 at The Novotel Exhibition Centre, Hammersmith. In between, there will be product launches and press conferences, and on the Monday evening LIVE! will host the largest awards dinner ever when almost 700 people assemble to see Jools Holland present trophies in recognition of outstanding performance in the world of concert production and touring over the past 12 months. Over the following three pages we present what (and who) you'll see at the year's first networking event

A.C. Lighting Ltd

A.C. Lighting Ltd will be showing a range of products suited to the live concert and production markets. The much acclaimed Wholehog II from Flying Pig Systems will be on show, linked to the newly enhanced WYSIWYG visualisation software. Also not to be missed are the Jands-Hog consoles, the fruits of FPS and Jands working together.

The rest of the Jands range will be on show along with the brand new HP12 12 x 10amp digital dimmer rack. The award-winning Powerlock connector range, Gelstream colour changer, Vision light enhancer and Reel EFX DF50 units will also be on show.

Amek Systems & Controls Ltd

Amek's Recall by Langley and 501 by Langley are the first general purpose computer-assisted sound reinforcement consoles. Advantages include console reset and recall functions.

At two different pricing levels, the consoles offer extensive audio facilities including audio subgroups and VCA subgroups and output matrix.

Amek Showtime automation allows snapshots of fader levels and mutes to be created and loaded either manually or to timecode. External events can be triggered via MIDI, and Virtual Dynamics and Visual FX are standard equipment.

The Amek/Rupert Neve RCMA (Remote-Controlled Microphone Amplifier) houses four Rupert Neve-designed mic amps in a 19-inch rack-mount unit. Sixteen devices can be linked, providing a 64-channel input system of the highest quality.

The RCMA may also be used on the console outputs to drive long lines efficiently.

Autograph Sales Limited

Autograph is showing new self-powered loudspeaker systems from Meyer Sound, including the compact, fully-arrayable, bi-amplified MSL-4, accompanied by the Meyer MTS-4, a full-range, stand-alone system with built-in four-way amplification. Also on show is the arrayable PSW-4 powered sub-bass unit.

The new Meyer systems enable rapid installation, saving the costs and the transportation of separate amplifier racks. The extensive range of ATM Fly-Ware loudspeaker rigging hardware is also on display, accompanied by communications equipment from the Clear-Com Intercom Systems, lightweight power amplifiers from of Lab Gruppen, plus signal processors and accessories from BSS Audio, EMO and Klark Teknik.

Avolites

The 1996 Live Show will see Avolites exhibiting their latest control technology, in particular the Pearl and Diamond II moving light consoles, the Graphic Tablet and the new ART dimmer.

The Diamond and Pearl consoles offer extremely flexible control of all intelligent fixtures. Quick to programme and playback, these desks retain the familiar parameters that have made Avolites equipment a favourite with LDs the world over. The Pearl has been Avolites' largest seller over the last 12 months, while the Diamond II has led the way for large shows that combine a multiplicity of instruments, e.g. Blur, Take That, REM, Simple Minds to name just a few recent ones.

The Graphic Tablet, which accompanies virtually every console ordered, revolutionises moving light programming, enabling huge time savings when it comes to preset focuses and colour mixes, making these processes at least 30 times faster.

The robustness and reliability of Avolites' dimmers have been responsible for them becoming the touring industry standard. The latest Avolites ART dimmer takes dimming into the 21st century. As with all Avolites equipment, common sense and practicality combine to produce an unrivalled product.

The chokeless ART dimmer is completely silent, and new technology and design combine to give highly accurate definitions of rise time in excess of 450 micro-seconds.

Beyerdynamic

There are many new Beyerdynamic products being shown alongside established favourites at this year's LIVE! Show. The NE600 is a half 1U UHF diversity wireless receiver employing synthesised tuning and capable of receiving 64 channels in one TV channel with transmitters to match.

The DT 200 series of headphones and headsets for monitoring and comms applications boasts a range to suit all requirements.

New in microphones is the MCE 83, an electret condenser mic ideal for overhead drum miking and the X-S range of budget microphones, ideally suited where price is a paramount consideration.

New consoles from Soundtracs include the Topaz Mini, Macro and Maxi, ideal for installations, and the new Megas Monitor II, a new version of this great performer.

Following the introduction of XTA Electronics DP100 delay processor they now offer Windows based control software for this device and future Audiocore products.

Products from ASL Intercom, Sound Performance Laboratory and Omniphonics amplification will complete this year's line up.

Stand personnel: Steve Bickford, Richard Buckland.

BSS Audio

The BSS Omnidrive Loudspeaker Management System has really made its mark in the touring sound area this year, and now has the ability to be remotely controlled from BSS's own FPC-900 Varicurve Remote unit. Band gains, mutes and delays may be set from any location using a wireless link.

Soundbench is a new Windows Control Software package for BSS products, and will be shown with the Varicurve system. Among its features is the ability to cut and paste data and curves to WP documents or other units.

Also on show is the FCS-916 Parametric Equaliser Preamplifier, a creative EQ with notch facilities, sweep high and low pass filters and a high performance microphone preamplifier. This is shown alongside the new DPR-901 II Dynamic Equaliser.

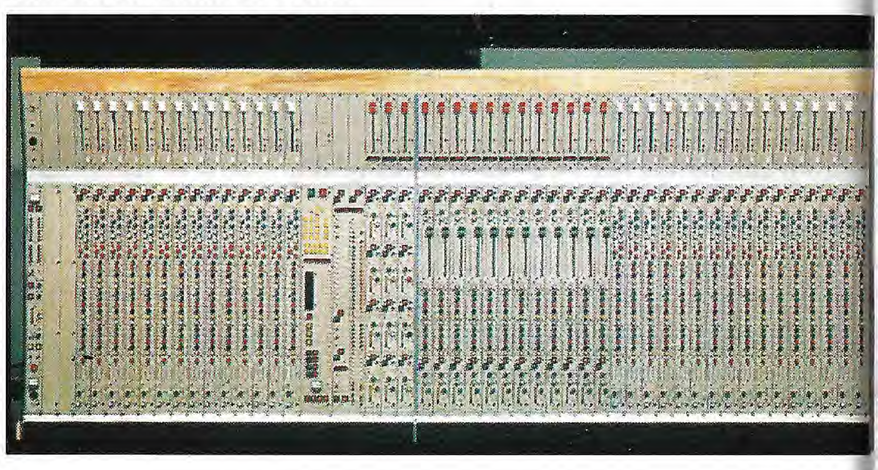
The other products from BSS's range of equalisers, dynamics processors, accessories, time correction systems and crossovers will be shown.

Cadac

The powerful Cadac Concert Board will be on show at the 1996 LIVE! Show, offering engineers complete status recall of every function, plus comprehensive static and dynamic automation with MIDI sequencing and event control. Concert's flexible architecture allows up to 112 inputs, 12 subgroups, 12 matrix output groups and 16 auxiliaries.

The console's design allows for modules to be freely removed or inserted, without the need to power down. Multiple-frame configurations allow the engineer to specify a console which matches every production's requirements. Concert's design is of particular ➳ p20

The Cadac Concert Board



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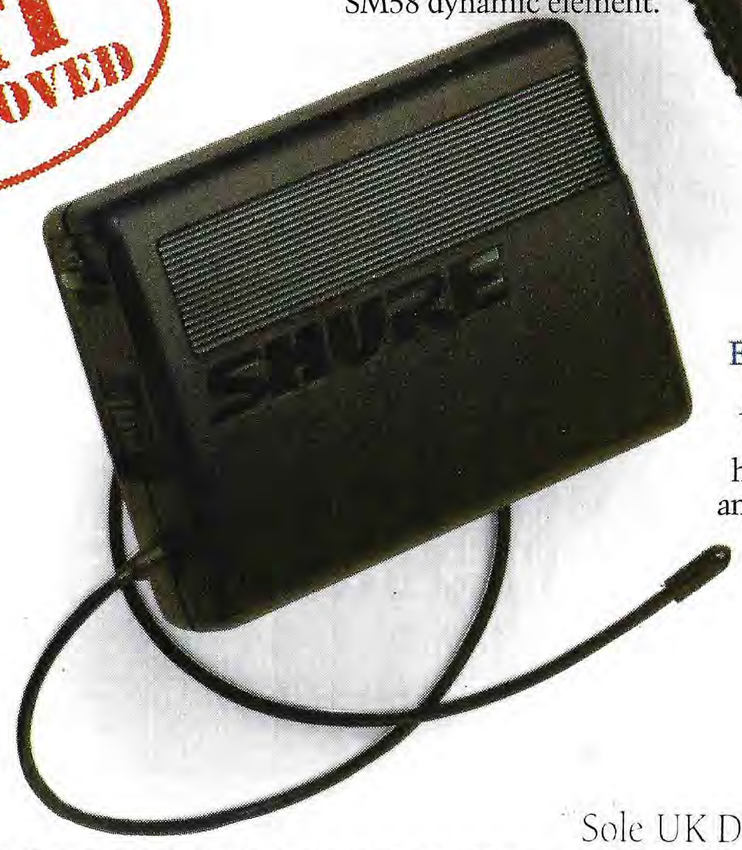

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p18 relevance to large arena productions, concert venues, fixed theatre installations and large tours. Cadac's renowned audio and construction quality combine to make this the ultimate live production console.

Details of Cadac's new monitor board are also being announced at the show, due for official launch in the Spring.

The Chevalier Catering Company

The Chevalier Catering Company, Eat To The Beat's sister company, enjoys a high reputation within the corporate hospitality market for comprehensive catering for events such as business lunches, exhibitions, banquets, themed parties, weddings and barbecues. Their event management skills are utilised by providing licensed bars, VIP hospitality, marquees, entertainment, as well as being agents for mobile catering concessions for music and summer festivals, and prestigious county shows.

Past clients include Capital Radio, The Government, British Airways and Jaguar. Chevalier are totally committed in the belief that each client's needs are specific and this is paramount in achieving a totally professional, successful occasion.

Crest Audio UK Ltd

The 1996 LIVE! Show will be the setting for Crest Audio UK's first birthday, at which it will be showing a selection of professional amplifiers and consoles manufactured by its parent company, Crest Audio Inc.

These include the new Century Series Vx and GTx front-of-house consoles and the Century Series LM monitor console. Designed with advanced direct-coupled circuits, sophisticated ICs and 1% metal film resistors, the Century Series consoles offer maximum performance at a highly-affordable price.

On the amplifier side, Crest Audio UK will be displaying its highly successful Professional and CA Series and its latest V and Vs series power amplifiers.

Crest Audio's CA6, 9 and 12 models from its CA series of power amplifiers

Eat To The Beat

Eat To The Beat, the premier tour catering company in Europe, works extensively in the music and film businesses supplying full crew and artist catering around the globe. Their experience encompasses trade shows, festivals, television and video, advertising, award presentations and pop promotions among others.

Outdoor events have become their forte. By making use of their mobile kitchen trucks, refrigerated trailers, dining buses and marquees, they have liaised successfully with production teams to provide a friendly efficient and professional service.

They hold quality service in the highest regard, and their qualified crew are well versed in all Health and Safety laws.

Recent clients include The Brit Awards, King of Greece, Prince, Take That, Blur, BBC, Big Breakfast, BT, The Government and many more.

EAW

For nearly 20 years Eastern Acoustic Works' loudspeaker systems have been recognised as the world standard in concert touring loudspeaker technology. Today, EAW engineers continue their search for even higher levels of performance and flexibility. As a result, attendees at LIVE! will be able to view the KF853 High Q and the BH853 Low Frequency Stadium Array™ series modules, the Linear Activation Series LA325 loudspeaker system – designed for band PA, DJ, and other nearfield applications – the FL103 High Output Ultimate Fidelity System, engineered for theatrical sound design and multimedia presentations which demand utterly natural reproduction and high sound pressure levels, the KF300 Virtual Array™ loudspeaker system, and several members of the SM Series stage monitors.

Harman Audio

Allen & Heath's GL3000

With the recent announcement that the Studer range of professional products are to come under the jurisdiction of Harman Audio as of Jan 1, the Borehamwood-based distribution company further reinforces its position as a one-stop-shop for the full chain of audio products, from microphone to loudspeaker.

For the LIVE! Show the star attraction on Harman's stand will be the world launch of the GL3000, a new mixing console from Allen & Heath, offering theatres, clubs and PA hire companies a multifunctional 8-buss mixer with a feature set that belies its price tag. The GL3000 resembles the popular GL4 in its aesthetics and functionality and is available in 16, 24, 32 and 40 channel configurations, with list prices starting at just £2199 for the 16-channel version.

Peter Gabriel, Rod Stewart, Wet Wet Wet and currently Simply Red are just some of the major acts to have toured with AKG's WMS 900 UHF wireless system, complete with Tri-Power C5900 vocal mics and C409 brass mics. The full 900 system will be on display at the LIVE! Show along with the SR 800 single channel unit designed to operate with all WMS 900 hand-held and body-pack transmitters, and the PR 900 portable receiver system.

Also on show for the first time will be two new products from JBL: the P66A, a two box system comprising of a mid-range cabinet with a passive 12 inch and 11/2 inch compression driver running in conjunction with an amplifier complete with control card; the system allows the operation of eight cabinets from two amplifiers providing 4,000 watts of music power. Also featured from JBL will be DSC 280, a 2-in 8-out digital controller offering pre-sets for JBL Array and DMS1 monitor systems.

Other products vying for stand space alongside Allen & Heath, AKG and JBL, will be the brand new dbx 1066 compressor/limiter/gate, and key items from the C-Audio range of amplification.

Stand personnel will include Paul Mason, Mark Cogswell and Justin Frost.

Kick Backline

"Do you have a jack-jack for my guitar? A step-down transformer to 110? How do you get this Hammond B3 in tune? Or was it an 18" bass drum you wanted with a Black Beauty snare?"

The gear: Pearl Masters Custom, Yamaha Maple Custom, Yamaha Recording 9000, Sonor Designer, DW custom fast, Trace RAH600, Ampeg SVT/V4B, SWR SM400, Hartke XL, Goliath, Triad, 810DL, Twins, Supers, JMCs, JCs, Plexis, Hammond B3s, Wurlitzers, around 75 keyboards and workstations.

Kick don't do PA, they don't do lights – simply backlines and instruments for musicians throughout Benelux and Europe.

Lamba

As a first time exhibitor, Lamba is proud to display its new 256 channel digital lighting controller, known as the KAM Apollo, and sister control panel, the KAM AP1.

Both panels are totally water resistant and simple to operate, with a specially designed internal database storing the characters of all major generic lighting and effects.

As the sole UK and Eire distributor of Cerwin-Vega loudspeakers, Lamba will show the latest addition to the Intense series. This range of powerful reinforcement cabinets is designed and engineered specifically for both the installation and touring markets.

LMC Audio Systems Ltd

This year LMC will be exhibiting the latest high tech products from their extensive range of BSS, Klark Teknik, Martin Audio, Soundcraft, EAW and Crest Audio to name but a few.

They believe that professional users deserve quality products with the peace of mind of quality support, and aim to provide both.

Contact: Dave Wiggins, Chris Smith, Sean Hames, Richard Ferriday.

Mark IV Pro Audio Group

Mark IV Pro Audio Group is responsible for sales and marketing of DDA, Electro-Voice, Klark Teknik and Midas products.

On display at this year's LIVE! Show are:

The new competitively priced DDA CS3 console, for live installations and theatre or concert applications.

Klark Teknik will be exhibiting a number of products including the recently launched DN6000 Audio Analyser.

Midas will be exhibiting the highly successful XL200 Live Performance Console and XL42 Pre-Amp Equaliser System.

Stand contacts: Bob Doyle, David Webster, Ian Hodgkinson, David Cooper.

Martin Audio

At this year's show, Martin Audio will be displaying its highly-acclaimed F2 system as well as the new Wavefront 8 which, following its recent launch, has successfully broken into the touring scene with the likes of Take That, Simple Minds and Joan Armatrading, and is now used widely around the world.

The established LE monitors, the LE350 and LE400, will also be on display.

The revolutionary ICT technology used by Martin Audio will be shown in the form of the ICT300 and its dedicated sub, the ICS300, together with the new M1200 amplifier.

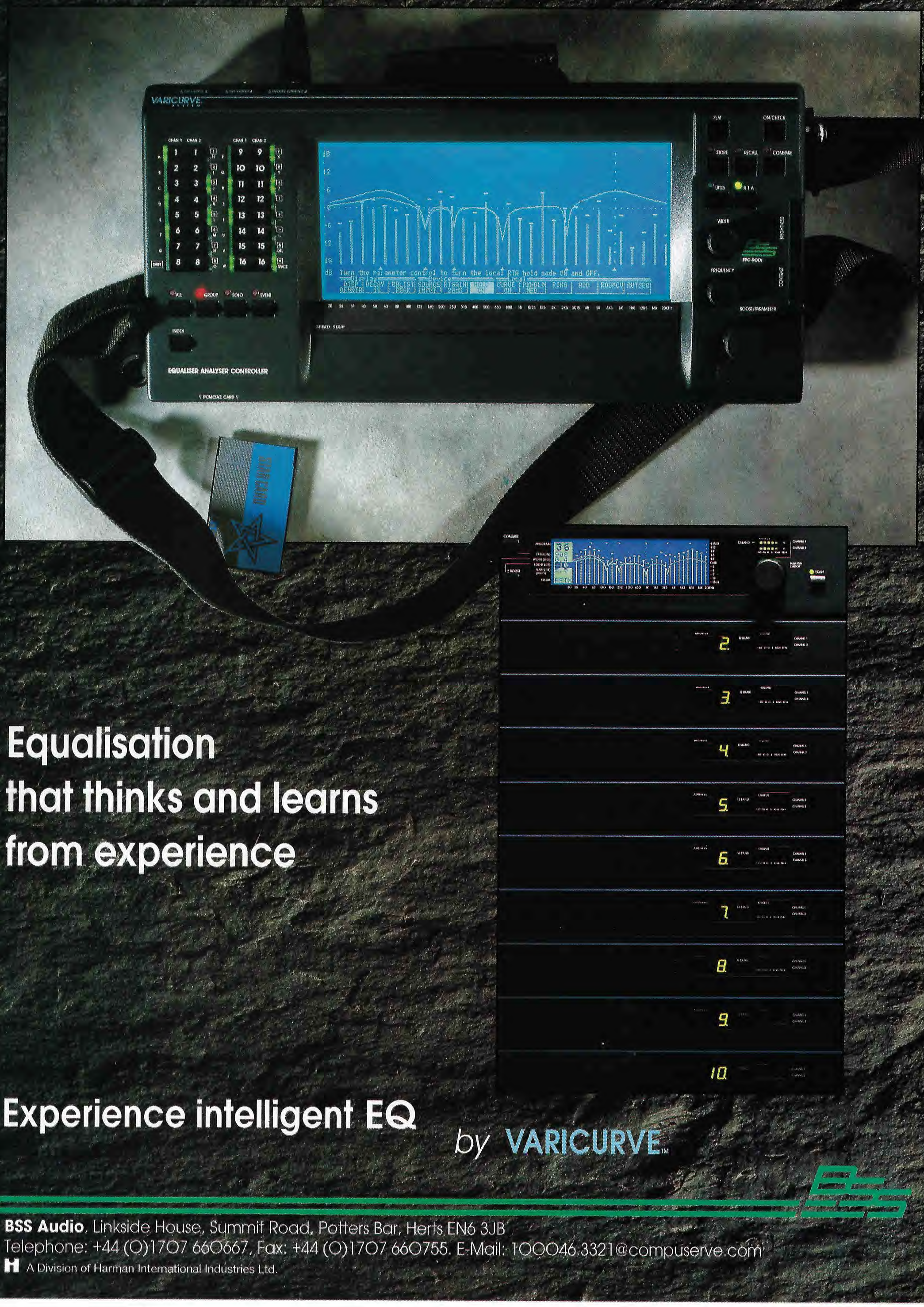
Martin Professional

Martin Professional will be showing their latest range of automated luminaires, including the revolutionary PAL1200 Profile Automated Luminaire, introduced last September. Some of these luminaires will also be on display in a compact light show within the exhibition area itself.

Navigator Systems

The award-winning Hire Track hire software p22

...how times change ...



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p20 from Navigator Systems will be on show throughout the exhibition, and Navigator's staff will be on hand to explain and demonstrate the features and benefits of this unique system.

nv ALC Sound & Light – Belgium

Working for more than 15 years in PA and lighting services, nv ALC Sound & Light has become a pillar in Belgium's sound industry.

They will be showing off their top-of-the range Meyer Sound system consisting of the MSL 5.

"Every group or artist coming to the old continent to tour or perform should know that we can provide all sound and light facilities," say ALC. "We would like to meet people who are planning to organise a tour or gig in Europe, and are looking for a sound and lighting company which can meet all current standards."

In the future you can't pretend you haven't heard of them.

Olsen sets up SRT

Well-known sound system designer Sven Olsen, formerly with Martin Audio and Turbosound has left the latter to set up his own company SRT (Sound Reinforcement Technology). "My business will be aimed at providing flexible answers and being able to deal with specific customer requirements, based on solid engineering and sound expertise," he told LIVE!

He also aims to develop edge-wound components "which not a lot of people can do" and will debut a full Arena system, including the SRT-315B bass bin, at the LIVE! Show.

Meanwhile, he can be contacted at: 5 Highbarn, Findon Village, West Sussex BN14 0TJ. Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1903 877788.

Optikinetics

Optikinetics have manufactured effects lighting equipment and Trilite structural systems for over 25 years.

Optikinetics will display K2 effects projectors, Solar System programmable multi-effect attachments, Trilite 200 and Trilite 100 at the LIVE! Show.

The K2 is built around the MSD 200 lamp with 2000 lumens output, at lens, with an average 2000 hour life. It is the first in the K range of effects projectors which includes the K1 and K4, built around M33 and MSR575 lamps.

Trilite 100 and 200 are aluminium structural systems. Trilite 100 is based on 3 x 25mm tubes linked at 150mm centres and has a unique split-spigot connection system. Trilite 200 is based on 3 x 50mm tubes linked at 200mm centres. Both have ranges of junctions and accessories which can be customised to suit individual requirements.

Whether you have lighting to design, a message to project or structures to be made....don't miss the Optikinetics stand.

Out Board Electronics Ltd

The 1996 LIVE! Show is the first joint exhibition since Out Board Electronics and Cambridge Broadcast Audio joined forces. In November 1995, the two companies merged operations under the name of Out Board Electronics Ltd.

Out Board is known for its work in the field of live sound automation. Recent credits include supply of equipment to the Rod Stewart and Phil Collins tours as well as to productions of *Miss Saigon*, *Les Miserables*, *Beauty And the Beast* among others. Out Board has developed a bespoke version of its automation system for Midas, Soundcraft and DAR.

Cambridge Broadcast Audio have also been busy designing and supplying three phase distribution and motor control units to Theatre Projects (used on Take That, Rolling Stones, Tina Turner etc.) and Arrow Rigging. Other recent customers include Audiolease (now Electrotek), Edwin Shirley Staging, Audix and Focusrite.

Equipment on show includes: Octopus, an 8-channel sound effects control system, QP4, a mannual 4-channel joystick quad panner, universal cable tester for any three pin connector, a three-phase RCD unit, mains distribution units and the MC6 6 channel CM Loadstar chain hoist motor controller.

Pulsar

Pulsar will bring the very best in lighting control and intelligent lighting. As well as the usual Pulsar team Clay Paky Sales and Marketing director Enrico Caironi will be in attendance. The products will include the latest versions of Datapack and Masterpiece, together with Golden Scan HPE and Combicolor.

Pulsar's dimmers, strobes and control boards now carry the required CE mark.

RCF Electronics (UK) Ltd

RCF Electronics will be showing a selection of the Event Series loudspeakers. The Event was launched during 1995 and proved an immediate success in both the live market and fixed installations market. With RCF's commitment to the continued development of loudspeakers technology, products such as the Event Series have quickly been established as market leaders.

The result of such development now shows in both RCF's loaded speaker range and their range of loudspeaker components, which are used extensively by major touring companies and the world renowned 'OEM' loudspeaker systems market.

They will be represented at the show by RCF's new Pro and Lab Series.

Scanachrome

Scanachrome is Europe's leading producer of large ink-jet printed images. With the ability to print on almost any flexible material, the system offers great opportunities for all forms of stage-set scenery.

Canvas, Sharkstooth, Voile and other textiles can be printed to seamless piece size of up to 9m x 7m – even larger in some cases. Designs can also be printed on stage flooring materials.

Acquisition of new machinery permits the same image to be simultaneously printed on the front and back of PVC backlight or projection materials. This provides both strong colour rendition when backlit but still retains correct colour and contrast in front-lighting conditions.

A selection of the most frequently used substrates will be on view at the LIVE! Show.

Sennheiser

Sennheiser UK is showing its complete range of Sennheiser and Neumann microphones and RF transmission equipment for professional SR and theatre sound applications.

The new Neumann M149 valve condenser microphone is being shown for the first time in Europe. The first new Neumann valve design for 30 years and one of the world's first transformerless tube designs, it features the classic K49 capsule (from the M49 and U47) and FET100 circuitry.

Also being shown is the new Sennheiser MD735/MD736 dynamic mics and the Neumann KM184 miniature condenser, featuring the classic KM84 capsule with FET100 circuitry.

A complete range of radio microphone systems includes new channel switchable designs for both UHF and VHF operation.

SRT

At the 1996 LIVE! Show SRT will be launching Nucleus, a new large scale sound reinforcement system.

Nucleus is a two-box fully horn-loaded flyable loudspeaker system with optional horn-loaded sub bass.

The bass-bin SRT-315B has been extensively beta tested at various festivals with excellent results. The top box SRT-210T is a fairly conventional equipped box with 2 x 10", 1 x 2" and two tweeters, but the implementation in a semi-fixed physically time-aligned format is completely new according to Sven Olsen.

Employing Conex flare rates and Differential Dispersion Technology (DDT), with 50°H x 25°V giving a medium to high throw (directly) makes Nucleus an ideal choice for difficult acoustic enviroments.

Neumann's M49 value condenser microphone

Soundcraft Electronics/ Spirit by Soundcraft

This year at the LIVE! Show Soundcraft will be exhibiting a range of professional consoles including the K3 Theatre, the SM12 and the Broadway.

The Broadway is a fully-assignable mixing console which offers digital control over analogue audio, with complete reset of every audio parameter on a snapshot basis. Aimed primarily at top-end theatre sound applications, the surface and rack components of a Broadway system are interconnected via Ethernet and may therefore be positioned as space in an auditorium allows.

Spirit by Soundcraft will be showing their new range of Live consoles: Live 3 Mk 2, Live 4 Mk2, and Spirit 8.

Spirit 8 comes in 16, 24, 32 and 40 channel frame sizes. It includes an integral meterbridge as standard, four mute groups and a 10 x 2 matrix section. Each mono input includes the padless Spirit Ultramic Plus™ mic amp, with 66db of gain range and 28db maximum output. In addition to the mono input channels there are four stereo inputs and eight returns, four of them including EQ. The console also includes 4-band EQ and six flexible auxiliary sends.

Spirit 8

Turbosound

Turbosound is an industry leader in the manufacturing of professional loudspeaker systems for the concert touring industry. Flashlight is currently being used on tour with Simply Red and Oasis whilst Floodlight was recently used on the World Dance New Year Extravaganza and Bill Clinton's visit to Ireland.

Turbosound wish all their users continuing success in 1996.

Contacts on the stand will be David Bruml and Martin Reid.

Vari-Lite Europe

You will find a warm welcome from the Vari-Lite Europe team stand. Exhibiting for the first time at the LIVE! Show they will be showing luminaires from Vari*Lite Series 300 system: the VL5B wash luminaire, and the VL6 spot luminaire.

Vari-Lite's customer production managers will be on hand to talk about latest developments, including new designs for the Vari*Image multi-gobo wheel system.

Also represented on the stand are sister companies: Brilliant Stages and Concert Production Lighting.

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

AMEK

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Electrotec audio

Electrotec Productions Inc of California and AudioLease, of Cambridge, England, have unveiled their merger – signed shortly before Christmas – to form Electrotec Audio Lease. The deal will form one of the world's largest audio rental companies, with offices in the USA and the UK.

Steve Sunderland comments: "For a long time I've been of the opinion that the sound rental industry needs to become stronger through mergers and aquisitions; there are too many medium-size companies, all doing a reasonable job. In October 1994, Aura Systems purchased Electrotec; Aura themselves are a research and development company specialising in electromagnetics – so buying a sound company was a natural progression for them.

"Electrotec Productions Inc were looking to expand into Europe anyway, and discussions between Electrotec's President Pierre D'Astugues and AudioLease started in June 1995. Pierre has been with them since the early days. Electrotec grew out of an English company which migrated to the States in the early 80s, and most of the key personnel are English.

"The deal was concluded on December 5th, and in effect Eletrotec purchased the assets and goodwill of AudioLease – to the satisfaction of all parties. We're all extremely happy with the move."

The combined company is now, Sunderland says, "probably number three in the world" in terms of its total rental equipment: "which puts us in a very strong position for the future."

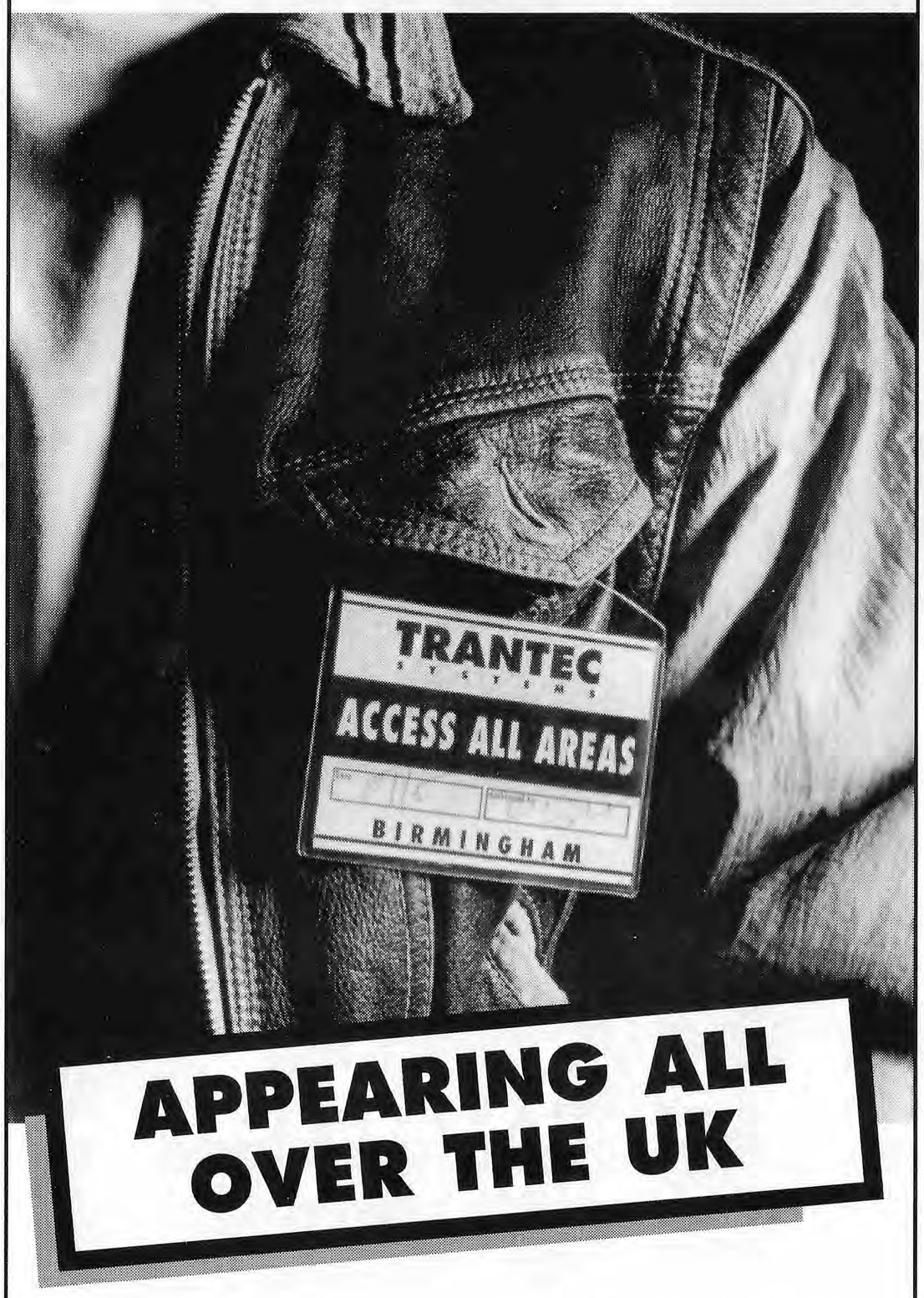
Talking of the newly-formed company's development plans, he adds: "One of the things which interested Electrotec immensely was the fact that we had developed our own system – the Audiolease A2, which is very well respected in the European market. Eletrotec are looking at pushing the boundaries of live sound as far as possible in terms of excellence, and will be drawing heavily on our expertise in future projects."

The current UK-based rental stock consists of AudioLease A2 and Eletrotec Lab-Q PA cabinets, together with Midas XL3, Gamble and Soundcraft consoles. The combined amplifier roster will comprise Crest, Crown and QSC. The staff of AudioLease – formed by brothers Steve and Tim Sunderland in 1980 – and its UK operation will remain as before. Steve Sunderland will still be active as a consultant to the combined company, while Tim is likely to be involved in new systems development in California.

World wide web: among Audiolease's past projects were contributions to Jean Michel Jarre's Wembley show (below) and Montreux Jazz Festival (above)

You haven't yet heard of Trantec? So, *where have you been?*

All over the country rockers, rollers, funkers, jammers and every other kind of groover (!?) has spent his or her last few bob on a Trantec system. And who can blame them? After all, whatever you do and wherever you live you won't be able to lay your hands on a more reliable, hard-working or affordable mic.



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Adds Steve: "Aura very active in numerous fields of eletromagnetic research, in applications which range from audio to automotive technology. One of the goals is to produce the finest PA system in the world, using the rental/manufacturer partnership to achieve these very ambitious aims." The LAB-Q system was designed by Mick Whelan, primarily using JBL components, although newer Electrotec systems incorporate Aura subwoofers.

He concludes: "There's only one other company which is seriously based in both the UK and the USA, making Electrotec Audio Lease one of the few truly international rental companies with offices on both sides of the pond." Gordon Lilley is the company's general manager, based in the UK.

Pierre D'Astugues comments: "Electrotec is growing both domestically and internationally; our parent company, Aura, are very keen to see our worldwide services increase, and as such they've been very instrumental in helping us conclude the acquisition of AudioLease. The first reason for our interest in AudioLease was that they were also interested in doing some kind of joint venture or merger, and were headed by Steve Sunderland who's a very astute guy. There were some other possibilities, but AudioLease, on closer examination, fitted into the Aura/Electrotec concept very well.

"The second thing was the strength of their personnel; Steve's proven marketing abilities and their infrastructure. Plus they've got an established client base; a view to upcoming talent and a very strong technical department. So for all of those reasons, and more, they were a very attractive proposition."

He adds: "I think the end result is an entity that has been extended to include a very streamlined UK operation, with the potential to move very quickly on projects on an international level. An additional, and fairly exciting thing from future customers' point of view, is our intention to grew our inventory base with Aura's help and using their new series of transducers in the next couple of years." ■ **live!**

Mike Lethby

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m people dance it big

M People have made the big career move from club supremos to festivals to arena-fillers. With a new management team and big ideas, their latest shows emphasised their chart-hit status, most recently with the Itchycoo Park remake, with an all-star production design. Louise Stickland explores a lighting and set design collaboration between Patrick Woodroffe and Jonathan Park

M People's powerfully real, vivacious dance grooves cut a clear line of relief throughout the heavily guitar-oriented and techno-laden charts as their third album, *Bizarre Fruit*, reaches the year mark in that bible of the unit-shifting economy. Fronted by the effervescent Heather Small and her equally astonishing mane of hair, M People's live performance is a full-on visual extravaganza, issuing an irresistible challenge to even the squarest, most uncoordinated and introverted members of the public to dance. It's undeniably pop, unashamedly dance and unbelievably good fun.

Only after experiencing an M People show do you realise just how many hits they have had, as they storm through a tight and sizzling 90 minutes of in-your-face gyration-obligation. Introducing *Someday*, Mike Pickering (the 'M' of M People), brings a moment of serious reflection, revealing his hopes for a prejudice-free world where colour, gender and sexual orientation are non-existent and we can all live together in harmony. If only it could be that simple, Mike; but at least for the rest of the set, everyone could dream – and dance – on.

It took half the set for Wembley to get in the mood for movement – this is London, after all, and we're all *cool*, remember? And valiant pre-show attempts to make the atmosphere more 'clubby' with dingy lighting levels, a DJ and a few Vari*Lites scudding around didn't really work in the bowels of this completely charmless building.

Claws for action

The set looked like a giant robotic hand was reaching up from below and clasping the stage, with huge claws poised to whisk it off to another world at any point. It had an eerie transience about it. The claws (also referred to as 'shark's fins') are four 30 ft-high curved towers which stretch round the back of the performance area.

The visuals were the result of a lighting and set design collaboration between Patrick Woodroffe and Jonathan Park. The band have recently switched management companies, and wanted a bigger production look to the show to reflect the success of the last year, and the ascendancy of the band from clubs to arenas. One of Woodroffe's primary dance-enhancing objectives was to get the band closer to the audience, so a large semi-circular thrust was built to take Heather right out into the people. Everywhere she looks on an 180 degree plane, she can see people and interact with them.

He also desired to get away from straight trusses, so the claws were functional in that they contained Vari*Lites and strobes, rather than just being cosmetic accoutrements. Three electric screens unfurled and retracted between the towers at various points throughout the show, for the video projection that is an integral part of the design. The rear lighting truss is also semi-circular and moved twice during the show: once to form an arch and once to form a 'U' at the end. Other parts of the stage also moved, including upstage hydraulic steps which rose to form an entrance point.

Woodroffe's objective of dividing the show into several different settings worked slickly. The stage changed persona, from being claws-oriented, to screens with video, to screens with gobo

projection – or to just the plain starcloth background. Jonathan Park describes the set as 'Bizarre Elegance' – a composite pun on the last two M People albums (*Elegant Slumming* being their second, for which they won the Mercury Music Prize).

Lighting was operated by John Sinden through an Artisan console. Sinden worked Vari*Lites on the last M People tour, and Woodroffe was keen to recruit him as lighting director this time, for the 'continuity element' as well as his wealth of experience.

Sinden comments that the whole show came together extremely smoothly. A few days of production rehearsals at Docklands enabled them to achieve two complete dress rehearsals plus a good slice of technical time. He stresses that Woodroffe had been good to work with, in that he stood back and allowed Sinden his own input into the light-show's construction – occasionally intervening as necessary – while Woodroffe worked on acquainting the band with the realities of the set design and concept.

The vast majority of the lighting instruments were Vari*Lites, a mixture of 2Cs, 5s and 6s, plus some Coda floods and ACLs as token conventionals. In addition to the claws and semi-circular truss, there was a front truss of VL5s and VL6s for stage washes, plus a few luminaires on the floor and Vari*Lite VLM pan-and-tilt mirrors.

In an extremely colourful and positive show, Sinden also overturns one of the traditional rules of conventionality in stage lighting – not lighting black people in green. He proves that done in the right context and circumstances it can look extremely tasty, not to mention the 'idiosyncrasy value'!

Once production rehearsals were over, the equipment was packed into six trucks, two of which, containing the 'B' system, went to Europe for three weeks. The European tour featured a 'Pandora's Box' assortment of venues, the last of which was Docks Musichalle in Hamburg. The tour went straight from there to the Albert Hall, where it met up with the other four trucks. Sinden describes that day as "rather stressful", adding that despite this, "everything worked like clockwork".

Although there were some theatrical and moody moments during the band's set, the vast majority of the show features up-tempo pumping dance vibes. By sheer definition of the type of flashy, beam-heavy lighting required to support this genre of performance, the optical experience greatly benefited from the use of moving images.

From the moment the screens glided-in during the intro to *Sugartown*, they introduced a completely different visual entity to the show. Video hardware was supplied by PSL, consisting of four Barco projectors – three for the out-front screens, and one more on-stage for the song *Search For The Hero*, in which Heather is framed by a rear-projection screen which rises up from the stage.

One pit-based camera and three mini-cams provided the live footage, which was mixed together with re-edited tape playback. It was a fairly basic set-up in terms of concert video, but PSL's Kahren Williams states that it was a pleasure to work with Woodroffe and Park – as was the fact that they had designed video into the show from the outset. And watching the show, it was equally obvious that the moving images had been to the forefront rather than merely a creative afterthought – as is so often the case – to great effect. ■ **live!**

The sound of M People

M People's audio production came from Britannia Row Productions in London, with FOH engineering by Ray Furze, John Shearman as babysitter and Guy Gillen on monitors.

The system itself was based on a standard arena left/right system, but with the exception of a centre cluster of Flashlight, Floodlight and Turbosound's special underhung boxes fown from the advance truss bar. This was installed to cater for a centre-stage thrust, the majority of which was located in front of the main PA. Radio station monitoring complemented the conventional variety for singer Heather and band.

CREDITS

Production manager: *Gerry Raymond-Barker*
Lighting designer: *Patrick Woodroffe*
Set designer: *Jonathan Park*
Stage manager: *Pitso Pirie*
Set construction: *Brilliant Stages*
Lighting equipment: *CPL/Vari-Lite Europe*
Lighting operator/director: *John Sinden*
Lighting crew: *Ian Cameron (crew chief), Scott Duhig, Piers Sheppard*
Vari*Lite crew: *Jason Truman, Matt Croft*
Sound equipment: *Britannia Row Productions*
FOH engineer: *Ray Furze*
Monitor engineer: *Lance Miles*
PA crew: *John Shearman, Guy Gillen, Simon Thomas*
Video equipment: *PSL*
Video crew: *Matthew Askem, Richard Shipman, Tony Hulme*
Backline crew: *Anthony Oates, Jules Bowen*
Riggers: *Andy Chard, Andrew Jupp*
Staging/hydraulics: *Glen Binley, Andy Russell*
Wardrobe: *Louise De Ville Morel*
Catering: *Popcorn*
Trucking: *KB Event*
Buses: *Phoenix/Len Wright*

Cats on the prowl

They've been on the move for 13 years and played over 200 venues. Paul Greener, the Howard Eaton Lighting designer, compares the differences between *Cats* productions at home and abroad

Over the last 13 years *CATS* has appeared in some 200 venues world wide and has moved into history as the longest ever running musical.

Earlier in 1995 the production at the New London underwent a facelift from the original creative team, including Trevor Nunn, John Napier, Gilllian Lynn and David Hersey, to incorporate new choreography and scenic improvements.

My colleague, Howard Eaton, was the original production electrician and has been the associate designer for many productions of *CATS* as it appears around the world. Howard Eaton Lighting Ltd (HELL) designed, built and installed two lighting bridges for the New London show while it closed for its spring holiday early in 1995. We provided a fibre optic star field over the auditorium using dual fibre optic light sources. HELL extended and refurbished 300 'cats eyes' – widely recognisable as the reversing lights of the old Ford Granada! We also extended and refurbished the fibre optics in the back wall of the set. Meanwhile, the tours across the continent continued ...

On December 2 1995, the current *CATS* tour closed for a brief break in its gruelling schedule. Over the last seven years I have completed all 28 feline movements and feel eminently qualified to describe the pains and pleasures of moving such a complex tour, not only around the continent but in the UK as well. This article explores the similarities and differences, the rules and the exceptions, between *CATS* touring the continent and *CATS* touring the British Isles.

CATS has now been in production for 13 consecutive years and on tour at home and abroad for almost five. The most recent tour on the continent has been on the road for over two years, which has involved 13 moves. Initially it ran for two years in Zurich as a fixed installation before being totally redesigned as a touring version. The redesign involved reproducing the entire set so that the wiring could be left in place and literally plugged together as required. And, because the lighting goes up and down so often once it goes out on tour, every light has its own individual position which is both colour coded and numbered.

The movement of a production on the continent is so much easier than moving the same production in the UK. The reason? Continental venues are usually all purpose halls, in which we build a Black Box theatre which can be customised for any particular production. In the UK, however, each venue has individual limitations into which the set must fit, to all intent and purpose, redesigned. The UK environment is, from the technicians' point of view, more cramped and the size of the show tends to be smaller, with only 15 trucks involved, as there is no need for the box office and marketing personnel.

An example of the difficulties presented by a British theatre is illustrated in the case of taking *CATS* to Glasgow during a cold and wet December. It would be an understatement to describe the venue as non crew-friendly — a massive auditorium, tiny stage and access to the stage straight off the street. For four or five days all our lighting equipment was stored on the street with a security guard patrolling the two sides of the theatre around which we had piled our kit! The band room situated in the get-in dock ensured that absolutely no last minute equipment could be brought in.

Across the continent the set travels in 18, 40ft containers and 40 people are flown from England to complement the local touring company and technicians. The most recent move on the continent was from Graz to Vienna and I think most would agree, the continental tour is generally characterised by prettier cities, better facilities and more financial support.

However, the continent is not a busman's holiday. It has more restrictions in terms of transportation which means, for example, that in Switzerland trailers of 40ft or more are not allowed to travel at weekends. The effect of this is that the European tour will close in one venue on a Sunday night to travel in the early hours of Monday morning, whereas the UK tour will generally close on a Saturday night and reopen to the public on the following Thursday.

The border crossings are also a bit of a nightmare with 18 trucks travelling in convoy, resulting in a mountain of paperwork having to be produced at a moment's notice. Of course the crew gets bussed or flown between venues, as generally the distance between locations in Europe is far greater than in the UK, where counties rather than countries are being crossed.

The people who comprise my crew are important as I have to recruit a nucleus of eight professionals for each move. This team is vital to keeping the show on the road. However, in the UK the same team is supplemented with an additional crew member. This is because in Europe the show will have its own resident crew consisting of seven or eight engineers, who will live with the show at each venue; four are probably follow-spot operators and will also undertake day to day maintenance. In the UK a follow-spot operator will be picked up a day or so before the show, have minimal rehearsals and then be thrown straight into the live performance — hence the wobbly opening nights we see from time to time.

On the continent I find standards much high-

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PROFESSIONAL SHOW LIGHTING

er, which I put down to the fact that staff are employed on a full-time basis and enjoy a much higher wage. In the UK, a show will be supported by just two full time electricians, while the remainder of the support staff will be part time. There seems to be a different attitude to the way professionals are used on the continent; a classic example is the availability of 'humpers', of which around 20 are usually allocated to any one show. This ensures that the electricians, lighting designers etc. do their specific job well rather than lugging or humping equipment around. The UK 'humping' crew would consist of just a dozen and that would be on a good day!

The volume of lighting equipment rises steeply once the Channel is crossed due to the fact that Black Box theatres require house lights and emergency lighting to be installed, in addition to the stage lighting and control equipment.

Having described the differences of the two types of tour, and generally favoured the continent, I have to say that both my best and worst experiences were when I took *CATS* to Milan. With hindsight, I suspect that the clash of cultures had a lot to do with the problems that we faced. We had developed a way of doing things which had become second nature to us, rigging and de-rigging with a fluency that didn't reflect in our ability to speak Italian! We found the Italians very relaxed in their approach and I guess we were pretty highly-tuned, this being our ninth consecutive move.

The first of several 'challenges' that we faced was the venue. It was huge. In fact it was so big that there were 3,000 seats behind the stage alone! Technically these seats were not to be used; in reality the Italians found the costume changes so fascinating that behind-the-scenes tickets were sold to the public, much to the discomfort of the players trying to get in and out of their now world-famous Lycra leotards! While this aspect was not actually my personal issue, it does help to build a picture of the mentality with which we found ourselves dealing. It was an occasion when the politely conservative British audience came to mind with great fondness!

The major problem was the inadequate staging structure, which we were promised faithfully would support over ten tonnes of kit, as a previous rock concert had demonstrated. It began to buckle with our eight tonne bridge and a third of the equipment still on the ground. The delays caused led to our frustrations, which probably soured 'diplomatic' relations further.

Our next issue came in the form of incorrectly supplied power feeds and no separate fusing of any supply. This led to overheating cables, very dim lighting states and the local Milanese crew begrudgingly reinstating their fuses.

As anyone who has seen *CATS* will be aware, the aisles in the auditorium are important for the performers. Therefore, if seats are positioned where the aisles should be, interaction between performers and audience is impossible. It may seem improbable, but someone had decided that in order to satisfy the demand for tickets, additional seating should be put in to the aisles, not only overnight but without any consultation, against health and safety regulations and destroying a key aspect of the show. All this after we had focused the auditorium lights. It took 24 hours to get the seats removed.

The sense of satisfaction on the opening night of the show in front of Princess Diana and Hillary Clinton was well earned by all our team.

So at the end of the day after miles travelled, would I change any of it? Certainly not! ■ **live!**

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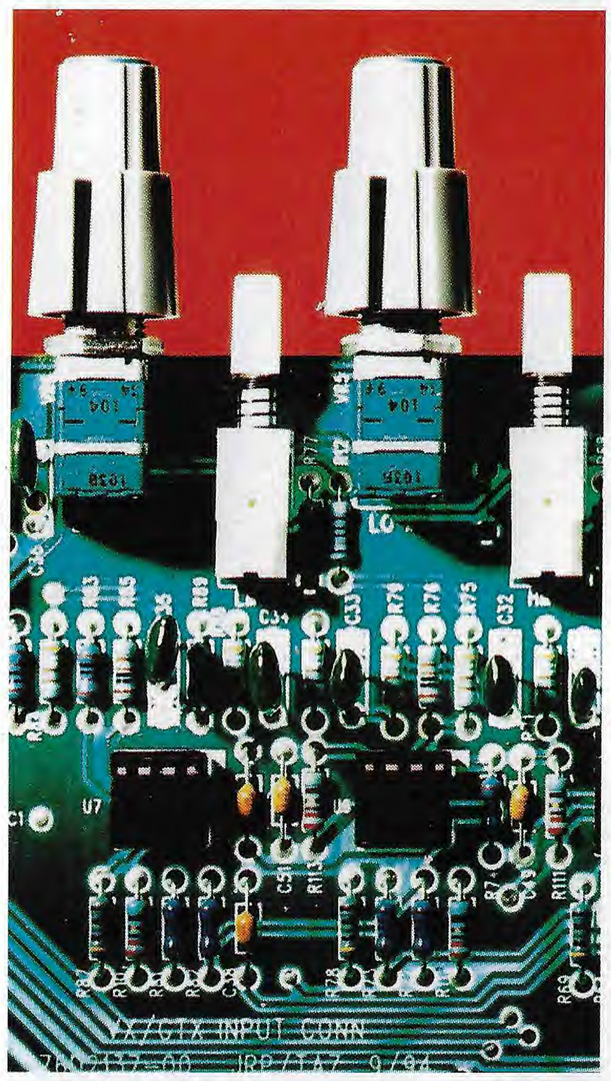

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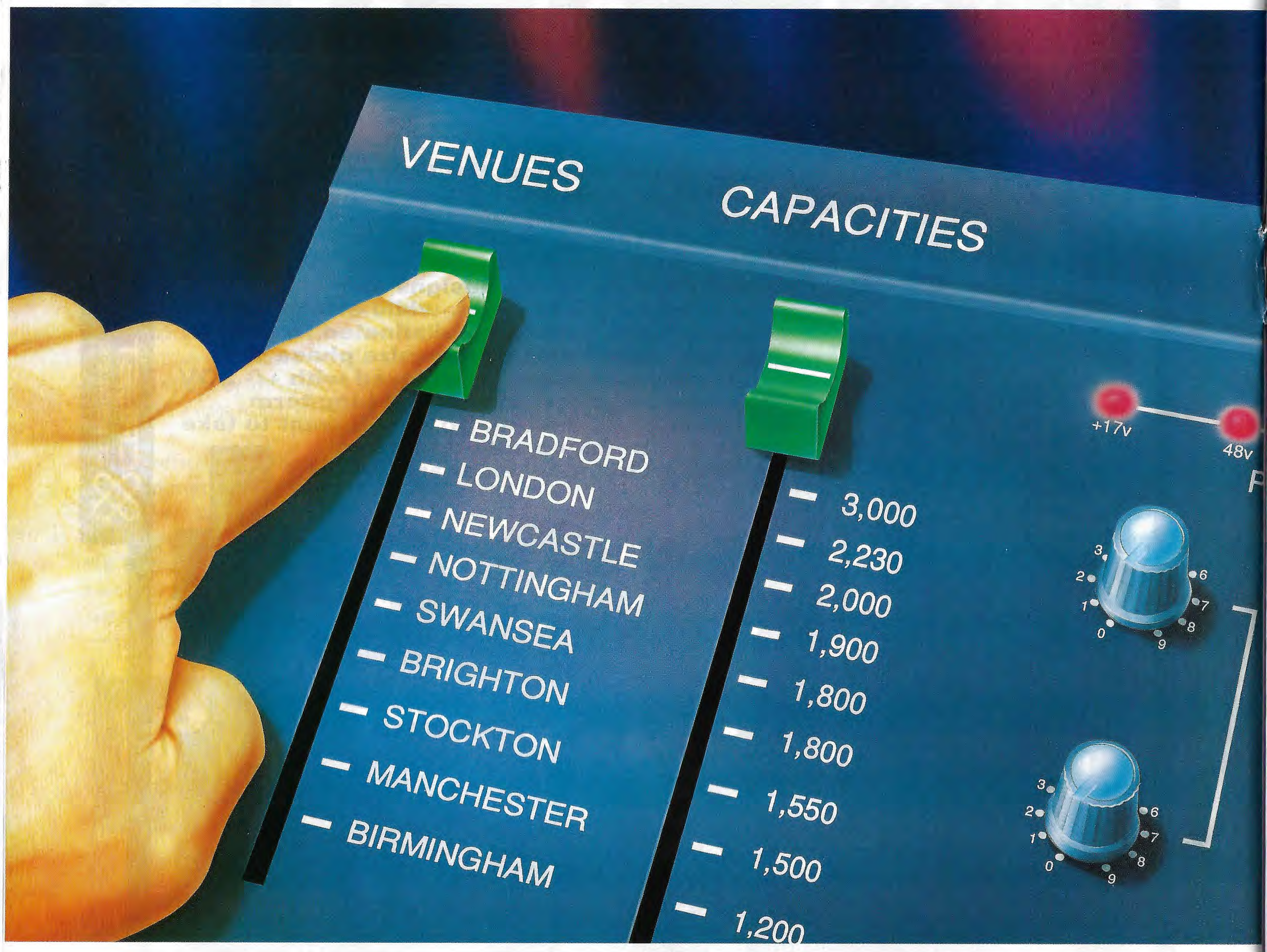

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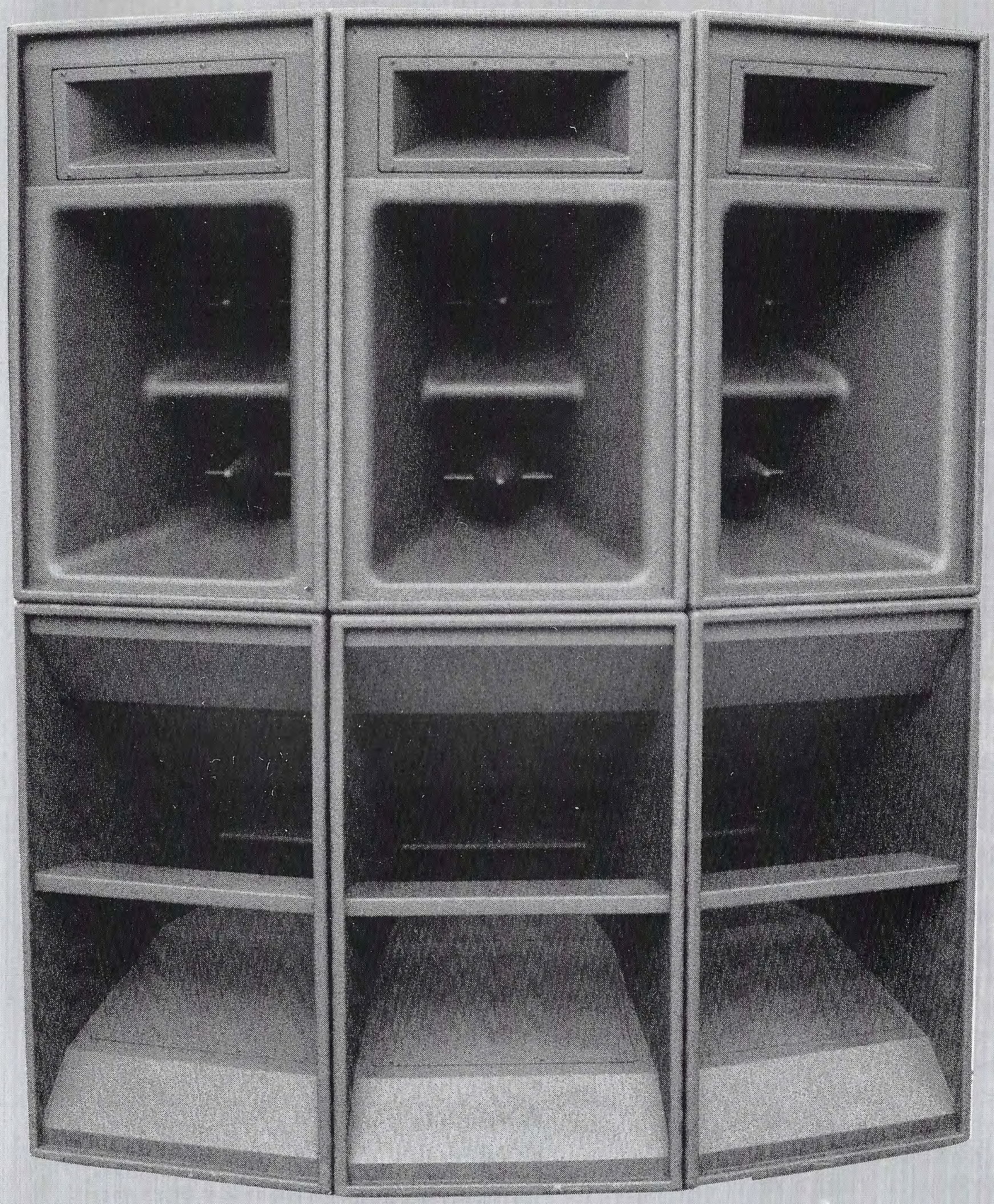

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World Dance

Getting high on New Year's Eve

The party posse left West London in search of the ultimate New Years' Eve high. It was a dull, damp, uninspiring evening, but that car was filled with positive vibes and the incessant bubbling chatter of anticipation. Louise Stickland soaked in the atmosphere

Driven by Avolites' Steve Warren, whose reputation and ability to party is legendary, the quartet was completed by The Spot Cos' Ben Sullivan, a pure inspiration undeterred by broken leg and crutches; Dickie Howe, long time Spot Co associate, currently taking a break on the Simply Red tour – and yours truly.

World Dance have built a reputation as one of the most progressive, consistent and successful party organisations of the '90s. Headed by the charismatic and eloquent Jay Pender, together with partner Chris Leonard and technical co-ordinator Daz Jamieson, the company have achieved what is almost unthinkable in rave terms. They have gained the respect of the youngest, most demanding and sharpest end of the rave-going spectrum along with that of the authorities – without 'selling out' their underground roots.

The unique vibe of World Dance filters down throughout the whole organisation, and is particularly evident in the multi-layered production team who make the events happen smoothly and spectacularly on a large scale. It's a huge compliment to the abilities and hard graft of everyone involved, that they can transform prosaic and dull venues like Docklands Arena into a vibrant visual and sonic experience.

The focal point tonight is a formidable industrial-style scaffolding stage structure at one end, which looks as though it's propping up one side of the arena, with DJs holding court centre-stage.

The Spot Co have lit World Dance for some time, and front of house LD Chris Craig is getting into the mood, explaining that he is holding back 80% of the lighting and effects until after the midnight crescendo. He shares the FOH mixing platform with Definitive Lasers and XYLO, who are providing video and moving image mixing. Meanwhile, the Blue Box company's sound HQ is side-stage.

In the main room, the midnight hour is approaching. The arena has been throbbing from the moment the doors opened at 7.00, and a mist rises from the heaving mesh of bodies on the dance floor to meet the ponderous vapours of the smoke machines.

Rumbling bass frequencies, the mesmeric thumping electro-tribal-jungle rhythms and the ultra-friendly World Dance ambience induce an hypnotic uplifting feeling – as if an organic mushroom cloud of Ecstasy had just engulfed the place. Everyone is smiling and getting higher – on music, dancing and just being there.

Suddenly people are pitching on to the FOH tower and the countdown to midnight begins. It's an explosive moment! Maroons and gerbs ignite; the 50-odd moving mirrors (Golden Scan HPEs and NATs) and Vari*Lites in the building fire up from all directions. Jay Pender exclaims, "Fuck, it looks like Radio Rentals!" as the 80 Sony video monitors burst into life, criss-crossing the structure, transforming it into a giant game of space invaders – or a stick figure with outstretched arms. Two large Barco-projected screens either side of stage also come alive with spinning World Dance logos and energy levels reach fever pitch. Mayhem abounds FOH as the 30-odd people on the tower hug and kiss each other. The empathy is breath-taking – and everywhere. The light-show comes on-line with Chris flowing into his stylish colour psychology, chasing blocks of colour and beams round the building and all over the dance floor. He'd spent two days programming the WholeHog via WYSIWYG beforehand – saving him enormous time and stress on the get-in and show days.

The video monitor idea stems from Daz's obsession with TVs and computer graphics. Controlled by XYLO's Turbine, a matrix switcher which takes 10 inputs and allows any one of them to be put on to any screen and chased – in a similar fashion to a lighting chase – it adds another spectacular texture to the show. Sources are from three laser disk players, two Betacams, a Fairlight CVI, a Chromascope and three S-VHS players. Chases vary from computer graphics, to plain colours, to video playback.

Daz is convinced that presenting a technology-based show is vital to satiate the low boredom thresholds and voracious visual appetites of the youthful World Dance audience, and he feels it's one of the areas in which WD excel.

Sensory Audio from Blue Box

The sensory pleasure enhancement is completed by Blue Box's submersive, libidinous sound system. In each corner of the room are 12 flown Flashlight cabinets, and underneath each is a ground stack with 12 21" sub bass units, four 218 bass and two Floodlight units.

Blue Box's Mark Metcalf says that surrounding the audience with sound is essential for dance music, and that the Turbo systems' cleanness and precision makes it "ideal for the job". It's basically a monitor gig for them, and even the occasional mandatory smacking of DJs wrists' is kept to a minimum. The deck output is artfully doctored in case of over-enthusiasm, vastly reducing the risk of getting an over-cranked, distorted signal into the PA.

All the supply companies pay homage to the pleasure of working with World Dance – and the Docklands show celebrated a series of firsts. It was the first New Year's Eve event staged by World Dance – and the first time the venue had been granted an all-night licence (finishing at 7.30am). It was the also first of the hundreds of New Year's Eve parties in London to sell out in advance: proof positive that it was the hottest place to be, and that no one does it better! ■ **live!**

CREDITS

Promoters for World Dance: *Jay Pender and Chris Leonard* **Production Design:** *Daz Jamieson* **Production Management:** *Nick Fisher, Brian Heritage, Helen Smith* **Lighting Design:** *Chris Craig* **Lighting Equipment:** *The Spot Co* **Lighting Crew:** *Nathan Matthews, Scratch, Onkar Narang, Darren White, Gaz* **Video Control Equipment:** *XYLO* **Video Hardware Equipment:** *PSL* **Video operators:** *Brooke, Don & John* **Lasers:** *The Definitive Laser Company* **Laser operators:** *Stuart and Gareth* **Sound Equipment (Main Room):** *The Blue Box Company* **Sound Crew (Main room):** *Mark Metcalf, Rick Pope, Sarne Thorogood, Peter Baigent* **Sound Equipment (Second room):** *Eskimo Noise* **Projection and effects (Second Room):** *Vegetable Vision* **Draping:** *Sammy for Bannerama* **Staging:** *MACT* **Security:** *Showsec* **Venue Security:** *Falcon Security*

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Pulp at Brixton Academy

Pulp, according to the music press, are the thinking fans' Britpop sexpots. Louise Stickland, who was at their Brixton Academy gig, fancies her chances

There's no doubt about it, Jarvis Cocker is quite simply the sexiest man in British pop! The wildly enthusiastic crop of punters in the Academy that night evidently agreed with me, as every wiggle of Jarvis's lanky torso was met with deafening screams and a barrage of unrepeatable fantasies. Whoever would have thought that, after a mere 16 year crawl to stardom, a Pythonesque figure whose looks could just as easily belong to a hermit propeller-head hacking into the night, could make brown nylon flares and horn-rimmed glasses look cool?

It's those big doleful expressionist eyes that reach out to the hormonal regions of multifariously aged women...and, I dare say, a few men too. Drowning is easy in those pulchritudinous orbs and the razor sharp intellect that lies behind the literary contrasts of cynicism, voyeurism, eccentricity, everyday life, sexual repression, sex, social marginalisation – the words and the perfectly crafted pop music that make Pulp.

Jarvis struts up to the life-size cardboard dummy of himself on the upstage walkway tonight and comments, "You're quite boring", but he's probably the only person in the room who holds this opinion. His natural charisma is stunning, his between-number rambling surrealist, his movement at times resembles performance art and the clarity and deep, breathy pitch of his vocals shimmer sensuously. He makes us unashamedly confront what society has dubbed 'sleazy', but what is an integral component of our sexuality, bonded tightly with a bunch of incredibly memorable tunes.

Ready for the cameras

I couldn't have chosen a worse gig to visit. Island Records were filming the following night's show, and the resultant rigging of extra lighting for this meant that everyone was running two hours behind schedule. The sound team had to contend with an extra percussionist who had never played with the band before, an extra support band and a DJ who turned up 20 minutes before doors – while lighting had to deal with the fact that this was only one of a handful of times the whole rig had been up in three months – and .

Jarvis Cocker: a prominent feature in the Stickland bedroom fresco?

their programming time was ebbing away.

After touring Europe with club rigs, these last six dates featured a production rig that hadn't been seen for six weeks, and there were the usual elements of 'Londonitis' thrown in for good measure.

Lighting designer Dave Byars was there – only the third time he had seen his design since leaving it in the hands of operator Phydeaux McAvoy while he was committed to the Blur tour.

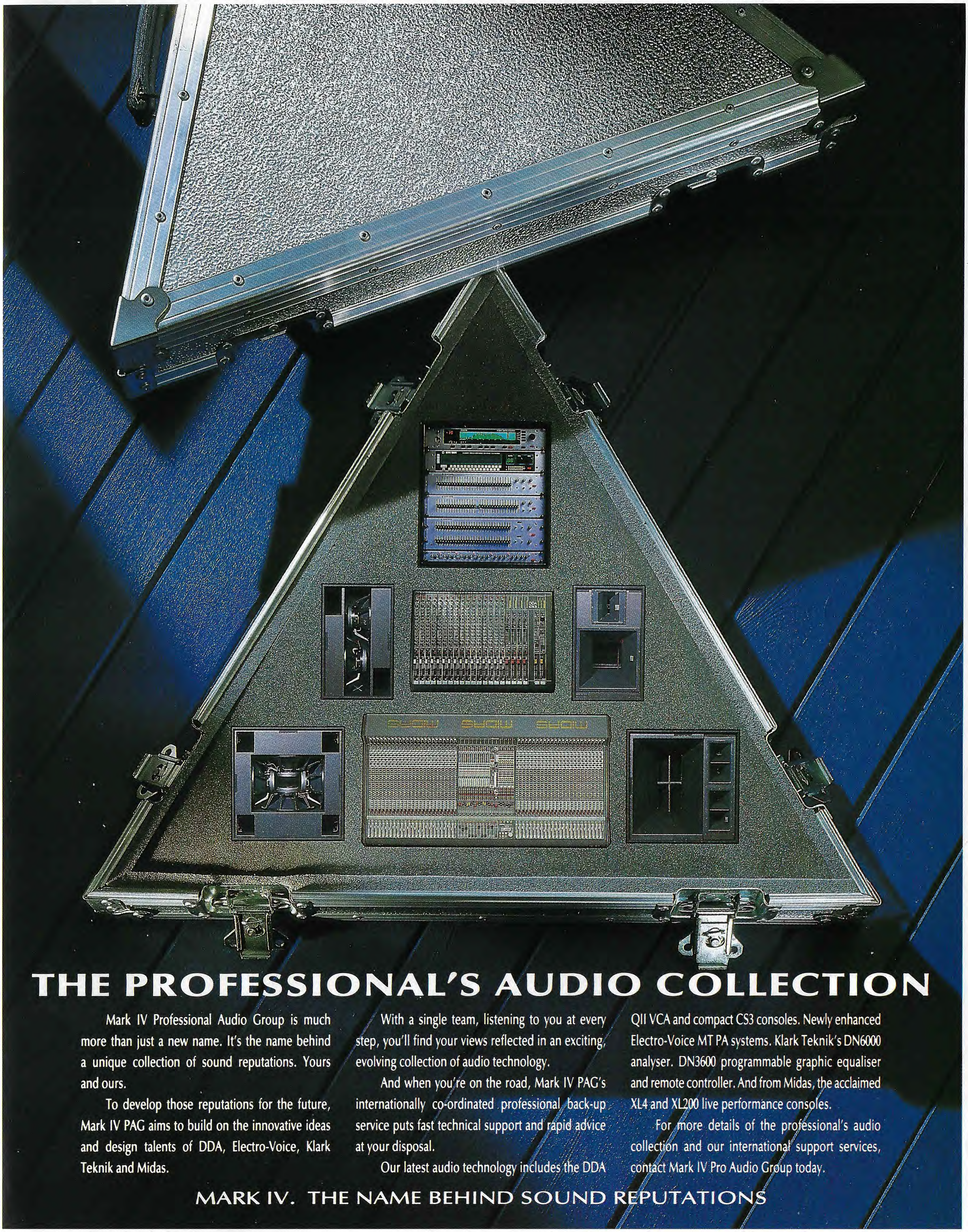
In spite of all these potential spanners-in-the-works, the show rocked, reaching energy levels set to blow the roof off the Academy. It's a tribute to the innate professionalism of the production team that all the "palavers" (Dave Byars' terminology) didn't effect anyone's good-naturedness.

d&b and Burton

Front of house engineer Jon Burton found ten minutes to talk about the PA over dinner. He has been using Entec's new d&b 402 system for the first time, which he likes – especially for the larger venues, where its long throw capabilities really 'kick ass'. For this show they have 12 cabinets a side on the deck and four flown, more than adequate for balcony coverage, confirms Jon.

Jarvis's vocals are crucial to the show, something which Burton tries to achieve with minimal interference. He uses a Lexicon 480 reverb plus a Summit TLA 100 and Eventide H3000. He comments that the 480 adds "a touch of class" to the vocal sound, and also runs Tubetec valve compressors across the rig for soft system compression. "You don't really hear it, but it's 'there,'" he elucidates.

Jarvis uses an Audix OM3 micro ➳ 38



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36

phone. His vocal dynamics are intense, and Burton explains that the singer can sound very intimate at times: "The late night radio announcer feel," through to screechy, punky numbers. Burton expands that Jarvis has some 'interesting' microphone techniques which include covering the microphone up completely and making bizarre voices .... both of which encourage feedback. "This can be a bit of a trial," he adds with a wry smile.

Pulp's 'retro' keyboard sound is also highly prominent in the mix. Candida Doyle plays an analogue Farfisa live, which has a mind of its own, according to Burton, and all other analogue keyboard sounds are sampled on an Akai and triggered via MIDI keyboards. The itinerary proclaims it's not sure what crew member Paul Keeble actually does, but during *F-E-E-L-I-N-G C-A-L-L-E-D L-O-V-E* he manually sweeps an LF channel on the parametric during the verses to produce a weird sound. Burton mixes from a Midas XL200 with an additional rack-pack Spirit mixer which has been, he says, a "Godsend", and the monitor system is driven from an XL3.

To catch the lighting department for an interview I had to sit in on Phydeaux shaving before going into pre-show conference with Dave Byars. Byars originated the Pulp design after finding a programme from a 60s art exhibition that featured moulded plastic and neon. The 23 circular projection screens were originally intended to be extruded domes, but time factors prevented it happening this time around. The 'portholes' from which six Golden Scan 3's peek out are outlined in blue and pink neon. The 20 small circle screens are rear-lit from Martin Pro 400's while the three large ones are used for front slide projection from Simda 400's mounted on the front truss.

Four Golden Scan HPEs grace the front truss, used primarily for washing the back wall with spectacular projection combinations, which at times cast a truly different class (sic) of psychedelic and kitsch ambience across the set. There's also a spattering of generics – ACLs, PARs and Moles for filling. It's essentially a small rig with the imaginative ability of one ten times that size.

Phydeaux, complete with plaster cast on broken arm following an altercation with a Golden Scan in Europe, is philosophical about the evolution of the show. Likewise about the fact that Byars has called a heavy overnight re-programming session to incorporate all the extra parameters needed for filming, and 're-touching' according to the true Byars algorithms.

Byars himself states that at the outset he was keen not to impose too many artistic constraints on Phydeaux, whom he maintains is "the ideal operator". However, being dedicated to his own ideals and the master of self-criticism, Byars now feels it necessary to redefine the various lighting dynamics of the show.

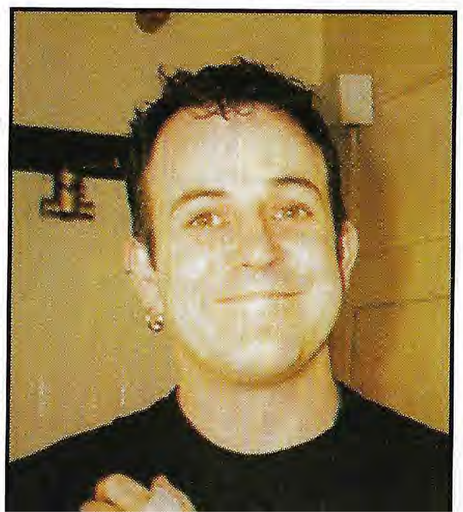
Dave was decidedly more relaxed following the second night where everything went fine for artistic expectations, production, paying public and film crew, launching Pulp towards their bid for stadium conquering in the new year. ■ **live!**

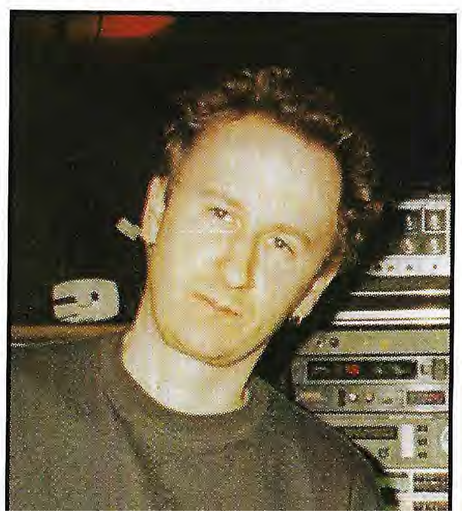
CREDITS

Vocals/Guitar: *Jarvis Cocker,* **Drums:** *Nick Banks,* **Keyboards:** *Candida Doyle,* ***Bass:*** *Steve Mackey,* **Guitar/Violin:** *Russell Senior,* **Guitar/Keyboards:** *Mark Webber*

Tour Manager: *Richard Priest*
Production Manager: *Roger Middlecoate*
Lighting Designer: *Dave Byars*
Lighting Operator: *Phydeaux McAvoy*
Lighting crew: *Barry Branford, Adam Stevenson* **Lighting Equipment:** *Entec*
FOH Sound engineer: *Jon Burton*
Monitor engineer: *Justin Grealy*
Sound rigger: *Paul Keeble*
Sound Equipment: *Entec*
Wardrobe: *Richard Banks*
Catering: *Cat 'n' Mouse*
Trucking: *Stardes*
Buses: *Wharfedale*

Lighting operator Phydeaux McAvoy (left)
FOH sound engineer Jon Burton (right)





d&b system 402

In the past 18 months, d&b's system 402 has become one of the most talked-about new high-end PA designs. Yet its almost-unnoticed introduction (and remarkably swift acceptance) into touring audio's upper echelons has also been characterised by very low-key marketing.

d&b audiotechnik AG, whose UK office is headed by the affably astute Scot Simon Johnstone, has deliberately opted to allow a buzz to grow around the product itself, as its merits have slowly filtered out by that most powerful marketing tool of all...word of mouth. It's mirrored in product literature which is unexpectedly funky for pro-audio – let alone from a German manufacturer which already has a BMW-like reputation for expensive design quality.

Countering that rather daunting image with what they saw as the product's true benefits, Wigwam were the first big-league UK audio company to acquire the system; at the end of last year, Entec became the second.

The system 402 shares a common system structure with d&b's Series 02 range, consisting of two loudspeaker cabinets plus dedicated controller modules and mainframes.

The mid/high 402 TOP cabinet uses two passively-coupled drivers: a 12" LF with a 4" voice coil and a 2" compression driver with a titanium diaphragm, mounted coaxially on a constant-directivity (35x35-degree, down to 700Hz) horn. Its 402 TOP-CO/M controller module offers the usual audio signal stages, filters and limiters, plus HF compensation for air attenuation in long-throw applications, in two versions – with or without remote control for the P1200 mainframe.

The accompanying 402 SUB is an active subwoofer: a compact, horn-loaded bandpass cabinet of similar dimensions with one 18" driver. It's partnered by the matching 402 SUB-CO/M controller module.

Delving further, P1200L or P1200A mainframes form the heart of the system. Each mainframe can drive two cabinets per channel and accept one or two signal processing modules – and provides the system's power supplies, power amplifiers, control and protection logic; plus, in the P1200A's case, a connection to d&b's Remote Interface Bridge [RIB]. Via RIB, groups of up to 12 mainframes can be connected to a supervisory computer for comprehensive remote control and display of the complete system operation.

Talk about timing. Just when PA technology looked to have hit a new peak, along comes another fresh idea. So will d&b's concept seriously challenge the market leaders? (Unequivocal answer: yes. It's smaller than you can guess and it works very well.) Are there more contenders waiting in the wings? (Answer: equally certainly, yes.) We'll be following the chase with a fuller review of the system 402. Just watch this space.

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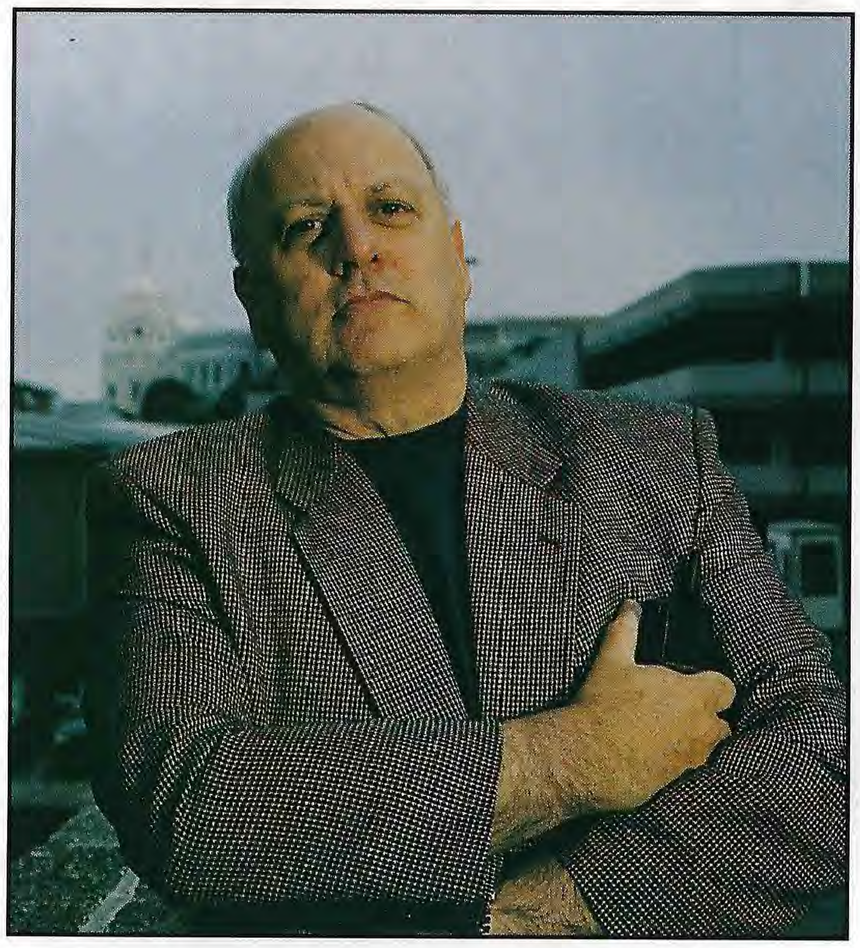
mick upton: managing the crowds

Mick Upton must be one of the most familiar backstage faces in the business. At age 58, he is a veteran of a security industry he was instrumental in forming, setting up the concert security company ShowSec in the early '80s. Their familiar yellow t-shirts are now seen at major events worldwide. Fiona Harley profiles the 'main man'



He's worked with them all: The Who, The Stones, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Sinatra; and seen the chaotic beginnings of an industry in which he is now one of the most specialised. He has set up a security training company; he's been called upon to lecture to police forces and other bodies; and is presently researching his pet obsession, crowd management. He has also frequently been asked to write a book about his experiences – but he says he's got good friends in the industry, and wants to keep it that way.

Ask him for favourite memories and he'll mention his long association with Donington's Monsters of Rock, the spectacle that was Live Aid, Michael Jackson's '88 tour and the Moscow Peace festival, just before *glasnost*. He's equally proud of the company's turnaround at Leeds football ground, and of putting more women into the job.

Asked about his bad ones, he will mention the crowd fatalities and the death of one of his favourite protégés, Nigel Browne, one of Eric Clapton's tour party who went down in a helicopter accident in 1990.

A watershed event in Upton's life, though, was the death of a 14-year-old girl at a David Cassidy show at the now-defunct White City Stadium in 1974. He remembers Bernadette Whelan to this day, and wonders whether it would help her parents to know that, tragic as her death by crowd pressure was, she became a catalyst for Upton in establishing procedures to safeguard fans at major events.

As his career has progressed, it has been this shift in focus, from the early days when the major concern was to safeguard the artist from over-eager fans to the protection and safety of the audience, and the little-developed area of crowd management, that has most involved Upton.

Born in Camden in 1937, and following in the footsteps of his father, he boxed for his school. He was into jazz and blues, and did a distance learning course in composition. At 18 he joined the army on two years' National Service, and went on to complete three years' training in anti-terrorist techniques – but Mick keeps the details discrete. In 1958 he did stints with the Mecca ballroom and a bowling alley in North London.

As the ballrooms closed, Mick would go on to the Manor House Club, frequented by groups of the day – and the venue where he rescued the Hollies' guitar from a would-be thief. "Through them I ended up working with The Who and the Rolling Stones," he explains. "Alan Clarke explained the kinds of problems they had: mass fan worship, crowd pressure, people pestering them backstage and while they were travelling."

Upton was offered work by Peter Walsh at Starlight Artists, on various package tours where his role was more that of a tour manager. "We did tours with the Hollies, Manfred Mann – it was common to have a local orchestra backing them. There'd be 40 people and they'd all squabble. You'd have to stick strictly down the middle and arbitrate."

He worked on the first Isle of Wight festival and the Stones in Hyde Park in 1969, where half a million people turned up. Mick was on the Stones' personal protection team and, like all the security crew, wore a T-shirt two sizes too small to emphasise his muscles. The band had appointed the Hell's Angels to do front of stage security, and when Mick Jagger sashayed on in a dress it caused, he recalls: "a certain amount of divided loyalties."

Upton says the mistake made at Altamont [often cited as the 'day the hippie dream died'] was when the band's management said, 'let's have those nice Hell's Angels people again' – "but of course in America it was a different situation altogether".

Among the sex and drug excess of the early 70's rock gods, he took an early stand: "There's two things I'd never do: procure drugs or women from the audience – not for anybody. I guess it lost me a few jobs." He maintains that he'd still take a very dim view if any of his people did that.

But that didn't mean he wouldn't alert straying musicians to the unannounced arrival of their wives. On one memorable occasion, a "very famous person indeed" had a surprise visit from his wife. Mick dashed up to the suite to find him with a strange female. He managed to get the artist into the shower and the girl out of another door just as the wife arrived. "Absolutely perfect timing," he grins.

Upton was working for David Cassidy with a capacity crowd at White City Stadium in 1974. "We knew there was some kind of problem with the crowd but it wasn't until after the show that we discovered what had actually happened. Cassidy was convinced the girl had died of an acute asthmatic condition, which the death certificate mentioned. But the end of the report did also say she'd died due to crowd pressure. I was picking up vibes about this case – why did a 14-year-old girl die in the middle of 30,000 people? There was a lot of frustration. I was awakening to the realisation that all was not well out there."

He continues: "I began to look at the crowd rather than the artists, which had been my prime concern before. The emphasis was shifting from personal protection to crowd safety." As a result of the White City tragedy, the GLC Pop Code was ➤➤ *p42*

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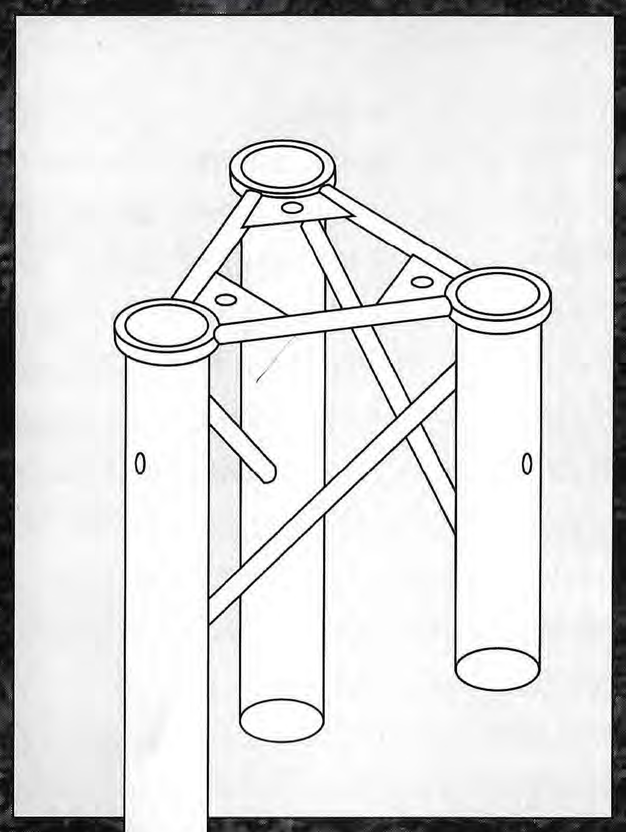

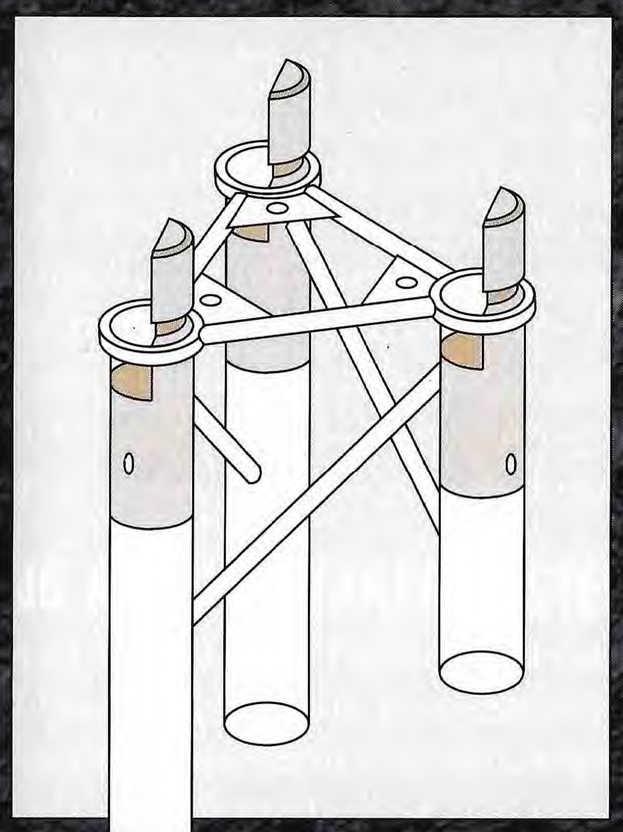

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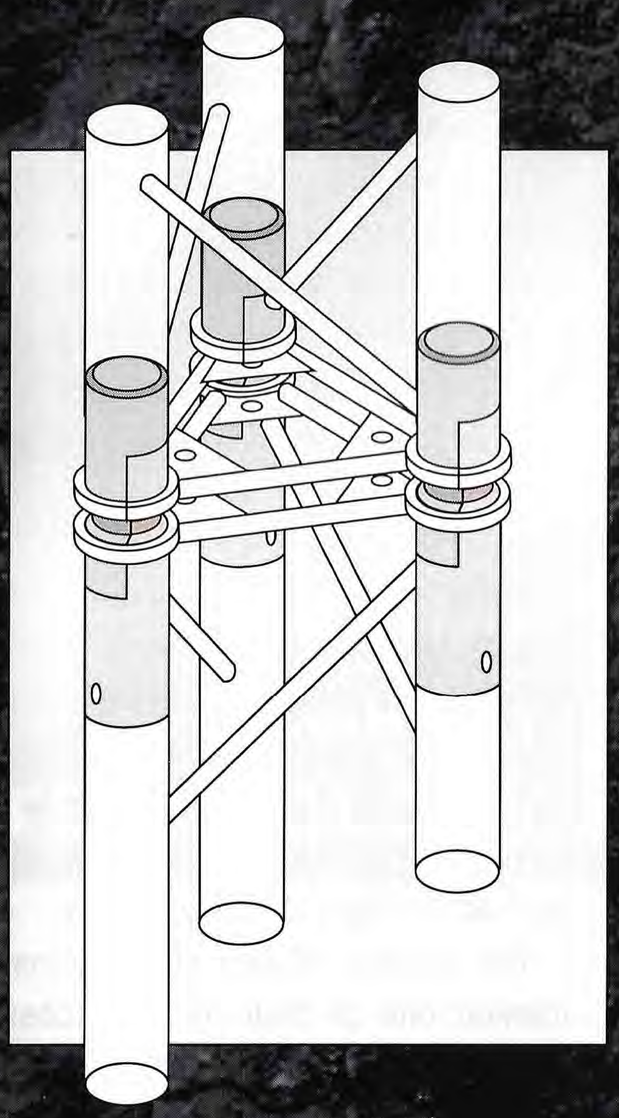

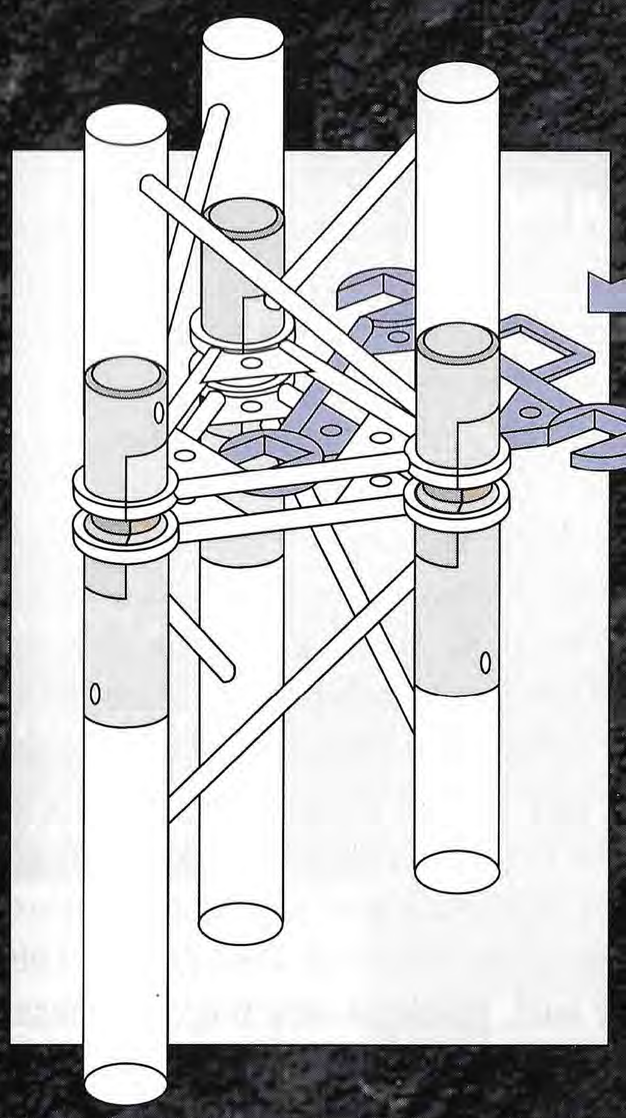

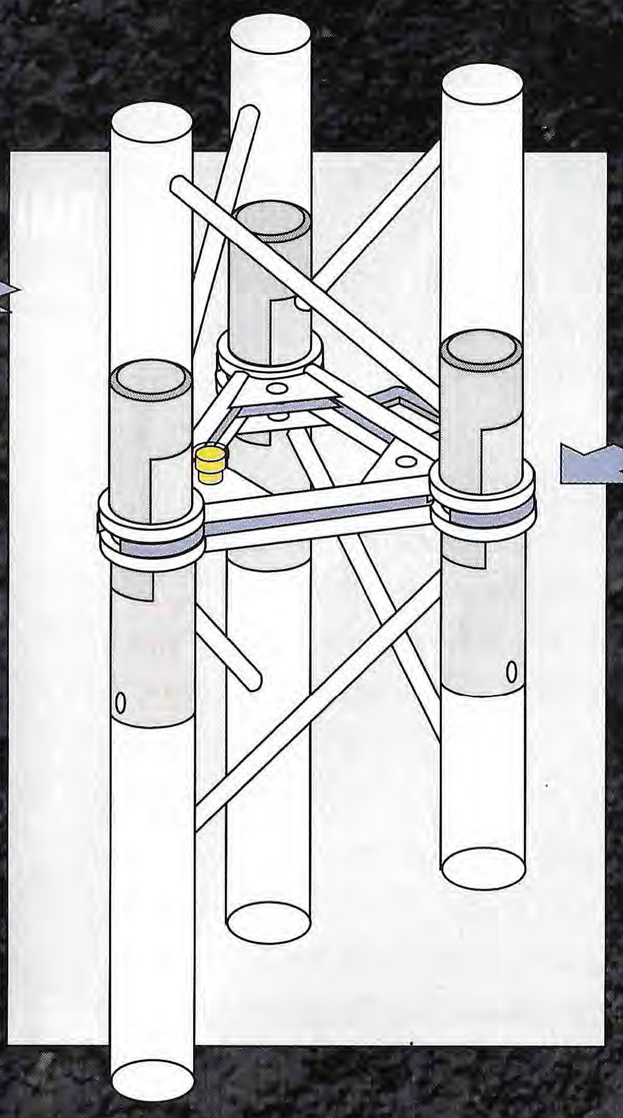

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p40 brought out, which Upton carried around like a bible – though by today's standards, he says, "it was pretty weak".

Upton also started to work for Artiste Services in the mid-'70s, run by Don Murfet and Gerry Slater, the latter to become Upton's partner in ShowSec. It was, says Upton, the first company set up to deal with rock and roll artists.

Character actors

There were a lot of strange people swirling around the business at that time, and Upton says people were sometimes picked more for their character than their ability to perform specific tasks.

There was Fat Fred, Danny The Moody, the evocatively-titled Mumbles Wally and, of course, another of the originals – Alfie Weaver, now of M&A Security – who also worked for Artiste Services. "Alfie was a key figure", Upton says. "I was just one of the team."

In the mid to late '70s, Upton worked for bands like Slade, the Small Faces and Kenny, whose members included Chris Redburn and guitarist Yan Stile. Artiste Services then took on the merchandising for the Bay City Rollers, under Paul Pike. Upton continued with the likes of David Soul, Steve McQueen and, in the late '70s, worked on TV programmes like *Swap Shop* and Noel Edmonds' *Late Breakfast Show*.

A mountain of calm reasonableness, Upton has spent years dealing with artists and fans alike, only once giving up on a job – on the Sex Pistols. When he started with the Pistols he told them: 'spit anywhere you like, but if you spit at me I'll punch you'. Mick remained sputem-free, but says he balked when Sid Vicious staggered out of a gig and spat in the face of an old guy walking a dog: "That was it!"

By the time he left Artiste Services in 1981, he had become their head of security. Offered a partnership deal to take over the whole security side, he says, "We couldn't agree on percentages, so I left. It was a business decision."

Going solo

Now freelance, Upton had the contacts he'd made at Artiste Services. Maurice Jones gave him his first big inroad into supplying bulk labour – and indeed Upton's done Monsters of Rock ever since. Jones says of him: "He's efficient, easy to get on with and you can shout at him now and again – and we've got one advantage: we're paying the wages," he laughs.

1981 saw Upton embark on his last tour, with Gary Numan and The Police. When the latter decided to extend their dates to South America, Upton decided he'd had enough and passed the job to Billy Francis – Sting's tour manager to this day.

The ShowSec name entered circulation when Upton was working freelance for the BBC; they wanted a company name and ShowSec was the first that came into his head. In the end, Upton went back to Artiste Services and bought them out. "I'd always been friendly with Don [Murfet] – I didn't want to just take all his business," says Mick. Luckily for the new company, Wembley Stadium's decision to extend an existing contract by three months covered their early costs.

Gerry Slater joined ShowSec in 1985. He was hiring out vans, and had an office, where Mick was working from home, helped by his wife Jean whom he'd married at 18. They later started another company, ShowBarriers, the profit from which enabled them to set up training courses.

Ron Franklin, another old Artiste Services hand, came in as a director on ShowCars, the company's diversification into vehicles for the industry. When Franklin later left, taking the division with him in the early '90s, Upton and Slater stayed in the business they know best.

Upton says: "I was really into studying crowd management. I didn't want to go on tour with pop stars and put them to bed and get them up in the morning. So I was able to develop my ideas and stand back a bit. If you're with the artist you don't see the build or what happens in the queues outside, just what happens when you arrive with the artist. I began to take pictures of crowds."

He remembers hearing about 11 people dying on entry to a Who concert in Cincinnati. "At the time, the media reported it as stampeding kids, but it was a lot more complex." But the three deaths at Donington in 1988 really hurt. "Whilst a very tragic business," he says, "we took heart from the fact that the agreed standby emergency plan was put into action and many lives were saved."

Kevin Camp, who worked with Upton at Donington that year (and later formed security company TopGuard) says: "It was traumatic for everyone. The worst I've ever seen Mick was the Donington deaths – it hit him hard. But if it hadn't been for Mick and the rest of the team, there would have been more casualties."

Apparently, these are not the only lives that Mick saved. Harvey Goldsmith recalls an incident at a Madonna concert at Roundhay Park in Leeds. "I fought with marauding Leeds lunatics, trying to break into the concert hurling concrete posts. In a fit of pique, I stood in front of them, not realising that one of the loonies was about to smash me over the head. Mick jumped in front of me and saved my life – thank you, Mick, and sorry about the cracked ribs."

Changing times

Being so aware of crowd safety, Upton notes a marked change in bands' thinking over the years. While some artists still assume that with security it's a case of 'the bigger the better', more are concerned at what happens with the audience out-front.

He's had a long haul in getting audiences to respect security as potential life-savers rather than heavy-handed thugs bent on stopping them have a good time. Aware of the power of language in shaping perceptions on both sides of the stage barrier, ShowSec have experimented with different legends for pit staffs' T-shirts. Changing 'Security' to 'Crowd Control' didn't help much but after they adopted 'Crowd Safety', he says, "everyone become a lot calmer".

In recent years, Upton has run training courses for his own people and other security companies, and he's been a regular speaker to various police forces and the Emergency Planning College, part of the Emergency Planning Division of the Home Office. Course director Bob Wyllie says: "The police have a high regard for him and his company's reputation. When he lectures, he wins people over straight away. It's good to see him standing up and talking about the responsibility the industry has. He's a very good ambassador for the industry."

ShowSec recently restructured its offices, leaving Mick freer than before to pursue his research into crowd management at Leicester University. There are now four London offices and six around the rest of England – including a new Manchester base, following this year's contract for Ogden's Nynex Arena.

The London VE-Day celebrations in May marked one of their most successful contracts, covering a whole succession of events – exhibitions, military displays and evening concerts – all with their different demands. It was also, according to Mick Upton, the last show that he will have worked on personally.

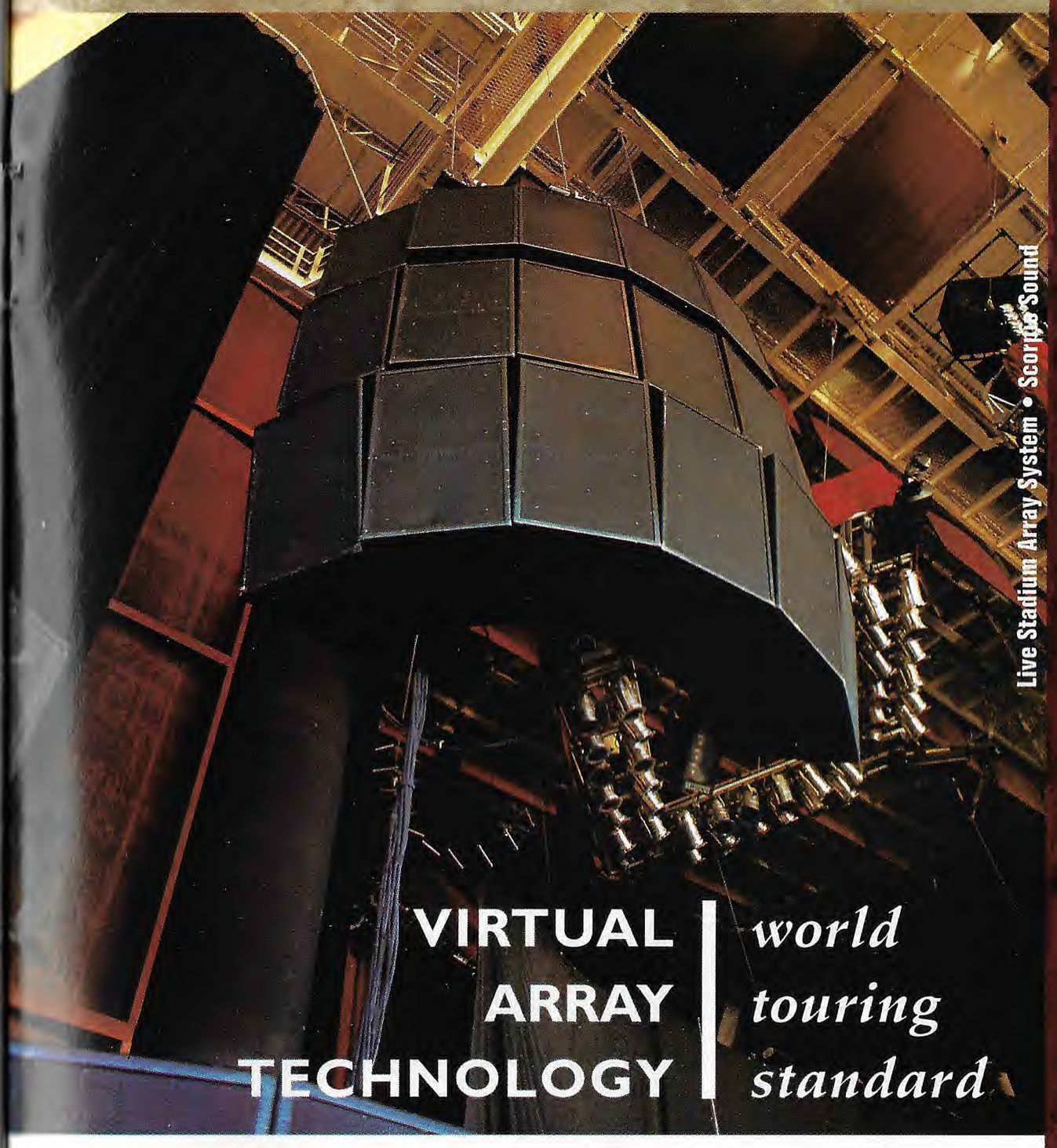
Phil Bowdery, promoter for BCC, says: "This is somebody that, whatever I've been involved in – especially later on in life, putting on big shows – I can phone up and ask, what do you advise I do? Because he's been there. I call him my dad! He is one of the living legends of the business and the grandfather of shows."

Andrew Zweck of HGE believes Mick to be: "A giant of a man in all respects. Mick and his colleagues have led the way in making the security industry credible." The final word goes to Dennis Arnold of HGE: "He knows everything about safety and security there is to know." ■ **live!**

Fiona Harley

"I have a responsibility to every single person in that audience, to deliver the best sound they can possibly get."

Monty Lee Wilkes, FOH Engineer for Live
Talks about the mix, the music and the right equipment.



Monty has been focused on engineering and mixing since the day his father brought him along to an all-night recording session, let him sleep in and miss an algebra test the next day, and a week later dragged him into the high school principal's office *to tell the principal off* for refusing to credit Monty for a make-up test. His mastery of both the basics and the fine points of the craft has earned him the FOH spot with Live – and universal applause for the sound of the band's sold-out summer '95 tour.

LEARNING THE CRAFT. I think the school of hard knocks is the best school you can go to. That's where you get real world experience. Hooking up with bands when they're young is good. Working for a sound company is a really good way to grow both technically and emotionally. Being a system tech teaches you how to troubleshoot, how to fix things fast when the pressure's on. Those sink or swim situations go a long way to seasoning you, teaching you how to keep your head when all those around you are losing theirs.

CHOOSING A LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM. I look for well-defined midrange. Tight low end with a lot of impact – I like low end a lot. Consistency and coverage: how it sounds going from a gymnasium to a theater. How it roads, how it loads, how it stacks, how it flies. The Stadium Array System's midrange sounds so good, I'd wind up taking out far less frequencies on my room EQ than I would with other rigs. What this leads to is better definition everywhere – more intelligible vocals, guitar solos that tend to stand out quite nicely without tearing your face off. It doesn't have to be just screaming over the top loud to have impact and definition.

DELIVERING. The object is not just to have a pile of speakers roaring away. The object is to make sure that sound gets to every seat, because the ticket buyers pay all of our salaries. When Live first hired me, we went into rooms as small as 600 seats. By the end we were playing rooms as large as 30,000 seats. I go to every section, I listen in just about every seat. I have a responsibility to every single person in that audience, to deliver the best sound they can possibly get. With the KF853's, we found ourselves getting crystal clear vocals all the way up to the last row in the last balcony. Outdoors, Hershey Stadium, for example, we nailed every single seat – all the way up to the far corners of the bleachers. It was excellent.

BACK TO BASICS. I'm very fortunate – I have pretty much 100% creative freedom with Live. We use a lot of effects. It's nice to have a lot of things in small quantities. I don't want the effects to be overbearing. They are there to embellish, to help you paint your picture, not to be the show. It's fun sometimes to get rid of all your effects. Right in the middle of production rehearsals, the band decided to do a show at the Chameleon, a little tiny club in Lancaster, Pennsylvania that they kind of cut their teeth in. I walked away from my 96 channels of all kinds of crap to a 16 channel board, one delay and one reverb, and said "Game on. Let's go, boys." It's nice to have all the toys in the world, particularly when there's a problem you need to fix. But that's not what makes or breaks a mix.

For a complete transcript of our talk with Monty Lee Wilkes, and for more information on Virtual Array® Technology and the Stadium Array Series, contact EAW today.

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ideas in the mix

an interview with Nick Franks and Graham Langley

Early days: Nick Franks and Graham Langley model retro fashion

It's close on 22 years since Nick Franks and Graham Langley, Manchester school pals, formalised a loose arrangement of five years' standing and founded Amek. LIVE! talked to the duo about how they first came together, their landmark products – and how they hear the future of live sound mixing

Nick Franks [NF] opens the conversation with a flashback to the pair's Manchester schooldays: "When we were lads at the beginning in the 1960s, nothing we're doing now had been done before. And it's definitely more interesting discovering it than rehashing it. So there we were at school..."

Graham Langley [GL] picks up the thread: "Trying to get new sounds out of untried things. I started – largely through doing a lot of woodwork at school – making guitars, speaker cabinets and flogging them. I didn't know what electronic components were, until somebody told me you could change the sound of a guitar by buying a capacitor from a shop."

NF: "Actually, he was born with a soldering iron in his hand."

GL: "There were various bands at school and while I dabbled in playing with them, I was fiddling around trying to make sound effects with various things."

LIVE! / Mike Lethby [ML]: "The proverbial bass player who becomes the roadie?"

GL: "Almost – the rhythm guitarist who became the roadie."

NF: "I was the bass player. And the manager."

GL: "I went on to college in 1969, and I was still making all this stuff in my parents' shed and selling it to anyone who'd buy it; and then Nick came along one day with this practice violin and asked me to put a pick-up on it."

NF: "I made speaker boxes in that shed. I remember saying to him, 'one day we should make a business out of this.' Fateful words!"

GL: "I started making more things simply because we couldn't afford to buy the WEM Copicats and mixers that everybody else had. I went back and completed my electronics college course – then I started building mixers in earnest at Audio Developments, working on their first small mixers. Finally, I came back here. We formed Amek and started making consoles, amplifiers and graphic equalisers – and Nick gave up making speaker boxes."

ML: "Where did the 'Amek' name come from?"

GL: "I'd been surfing in Perranport and wound up, after my surfboard landed on me, in bed. Laying there, I was thinking of short, meaningless names that people would question and remember."

NF: "Actually what happened was that when the surfboard landed on his head he was so confused he meant to say 'fuck it!' but came out with 'Amek'."

"We were way back down the scale then: when Yes toured in 1972, they brought an Audio Developments console from the States – but it was too big, so they got a bandsaw and cut it in half. Not the sort of thing you could do now!

"When Graham came back, our first contact was Gerald Chevin at Chadacre, who made mixers. He introduced us to Nick Cohen, a bin-builder for sound reinforce-

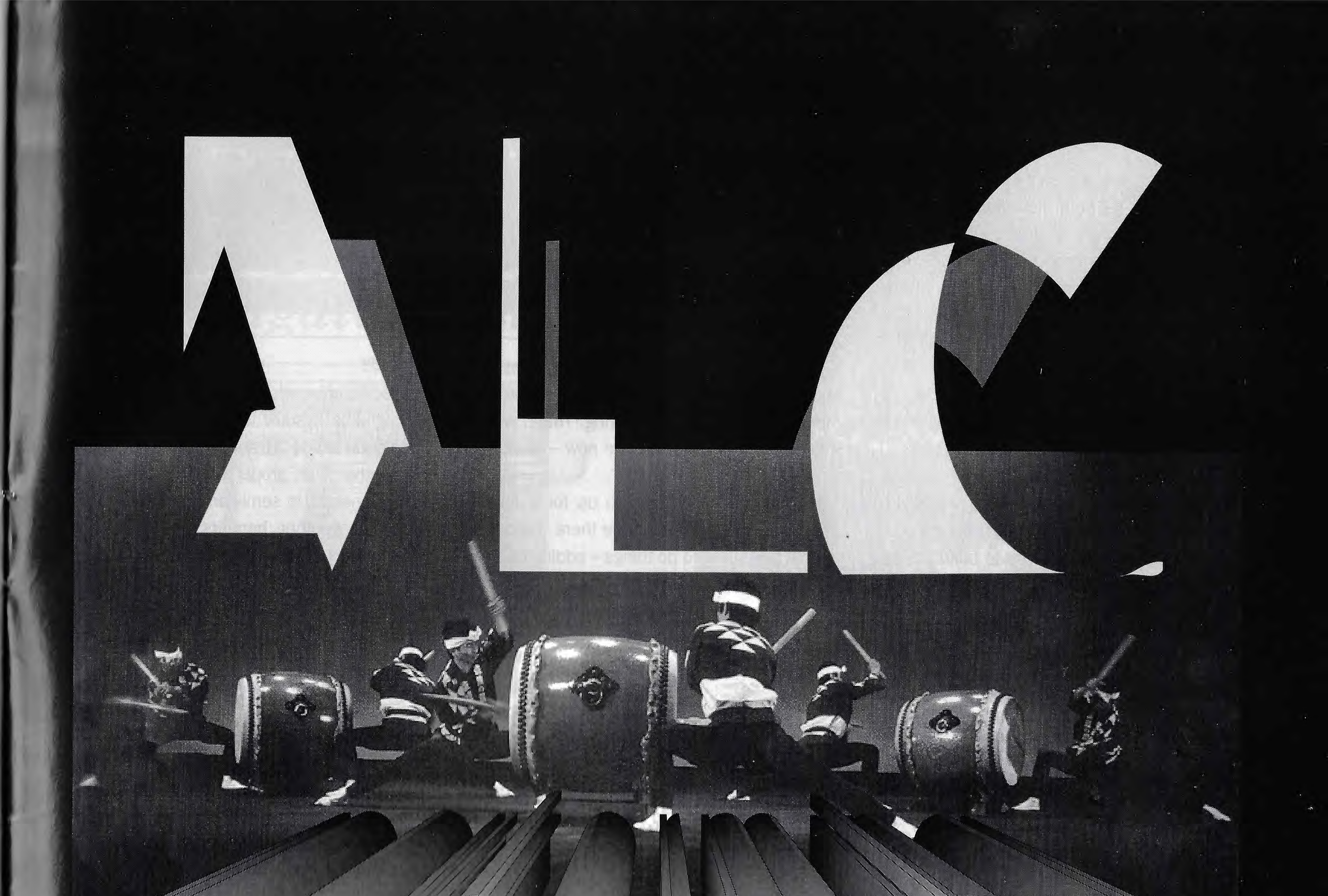
Thinking digital: Amek's automated future

On the line: production in the 1980's

At AES New York this year, Amek, one of England's most respected, diverse and successful console manufacturers, unveiled a prototype version of a broadcast audio console that contained many of the key technologies which will form the core of the company's next generation of sound reinforcement consoles.

We're talking digital here, as in all-digital. We're talking digital control surface, remote digital audio racks, digital touchscreen user interfaces...no-one would accuse this outfit of blinkered thinking. But these ideas also carry the implication of some potentially frightening re-learning curves for the traditionally-conservative live sound engineering fraternity, a prospect which Nick Franks and Graham Langley do not see as being entirely a bad thing.

Our conversation began with a comment that performance audio technology has reached the same level that the domestic hi-fi market attained some years back – i.e., in qualitative terms, room for further improvement is relatively limited. So will further developments simply pile on more features in search of useful applications, or might more imaginative design ideas actually contribute to a sea change in the nature of live performance? If Franks and Langley, and others of a like mind, have their way, it could well be the latter.



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ment and a hell of a character. Nick had a lot of ideas, he built incredible woodwork with birch-faced ply, and he taught us how things should be made and should look. He was also an incredible fantasist: at any minute we were going to do this for this band and that for that band – all the biggest names."

GL: "Some things came to pass, but not Pink Floyd. He rang me and asked if we could build some electronic crossovers. I said 'yes', not having a clue what an electronic crossover was. We made one and it worked; then we were introduced to Virgin, where our first contract was to build a massive (16-2) mixer for the Global Village Trucking Company.

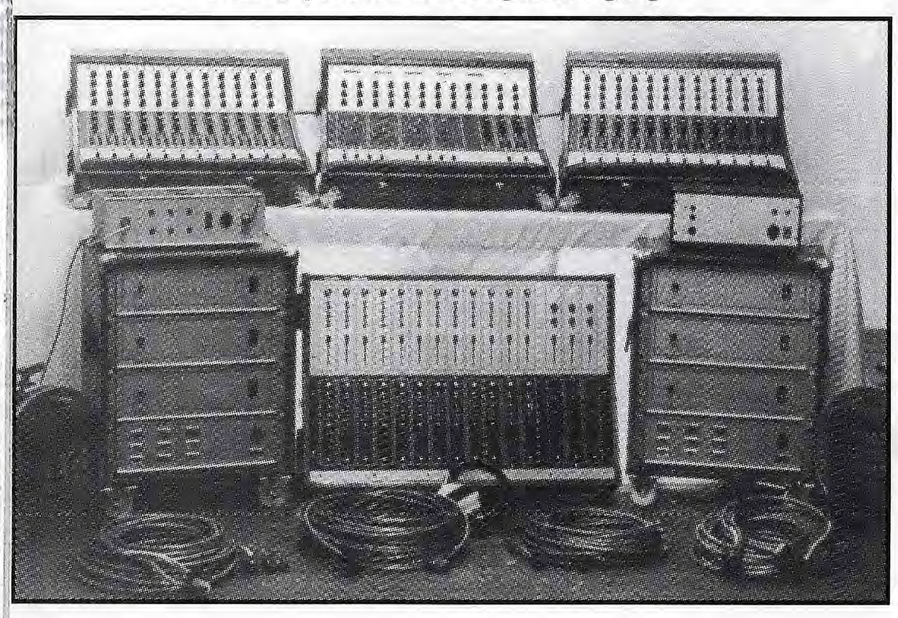
"Having built it, we went along to the Liverpool Empire where they were playing with Gong, Kilburn & The High Roads and Henry Cow. The PA was Nick Cohen bins and our mixer and crossovers, and it all went down extremely well. Then Gong asked us to build them a console – in three sections, finished with antique red polished wood and four joysticks on the outputs. Two-thirds of it still exists! That got us going, and we went on to do loads of work for Virgin's tours...desks, effects, lighting consoles, you name it, although the speakers, I think, were by then being done by Dave Martin.

"After that we introduced the X Series – a modular, up-market console. It corresponded with studio requirements too, so it was dual-purpose."

NF: "It was all new, fascinating and exciting. We built a foldback mixer for Gong – a radical innovation: we didn't even bloody know what a foldback mixer was – then, you just had input gain and routing switches."

ML: "So is it less interesting or challenging for manufacturers now?"

Period piece: the Gong touring rig



NF: "The first Midas boards back in the 1970s set out how a live sound board should work for maybe 15 years. From our point of view, compared with the forward movement to automation in studio consoles, the whole sound reinforcement thing looked pretty boring. That's why we've done what we've done now – launching the Recall and the 501."

GL: "It's been obvious to us for a long time that the applications are there. Various people have tried to do things – adding on little sequencing ideas and triggers. It's been very conservative – maybe through techno-fear or whatever; the worry of a computer going down on a gig."

NF: "Well, they don't have computerised lighting desks on gigs at all, do they? But we put a bypass 'panic' button on our consoles, so you could operate in the normal way if necessary.

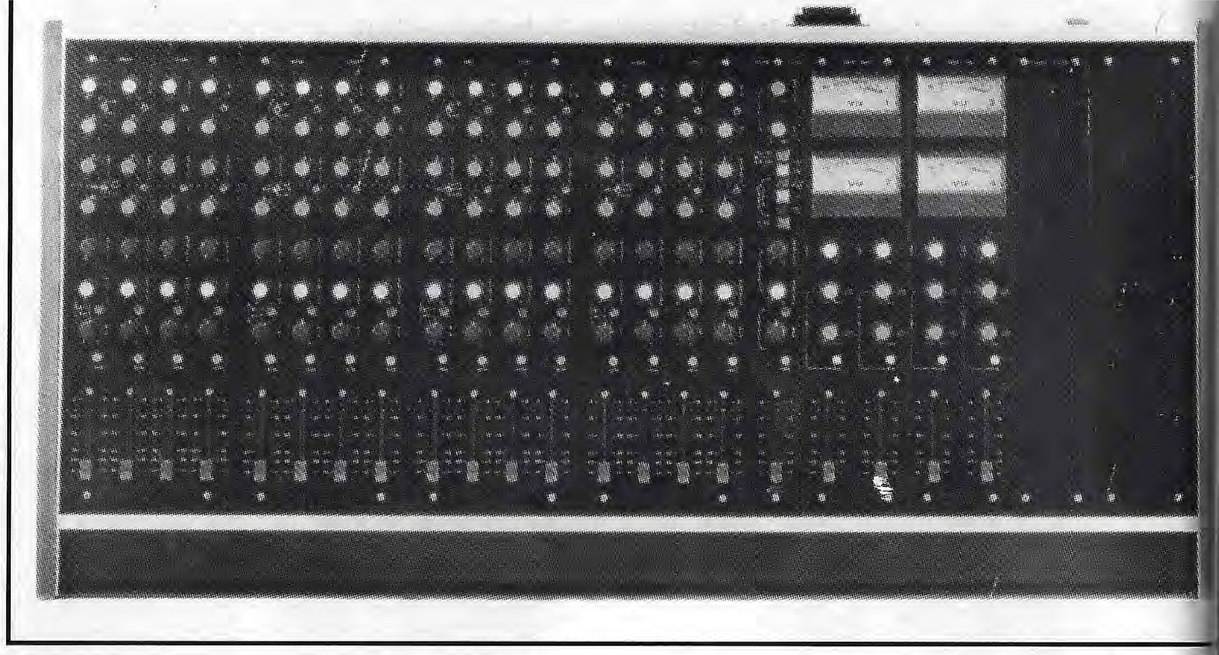
"When the surfboard landed on his head he was so confused he meant to say 'fuck it!' but came out with 'Amek'."

"From the feedback we're getting, the people who are hip to what you can do with a computer like it a lot. And those that aren't hip to it either haven't tried it, or they're suddenly thinking 'we'd better do this or we're going to be out of business'. So it's creating a new benchmark for people to look at.

"And I think it's just the beginning, because it's going to go way, way beyond this. I think it's going to go into another level completely – and in the not-too-distant future. What's coming is digital sound reinforcement consoles, and we were very surprised to find a highly prominent live sound engineer telling us that he just wants to get his hands on one as soon as possible.

"We were shocked. Why? We'd always assumed that everyone would want all the controls in front of them all the time in a live sound situation – so you could reach out and get at anything immediately. And he was saying to us, 'not at all'."

GL: "He wasn't talking about a totally assignable console, but one where if he wanted a channel, that whole channel could be there in front of him, on real knobs, at the press of a button. At his level of touring, he would be using two or more conventional FOH consoles. His message was that once you've got your channels set up it's the handling of sub-groups that's crucial – you're either doing subgroups or you're looking for



The X Series

one specific channel. And let's face it, with an assignable system it will be quicker to call the channels to the controls right in front of you rather than grope around a 10-foot span of consoles in semi-darkness."

ML: "What other benefits, apart from size, would spring from digital live consoles?"

GL: "Loads of things. Losing multicores, for one. Getting rid of your effects racks, for another."

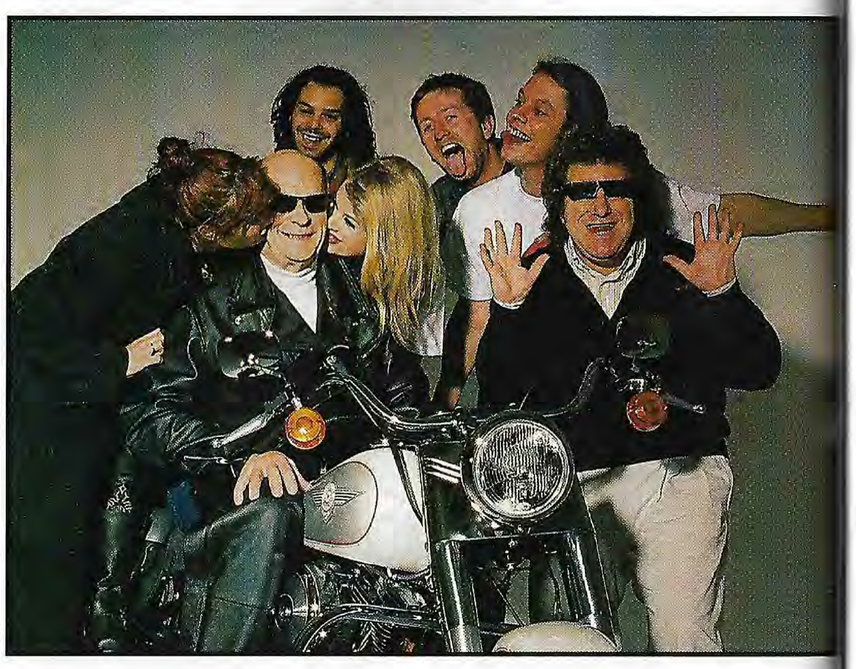
NF: "I don't want to go too far into our thinking, but with that much high-speed data processing, you could also evaluate every signal and monitor the concert hall environment *and* adjust all the parameters continuously. You could take a lot from the engineer's mind and integrate it algorithmically. It could be incredible. That's where we see it going, but it's going to take some time yet.

"In maybe five or six years the Recall's going to look like a WEM mixer does today. Things are going faster in every level of technology; from Recall to digital isn't going to take another 20 years."

GL: "A real digital live console will give people the ability to do more interesting things in shows. Maybe they haven't had the tools before; but it's an interactive process and they've got to have the imagination to want to do it."

NF: "Imagination is a really important point: who do you see these days who makes you gasp like when you first heard Jimi Hendrix? Everyone's got fantastic tools now but who's got the imagination to use them?" ■ **live!**

Today's model: Rupert Neve, Nick Franks.... and friends



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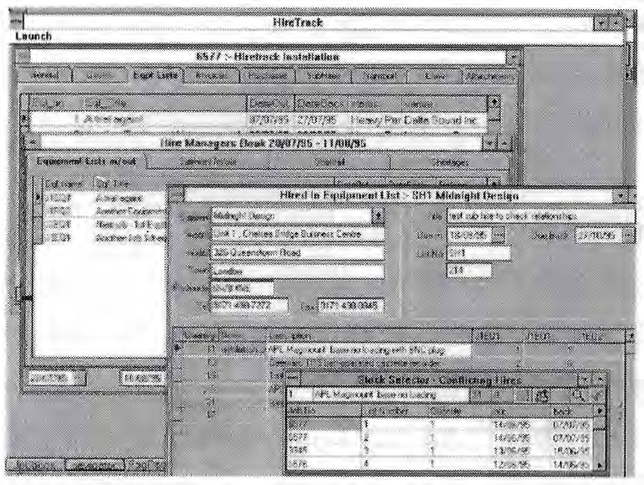

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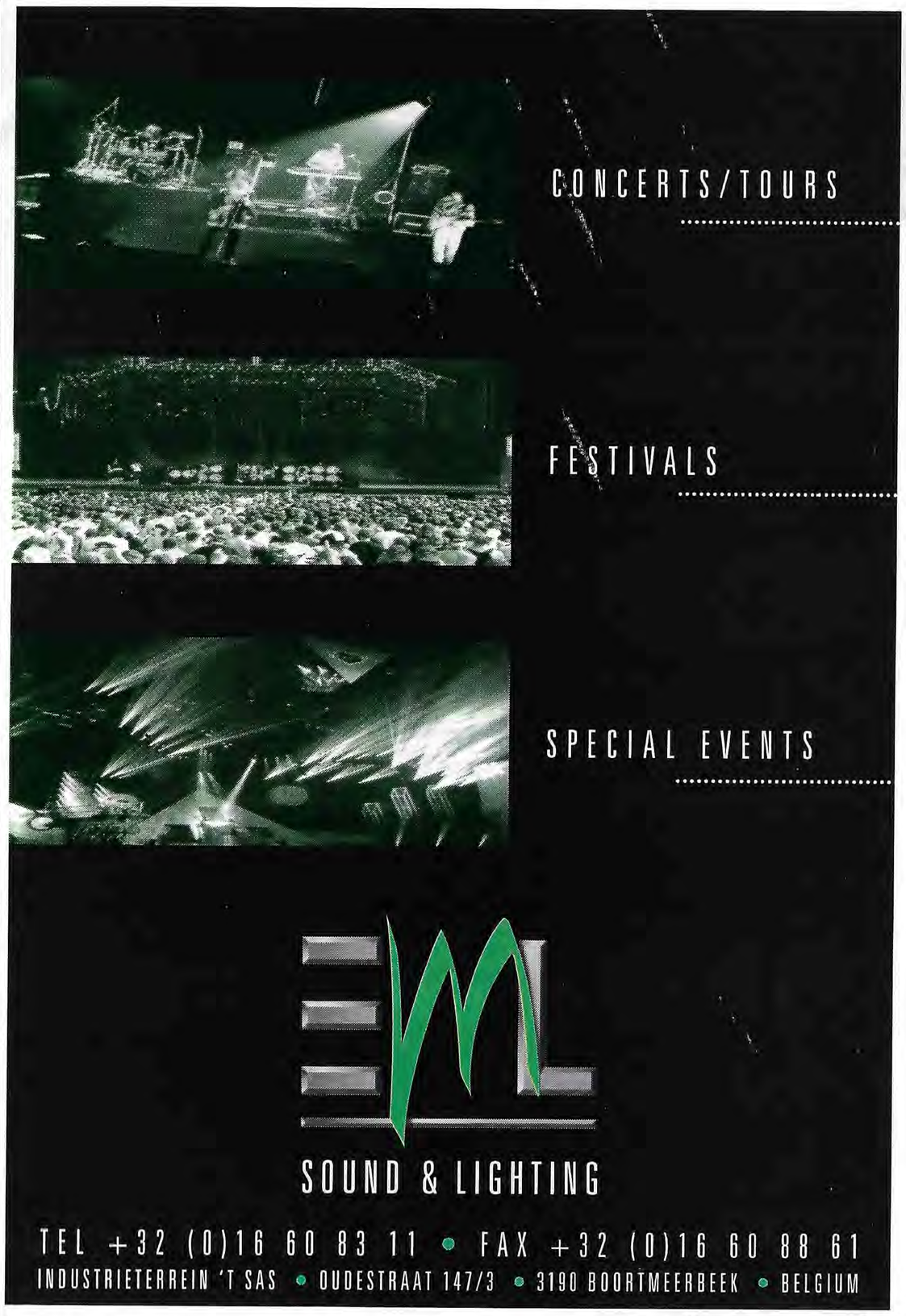

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live! exclusive

Cadac Monitor Board set to storm

Clive Green & Co, manufacturer of the Cadac range of live consoles, is launching a brand new Monitor Board early in 1996 – in line with the company's focus on live sound reinforcement console design.

In the words of managing director Clive Green, "the company has taken this step as a direct result of strong industry demand, both in Europe and the US." He adds "This is the first ever monitor mixer to bear the Cadac name and on the surface, it may appear to be something of a departure for us. In fact, it has been a question of listening to engineers' requests for a top-quality board with flexible automation, and translating our long-standing live experience into an appropriate design. The Cadac Monitor Board will have taken eight months from drawing board to production unit, with the first desks due for shipment in the next couple of months."

The Cadac Monitor Board will be available in customer-specified frame configurations, offering up to a total of 112 dual input channels, 48 outputs and 12 VCA Masters. An important feature of the new desk is the automation of input "ON" switches, giving engineers the ability to pre-set input gains for different acts and handle rapid changeovers. Each "ON" switch state is memorised and can be recalled as part of a Cue.

The Cadac Monitor Board offers more than double the number of mix buses currently available from any competitive design – outputs are configurable to 24 stereo mixes, with a global "stereo" switch per dual bus. This allows engineers to select an output as either stereo or dual mono, via switches located on the Central Control Module (CCM). Sophisticated VCA assignment is also provided, to twelve Master and two Grand Master faders. With this facility, engineers can group-select VCA masters under the control of a single fader. By selecting one of the two switches on each VCA master fader, it is assigned to the Grand Masters, located on the Board's CCM. The Grand Masters incorporate a MUTE switch, acting over any VCA assigned to that fader. The automation system allows engineers to re-assign the entire VCA system quickly as required.

A sophisticated arrangement of three independent Monitor outputs allows total listening flexibility – engineers can monitor in-ear outputs via an in-ear system, speaker outputs via their own wedges and any inputs using either system. Channel PFLs can be routed to Monitor 1, Monitor 2 or both as required. The third output – Monitor 3 – is dedicated to input PFLs, allowing independent line checks to be made, as well as gain presetting of unused inputs.

The design includes the Cadac 4-band fully parametric EQ, with variable HP and LP filters. Other features include a switchable Solo Hold function, which allows the PFLs and AFLs to become "additive" when selected, complemented by inter-cancel facilities. The board's comprehensive oscillator routing is designed for multiple-act situations, where the facility to pre-check off-stage feeds independently saves time.

The Cadac Monitor Board's extensive automation functionality includes:

* handling of 1000 cues
* full control of external equipment via MIDI and Event controllers
* mute and VCA assignment recall
* dual input selection
* 8-character VCA Master identification.

Plans for the Cadac Monitor Board's formal launch will be announced shortly – LIVE!'s latest information targets the AES in Copenhagen as the first formal showing for the new desk. ■ live!

live! exclusive

Allen & Heath launch GL3000 at LIVE! Show

With an extensive new factory facility recently completed, and a 'Queen's Award For Export Achievement' secured last September, console manufacturers Allen & Heath are now unveiling the GL3000, an 8-bus multifunctional desk aimed squarely at theatres and clubs.

Showing for the first time on the Harman Audio stand at the LIVE! Show, the GL3000 offers an impressive array of features for the price. It should be seen as an affordable way of getting nearer to the GL4's specification, which is resembles aesthetically and functionally, rather than a replacement for the 4-bus GL3.

It's available in 16, 24, 32 and 40 channel, £3999 for the 32 channel and £4999 for 40 channels. There are two expander options available; GL3000-EX8M (8 channel mono, £999), and GL300-EX8S, (4 stereo channels, 4 mono, £1099). Comprehensive metering is on the desk, and in addition, optional meter bridges for the 24, 32 and 40 channel desks are available as stock items priced at £449 and £499 and £549 respectively.

The layout provides an eight-buss / eight-aux console featuring dual-role, dual-function capabilities with mechanical expandability, and incorporating the unique Allen & Heath SYS-LINK technology for further electronic expansion. EQ is four-band, two-sweep with 100Hz roll-off, and the desk joins the GL4 in its adoption of dual mic stereo inputs.

For FOH applications GL3000 offers the engineer up to eight subgroups to LR; eight aux. sends all on individual controls; up to a maximum of eight output feeds on fader control, and one output feed on rotary pot (mono sum).

For monitoring, the GL3000 provides eight independent monitor mixes with full signal patch facilities; one independent stereo mix for on stage side fills or in-ear monitors; two alternative mixes using the matrix outputs and channel routing balance; and four further level outputs derived from similar mixes.

In Dual Mode Format (expected to be the most common application) the GL3000 offers eight subgroups for FOH, four with balanced XLR outputs and insert points; four FX sends; two stereo returns that can be used for external inputs; two mono matrix outputs; and one mono output (LR sum) with balanced XLR output.

For Theatre Applications the master section can be configured to give 13 individually-controllable speaker outputs; L/R balanced XLR output and insert points; matrix A and B outputs on faders; mono sum balanced XLR output; four group outputs with faders and more. With so many stereo sound sources now available for theatre use, four full-function stereo mic/line channels are standard on all but the 16 channel model. Its first outing is the LIVE! Awards Dinner with Dimension Audio. ■ live!

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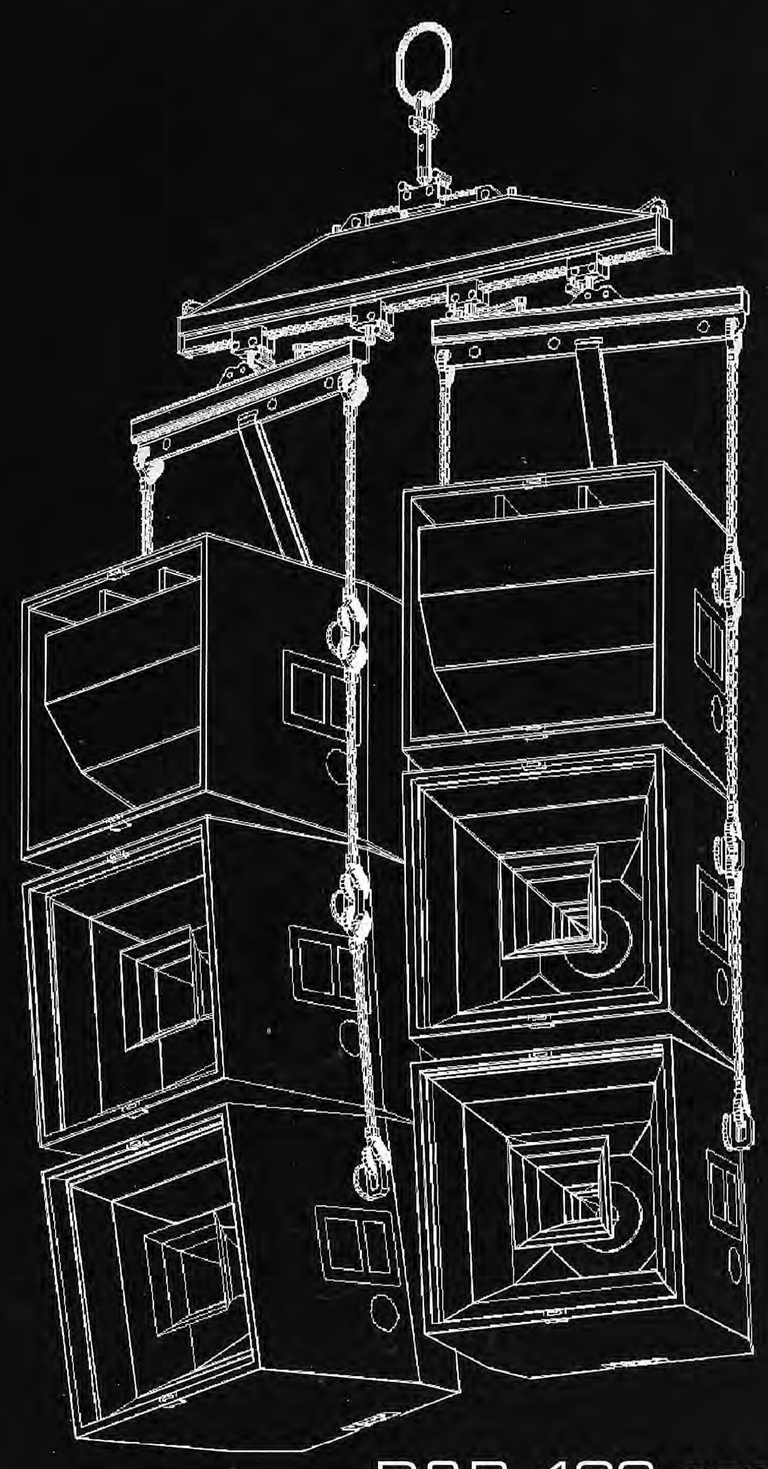

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live! exclusive

spirit 8: packing it in

The Spirit 8, unveiled to the world at the 1996 LIVE! Show this month, is the most sophisticated FOH console yet from the Spirit marque. For our exclusive preview, Zenon Schoepe looks at this hot new contender in a hard-fought field

The new Spirit 8 marks the company's first drive into serious FOH mixing – and should be seen as a response to the number of its studio desks that have been pressed into this function.

Again you're looking at Alps and Neutrik bits and pieces but, unusually, also a surface-mount meter bridge which acts as a type of anti-roll bar to give the chassis torsional strength. Available in 16, 24, 32 and 40 mono channel frames, it's a very small desk in all dimensions – and once again proves Spirit's ethic that although it maybe cheap, it doesn't have to look like crap.

Feature-wise, you're looking at an 8-group board with two stereo input strips, six auxes, 4-band EQ, a 10 x 2 matrix, four mute groups and eight additional stereo inputs. Although specifically designed for live mixing, multitrack recording is possible, too, via mono channel direct-outs.

Inputs are balanced on jack and XLR and have inserts, while stereo inputs, where they occur, are on individual left and right balanced jacks. The mix, group and matrix outputs are on XLRs, and the groups and the main mix have inserts. There's also a balanced stereo record output.

Spirit 8 uses the company's much-vaunted *Ultramic Plus* padless mic amp which can take line and mic inputs to a maximum of 28dBu, and with 66dB of gain on tap you can throw just about anything at it. It's a development of the original Ultramic – introduced originally on the PowerStation – and is claimed to be even better. Mic/line is switched on the connectors and there's a phase reverse and individually-switched phantom.

Input strips

Mono channels have a switchable 100Hz 18dB/octave HPF followed by ±15dB shelving LF and HF (at 60Hz and 13kHz) and two sweepable, broad-ish, mid bands covering 80Hz-1.9kHz and 550Hz-13kHz.

There are six auxes – 1 and 2 are pre-fader, 3 and 4 can be switched pre/post globally, while 5 and 6 are post-fader. 'Pre' auxes can also be jumpered internally to give pre-EQ sourcing.

Routing to the eight groups and the main mix is achieved via paired group switches and a pan pot – and it's here that you also find the four mute master groups, which are stored and selected in traditional fashion in the master section. The desk employs a combined PFL and peak indicator in one LED, and this is supplemented by peak metering for the inputs and the group and mix outputs.

Each desk configuration provides two stereo input strips, each offering a basic stereo pair routed to the main mix for things like playback, and a more fully-featured stereo pair for more critical sources. The former has access to auxes 1 and 2, 10/ -20dB switchable gain, a PFL and a level pot. Full stereo inputs have 22dB of gain, access all six auxes in mono, have full routing via a balance pot, plus PFL and mute master group participation – but EQ is restricted to HF and LF, switchable between 6/12kHz and 60/120Hz respectively with an EQ bypass.

Groups and master

Group strips house two group faders, yet another two stereo returns and two pots, and a PFL for each group's contribution to the two matrix outputs. Pairs of groups can also be mono'd and routed to the main mix. One set of stereo returns has fixed HF and LF EQ, but both pairs can be switched individually between the main mix and the two groups beneath it.

Similarly, the main mix can be routed in mono or stereo to the matrix; and the arrangement is completed by two matrix master output pots complete with AFLs.

Talkback can be routed to auxes 1 and 2, 3 and 4, the main mix and the groups.

Conclusion

Spirit 8 is really quite a remarkable desk. Virtually the only things that give the price away are the slightly-compacted nature of the controls and the console's size, but it's an easy two-man lift.

Better still, it sounds great with excellent crosstalk and mute performance, and there is no doubt that the input front-end is very refined.

The inclusion of a matrix on a board of this price may seem a little ambitious, and while it is ultimately restricted for multi-speaker surround mixing by its relatively basic nature, it does serve as a useful adjunct to the aux capabilities. Thus, in terms of flexibility alone, it's a quantum-leap ahead of anything in its price range. It also has a higher density of inputs in mono or stereo with a lot of EQ than any competing product.

In all honesty, for this price, I can't find anything on which to criticise the Spirit 8 – which makes me sick. This is ground breaking value for money. ■ **live!**

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The future face of Optikinetics

Launched as a replacement for the Solar 250, the new K Series is given the thumbs-up by Carl Dodds

One of the stars of *PLASA '95* was Optikinetics' new K series of effect projectors – a replacement for its most famous product, the Solar 250, after no less than 22 years of production.

The K series is thus quite superb – but why ditch a phenomenally successful product after all these years? And what was the background to the R&D process that lad to the launch of the K series?

Work began on the K series in January '94, and it became obvious during discussions with Neil Rice and his R&D team of Aaron Custance and Dave Thomas, that it was a direct result of the success of earlier products.

The Solar 575 projector gave the team optical, cooling and ballast technology, with the amazing Solar System adding electronics and DMX to the mix. With the success of the Solar 575 leading to marketing pressure for a product between the Solar 250 and the Solar 575, added to competition in the retail sector, particularly from German products, plus the new and upcoming safety regulations ... and the decision to make the K series becomes eminently logical.

The brief to the R&D team was very specific. The machine (there was to be just one at this stage) was to cover the gap in the market between the Solar 250 and Solar 575; it had to be quiet, meet all current and impending safety regulations, and was to be aimed particularly at the worldwide retail display market. Naturally the new unit had to be able to use all Optikinetics' vast range of image software.

The search began to find a suitable lamp – which ended up being the MSD200, with its 2000hr lamp life and no compromise on optical quality. This led to the choice of an electronic ballast; this is excellent as the one unit can be sold world-wide without any messing about changing voltage selectors or having different versions, as the ballast auto-senses what voltage is being used and adjusts itself accordingly. Low weight, size and heat dissipation are further advantages.

Much work was done on the casing, with many other options being considered before finally a diecast body was decided upon. One surprise was that the aesthetics for this beautiful machine were designed in-house – I'd given up on UK manufacturers being able to make their products look good as well as function properly.

The diecasting was seminal in the decision to drop the Solar 250 and Solar 575 and produce replacements. The massive investment in tooling the diecast became easier to swallow as well as giving the optical benefits of the much more accurate and stable diecast to all the products, getting Optikinetics firmly away from the 'biscuit tin' look of sheet metal products. The old Solar 250 was doomed to extinction anyway by the impending CE regulations, the new K1 being essentially the old machine in the new diecast. Whilst using diecast, and particularly the electronic ballast, means that the Solar 575 in its K4 guise is not only better looking but much lighter.

So we now have a series of machines – the K1, using the 24V 250W lamp, the K2 using the MSD200 and the K4, using the HMI575 – all in the same diecast body. Opening up the body gives very good access for cleaning and reveals the very clever cooling system coupled with a UV/heat filter that is optimised for each lamp type.

There are a wealth of clever details, like the simple external condenser lens adjustment facility to compensate for different focusing lenses, external lamp adjustment, the retractable support bars for front of lens effects and the removable, easy-clean ventilation grilles.

Optikinetics projectors have always been based on the idea of modularity, different lenses and add-on effects to give the required image – but with the K series the modularity has been extended to the electronics as well. Lifting the lid means the ability to swap in and out different electronic modules that plug into the main electronics motherboard. Add in Sound Animator sockets, a mechanical shutter/dimmer or an hour meter.

Coming soon will be a DMX interface card with board storage. Also coming soon is an intelligent interface that will work with the DMX interface and will automatically recognise a new generation of intelligent accessories as they are connected.

The K series are truly products of the '90s – sophisticated, aesthetically-stunning, with massive attention to detail, and an ever-expanding potential for the future. Developed with technical and marketing considerations fully integrated, computer designed for optimised performance and easy manufacture, this is the kind of product I hope we see more of in the future. ■ **live!**

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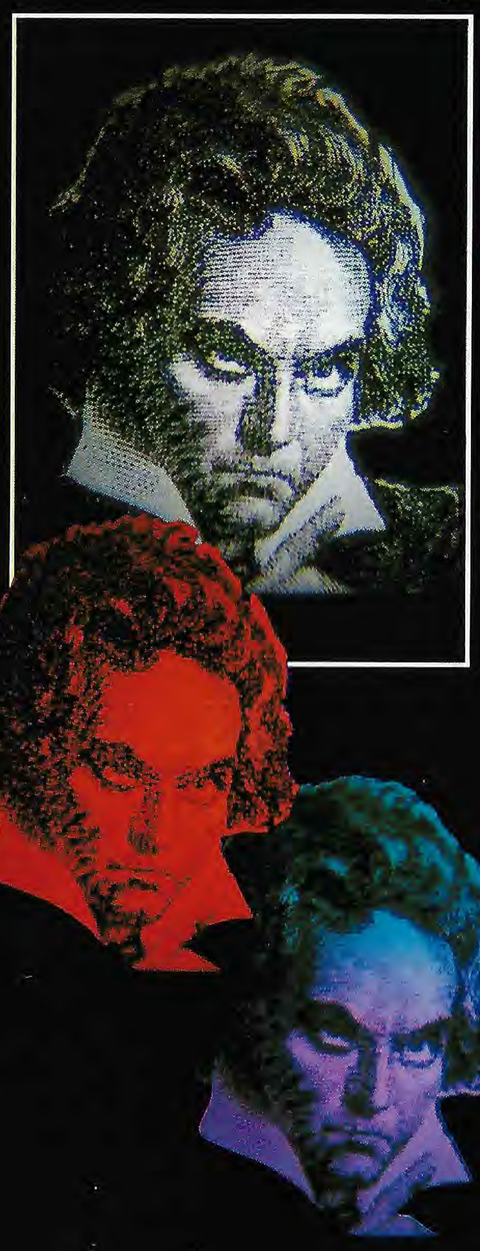

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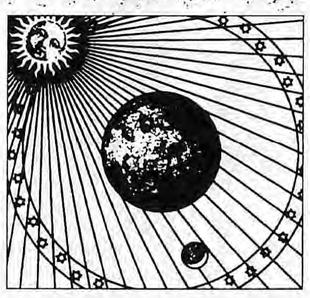

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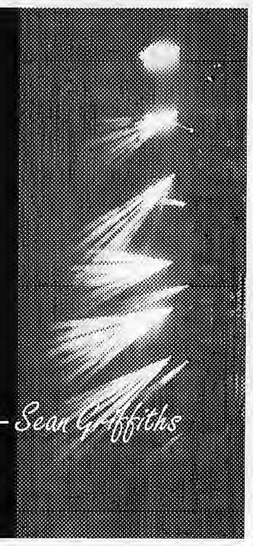

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Clay Paky	29
Eaw	43
Entec	49
EML	47
Fuzion	30
High End Systems	9
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HW 'QSC'	11
Hand Held Audio	49
Lite Structures	41
Meyer	16,17
Musikmesse	51
Mark IV	37
Navigator	47
NEC	25
PSL	47
Pala	49
Soundcraft	13
Spirit	15
Stardes	49
Trantec	24
Total Fabrications	53
Turbosound	IFC
Varilite	55

up the truss

with **Tim Roberts**

The fax line here at Truss Towers has been humming since the announcement that winners of the 'story of the month' will not only receive a T-shirt, but will also now bag an engraved MagLite courtesy of the bending beam boys at Vari*Lite. Honestly, are you people motivated by nothing more than greed and personal gain? (No, me neither.)

To kick-off what promises to be an *annus horribilis* (a bummer of a year for those of you who don't speak Latin), I shall return to a common *Truss* Theme: the love/hate relationship we foster with our vehicles. Thanks are due to John from Horsham who has recently undergone a severe transport trauma and still has the good grace to come out smiling.

John was on one of *those* lightning tours of Europe: 30 dates in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Scandinavia. Sadly, the tour had been booked-out by someone who only had a passing acquaintance with matters geographic, and band and crew were obliged to charge hundreds of kilometres from gig to gig. The transport was a knackered old Dodge van which was clearly nearing the end of its useful life, and would soon be seen in the Cosmic Solar Rainbow Field at Glastonbury sporting a sign reading "Van for sale. If you can start it you can keep it. Will swap for a sixteenth."

After one particular night in Austria, John and the boys load all the gear out, ready to grab a few hours' kip at the hotel before driving 600Km across the Alps to the next gig. Sadly, something went seriously Trussy with the starter motor, which not only failed to engage but began to belch smoke alarmingly. The truck had to be unloaded in record time to gain access to the battery, thus preventing the whole thing from going up like a nylon nightie.

A visit to the local garage the following morning revealed that the offending part would have to be transported overland by mule train from a sweatshop in Mongolia. John decided to hire a van. Already four hours late, everyone piles into the gleaming new van and they roar off across the mountains to the next gig. Being behind time John splits the driving with the other technician and a member of the band. He's woken up at a service station to go and pay whilst the band member refuels. At the cash desk he indicates "Diesel", but the guy behind the desk responds enigmatically: "No diesel". "No, I want to pay for the diesel," John insists, pointing at the forecourt. "No diesel. Petrol ja, but no diesel," comes the reply. The horrible truth dawns: someone just filled the brand new diesel hire van with four star. Ooops.

The Austrian AA are summoned. the van is strapped to a low-loader and driven to a local farm where the engine is stripped and bled. They are then returned to the self-same garage where a more prudent fuel selection is made. John assures me they made it to the gig, loading in the backline as the support played on.

****

MAGLITE WINNER Troublesome though they were, John's experiences were a holiday compared to the trauma suffered by a Mr Colin B –who certainly merits the first MagLite of the year. Colin was out on a mini UK tour doing the lamps for Magnum, sharing a 7.5-tonner with the PA guys. The last date was a show in Market Harborough. Everyone thought it would be a regular mid-sized venue, it turned out to be a Rugby Club-type affair with a load-in round the back of the club, i.e. off the pitch. Things began to climb the Truss when Colin took a considerable length of guttering off the side of the venue as he manoeuvred the truck. He did, however, have the foresight to park the thing up on blocks to make sure it wouldn't get bogged down should it start to rain. Sure enough it pissed down for the entire duration of the gig and the handy idea with the blocks only meant that the truck got bogged down a metre further on.

As you can imagine Colin and his cohorts were not best pleased – especially since they'd been up continuously from the night before just to get to the gig. With much swearing and assistance from the rugby team, the offending 7.5-tonner was finally dug from the mire. They then faced a long drive back to the PA guy's Gloucestershire home, halfway up a long single-track farm road. In front of the house was just enough room to turn the truck. Unfortunately the grass in Gloucester was as moist as in Market Harborough, and once again the thing sank immediately up to the axle. Despair all round.

Someone went up to the farm to wake up the occupants and borrow a shovel. Colin found himself on his hands and knees in the pouring rain, without sleep for two days, trying to dig the vehicle out for the second time. Surely things could get no worse, he thought. Then the shovel snapped. He worked on with bare hands.

At 5.30 am a car came up the lane. It was the milk-maid coming to collect from the farm. Access was completely blocked and she was obliged to leave the car and walk. Being a helpful sort she left the engine running and the lights on so that the boys would have a bit of light to work in. After a while Colin had enough of the motor running right by his ear so he turned the engine off. Ten minutes later the lights dimmed and the battery was completely flat. He and the PA man tried to bump-start the car, but unfortunately the combined effects of sleep deprivation and sheer aggravation gave them the co-ordination of a pair of anorexic haddocks on mescaline and they pushed the car straight into the ditch! Trying to pull it out simply removed the bumper... In the end, someone had to go back to the farm and beg the owner for a tow – as well as owning up to having just broken his prize spade, er...oh yes, and having trashed the milk-maid's car. Rock and Roll – don't you just love it!

If none of you believe me, you can ask Colin yourself. He's that lampie with the spade handle sticking out of his forehead. ■ **trussed!**

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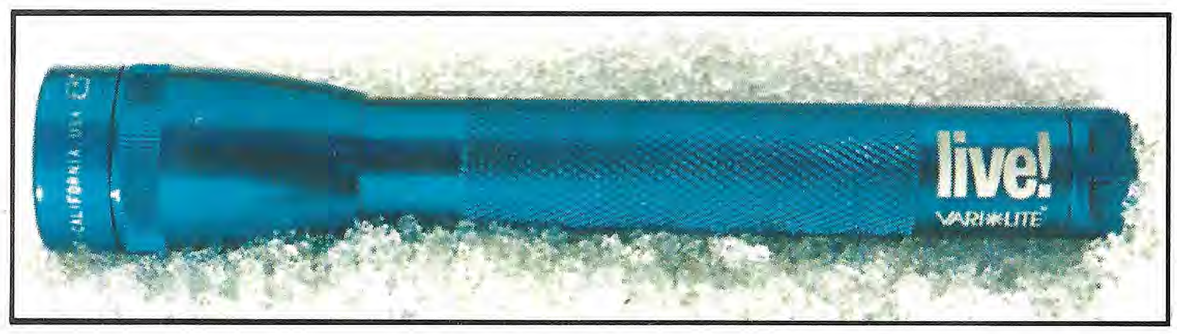

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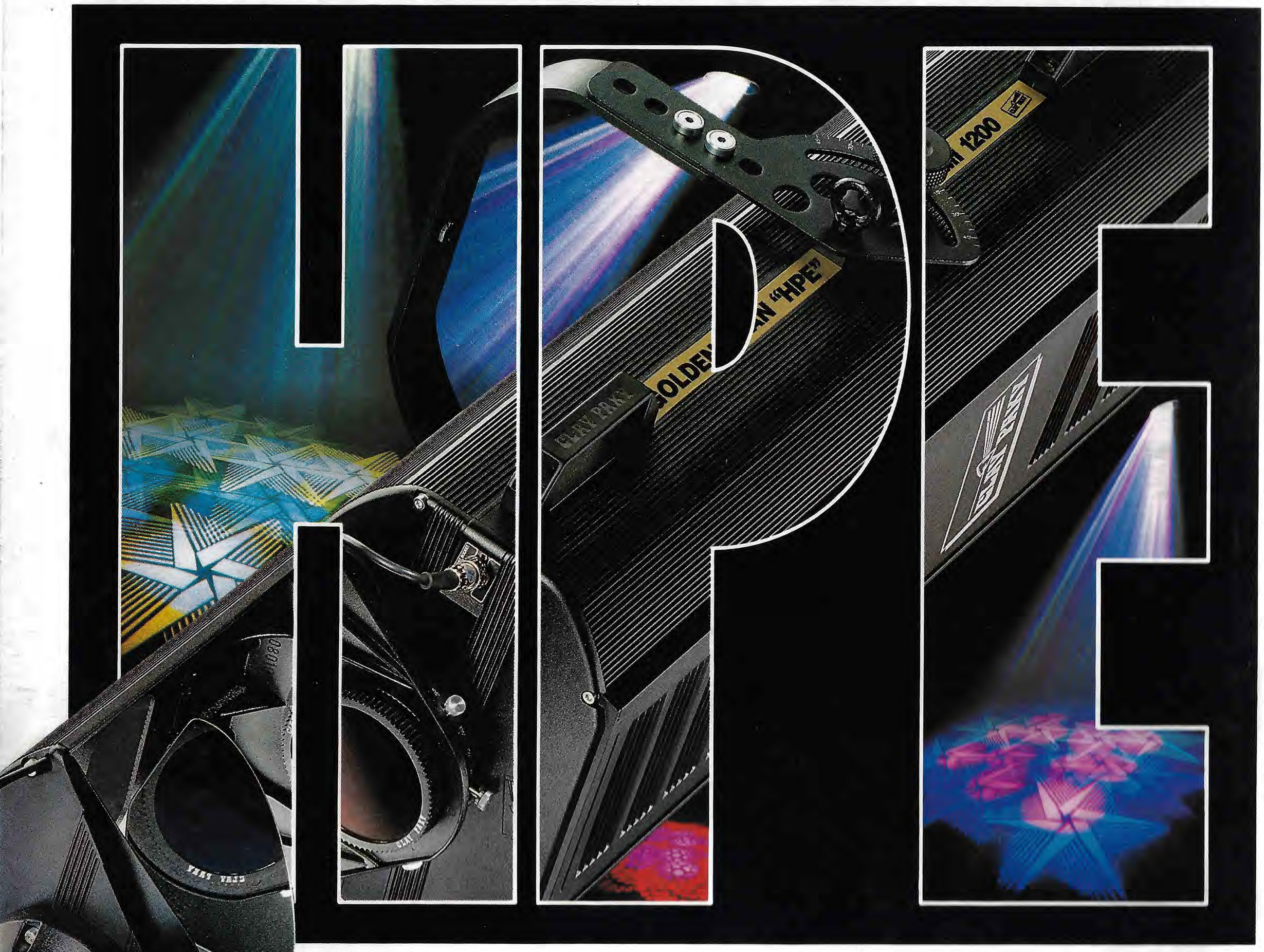

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