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live!

1996 LIVE! SHOW & AWARDS SPECIAL

live! awards
the winners, the sinners and the inside story

special supplement
vari-lite europe

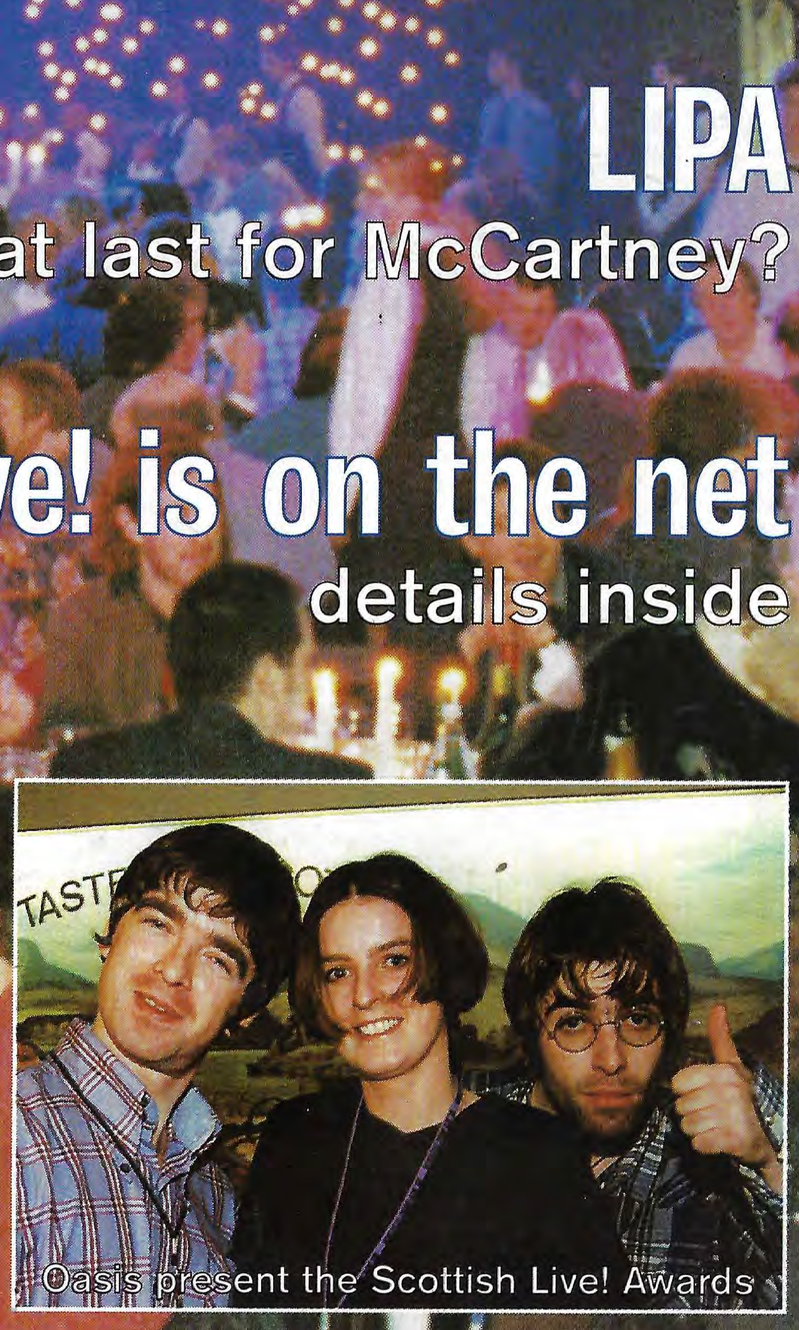
live! show
the fourth and 'best ever'

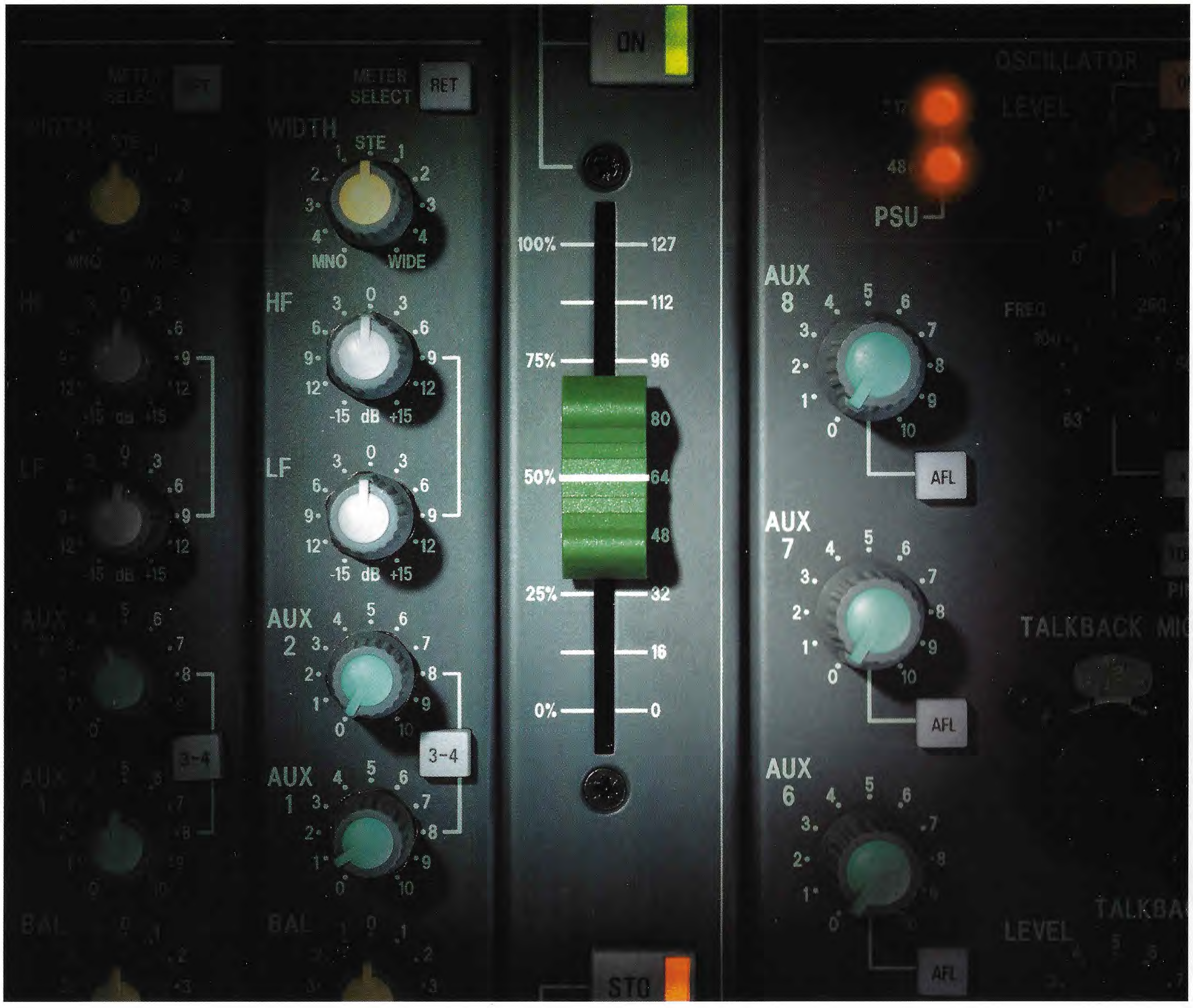
LIPA
fame at last for McCartney?

2nd PSA conference
exclusive report

live! is on the net
details inside

on the road
simply red, eddie izzard, cirque du soleil


Oasis present the Scottish Live! Awards



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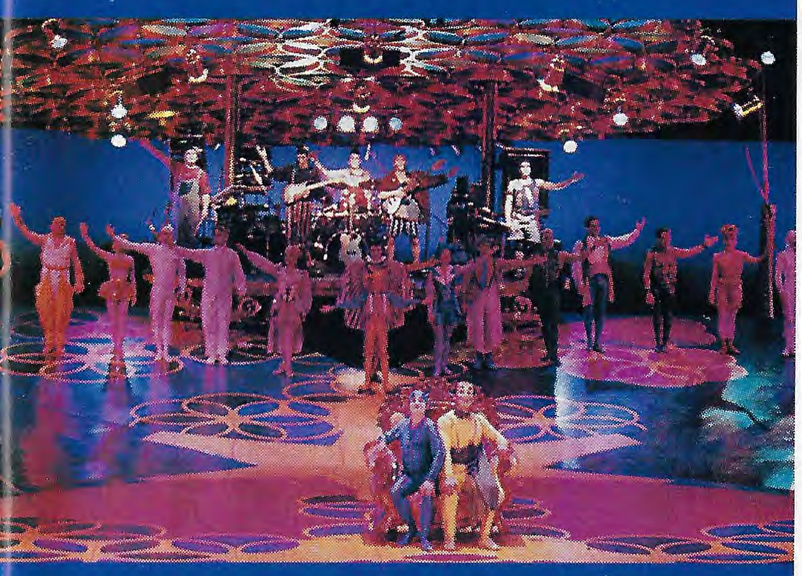

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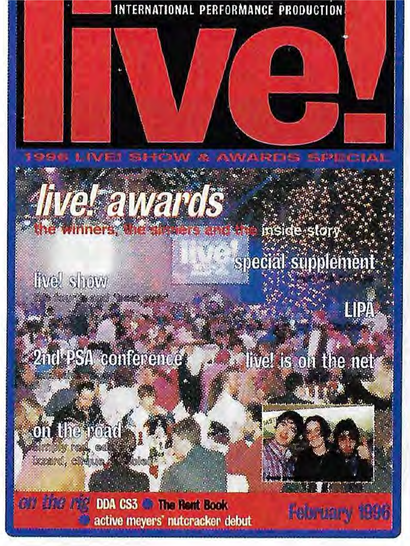
February 1996 Issue 42

Itinerary



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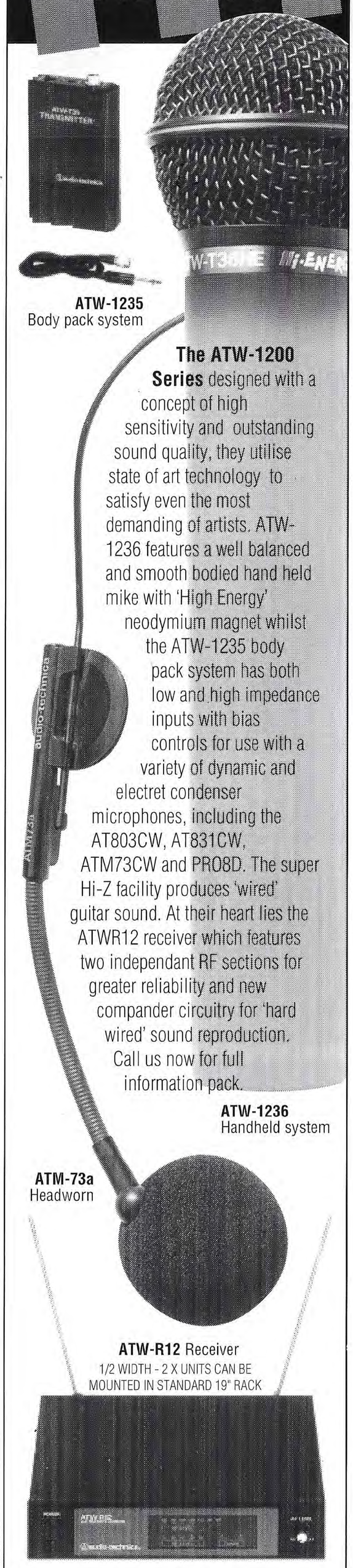

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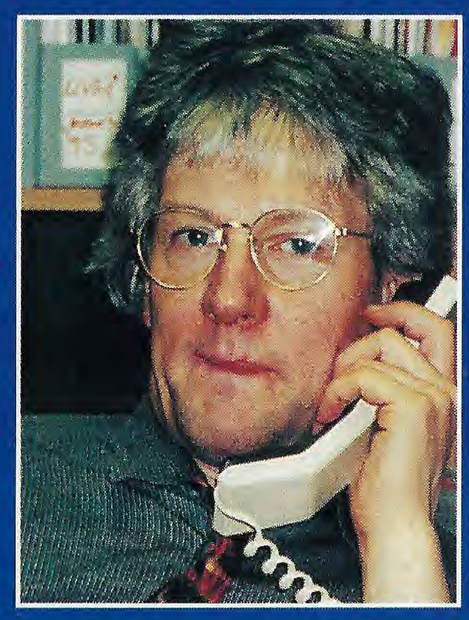
live!

January 1996



a year in the life

12 months ago we set our ourselves a series of goals that even then seemed more than a touch foolhardy. Beginning in January 1995 our first job – undertaken over the spring and summer – was to inject a new dose of visual life into what is, of course, a magazine for a highly visual industry. This process was soundtracked by the groans of Pickfords furniture removers as we moved office (for the second time in five months), saw a succession of designers come and go and witnessed the terminal decay of our ancient Macs. With that under way, our minds turned to the not-so-little matter of the LIVE! backstage marquee at Glastonbury Festival – enormously enjoyable and rewarding but entailing three weeks' f*****g hard work too – followed by a brief stint in Estonia at Juri Makorov's charming Tallinn festival. It follows that in this business, there are some things you simply have to see – and others you unmistakably have to *do*.

A fully re-designed LIVE! was unveiled at the PLASA show in September to (as they say) popular acclaim, barely two weeks before we made our final, geographically-challenging office move to Nexus's HQ in north Kent. With long trips to AES New York and LDI Miami looming in the autumn, we also decided (defying certain parties who were rather keen to see us abandon the idea) to go for broke and produce a better-than-ever LIVE! Show and Awards '96 – immediately after also producing the magazine's first-ever separate December issue. Not a crazy concept at all, really. And, with the incredible help of many friends and supporters in the industry, so generous with their time and energies, it all came together on the night, in style.

It hasn't always been easy. Some would have preferred that we stick to the old ways, tread well-worn paths and keep our heads far below the parapet. Often last year I was reminded of the razor edge of Bob Dylan's *Ballad Of A Thin Man*, in which he recounts his verbal shredding of a hapless *Times* reporter (documented in Pennebaker's on-the-road movie *Don't Look Back*): "You walk into the room/with a pencil in your hand/you see someone naked/and you say who is that man?/Something is happening/but you don't know what it is/Do you, Mr Jones?" Ah, well...*we* do, eh?

Now, writing two weeks after the frantic, exhilarating whirlwind of the Awards, the dust is settling on an exciting year. In that same 12 months, too, a small-but-perfectly-formed new team has settled in at Swanley; we've forged closer links with the Production Services Association; expanded the magazine's Business News coverage with Fiona Harley; and made more use than ever before of the superb concert photography of Phil Dent and others.

We've many more exciting ideas waiting in the wings. So keep reading – and watch this space.

It's good to talk

Two events in January alone showed how much this small, intense and impassioned business relishes communicating – and yet how rarely this really happens.

The first, of course, was the LIVE! Awards night, which gave the management of the Hammersmith Novotel considerable food for thought (they were, I should add, dazzled and delighted with the Awards crew – and charmed by the industry as well on the night.) Our post-event questionnaires confirmed the happy fact that there are as many opinions as there intelligent individuals in this business (yes – two, boom, boom) but the consensus seems to be that (a) it marked a step onwards and (b) everyone had a seriously good time. Which is what counts, really. Be assured that all comments will be fed into the mental mincer for '97.

The second event was the PSA's AGM and Conference on January 20. It was marked by the remarkable acidity of some of the comments in the open forum entitled "The State Of The Industry Today". Heated exchanges between PSA members on the floor and the promoter/agent/band management representatives on the panel showed how little communication has gone on between the various levels of what is, after all, one business. One particular spat, between Allied Entertainments' Andy Zweck ("I've got a list of complaints for you from Harvey") and Vari-Lite Europe chief Brian Croft ("That is complete and utter bullshit, and you know it"), would be described in diplomatic circles as 'a lively exchange of views'.

However entertaining, though, none of this was new stuff, and a litany of disgruntlement from both sides merely re-confirmed the familiar 'us and them' divisions – many of which could be dealt with by regular dialogue, to the benefit of all concerned. And while Zweck and Gary Glitter's manager Jef Hanlon derided a lengthy diversion into the politics of catering for local crew, it was equally encouraging that the voice of such people are heard at the PSA's premier forum.

And if anyone wants another forum to air their views, the pages of LIVE! are at your disposal. Write to The Editor, LIVE!, Nexus House, Swanley, Kent OB8 8HY, or e-mail Mike Lethby on 101363.1505.compuserv.com.

...and it's goodbye to Jerry

Many of you will by now have heard the news that Jerry Gilbert, founder of LIVE! magazine, has left Nexus Media, where he had been working as Business Manager, to pursue his own business interests. No doubt Jerry will maintain his close links with the entertainment industry, and we wish him well.

Mike Lethby

live! NEWS

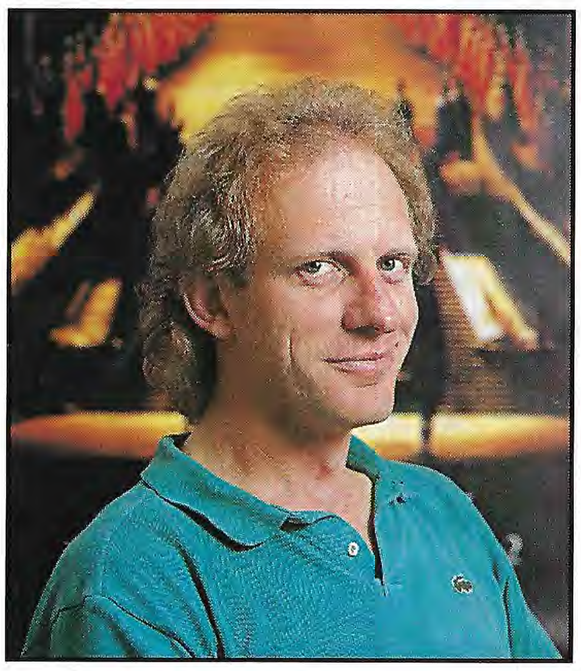
FEBRUARY 1996

Zweck goes solo

Andrew Zweck, veteran of the live industry, is leaving Allied Entertainments after 19 years with the company. His role has encompassed promoting, production and agent for the company's acts in Europe.

Zweck is setting up his own company, AZ Productions, offering his services as an event producer, taking him back to his roots in production.

He says: "I want to produce events and shows and arrange sponsors – it doesn't have to be concerts – there's lot of scope in the entertainment industry. I felt the time had come," he adds. "There are opportunities for me in my own business: I've reached that stage. I'm very familiar with the structure at Allied and I feel there is a better structure for me outside rather than within the Allied Group."



Allied's managing director Harvey Goldsmith was, by all accounts, reluctant to let him go – but succumbed to the inevitable. Goldsmith commented this week: "Dennis Arnold, who's been doing production, will take over Andrew's role and David Hodsdon, who's been working on our classical events, will come into this office to deal with the technical stuff. Pete Wilson will carry on overseeing the acts we buy and I'll be doing more overseas work."

Andrew Zweck: Tel 0181 482 2645. ■ *Fiona Harley*

Arena escapes bomb

London Arena in Docklands escaped unscathed in the massive IRA bomb blast which claimed two lives at Canary Wharf on February 9.

A basketball match between the London Leopards and London Towers was in progress at the time.

Alex McCrindle, the Arena's general manager, says: "We heard the noise and we were unaware it was a bomb. It proves the venue is very solidly built. The event carried on as normal with just under 2,000 people in the building."

At the request of the police, the Arena kept the audience in for an extra half hour. Though there were numerous rumours of other potential bombs or incendiary devices, no further problems were encountered and the Docklands Light Railway was expected to be in full operation again by the end of the week.

McCrindle says that, in the days following there were one or two small problems but adds: "We don't anticipate any effect on our business; after all, there are 55,000 people a day coming into Canary Wharf." ■ *FH*

Brit Row trio split

Two of Britannia Row Productions' best-known faces, Chris Hey and Steve Spencer, are leaving to form their own production management company. The announcement on February 7 confirmed that Ian Calendar will also be departing from BRP's staff roster.

Pink Floyd: BRP client

Hey and Spencer have been at the forefront of client interface and system design on many of BRP's major tours, including Pink Floyd, The Cure, Oasis, Simply Red and Dire Straits.

Managing director Bryan Grant said: "Over the past few years, we've been drifting into the production area of audio and it's not really what we do best, as an audio company."

Chris Hey told LIVE!: "It has been very amicable – there are no problems at all. But in recent years more and more of what Steve and I have been doing has been expanding beyond audio production into general production management, and Brit Row want to concentrate on their core business, which is sound rentals.

"We fully expect to be brought in for the more complex situations, and it gives us the opportunity to do other things as well. In the immediate future we'll carry on doing many of the same things, including work with Britannia Row: the likes of VE-Day-type events and festivals, plus we're looking at industrials and presentations – basically more general production as well the audio production work."

Added Steve Spencer: "It's certainly the case that, especially with larger events, the non-equipment rentals side – dealing with local authorities, the acts and so on – is becoming ever-more complicated. So it's not just a matter of audio production but site management work too. Given our history we obviously have a close relationship with Mike [Lowe] and Bryan and we will continue to work with them, but we do have to be seen to be independent. Britannia Row wants to be the best sound company in the world, and though what we do is often inextricably linked with that we don't have to be in the same building do it."

Chris Hey: Tel 0171 480 6860

Tallinn fest divides

Juri Makorov: entrepreneur

Juri Makorov is moving the Tallin Festival in the Estonian capital from its usual location this summer. He is also planning a sister festival, with partners in Riga in neighbouring Latvia, on July 12 and 13. Following the erection of a new exhibition hall on the existing site, the drain on power facilities hasn't left enough to run the festival, so Makarov has moved the main stage to a 30,000-capacity stadium in the centre of the city. Makarov will utilise another space in the stadium complex to erect the second stage. He is also hoping to have a third, indoor stage at a nearby arena, but that is largely dependent on negotiations with sponsors. Makarov says of the Riga festival: "I think the Tallin concept is mature enough to do two. I will divide my organisation into two parts and one part will go to Riga. The two places are 200 miles apart and they represent different markets. I can't do a brand new act in Riga – which I can in Tallin – so the artist bill will be different."

Makarov is developing a new green field site, 12 kilometres out of Tallin, for next year's festival. ■ *Fiona Harley*

Workshow '96

Workshow '96 will be hosted by Theatre Design students at Croydon College – an exhibition of 2nd-Year Setting, Costume and Lighting Designs from 14 – 20 March. The exhibition, now in its 22nd year, offers an opportunity to check out new talent in the theatre industry and observe backstage techniques. Students realise sections of their set design, costume and lighting design from two projects set last term: *L'Enfant et Les Sortileges* by Ravel, and *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui* by Bertolt Brecht. Jonathan Martin: Tel +44 (0)181 686 5700 (x3623)

live! is on the net

LIVE! magazine now has an e-mail address for those letters of lavish praise, unsolicited offers of large amounts of cash and all-expenses-paid invitations to fabulous gigs in exotic, far-away locations. The usual sort of thing, in fact, with which we're deluged on a daily basis.

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Hilton sells to zomba

Hilton Sound has been sold to Zomba Recording Services as an on-going concern. Owners Andy and Robin Hilton, who started the company 17 years ago, retain another company, H20, from which they will operate their sales, computer software and production side.

Andy Hilton says: "On a personal basis we wanted to change what we've been doing for some time. The rental market has changed a lot." Hilton is continuing his development of specialised software for the entertainment industry. "Within a few months clients will be offered direct access from the software system to the Internet." He adds: "Offices in other countries have been blended into the Hilton Sound rental side. Most are agency outlets so they will continue to wave the flag for Hilton Sound and H20."

Steven Howard, managing director of ZRS, which already has a pro audio company, Dreamhire, says: "We were keen to offer our clients a far broader and cheaper range of equipment. We've merged the financial and business affairs areas but we're still keeping Hilton's name and their sales and maintainance people." ■ *FH*

Dimension sheds six

Dimension Audio's Derrick Zieba says that, after a "very busy" nine months, and the company's "best ever" sales month last September, a review of its live sound markets – corporate, special event, broadcast and communications – has resulted in a rationalisation to concentrate on core business, a process which last week led to six redundancies. CD-R production and custom R&D work will be hived-off.

"The problem with this high level of business," he said, "is that we still have to sub-hire more labout and with the competitive nature of ths sector we end up with reduced margins and less control of quality."

Steve 'Bunty' King is among thse who have left, although Zieba says that three of the six will continue to work for Dimension on a freelance basis. ■ *ML*

Winchester Festival awaits licence hearing outcome

The new Winchester Festival, currently being planned by Leading Edge promoters Ray and John Foulkes, will know the outcome of its licence application, for a 50,000-capacity event at Chilcombe Down, by the end of this month.

Martin Elbourne, Glastonbury booker, who is booking bands for the festival says: "We can move it on once we get feedback from the council. They've already asked for so much detail we'll either get a yes or a no."

If sanctioned, it will be co-promoted with long-standing local fair organisers The Hat Fair. Ray Foulkes adds: "We're also doing a festival fringe in the city, but the open air event will be the high profile event."

Obviously hoping to attract the Glastonbury audience, Elbourne says: "there is a serious attempt to create the same sort of vibe." The bulk of the acts will be British, with a main stage, second stage, dance tent and street theatre. Richard Abel is site manager, and other Glastonbury people are likely to be involved.

The Foulkes brothers – the original Isle of Wight festival promoters, who tried to resuscitate the festival there last year – have conceded defeat on the island, for now, in the face of the authorities' reluctance. Ray Foulkes says: "It's very much on the back burner. The local authorities failed to give us a licence last year, despite the fact that the vast majority of people there want it; 60 per cent were in favour and 80 per cent were not against it, but the authorities are reticent. The opportunity lost for the place is quite tragic." ■ *FH*

Frengley leaves Garwood

Andrew Frengley, who has worked with the PRS (Garwood) in-ear monitoring system since its earliest days, last week announced his departure from the company. He told LIVE!: "I feel I've done as much of a job for Garwood as I could; I helped to develop the market for the system and helped it to grow, and Garwood's future looks very good – especially now they're expanding into other markets such as broadcast." Not denying rumours of tensions between himself and colleague Chrys Lindop, Frengley said he was currently working on short-term consultancy projects and would reveal further plans "soon". "The system's done incredibly well and there are some exciting new Garwood products in the pipeline," he added.

● LIVE! will shortly be reviewing the new Radio Station IDS, launched at NAMM in January. ■ *ML*

Roundhouse for architects?

Palacegate Properties, owners of the Roundhouse in north London, has agreed in principle for the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to acquire the building for use as an archive and showcase for its architectural drawings collection. The deal depends on RIBA's bid for lottery money to fund the development.

The move will end attempts to resurrect the venue, which has Grade 2 listed building status. For the past three years it has been an empty shell, with local residents' complaints the main obstacle to its use as a venue. Bettley adds: "It is a fantastic building with a fascinating history. We want the public to be able to come and enjoy it for what it is."

● Camden council also confirmed an initial meeting has taken place regarding a planned ten-day rock and pop festival in Easter 1997. The main mover is understood to be Nick Careem. In view of RIBA's proposal, the festival could signal the last act in the Roundhouse's musical history.

Daniel Shaw, in Camden Council's arts and entertainment division, says: "It is for them to convince the council it won't disturb local residents." ■ *Fiona Harley*

Production Arts Europe opens for Pani rental

United States-based Production Arts will open Production Arts Europe on March 1. Their office and warehouse in Acton, West London, will form part of the company's Image Systems group which specialises in large-scale projection.

The company has been trading for over 20 years, covering lighting rental and installations, and the large format projection side of the business got off the ground nine years ago. They are exclusive distributors for Pani equipment in North America, where their sales and hire operation for the equipment makes them one of the world's largest Pani dealers.

Production Arts felt there was a need for a comprehensive European hire facility for Pani projection equipment. Up until now, they say, while people have been willing to purchase where budgets have allowed, there has been no competitive hire alternative – which Production Arts Europe will provide, as well as continuing to act as a sales agent for the Austrian company. An initial hire stock of 26 projectors will be available from London – ranging from the BP2 tungsten halogen projector to the BP6 Gold HMI projector. A full range of lenses and imaging accessories will also be available.

Anne Johnston, Vice President of Image Systems, comments that since moving into their premises in January there has already been keen interest from theatre and special event companies. The official office opening takes place on March 7.

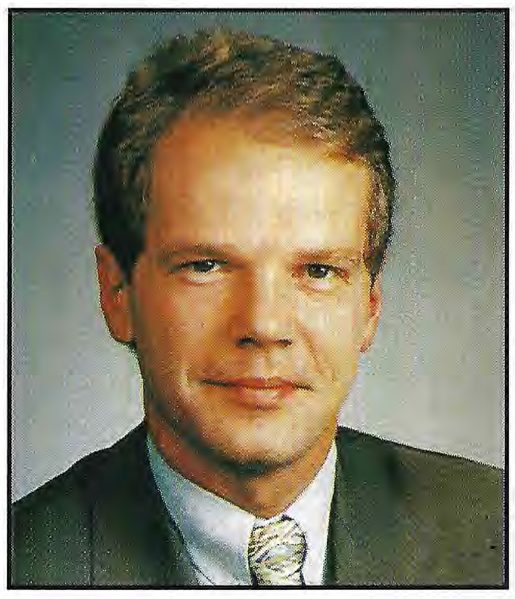
Production Arts Europe: Tel +44 (0)181 896 1777. Fax +44 (0)181 896 1888.

■ *Louise Stickland*

People brief

Sonia Martin (left) has joined Concert Production Lighting as Customer Production Sales Executive. Alan Thomson, MD of CPL & Theatre Projects, comments: "We have known Sonia for about eight years through her work with CYP Internacional, S.A. – Spain, and admired her tenacity and professionalism. Sonia will be working alongside Carol Croft and Lester Cobrin servicing CPL's concert and touring clients." Tel: +44 (0)181 575 5555

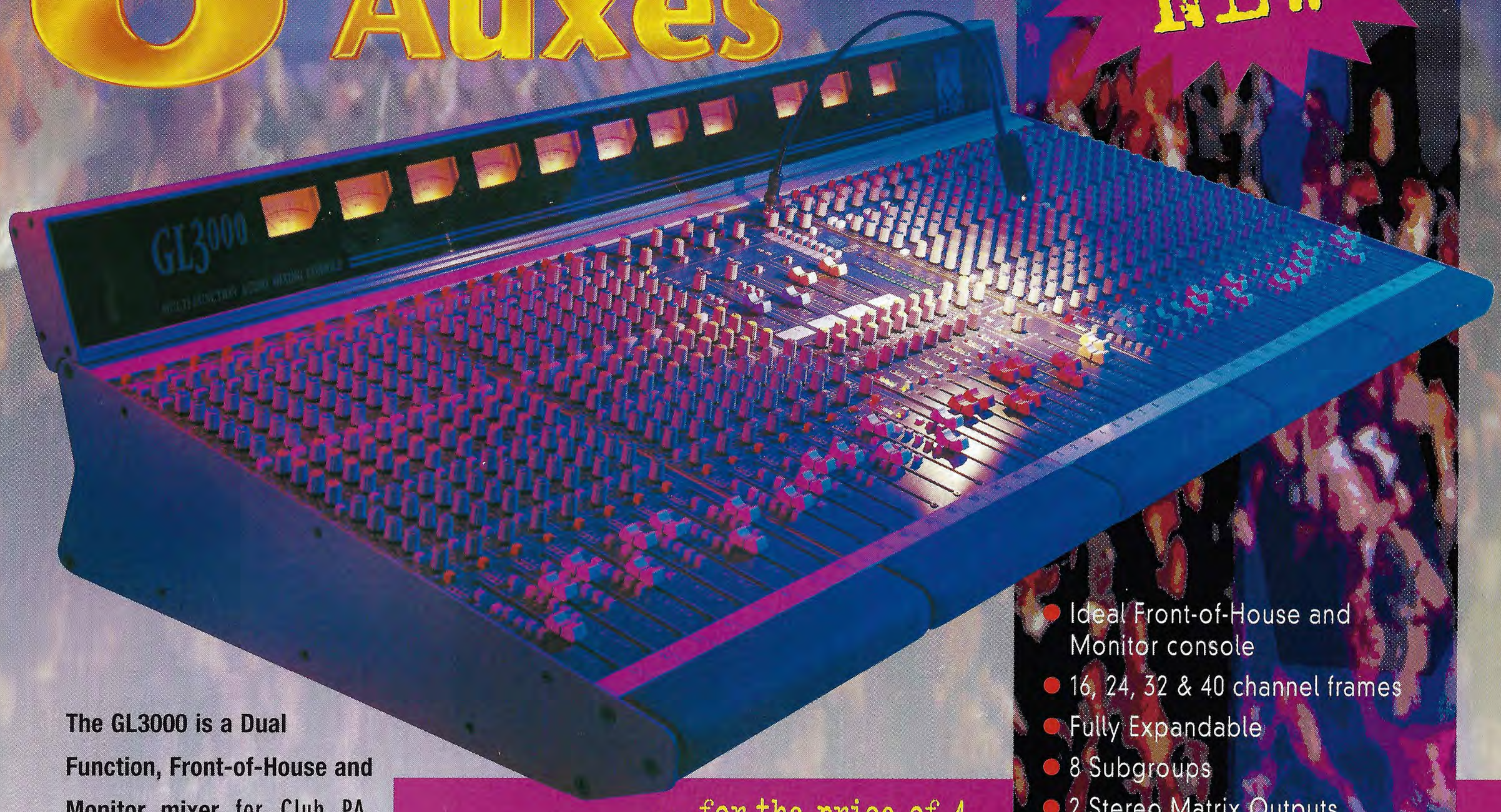
Stefan Exner (right) has joined Sennheiser as Sales and Marketing Manager. After completing studies in economics and mechanical engineering, Stefan worked for IBM's Marketing Department, attaining the position of director and branch office manager in Hamburg. Tel: +49 (0)5130 6000



Dermuid O'Shea recently joined Cerebrum Lighting's customer sales team from Donmar Ltd, where he was sales manager. Cerebrum's John Lethbridge commented: "We're strengthening our sales teams both in London and Birmingham, as part of our growth plans to service our UK and export customers." Tel: +44 (0)181 949 3171

8 Groups Auxes

NEW



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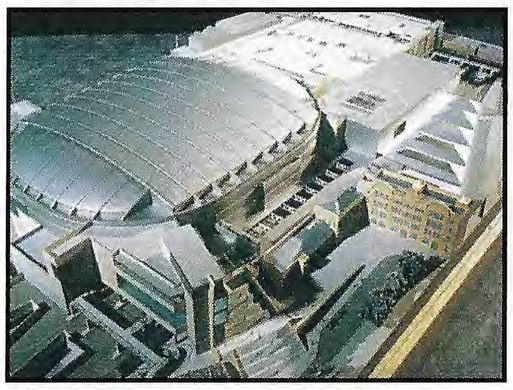
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Ogden venue management expansion put on hold



Nynex Arena

Ogden Entertainment Services' venue management expansion strategy in the UK and Europe has been put on hold.

John Lord, European facilities manager, said: "Ogden in Europe is, effectively, now consolidating operations to its contracted business. This means we will focus on the Manchester Concert Hall and the Oberhausen Arena in Germany, both due to be completed next year, and the Newcastle and Manchester arenas." As a result, the head office in Windsor is to close, with two senior executives, John Lord and ex-Wembley man John Sellins, who joined the company eight months ago, leaving at the end of this month, along with one or two administrative staff. The company will operate from its Manchester base in the Nynex Arena.

Lord confirmed business could be described as being "at a standstill." And Noel Penrose, managing director of OES, added: "We are putting new business on the backburner." But, he commented: "We're not retrenching; we continue to remain involved in areas we have a commitment or relationship to." This includes the Dublin and Manchester Stadium projects.

What Penrose calls "Ogden's high-risk strategy of investing in venues" will cease, for at least 12 months. He says they will be looking at other entertainment areas, broadening their base into theme parks and other fixed venue concepts. However, movement on Ogden's deal with the Apollo Leisure Group, which was going through 'due diligence', has come across a stumbling block. "We continue to try and seek a way around a particular problem – the existing strategy in terms of Apollo's flotation plans," he adds.

The speed of the company's change of direction, which surprised onlookers, was orchestrated by Ogden Corporation, the American parent company. Penrose: "The Entertainment Group as a whole is going through a change of emphasis. Ogden has six or seven divisions which are being sold off, including our interests in building services and environment and energy services." ■

Fiona Harley

shaking the tree with Fiona Harley

AGENCY AND PROMOTER NEWS FEBRUARY '96

The rumours of a **Sex Pistols** revival have continued apace, with a recent **John Lydon** interview suggesting that if the price was right **anything** could happen. Reforming (well, getting back together again anyway), could be a possibility, since it seems a fax has wafted across a certain person's table appointing him agent of this as yet non-existent entity. Solo's **John Giddings**, agent in question, was not to be drawn, but it seems the hot favourites for the **Phoenix** festival could be a Solo double whammy: David Bowie (also a Giddings client) and...The Sex Pistols.

An equally, but differently (?) hot pairing being courted for the potential **Winchester Festival** are **Blur** and **The Stone Roses**. As one of the Tree hounds prosaically put it: "It makes sense. The Blur audience is so young, it's a better bet than an outdoor one-off and the Roses owe **Elbourne** one for not appearing at last year's Glastonbury..."

Steve Parker at MPI has picked up **Darryl Hall** for representation in the UK and Europe. A May tour is being planned, following a proposed single and album release in April...New MPI agent **Alex Hardee** has taken on **QFX** and **Goldbug**....

Apologies to the 'disappeared' agent in last month's news on **The Agency**. Due to a technical glitch it is only now we can bring you the tidings that **Mark Davis** has joined The Agency's **New York** office, coming via the well-trodden path of the mailroom at the giant **William Morris** agency...

And **hello** to re-appeared agent **Derek Kemp**, finally returned after two and a half months in Thailand. He's back at The Agency – contrary to what some tongue-waggers are saying – revitalised and re-energised, he insists. He's taken on a new act, **Frames DC**, (signed to **ZTT** with a single out in March). He's also working on a world tour with **Napalm Death** and currently has **Primus** doing stadiums (??) in Australia and Japan...

On the temporarily-missing tip: nice to see **Colin Davie** back in town. One aggrieved Euro-promoter complained: "We were going to do **Shaggy** with him, but Colin went to India and no-one could find him for a few days..."

Annoying all the other agencies, who've since had to field sulky faces saying, 'why can't WE do that?', promoter/agency **ITB** last month offered the **entire staff** a weekend in South Africa at the (in)famous Sun City. **Mike Dewdney** described it as "fun, weird, interesting, different – Indiana Jones meets Mickey Mouse," with the highlight being the "spooky safari through the bush." As to booking bands there: "the taboo has gone – but has it?" he muses. Culturally, things have stayed much the same with some bands willing to go out and make their money – but only if you're happy to play to the rich, thus predominantly white, audience...

Martin Horne popped off to Brazil to see **Rock In Rio** with Plant and Page at their most Zeppelin-like, and had a six-hour drinking session with local man **Ronnie Biggs**: "a good fun guy, friendly and generous" and, it turns out, "an old mate".

Back home, ITB's **Barry Dickins** has **Alanis Morissette** coming over in April; Dewdney has festivals clamouring for Rage Against the Machine and Joan Osbourne touring. Horne's acts out in the next two months include **Rancid**, **The Posies**, **The Cardigans**, **Saw Doctors**, **Green Day**, **Afghan Whigs**, **Marion** and **Cast,** the latter also doing Japan and Thailand, with **Offspring** returning in August.

Our medical "up the tree" correspondent has informed us of a **clinic** in which a somewhat sleepy **Shane McGowan** is currently residing. Let's hope he gets a rest from all that living and gets back to work on his new album...

More taxing news: **Jim McKee** of Welldone says Finland is now more in line with Sweden. From the start of the year, the previous 35% tax has been cut to 15%, though production expenses are non-deductible...

Elsewhere in Europe, the popular Brussels venue, **Ancienne Belgique**, is to re-open at its fully-refurbished original site at the end of this year. A new foyer topped with a 200 standing capacity club, **improved** backstage facilities and a **remodelled** main hall with new stage and installations, plus an increased capacity of 2,000, will be unveiled.

Artist Marketing in Vienna is promoting a number of summer open-airs, with Bryan Adams and Sting in June, and Adams, Del Amitri and Melissa Etheridge in July...

Artists and agents venturing to Australia's **Big Day Out** festivals last month have returned with very favourable reports; though temperatures of 33°C made it a little hot for some...

And in Norway, the **Quart** festival again looks to be the one to watch in the innovative, well-presented hip festival-dom stakes...

Norway's **Talent Farm** is delighted to be promoting **Savoy**, a new band with the **ex-Aha! guitarist** (they did tell me his name but I'm not taking chances at trying to spell it.) With a record release on Warner in March, Savoy plays four major cities this month and next, to keen interest...

Accusation and counter-accusation **still** rumble in the belly of the **PPL issue** (fees paid to 'artists' for the public performance of recorded music), with the International Managers' Forum and newly-created artists' association, AURA, ranged **approximately** on one side, the Musicians Union **firmly** on the other. They're now moving on to the further issue of **how much** of the newly-negotiated 50/50 percentage the session players will get (presumably to go through the MU) and how much to the **featured** artist... Oh, this one will run and run.

Ed Bicknell has resigned from the IMF committee citing "not having the time". "Musical differences", anyone? Tree-dwellers suggest he just got **bored**...

Keeping him **busy** however, is the new **Knopfler tour**, and he was also hitting the skins for the **Notting Hillbillies** at a recent **charity event**...

Ossy Hoppe in bareback shock...Yes, Hoppe, promoter partner of Marek Lieberberg, apparently started life in a **leotard**, born into a big circus family. The biogs of some participants were as good a reason for going to a rather wet and cold **MIDEM** as any, some say...

ILMC is finalising its topics for the event (March 4 and 5), which include sessions on the problems of developing new artists, chaired by the Leadmills's **Graham Wrench**, a focus on German tax ("Big Brother is F***ing You"), chaired by **Marcel Avram**, and a new record company breakout meeting under EMI's **Mark Collen**.

John Giddings will be on South African **safari** when ILMC time comes round again, he tells us, though he's thinking of attending the **South By Southwest** conference, which continues its comfortable expansion into the gap left by New York's **New Music Seminar**...

Artists on **Solo-ITG** touring this year include: **Mike and The Mechanics** (March/April) **Eternal** in the UK in March, followed by dates in Japan and Ireland, and **Meatloaf** in April/May. **Iggy Pop** tours in June and July, and, like Bowie, will also be doing festivals. And isn't it nice that Bowie likes agency-mates **Placebo**, brought in by new Solo agent **Steve Strange**? 'Coz that's who's supporting him in Europe...

The **last-ever** date on the **Ramones' final tour** is March 16 at the 40,000-capacity **River Plate stadium** in Argentina; but at the band's last European show, at **Brixton Academy**, a bizarre sighting was made. One of the guys flogging-off the excess Ramones posters ("Come on now, last-ever show posters, £2") resembled none other than 'where there's muck there's brass', promoter of the show, **John Curd**...And to think I took him for a dodgy poster-seller...

Word leaked out last week that David Bowie would be presented with his **Brit Award** – for **lifetime achievement** – by Labour leader **Tony Blair**. Politics and music getting into bed? Well, almost: doesn't BPI Chairman John Preston's wife work in Mr Blair's office?

GOLDEN SCAN HPE
Winner again.

1996
NEW LIGHTING
PRODUCT

CLAY PAKY
PROFESSIONAL SHOW LIGHTING

Essex hardware theft

The following equipment was stolen from a customer of Concept Sound Services in the Maldon/Heybridge area of Essex. If you are offered any of this gear please contact Concept Sound Services on 01246 476403, or P.C. 1736 Dean at Maldon Police Station on 01621 852255.

Equipment (+ Serial Number, where available)

Amplifiers:

C-Audio ST600 (CA5179, CA5180).

Speakers:

EV SX200 (950881710, 956821678, 950821869, 950821871).
Concept custom Bass Packs.
Rane AC22 crossover unit (070000).

Other:

ST600s & AC22 housed in green HardKases (11U full Flightcase) – plus various lighting equipment, stands and cables.

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

festival update

UK

UK Tribal Gathering: May 4
London Fleadh: June 8
Winchester: June 28-30a
T In The Park: July 13-14
Phoenix: July 18-21
Donington Monsters of Rock: Aug 17 (tbc)
Reading: August 23-25
Glastonbury: June 27-29, 1997

EUROPE

Esparrago Rock, Spain: March 16-17
Rock In The Ring/Rock In The Park, Germany: May 24-26
Pinkpop, Holland: May 27
Sonoria, Italy: June 1-2
Provinsirock, Finland: June 8-9
Hultsfred, Sweden: June 13-15
Halfway, Holland: June 16
Roskilde, Denmark: June 27-30
Ruisrock, Finland: June 29-30
Nantes, France: June 29 (and 30 tbc)
Midtfyns, Denmark: July 3-7
Montreux Jazz, Switzerland: July 5-21
Torhout-Werchter, Belgium: July 6-7
Tallin, Estonia: July 11-14
Dr Music Festival, Spain: July 12-14
North Sea Jazz, Holland: July 13-14
Turku Festival, Finland: August 9-18
Lowlands, Holland: August 23-25

Bucks college announces 'unique' music industry management course

Buckinghamshire College has introduced a new course in music industry management, believed to be the only course of its kind in Europe. The 3-year BA (Hons) degree course is based at the college's Wellesbourne site and centres around three main disciplines of venues, artists and record companies. Students may also get placements during summer vacations on festivals and tours.
Buckinghamshire College: Tel 01494 522141. ■ *Christina Bunce*

Contract news

compiled by Robyn Pierce

MBD signs Malcolm McLaren

PR company Music By Design (MBD) has recruited Malcolm McLaren to its expanding list of music acts who are prepared to write and perform tracks for use in commercials. McLaren has written a track "I Feel Free" to accompany the TV anti-smoking campaign for Abbot Mead Vickers and the Department of Health which began at the end of last year.

MBD was launched in Spring 1995 to bring together advertising agencies with musical acts to produce campaigns containing original music tracks. MBD has opened new offices in the US, Buenos Aires, Amsterdam and Hong Kong since its launch, and there are plans for further expansion in 1996.

MBD (Shaw Thing Media): Tel 0181 518 7346

Tommy hits West End

The Who's musical Tommy is due to open in the West End on March 5 at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London WC2, with previews from February 20. The cast includes Kim Wilde, in her West End stage debut, playing Tommy's mother, Mrs Walker, with Tommy himself played by Paul Keating. Tommy was running on Broadway from April 1993 until the middle of last year, winning a vast array of awards including five Tonys – one of which was awarded to lighting designer Chris Parry.

White Light has the lighting contract, with M & M Light Solutions operating the lighting, dimming and control for the musical; the specification includes 210 Source Four ellipsoidals and 48 Source Four PARs, the company's biggest contract for ETC lanterns. The controller also comes from ETC in the shape of the company's new 1536 Obsession, the first to be used in a West End production.

White Light: Tel +44 (0)171 731 3291
M & M: Tel +44 (0)171 580 6334

ALC Sound & Light team up with Solotech

Belgium's ALC Sound & Light recently joined Canadian live sound company Solotech on part of the European leg of their Celine Dion tour to provide additional Meyer Sound MSL-5s for the larger venues. The show's main PAs have employed various combinations of Meyer Sound MSL-5 long-throw loudspeakers, Meyer's new MSL-4 self-powered loudspeakers, DS-2 mid-basses and 650-R2 subwoofers. ALC's tour and planning manager, Olivier Deblaere*, reports that he was very happy with the way the tour had gone: "The Meyers produce such a clean vocal sound with lots of headroom....ideal for an artist like Celine Dion."

ALC Tel: +32 (0)52 331211. Meyer Sound Europe Tel: +44 (0)1734 755533

HELL DMXport export success

Howard Eaton Lighting Limited has sold 54 DMXports to Glantre Engineering for the Teatro Real, Madrid.Tel: +44 (0)1273 400670

Vari-Lite firsts with RSC, Royal Opera

Vari-Lite Europe is supplying automated lighting equipment to The Royal Shakespeare Company for their stage version of *Les Enfants du Paradis* at the Barbican Theatre, and to the Royal Opera House for their latest production, *Midsummer Marriage*.

Brian Croft, Managing Director of Vari-Lite Europe, said: "It's exciting for me to see us make further headway into the theatre market. I think it is a significant milestone to have a first with the Opera House and a first with the RSC in the same month; because you cannot get more 'legit' then that." Other stage shows using Vari-Lite equipment include *Sunset Boulevard* (Adelphi Theatre), *Oliver!* (London Palladium), *Grease* (Dominion Theatre) and *Miss Saigon* (Theatre Royal Druy Lane).

Tel: +44 (0)181 575 6666

beyerdynamic stars

The BBC has bought six of Beyerdynamic's new U600 UHF diversity Wireless systems for shows including the Manchester-produced *Mrs Merton Show* with Catherine Hook. Beyerdynamic MC 834 microphones were specified by Wigwam Acoustics as orchestra overheads for Jose Carreras's Oslo and London concerts. At the Albert Hall show, Carreras requested a recording of the performance, which used two MC 834s and was said to be "delighted" with the results. And Rob "Cubby" Colby mixed the Billboard Music Awards at the New York Coleseum using a variety of Beyerdynamic microphones for vocals and kit – based on his success with Beyerdynamic equipment on high-profile tours including Janet Jackson and Phil Collins.

Beyerdynamic: Tel +44 (0)1273 479411

J-Type, d&b, Trantec tour Wind in Willows

The Royal National Theatre's production of *Wind in the Willows* embarks on a national UK tour from March 1996 with a 32-channel Cadac J-Type console. The show will take in 26 venues in eight months before returning to London for the Christmas season. PW Productions is staging the current show with sound equipment supply and installations handled by London-based Orbital.

Orbital put together a brand-new sound rig for the show, in line with sound designer Simon Baker's specification for a d&b FOH system and Trantec radio mics, and designed a complete cabling/interconnection system for fast set-ups – with typically one-day turnarounds envisaged for the regional tour. Baker commented: "We wanted a top quality system, in line with the RNT tradition. The Cadac J-Type was a natural choice because I've worked closely with a variety of Cadac consoles, including the RNT's own Concert board. On the radio mic front, we're using the new Trantec S5000 UHF system, which has also worked very reliably." Clive Green & Co. Ltd: Tel +44 (0)1582 404202

Millenium Studios books ahead for '96

Action at the Millenium Studios complex in Elstree, north of London, includes tour lighting contracts for Meteorlites on Sting's 1996 dates which begin in March before four months in Europe with LD Nick Sholem, plus Mike and the Mechanics and Eternal. Eternal also feature on the production rehearsals bookings list for Millenium's sound stage, followed by PJ and Duncan (February), Status Quo (March) and Mark Knopfler (April).

Tel: +44 (0)181 236 1242

Mark Knopfler dates announced

Mark Knopfler is to do a UK and European tour with a new four-piece American band plus Dire Straits' keyboardist Guy Fletcher.

It will be a compact four-truck tour, and will play venues smaller than the Straits are used to. "There's a very small lighting rig, no video, no dry ice," as manager Ed Bicknell, who is also booking the tour, puts it. He adds: "In the UK we'll be losing money but it will be subsidised by the European touring."

The tour kicks off in Ireland on April 24, and UK dates include two at Manchester Nynex Arena, three at the Albert Hall, plus the Caird Hall Dundee and Newcastle City Hall, with tour manager Tony Wigens says. Crew include Robert "Cubby" Collins on FOH and LD Rob Jones. Concert Sound, Supermick, Phoenix buses and trucking by Atkinson Saunders head the credits, rehearsals are at Millenium Studios' new sound stage. ■ *Fiona Harley*

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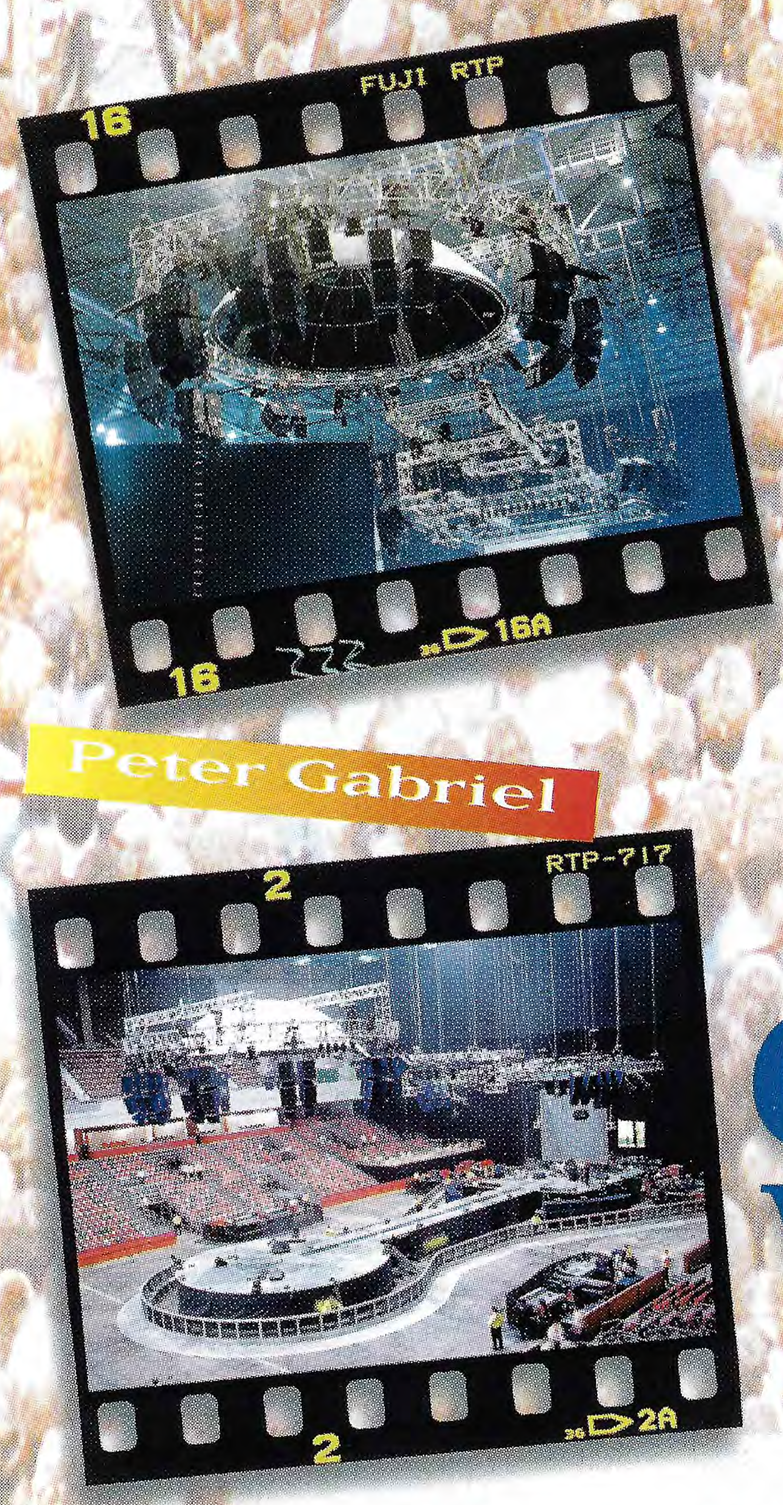
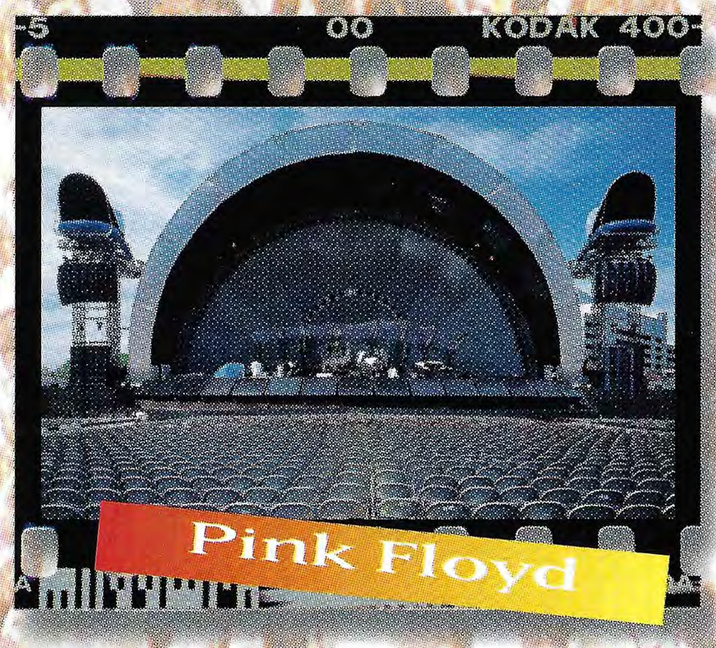
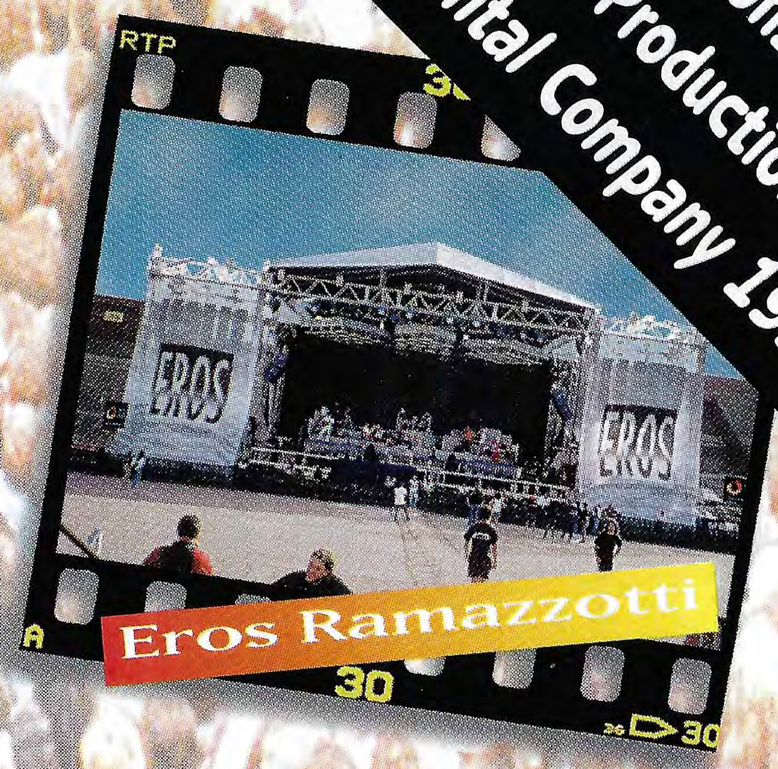
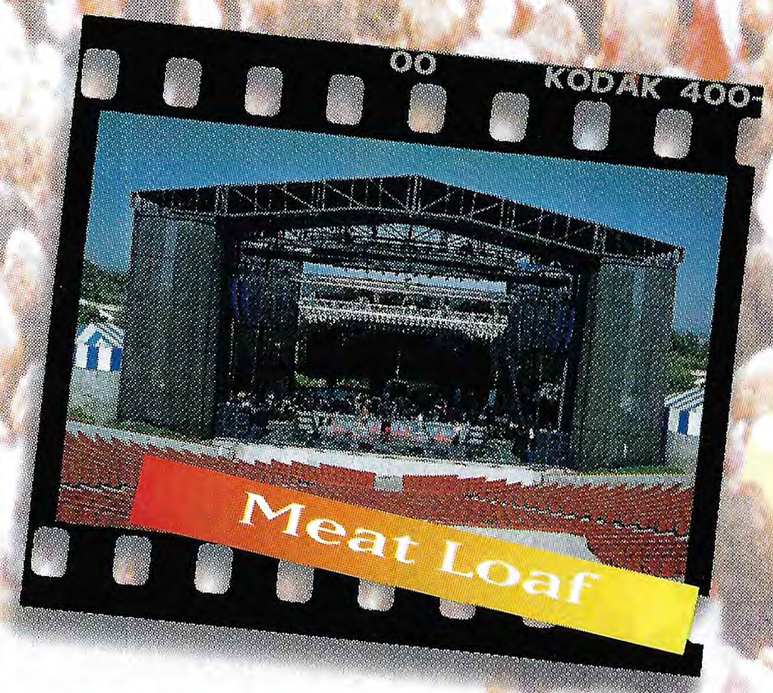
'Best Sound Rental Company 1996'







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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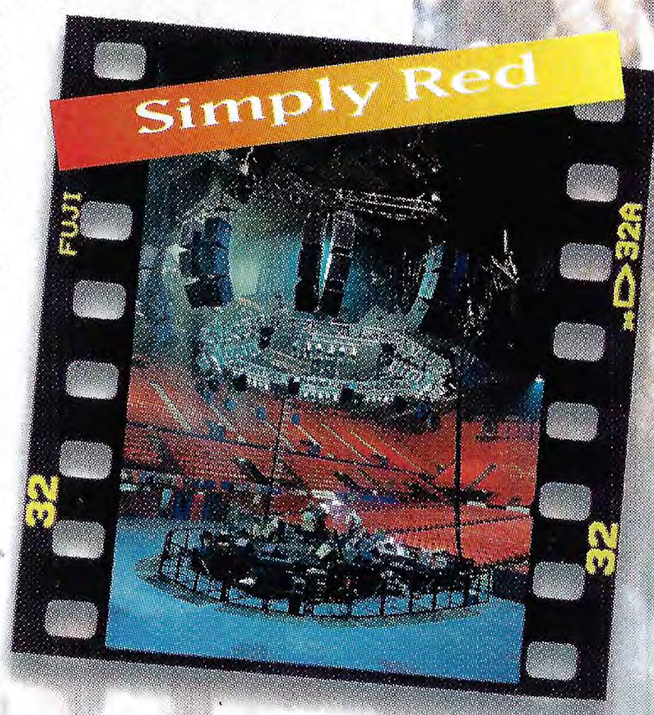

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Turbosound wishes to thank the artists and Britannia Row Productions, Ltd; Eighth Day Sound Systems, Inc.; Nuovo Service srl; and BBI Inc.

Use of artist names does not imply product endorsement. Floodlight is manufactured under licence from Funktion One.

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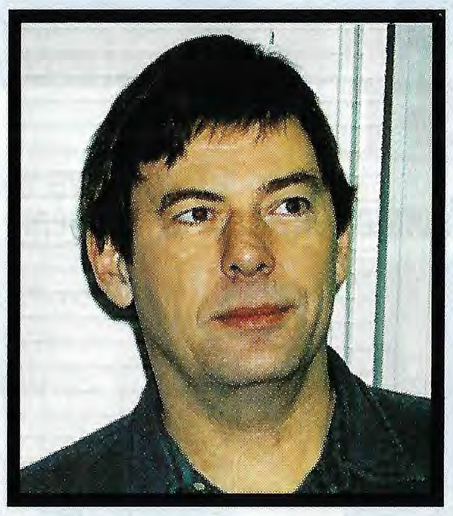
BULLETIN BOARD

live! UPDATE FROM THE PSA FEBRUARY 1996

OUTGOING MESSAGE FROM JON CADBURY, COUNCIL CHAIRMAN



Well, here we are, approaching our third year's existence as the Production Services Association, following our second annual conference. Now is a good time to take stock of what has been achieved so far, and some thoughts on the future development of the organisation.

We have achieved a notable body of members, including representatives of many of the industry's leading service companies, and a good balance of individual freelance members – although we could certainly do with more of the latter to maintain the balance of views within the Association. This became more of an issue when certain members suggested they may not feel able to stand for election to council as their freelance work would not allow them to attend council meetings on a regular basis. The newly-elected council may feel that it is worth exploring the idea of council members being replaced by a nominated 'stand-in' should this situation arise.

It is encouraging that we are beginning to be recognised as a suitable conduit for disseminating information from various authorities to our members, and that we are being invited by those bodies to contribute to future legislation as it is being prepared. However, there are inherent problems here that the Association must address. The main point is that if we are to work in this way, the influence we are having, and the information we are processing, must be truly representative of industry opinion.

To that end, any working parties that are called should be convened from as wide a cross-section of the membership as possible. This therefore becomes an appeal to the membership to take part in dialogue on the points at issue – and to the council to set up a suitable method of convening these working parties, and taking advantage of the huge range of experience represented by the members. I personally feel that each working party should have a highly-focused brief which will realise achievable objectives, and not be sidetracked into impossible, wide-ranging agendas.

It was most encouraging to see representatives of our customers and of the venues we work in coming to address us at the conference, even though it was also a good opportunity to indulge in many of each other's misconceptions. This initiative should be pursued in the future as, whether we like it or not, our long term interests are inextricably linked. We have to improve understanding of each other's point of view, and the best way forward in that is for continued dialogue. Again, it is important that initiatives such as the idea of future PSA consultation in the development of proposed new buildings should be pursued and to that end we must organise ourselves so that a suitably qualified team can be developed to offer advice in these situations.

As I come to the end of my time on the council of the PSA, I am pleased to say that I believe the Association is now here to stay, and that we are becoming a force to be reckoned with in the general development of our – still very new – industry. This business has always been very proud of its informal structure, its lack of recognised hierarchies, and its ability to do the job in the most adverse of situations. The Association must maintain the wide cross-section of membership that it currently enjoys, and must allow contributions from all members in all its dealings with others. So, as the slogan has it, "Get your buddy to join" and help wherever you can with the initiatives that are developing now based on input from you all.

Best wishes for 1996 to all our membership.

■ Jon Cadbury

THE NEW COUNCIL

Mark Armstrong
Roger Barrett
Dave Crump
Peter Hillier
Alan Jacobi
Mick Kluczynski
Tony Laurenson
Mike Lowe
Kim McCarthy
Tim Norman
Dave Smith
Dougie Souness
Dick Tee
Mick Upton

ON THE AGENDA...

DIARY DATES

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 8

First meeting of the new PSA Council – Westway Studios, Olaf St. London W11 – 2.00pm.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 29

Caterer's Forum – Park Royal Studios – 2.30pm. The Forum will include:

- Special Speaker – Mark Robertson of Touche Ross. Examining VAT in Europe as it effects caterers (e.g. how we might reclaim).
- Risk Assessment (now required by law). How to produce an acceptable risk assessment acceptable to the authorities.
- Plus further items.

The cost is £30.00 to corporate members and £7.50 to individual members (including refreshments). Cost to non-members is £50.00 per head. Call the PSA office now to book your place.

FRIDAY MARCH 28

PSA Seminar on National Vocational Qualifications. Details TBA.

FRIDAY JUNE 14

Extraordinary meeting of the PSA Council – Westways Studios, Olaf St. London W11 – 7.30pm. This meeting of the council and membership is primarily to ratify the appointment of four directors of the PSA as required under the rules for incorporation.

PRODUCTION SERVICES ASSOCIATION
UNIT 5, 193 GARTH ROAD, MORDEN,
SURREY SM4 4LZ.
TEL: 0181 335 3323. FAX: 0181 335 3725

THE 1996 live! awards

THE WINNING LIST

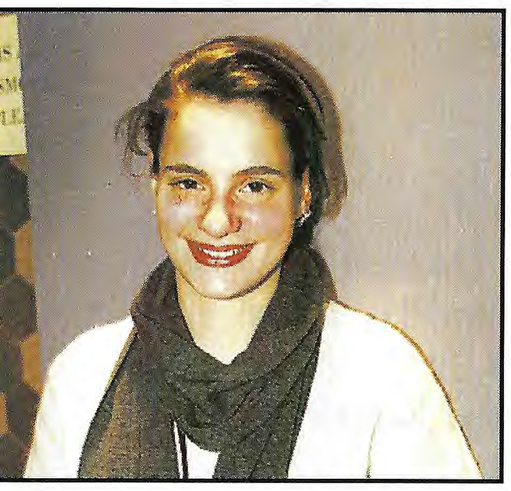
Agent of the year

Gold award: Charlie Myatt (*left*)
Silver awards: Ben Winchester, David Levy, John Giddings

Promoter of the year

Gold award: Simon Moran/SJM (*right*)
Silver awards: Phil McIntyre Harvey Goldsmith MCP

Tour manager of the year



Gold award: Margaret Mouzakitis
Silver awards: Dougie Souness Chris Healey Andrew Mansi

Production manager of the year

Gold award: Jimmy Innes
Silver awards: Gerry Raymond Barker Dickie Bell Lee Charteris

Lighting designer of the year

Gold award: Dave Byars
Silver awards: Mikey Howard Patrick Woodroffe Simon Tutchener

Sound engineer of the year

Gold Award: Jim Ebdon
Silver Awards: Huw Richards Robbie McGrath Gary Bradshaw

Monitor engineer of the year

Gold Award: John Ormesher
Silver Awards: John Challis Rick Pope Ian Newton

Crew chief of the year

Gold Award: Mike Humeniuck
Silver Awards: Pete Bell Bob Taylor Gary Rees

Simon Tutchener collecting the award on behalf of Mike Humeniuck

Set designer of the year

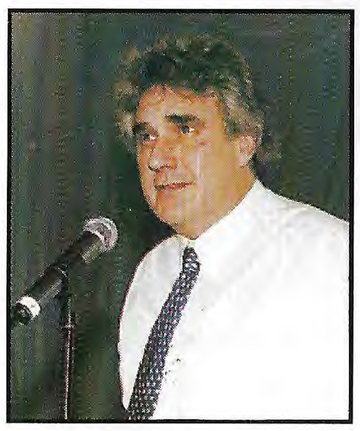
Gold Award: Mark Fisher
Silver Awards: Martin Nicholas Alison Chitty Paul Normandale

Charlie Kail collecting the award on behalf of Mark Fisher

Lighting rental company of the year

Gold Award: LSD
Silver Awards: The Spot Co Neg Earth CPL

Audio rental company of the year



Gold Award: Britannia Row
Silver Awards: Capital Sound Hire SSE Wigwam

Tour bus company of the year

Gold Award: Phoenix
Silver Awards: Wharfedale Len Wright Berryhurst

International production company of the year

Gold Award: EML/Ampco
Silver Awards: Showco MJK Productions Bandit Lites

Catering company of the year

Gold Award: Eat To The Beat
Silver Awards: Popcorn Eat Your Hearts Out Cat'n'Mouse

Trucking company of the year

Gold Award: Transam
Silver Awards: Stardes Stagetruck Redburn Transfer

Video production company of the year

Gold Award: PSL
Silver Award: Creative Technology

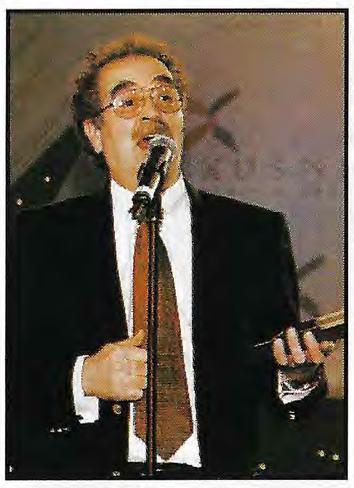
Live music on screen of the year

Gold Award: The White Room
Silver Awards: Message to Love (Isle of Wight Festival 1970) Later With Jools

New audio product of the year

Gold Award: Midas XL4
Silver Awards: Martin Wavefront 8 BSS Omnidrive Amek Recall By Langley

New lighting product of the year



Gold Award:
Golden Scan HPE
Silver Awards:
Dataflash AF1000
LSD Icon Washlight
Optikinetics K2

Other new technology of the year

Gold Award:
Avolites Graphics Tablet
Silver Awards:
BSS Omnidrive/ Varicurve Remote software
Navigator Systems Hire Track
High End Systems Litho Patterns

Venue of the year (small- to mid- category)

Gold Award:
The Empire, Shepherds Bush
Silver Awards:
The Garage
Barrowlands
University of East Anglia

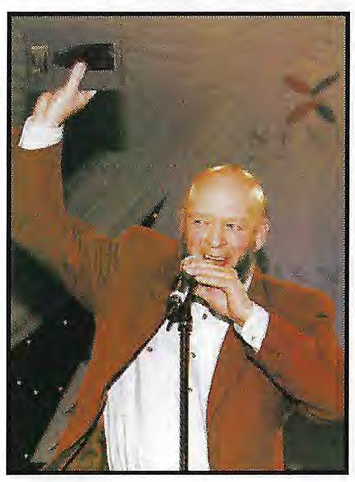
Venue of the year (arena)

Gold Award:
Sheffield Arena
Silver Awards:
NEC
Wembley Arena, Manchester
NYNEX Arena

Theatre production of the year

Gold Award:
Riverdance
Silver Awards:
Cirque du Soleil
Arianna
Oliver!

Festival/Outdoor event of the year

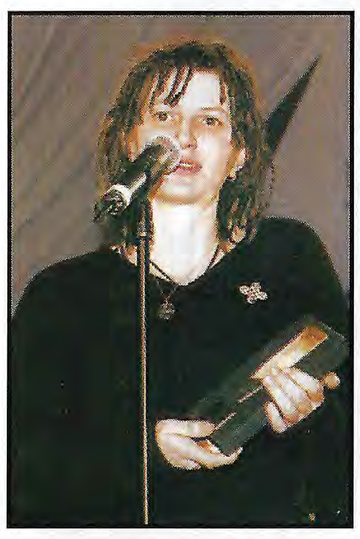


Gold Award:
Glastonbury
Silver Awards:
T in the Park
Blur at Mile End
Tallinn Festival

New event or performance concept

Gold Award:
Mean Fiddler Organisation (UK Tribal Gathering)
Silver Awards:
Momentary Fusion (High Vaultage)
Funktion One (Experimental Soundfield)
Cream Club Tour '95

Small/medium tour of the year

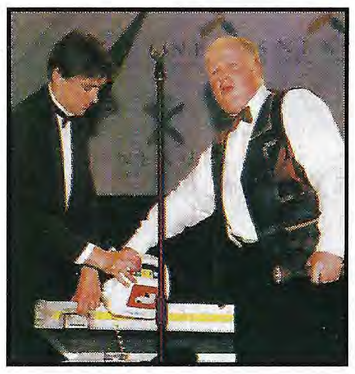


Gold Award: The Levellers
Silver Awards:
Foo Fighters
Stone Roses
Pulp

Arena tour of the year

Gold Award:
Take That
Silver Awards:
Wet Wet Wet
Oasis
Rolling Stones

Up the Truss Award



Gold Award:
Mrs Mills
(*aka* The BBC)

alive!

Oasis with Mikey Howard...

Midnight at the Oasis

BY MIKE LETHBY

Fourteen out of a possible total of seventeen categories marked a LIVE! Awards record for one tour – and more plaudits for the band which just a week later would be voted 'Live Act Of The Year' at the NME's Brat Awards.

Oasis' equally statistics-smashing Earl's Court weekend back in November was the key to this unprecedented LIVE! Awards success for thirteen of the individuals and companies who took part in the dates. Not bad for an act which enjoyed its first hit single less than two years ago.

Oasis were in Germany on tour when the LIVE! Awards were presented in London. But songwriter/guitarist Noel Gallagher, informed of the glad tidings by Brit Row's Chris Mounsor, suggested a special presentation to all concerned after their gig in the freezing atmosphere of Edinburgh's Ingliston hall on January 21. Editor Mike Lethby flew north o'the border with a bagful of goodies – and the Awards, ha, ha. After much loud fraternal joshing between Noel and brother/singer Liam (Liam: "I always do these things. You fookin' do it." Noel: "Bollocks. You never. Oh, all right, then...") the gongs were duly handed out by the chaps in a packed and raucous catering room.

OASIS LIVE! GOLDS (AND CATEGORIES)...

- SJM (Promoter)
- Maragaret Mouzakitis (Tour Manager)
- Britannia Row Productions (Sound Rentals Company)
- LSD (Lighting Rentals Company)

...AND THE SILVERS

- Oasis (Arena Show Of The Year)
- MCP (Promoter)
- Ben Winchester (Agent)
- Gary Rees (Crew Chief)
- Mikey Howard (Lighting Designer)
- Huw Richards (FOH Engineer)
- Creative Technology/Dick Carruthers (Concert Video Production)
- Cat'n'Mouse (Catering Company)
- Stardes (Trucking Company)
- Wharfedale (Tour Bus Company)

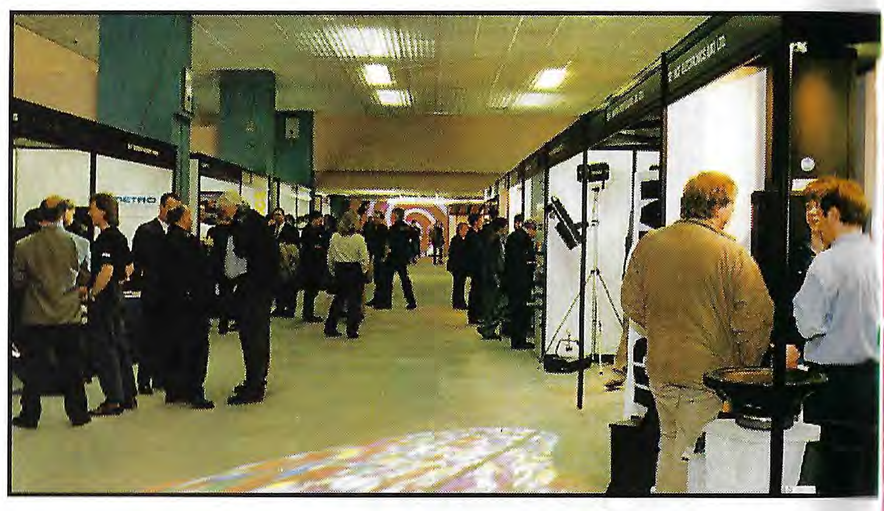
...Huw Richards...

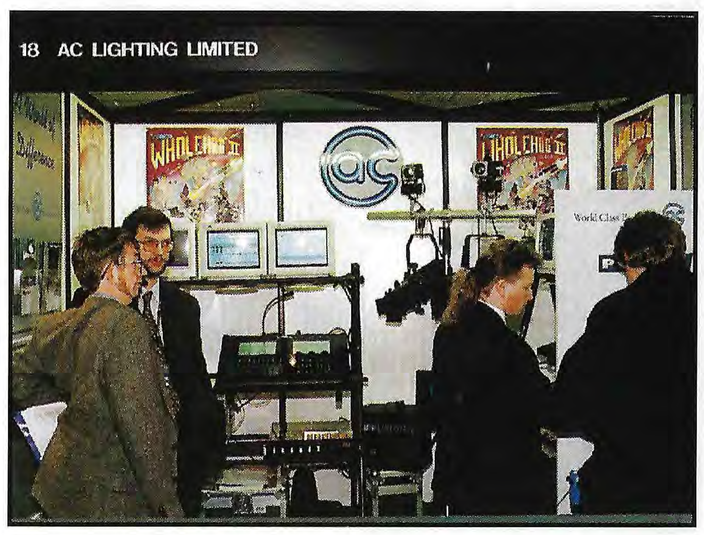
...and Mouse!

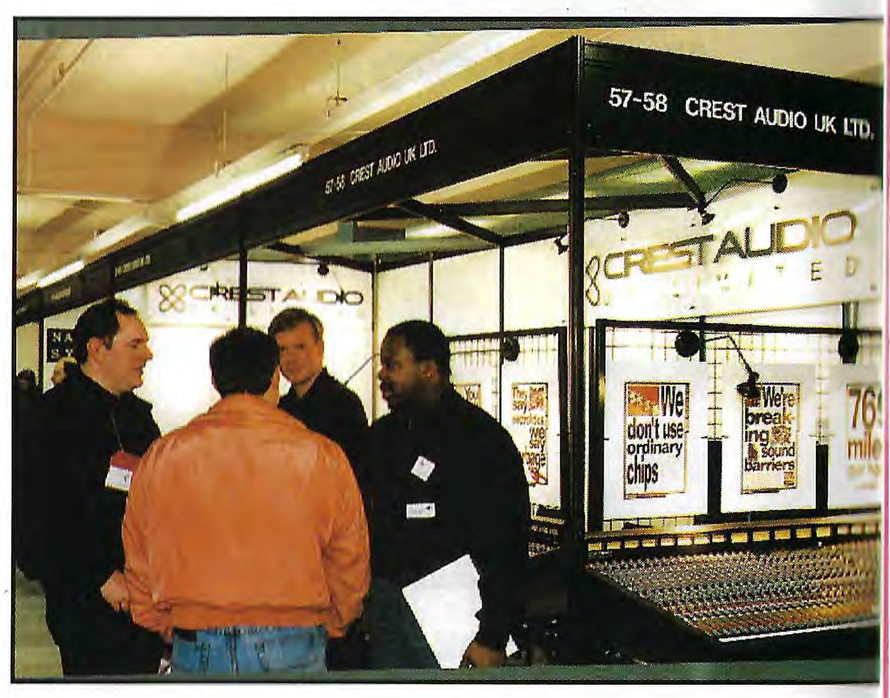
THE 1996 live! show

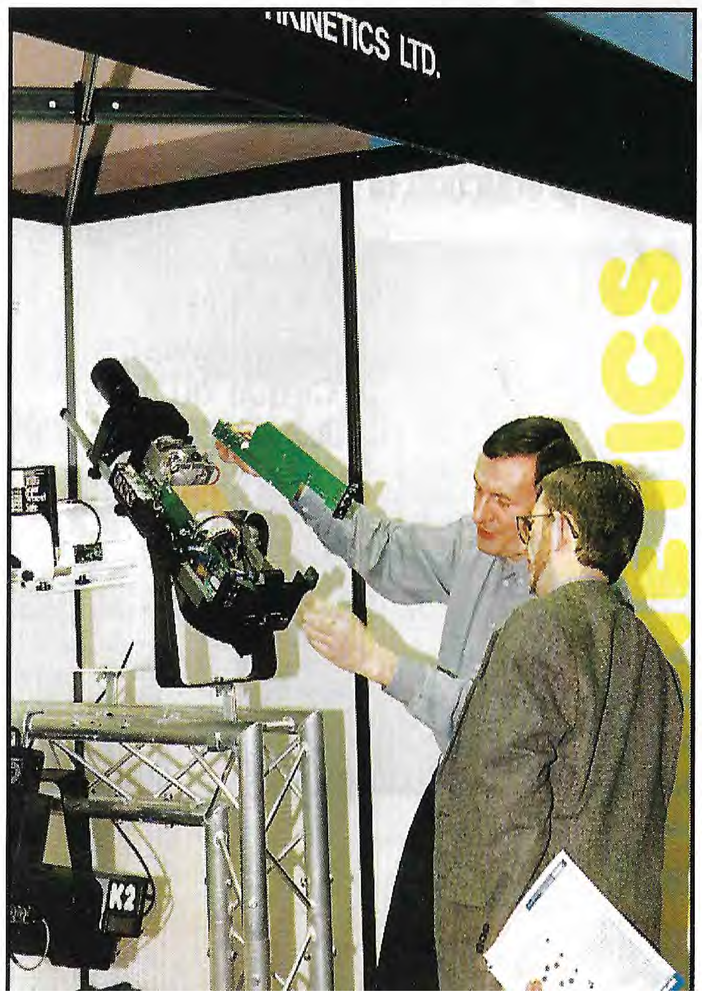
Photo *roundup*

Some of the stands at the busiest ever Live! Show









the inside story

venue: the champagne suite, the novotel, hammersmith

It was the ultimate way to shake off those drab post-New Year blues, conquer the freeze-frame of January – and instil positive energy and vibes into the bloodstream and cerebral cortex...to be at the 1996 LIVE! Awards on January 15.

An electric sensation of animated and excited chatter reverberated around the lobby bar beforehand as friends and, indeed, foes, from all walks of the industry gathered for the pre-dinner preamble. The Novotel's corridors, rooms, toilets and bathrooms witnessed frenetic activity as people emerged, complete with glad rags and beaming smiles, ready for action at *the* industry bash of the year. It was the start of a long (for some, *very* long) and successful party.

The Live! Awards officially opened with a spectacular liquid oil projection sequence (courtesy of Peter Wynne Wilson) on the white-gauzed stage. Unfortunately this was missed by many who didn't seem convinced that the dance-y intro music meant 'be seated'. The mood was so 'up' from the outset that a number of people chose to by-pass the starter to continue networking and the general exchange of hot air.

The fast and furious pace of the actual Awards ceremony disarmed even the most intolerant and inebriated attention spans. Jools Holland cut the crap – he'd promised to present all 28 Awards categories in under 50 minutes, and took just 45. This meant Tim Roberts still had an enthralled audience as he presented the final and phallic *Up The Truss* Award (a 12-cell bright red mega-MagLite – ooh, how rock 'n' roll!) to an anonymous recipient from the BBC, deeply ensconced in a flight case*.

The Spot Co were characteristically on-form with the noisiest and most vociferous tables in the room...and, continuing their tradition of subverting officialdom, a highly-successful attempt was launched by receptionist Andrea to hijack Melvin Benn's Gold Award plaque, foiled only at the last minute as a modicum of decorum returned for a few seconds.

The after-show crowds gradually dispersed from the dining room and settled into the Novotel's bars and the numerous room parties pulsating around the building. Most of these continued to imbibe well into the daylight hours, amidst much philosophical put-the-world-to-rights discussion.

Apart from offering a superlative party and reflections on the best of last year's productions and events, the Live! Awards dinner was, once again, a chance for the people to catch up with their mates, rivals and colleagues – and to engage in frantic social intercourse that's rarely on offer at any other point in the touring season.

Getting it together

At the hub of the on-going revelling were the production team and crew who ensured the event, now in its fourth year, reached new highs in terms of attendance, pre-show buzz and presentation standards.

The prosaic 60's low-art functionalist interior of the Champagne Suite at Hammersmith's Novotel was transformed into an intimate, sensual clubby ambience.

One of the original pretexts of LIVE!'s editor Mike Lethby was that the Awards should be up-tempo and as involving for all walks of the industry as possible. The original production concept – for a thrust stage, an opening projection sequence (Mike having been highly impressed by Wynne Wilson's Pink Floyd work) and bars in the room to keep the party going – was sketched on the back of a Virgin Atlantic serviette on his way back from LDI '95. By the time the empty dining room was converted into the ebullient, funky pre-show state for the Awards, he agreed that it had indeed been a very magical serviette.

Lethby called on the voluminous expertise of production manager Mick Kluczynski to oversee the Awards gig, and they went to work on eliciting donations of gear from various companies. Kluczynski enthused about the generosity of all the contributors, who put so much effort and creative energy into making it all go with a bang.

The vision and imagination of lighting designer Durham Marenghi played a fundamental role in the transformation of the room. Just 10 days previously, due to rigging and exiting technicalities, the stage position had moved from being widthways down the long wall to being end-on, necessitating a weekend's re-drawing and re-thinking by Durham. A large trussing cross graced the centre of the room, full of Vari*Lite luminaires, Golden Scan HPEs, Coemar NATs and Cyberlights – and an enormous mirror ball in the centre to add, as Durham put it, a bit of "culture". ■ **live!**

Louise Stickland

* See *Up The Truss*, page 50

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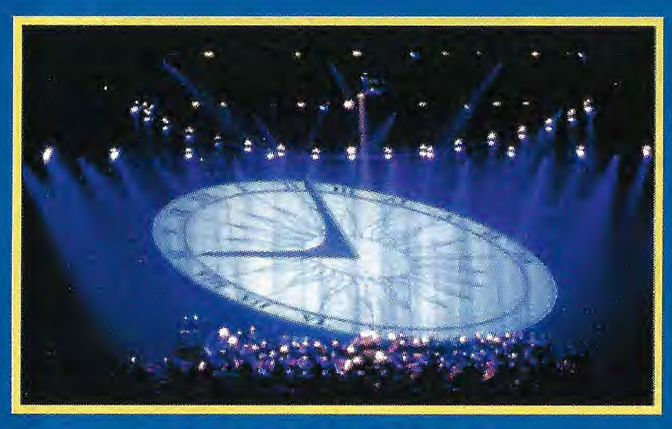

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thanks from us

The live production industry's networking event of the year – the 1996 LIVE! Show and Awards – marked its fourth year with a new two-in-one venue that, apart from a few glitches (easily correctable for next year), seemed to work pretty well.

Nexus Media's marketing and production departments, and its specialist Events team (under John Lenton), organised the LIVE! Show downstairs, with excellent help from the Novotel's in-house team headed by Jonathan Main and Linda Tuck.

As for the Awards... The ethos, building on the spirit of the past three years' Awards, and following the last hectic year for LIVE! magazine, was to go for broke and take the whole event a stage further – as well as making a modest attempt to reflect the production values and creativity of the industry itself.

Hitting the right party note wasn't too tough, especially with three legendary events and our 1995 Glastonbury marquee providing a suitably louche touchstone as reference points. You either do it straight or shoot for the moon. But for the new team on LIVE!, getting it all together – with the extra pressure of producing separate December and January issues of the mag for the first time – proved a mega-challenge.

No time for anything was the outcome, and apologies to everyone who is still waiting for their script three weeks after the gig finished. Special thanks – see the "A-Z Credits List" for full details – are also due, among many others, to Jools (obviously, mainly for being Jools); Gill Harris, who spent a Saturday creating video graphics in Creative Technology's Paintbox edit suite; Chris Saunders, who with PSL's Kahren Williams pulled together the video side; Dick Carruthers, who lent his multifarious talents to the video direction and mixing; Derrick Zieba's Dimension Audio team, who boldly went into the sound engineers' graveyard with tin hats on where others had feared to tread; Durham Marenghi (bless you, chap); Vari-Lite Europe and The Spot Co, who were also responsible for rigging the lights; Acre Jean; John Sinden, Chris Craig and the rest of the lighting team; Stardes, ESS and EST; Theatre Projects Lighting; Unusual Rigging (especially James, who spotted the missing link in the Novotel's roof grid just in time) and Wynne Wilson Gottelier.

The 24 hours beforehand were filled with regular calls of "What on earth are *you* doing here?" as the crew assembled and the production came to life.

It was Mick Kluczynski who had to contend with an amateur exec producer (*moi*) who aspired to out-do Mark Brickman on a production budget of eight grand. The task of dealing with this spectacularly silly ambition involved a large measure of Scottish pragmatism and the occasional terse rebuke ("don't be so fucking *stupid*, Michael.") Not only that, but because our wee bash sat just a month before his 'proper' production manager's job, the Brit Awards, Mick and his MJK team already had their hands more than a little full. But without him...it doesn't bear thinking about, actually.

Mick brought in LD Durham Marenghi, video co-ordinator Chris Saunders and, at the last minute, stage manager Colin Rowell (who had the unenviable task of kicking a very reluctant editor on-stage, only partly fortified with two very large marguaritas, it having been decided just before show time that

thank you...

(The A-Z of the LIVE! Awards)

Mick Kluczybski/MJK Productions: *Production manager* **Colin Rowell:** *Stage manager*

LIGHTING

Durham Marenghi: *Lighting designer.* **ETC:** *Pani lenses and accessories.* **Hardware for Xenon:** *Pani projector.* **PSL:** *Pani projector.* **The Spot Co:** *Lighting production and Wholehog II.* **Theatre Projects Lighting:** *Auto Pilot.* **Vari-Lite Europe:** *VL5s, VL6s, Artisan console.* **Wynne Wilson Gottelier:** *Liquid oil projection (Intro sequence).* **Spot Co Crew – Chris Craig:** *Lighting operator,* **Nathan Matthews:** *crew chief.* **Vari-Lite/TPL Crew – John Sinden:** *Vari*Lite operator,* **Beccy Hughes, Dave Stewart:** *technicians,* **Terry Peters:** *Auto Pilot technician.*

SET & RIGGING

Acre Jean: *Drapes and star cloth.* **ESS:** *Extra stage risers.* **Unusual Rigging:** *Event rigging;* **James Lee:** *crew chief.*

AUDIO

Dimension Audio: *Audio systems, mics and comms.* **Derrick Zieba, Jeff Eaton:** *Audio design;* **Miles Robinson, Paul Greenhalgh:** *technicians.*

VIDEO

Chris Saunders (Black Pig Productions): *Video co-ordination.* **Dick Carruthers:** *Vision Mixer/Director.* **Gill Harris:** *Video graphics creation.* **Creative Technology:** *Video edit suite.* **PSL:** *Video system, screens, Barcos, crane.* **Dogan Hall, Chris Hilson, Chris Keating:** *camera operators.* **Phil O'Brien:** *Graphics operator.* **Stuart Hall:** *Vision engineer.* **Julian Hogg:** *Projectionist.*

GENERAL

Eat To The Beat: *Crew catering.* **EST:** *Two 17-tonners.* **Phil Dent:** *Photographer.* **Stardes:** *Two 17-tonners.*

I would hand the hallowed slabs to Jools). Cue nightmare of stage-sized proportions. By God, those Scans are hot, and the smell of the crowd is a fearful thing...

The Novotel said afterwards that they hoped to liaise with Kluczynski and Unusual Rigging to make sure their planned refurbishment of the Champagne Suite will include upgraded rigging facilities to meet this type of production. Catering (by the Novotel) was a marked improvement on previous venues, too, (with apologies to those tables whose menu choice had run out by the time their turn came).

One 'big bang' which didn't happen on the night was a planned mock 'power cut' to accompany the *Up The Truss* Award – Le Maitre had kindly supplied all the necessary effects, but having been blagged at the final hour, Mick deemed it unwise to go ahead with no time for a run-through.

Two other last-minute problems proved to be a scarcity of suitable projectors and lenses for the liquid oil intro – solved via the grace of PSL, ETC and Jean Luc at Hardware for Xenon – and Theatre Projects' Wybron Auto Pilot system which they'd painstakingly rigged to perfection, only to find the presenter's transmitter unaccountably turned off as Jools went on stage...we *can* confirm that it was no fault of either TP or the technology.

Refreshingly, an Evening Standard journalist (our guest) neatly caught the spirit of the event in a half-page report in London's daily newspaper which confirmed that the live music industry shouldn't be shy of seeking public awareness of what goes into show productions. And a few days later, Britpop stars Oasis marked their record total of 14 LIVE! Gold and Silver Awards for one tour with a special presentation to their crew (see *Midnight at the Oasis*).

As with any successful event, the burning question becomes: where does it go from here? Having found a venue which works so well, next year's dilemma will be how to accommodate growing demand. Responses to the questionnaire we sent out to exhibitors afterwards have reflected the diversity of people and opinions within the business itself – so our balancing act for 1997 will be to take on board your views, ideas and criticisms – whilst maintaining the vibe which makes it so special.

Incidentally, Christina Bunce, LIVE!'s production editor, was the piano player who kept the Novotel Pub ivories tinkling until being forcibly removed from her post, along with the rest of us revellers, by the cleaners at 5.30 (or was it 6.30?) am. Star performances and excellent behaviour all round. Roll on '97! ■ **live!**

Mike Lethby

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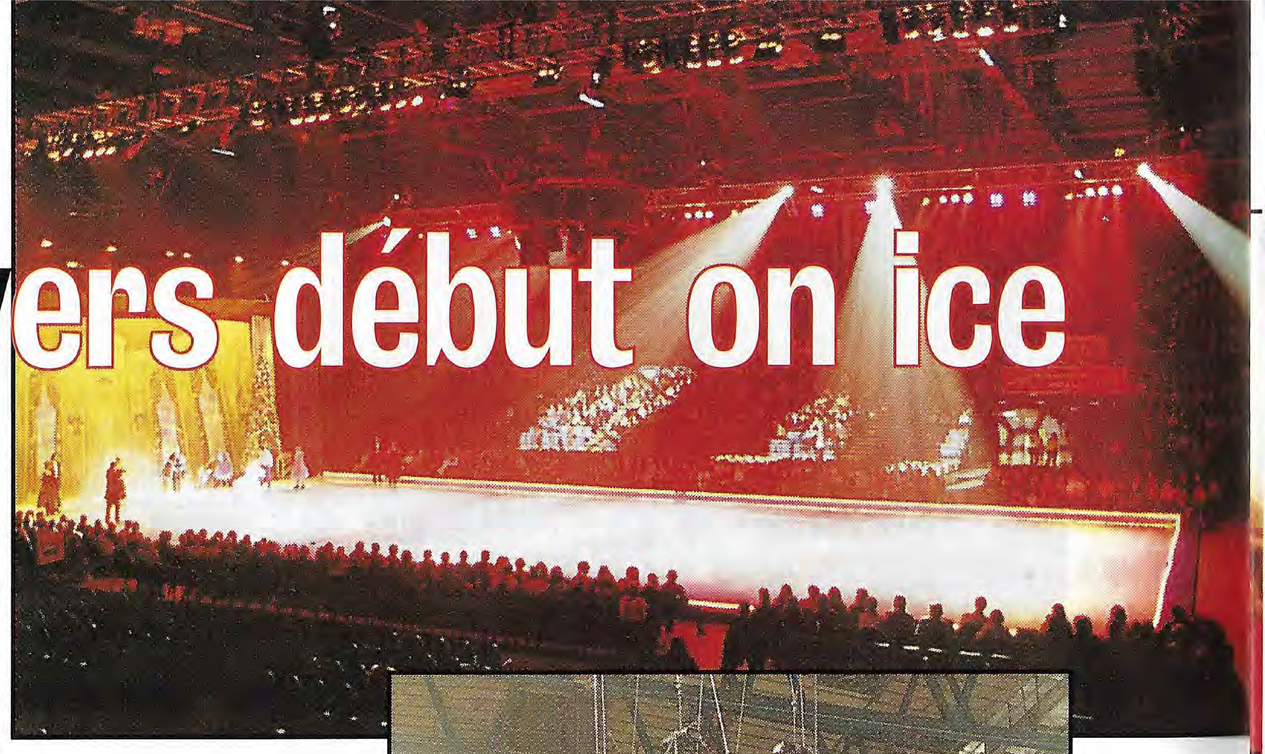
Winner LIVE! AWARDS 1996 VIDEO SUPPORT COMPANY OF THE YEAR

self-powered meyers début on ice



One of the world's favourite fairy tales was retold during the holiday season through the performances of Olympic figure skating gold medalists Oksana Baiul and Viktor Petrenko in *Nutcracker On Ice*.

The shows, promoted by Barry Clayman of Kennedy Street, also featured the first major UK outing for Meyer Sound's new self-powered speakers, unveiled at AES New York last autumn and supplied to Canegreen by Autograph last month.

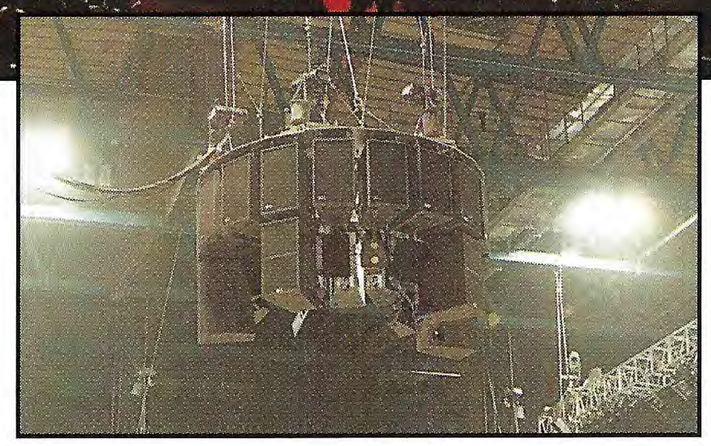
With a cast of international figure skating champions, lavish costumes and Tchaikovsky's immortal music, the show went on tour for the first time in the UK, opening at the Manchester Nynex Arena on December 27. It then visited the Birmingham NEC, Newcastle Arena and Sheffield Arena before arriving in London on January 5 for two dates at the London Arena.

The set for the production was provided by American company On Ice, using a rink was on loan from the Holiday On Ice show.

Lighting Designer Joshua Starbuck employed a minimalistic lighting rig, cut-down from a much larger rig provided by Neg Earth. Keeping his design simple, Starbuck used basic washes with gobo effects on the ice.

Commenting on the PA system and lighting rig, production manager, Colin Hannah of BCC said: "We were testing the water, or testing the ice so to speak. It was a very quick system to install and rig as well, possibly faster than any used on an ice show before. It took about three hours to rig and the de-rig took about 1 1/2 hours. We were going in at 8am and doing 2pm matinees."

Canegreen flew a centre cluster on six of its own custom-made 4-way Meyer flying plates which formed a complete circle. The hardware comprised 18 of the new self-powered MSL-4s and four self-powered PSW bass cabinets (which pack in single 15" and 18" drivers). Nine conventional UPA-1s completed the PA, with a further two UPA-1s slung under the grid to cover the ice arena.

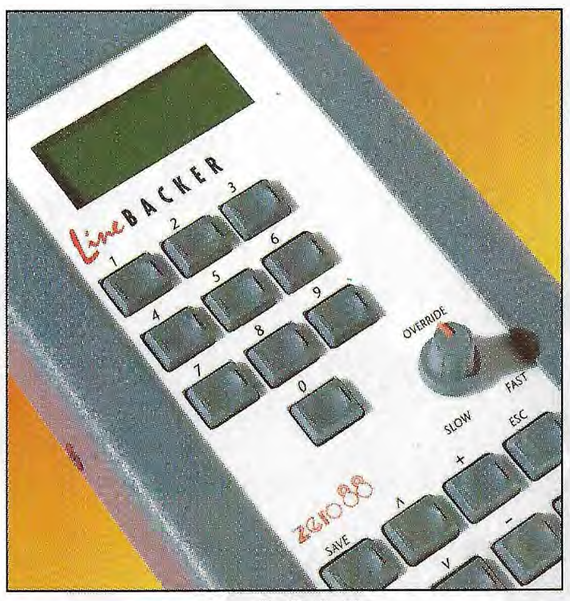


The sound source throughout was, of course, a DAT recording of Nutcracker.

Comments Canegreen's Yan Stile: "We first used Meyer's self-powered speakers on our Paul Weller winter tour. I'm seriously pleased to be involved with a piece of kit that's so radically different." He adds: "You can quote me on this — they create a higher level of sound quality from a Meyer system than we've ever heard before...and we only had to bring in one amp rack!"

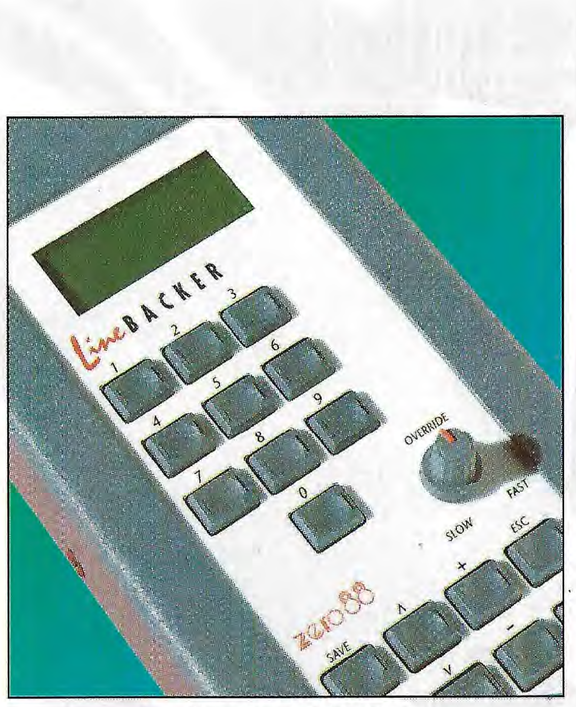
■ *Robyn Pierce*

NEVER BEFORE....



A DESK

A BACK UP



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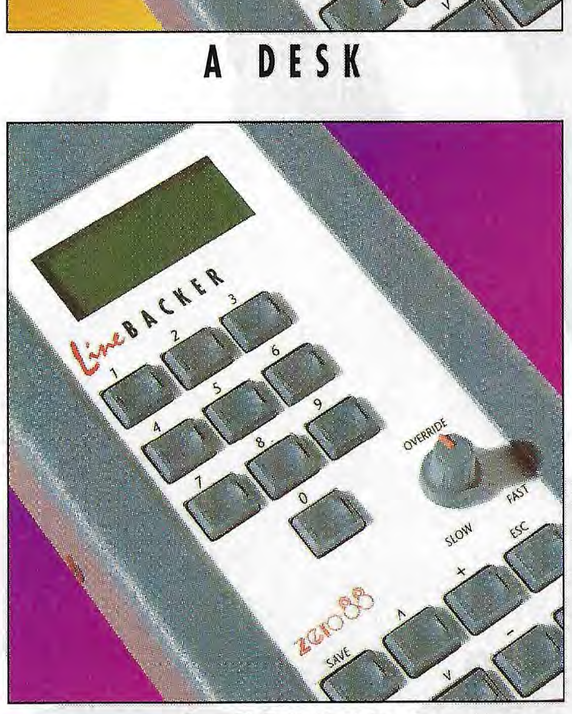

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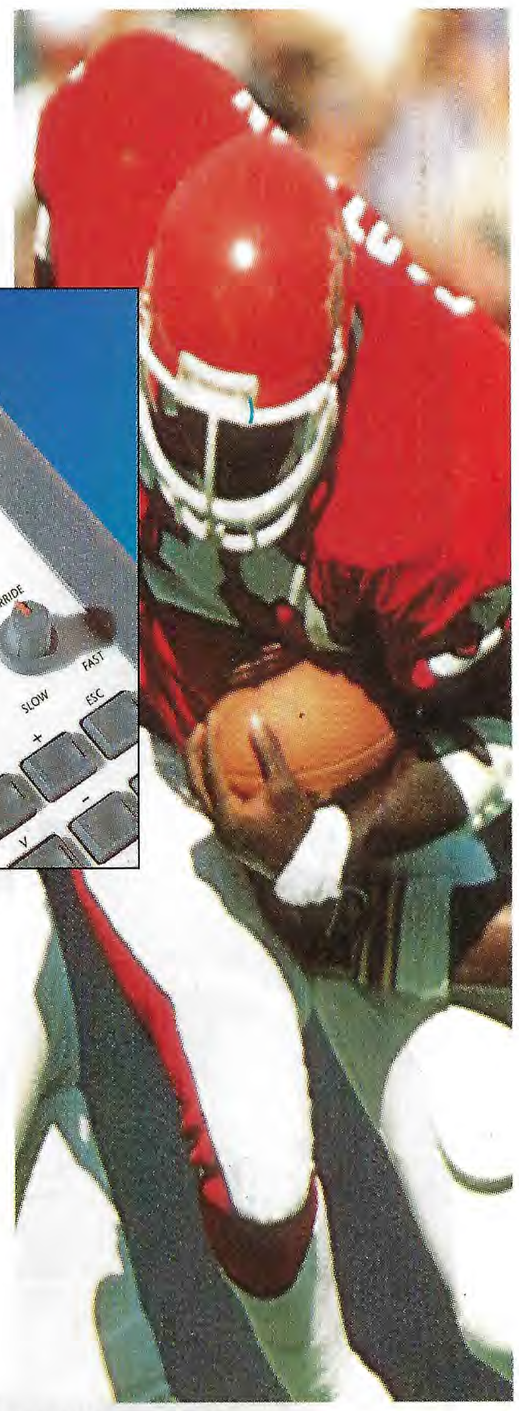

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Pro Sound

Reds in the round

Simply Red's *Life* tour marks another successful Fisher/Woodroffe partnership. With the budget to make it work smoothly the production team immersed themselves in the finer points of in-the-round staging, visuals and sound. Louise Stickland and Mike Lethby talked to the team at the Wembley and London Arena shows

The huge, elongated, elegantly curved, silver fishbone-like structure snakes above the similarly-shaped stage. Aesthetically it resembles a piece of Neo-Expressionist sculpture – sleek and streamlined yet extravagantly accessible for the senses of illusion and fantasy to run riot. Spanning approximately forty feet, at the straighter end of the bone a large, spiky, suspended sun resides, forming the dot at the foot of a large question mark surrounding the Simply Red *Life* tour logo.

Cantilevered arms either side of the 'bone' provide functionalist mounting points for Vari*Lite VL5s and VL6s, and 12 silver Icons protrude from holes spaced along the underside of the cladded truss. Down below are two stage areas – the smaller one being below the sun – joined by a curved 'bridge' that follows the path of the bone. Staged in the round, the immediate impact in terms of performance is the intimacy that's achieved, the fact that none of the audience is far removed from the band or action – and the sheer physical beauty of the set designed by Mark Fisher.

That, combined with lighting which produces subtle figurative imagery and classy delivery, makes the show a joy to watch – even for someone who finds Simply Red as musically inspiring as being stuck in the lift at the Holiday Inn. The axiomatic talents of Patrick Woodroffe as lighting designer and Mark (The Pope) Payne as lighting director once again fuse to make this an uninhibited masterpiece of visual cool.

The first ten songs of the set, performed on the small stage, are all jazzy, laid-back numbers. Proceedings then shift to the larger stage for the next ten numbers when the show really gets rocking. At the start of this section five phallic metallic telescopic towers pop up from floor positions in the centre of the large stage, complete with three VL6s on top of each, denoting the move to a more up-tempo, assertive pace.

Mark Payne explained that the idea is to treat the audience conceptually as a backdrop, involving them fully in the show with plenty of lighting cues sweeping out into their midst. For these purposes, the stage is cased on three sides with trussing and lamps, both moving and conventional. The lengthways trusses also provide four ideal follow spot positions either side.

The fishbone (referred to as 'the snake' by most of the crew) contains practical lights (Moles and Mags) disguised as bulkheads, which alternate with the Icons. As you would expect from a Fisher set, lighting is an integral component of the design. The sun is lit by a 5K below, six gold VL6s round the rim and a single Icon in the centre. The walkway is up-lit from below with more architecturals – PAR 20s for the handrail verticals and 5Ks.

Another dimension

Mick Hucknall's very natural, free delivery and movement are accentuated by the nature of the set. He saunters up and down the bridge, making contact with many more members of the audience than he would be able to were it an end-on show. The backing vocalists and guitarist also move along the set, stretching the performance out into another dimension.

Staging the show in this way thus produced some galvanising creative propositions for Payne and Woodroffe. Payne had to be aware of what the show looks like from all around the arena – especially since the fishbone truss is non-symmetrical. During the pre-Christmas European leg of the tour, the production was back-to-backed, requiring him to explore virtually all operating positions. He also mentions that working this way is generally "much less forgiving" than in a contained box. It's easy to lose definition and subtlety, and much harder to contain unwanted light-spills. Needless to say, though, this show is impeccably executed without a centimetre of light inappropriately placed.

Solo control

One of the initial briefs was that the show should be controlled by one person from one desk and Payne, who took the first Icon rig out on Depeche Mode's *Devotional* tour in 1993, maintains that the Icon board is by far the easiest and most flexible control desk he has ever used. Since then the Icon system has advanced in leaps and bounds, and now Payne – who works closely with LSD's software developer Mark Hunt – is previewing the latest version of Icon software on this tour, soon to be available for all Icon desks.

The entire Simply Red rig including conventionals and colour changers runs off DMX apart from the Icons themselves, which, of course, operate under proprietary protocol. One of the new software's features is to enable the Icon desk to treat Vari*Lite luminaires as if they were Icons, thus allowing seamless operation of both types of instruments.

Apart from the solidity and reliability of the control system, another advantage of this 'solo control' technique lies in having just one slim cable drop from the truss for a large and complex system – along with slimmer space requirements for the desk area. Aside from the artistic and optical pleasantries of staging the show 'in the round', so-to-speak, another practical consideration has also been achieved: increasing venue capacity. ■ **live!**

Louise Stickland

➤ *p24*

Reds in the round
continued...

Production manager Nick Levitt and Robbie McGrath, backstage at London Arena, took up the story of how the stage and PA design came to fruition. Begins Nick: "It started with Mick saying that didn't ever want to play in the end-stage format again – he'd loved the contact and intimacy of the last [*Stars*] tour, when there was a main stage and a small centre 'sub' stage. He threw that at Sophy and I in the early stages, and we brought Patrick Woodroffe and Mark Fisher on board and gave them that brief at the beginning of last year.

"They developed some ideas and started seriously working on the bridged stage shape in March. We'd looked at all aspects of the centre stage – feeling the 'standard' circular in-the-round stage was boring and visually limiting because of the lack of backdrops and props. Finally, we settled on a set which has a slow build right through from beginning to end.

"That was when we brought in the Britannia Row guys, because we were creating enormous sound problems all over the place – on the stage and in the auditorium. Even so, the original concept of the bridge and the 'snake' in the air hardly changed at all in the process – Mark and Patrick's design was very well thought-out."

Robbie: "Then it came down to creating a homogenous sound all around. We went for a six-zoned PA design which benefitted both the house and stage. It allows the band to play in real time, because the zone system puts sound into small, controlled areas – and it allows the monitor system to do a lot of the work because the band doesn't hear much PA. The whole show's sound mixing – monitors and house – has to be treated as one complete entity."

Nick: "We had to resolve a lot of monitor problems in rehearsals. Originally we'd hoped the band would all be using in-ears, but when they said 'no' to that idea Flaky [monitor engineer Steve Flewin] and I realised we'd have to work real closely together." Various factors contributed to the band's rejection of in-ear monitoring, the decisive factor presumably being that Mick Hucknall feels physically uncomfortable with those ubiquitous ear moulds.

As to the potential complications of time-aligning and EQ'ing the multiple PA zones, Robbie says: "We do a lot by the book – analysing with pink noise section by section as soon as the PA is up. Then we wait until we hear the band at soundcheck and tailor it some more."

Wedges were flown overhead in the 'snake', and arranged on the two stages and at key points along the bridge. Says Robbie: "It did create conflicts about who wants what mix in which wedges, but during rehearsals they choreographed their movements to sort it out."

Robbie: "In Pinewood we also got all the programming of the EQs and so on completely sorted so that when we started we had all the zones sussed out. The band are very good. They don't come out to us in an empty hall and criticise the sound; they trust us."

McGrath is mixing on a Midas XL4, using its automation to the full. He also sees no limit to the creative potential of automation now that engineers have been convinced about the 'reliability factor'. "It's the best," he says, "and it's opened all kinds of doors we didn't know existed. Now I'm sure it will go completely computerised, like the Vari*Lite Artisan desk. And of course the Midas just sounds brilliant." He laughs. "Anyone who disputes that is just..."

Nick finishes for him: "Wrong!" He adds: "I've never seen so many national newspapers mention the staging of a show.

"Kenny Underwood, our chief carpenter, was instrumental with Mark Fisher in working out the practicalities of touring the rig, along with Charlie Kail at Brilliant Stages. Mike England, LSD's crew chief, was also involved in designing the set-up. When we talk about it now, it's easy to forget the problems when we started. Cable management was a nightmare; we didn't want any cable drops by the stage at all. The amount of time spent between us, Britannia Row and the LSD crew boss was considerable.

He adds: "A lot of it comes down to having the finances and the trust to get the best people and make it happen. This hasn't been frustrating, not at all; and I have to say that the service companies have been fantastic – they've all been well into supporting our ideas and the concept of doing something that's different." ■ **live!**

Mike Lethby

SIMPLY RED CREDITS

Tour director & agent: *Sophy Ridley*
Production Manager: *Nick Levitt*
Tour Manager: *Michael Richardson*
Stage Manager: *Pip Betteridge*
Lighting Designer: *Patrick Woodroffe*
Set Designer: *Mark Fisher*
Lighting Director: *Mark (The Pope) Payne*
Lighting crew chief: *Mark England*
Lighting Crew: *Simon Harraghy, Ben van Grutten, Nick Barton, Dickie Howe, Andy Kitchen, Roger Nelson, Scott Sanderson*
Riggers: *Jon Bray, Ox Marsh, Richard Wythes*
Front of house Engineer: *Robbie McGrath*
Monitor Engineer: *Steve Flewin*
Systems engineer: *Paddi Addison*
Sound crew: *Gerry Fradley, Duncan Hoare, Craig Lilley, Dee Miller, Jock Bain*
Backline Crew: *Merv Pearson, Rab Randall, Derek Simpson, Pete Russell, Les Forde*
Generic lighting equipment & Icons: *LSD*
Vari*Lite system: *Vari-Lite Europe*
Sound equipment: *Britannia Row Productions*
Set construction: *Brilliant Stages*
Rigging: *Summit Steel*
Pyrotechnics: *Le Maitre*
Catering: *Eat Your Hearts Out*
Trucking: *Redburn Transfer*
Buses: *Phoenix/Domino Berryhurst*

Kelsey Acoustics: on the back line

Tom Scott of Kelsey Acoustics says that Merv Pearson, Rab Randall, Derek Simpson, Pete Russell and Les Forde's rôles with Simply Red confirm that backline crew are no longer "bearded knights of the road".

A formidable array of backline equipment was interfaced for the tour by Kelsey Acoustics – a system to allow musicians on both stages to control a common set of equipment, rather than expensively duplicating their hardware. With much MIDI information and unbalanced guitar and keyboard signals, and a completion date of two weeks, the key, he says, was to fit into the production rehearsals schedule. Once a solution was devised, Kelsey went into overdrive to devise two guitar pedal board systems, a line-driven MIDI patchbay and a drum trigger/line system, numerous rack-mount mains distribution boxes and a system to mount a 19" rack-mount mixer on sliders.

The guitar system (supervised by Rab) has MIDI line drivers for long-distance FX and synth control, two grouped VCAs for overall level control, two high-impedance balanced lines (for tuners and panic situations), two expression pedal controls – and Littlelites for foot illumination.

The keyboard system (courtesy patch-meister Derek) is more substantial but operationally similar: a patchbay drives 12 MIDI lines and eight high-impedance balanced lines to and from each stage to a central 19" box, which merges and distributes to various samplers, sound modules and Yamaha 02R MIDI-controlled mixers – the latter horizontally-mounted in Kelsey's custom rack slides.

All of these systems meet in a central patch box which sends the combined signals down a couple of Pyle multicores systems to link both stages. ■ **live!**

For Vari-Lite, Inc. – the originators of automated lighting – remaining as restless as ever in the quest to seek more creativity and versatility from their widening technological odyssey adds up to another story again.
In this exclusive LIVE! supplement, Vari-Lite, Inc. President Rusty Brutsché, together with Brian Croft and David March from Vari-Lite Europe, discuss the company's R&D philosophy with LIVE! editor Mike Lethby – and how the fruits of their original ideas are likely to evolve into the new Millennium

Twix Mix (Pic: Phil Dent)

Rusty Brutsché

lighting the future

An interview with Rusty Brutsché, Brian Croft and David March

LIVE!: How do you see the continuing progress of automated lighting in world-wide entertainment markets?

Brian Croft: "Automated lighting systems are nibbling into the 'conventional' market as every day goes by – and we know that very well, because in CPL we also have a conventional lighting company within the Vari-Lite Europe group – so we experience both sides at first hand.

"It's partly because automated systems are becoming more affordable – and because lighting designers beyond the rock'n'roll large-tour mainstream are increasingly understanding the advantages of an automated lighting rig on so many types of productions, which is not just about 'effects': less luminaires are quicker to put up, and take less time to focus. If the system's up and running quickly you have a show; you don't have six hours of focusing time with people crawling around on ladders and trusses; and you've potentially got less instruments doing the same job."

Rusty Brutsché takes up the latter point: "From a business viewpoint, it's now logistically that much better: you can replace six to ten instruments with one automated luminaire if you wish. You can also achieve completely new looks, so it's artistically better – and they allow you to work within the confines of a very complex production very quickly, such as television productions, where you need many different looks with little programming time."

Both acknowledge that the wider availability of affordable automated lighting doesn't necessarily mean that a smaller rig is uppermost in the LD's (or the artist's) imagination. Yet the past two years (since the introduction of the VARI*LITE® Series 300™ equipment, with the VL5™ wash luminaire and the VL6™ spot luminaire) have seen more major tours using fewer conventionals, or none at all.

Brutsché: "Our corporate vision from day one was to create a professional, fully-functional automated lighting system. We started with the VL1™, went to the VL2® and then the VL3™ and VL4™ luminaires – and in doing so invented the wash light business. On top of that we created the Artisan® control system; we put a lot of energy into developing its architecture, a distributed cue memory and processing system which was radically different from DMX.

"the Artisan architecture still represents the future for us"

"Even though the industry has moved towards DMX, we still believe that distributed processing is the future, because of the power it gives you as automated systems get larger. The VARI*LITE proprietary protocol – distributed processing with the processors and cue memories in the lights themselves, and a high speed bi-directional data link – allows you to achieve a sophistication level that a central processing system can't give you in large rigs.

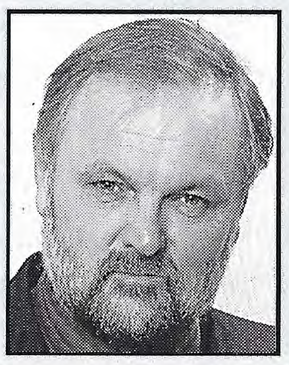
"Our vision is for fully-functional automated systems which have all the 'smart' elements in the lights, without having to ship all that data down the link. It's really the way to the future, because luminaires are going to continue to get more complex; and there's going to be more of them in each system.

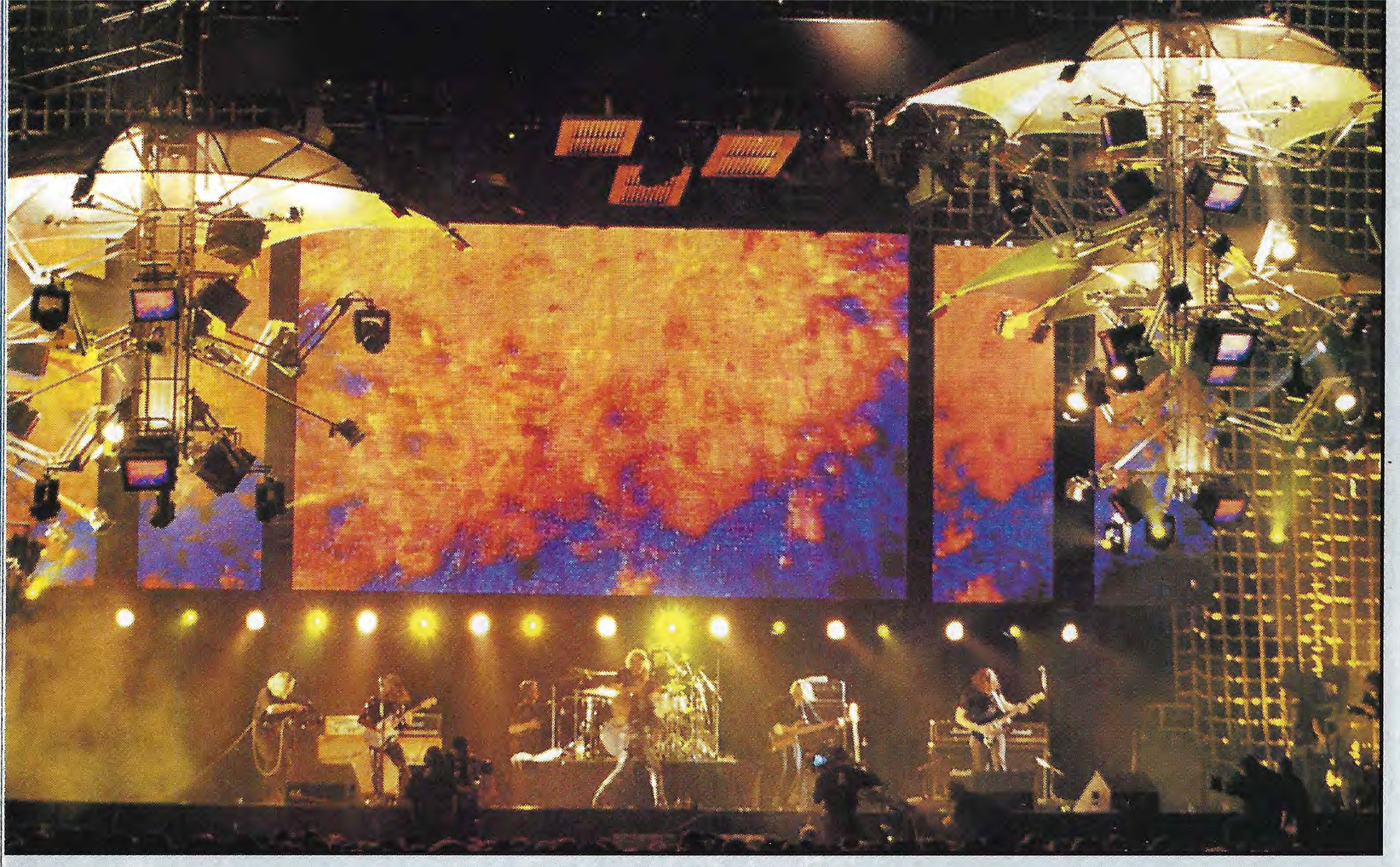
"So the Artisan architecture still represents the future for us. And our direction will be to replace that Artisan console with our next generation of control, which we're developing right now – at the same time continuing to develop our luminaire product line, all of which will be dual-data (VARI*LITE proprietary protocol and DMX).

"In Dallas we're continuing to put a lot of resources into our engineering areas: we have several major development programs going on now; a 60-strong R&D team works across all our projects and our development teams also include personnel from the service, marketing and manufacturing groups."

He cites television and theatre as the greatest growth markets. "While concert touring is really stable," he says, "there's still more automation growth within concert touring, and I think we'll eventually get to the point where virtually all rigs, in all markets, use

Brian Croft





Twix Mix (above and below)

automated systems. I see a lot of growth internationally in all three markets. Entertainment is a global industry and we'll see tremendous growth in all countries – and therefore a need for new equipment."

The looming, increasingly omnipresent Millennium, will also offer numerous potential opportunities for suppliers of fixed installations.

Says Brutsché: "We have a major initiative towards fixed installations. We also want to put VARI*LITE equipment into traditional houses where it's not been used before – and we've set up a separate organisation to do all of that."

Croft: "There's huge growth potential with the VL5 and the VL6 luminaires. Television is a big area, especially with those big awards shows – the directors love it, because they can change formats instantly: they can say 'let's move this interview to over there,' whereas with a traditional rig it's a big decision. That's a phenomenal tool, and the director understands that he can do that and not stop rehearsing."

Brutsché adds: "Some of our biggest supporters in the television industry are sound people, because these lights don't generate any noise of their own. The VL5 and VL6 luminaires were designed for theatre and television and it took a lot of engineering effort to devise a product with no fan noise."

Croft: "With the Series 200™ equipment we were restricted to doing musicals, in which there's almost constant background music – like Miss Saigon, for instance, where there are virtually no non-musical sections. And in television we were restricted to music videos or music-type shows. But now, with these silent luminaires, we can do 'straight' theatre and we do general television shows with a lot of lights."

Brutsché: "Our biggest systems are television productions: they use large rigs, especially in Los Angeles. We learned about the need for low noise luminaires doing an opera in 1988, with 150 VL2 and VL3 luminaires at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in LA. Artistically it was gorgeous, but in audio terms the sound level of the fans was unbelievable: we came back to Dallas from that gig and sat down and said, 'We've got to build a light without a fan'."

Comments David March: "The acceptance of VARI*LITE systems into more traditional areas is growing fast and at Vari-Lite Europe we are supplying equipment to a huge volume of work across all market areas. Our team thrives on this level of activity – and we all strive to deliver the highest level of service to our clients."

He adds: "We're very lucky to be able to work with adventurous LDs and crew who are willing to specify VARI*LITE equipment in so many different applications. They're not only embracing the practical advantages of automated lighting – but also the latest creative ones, such as the Vari*Image™ multi gobo wheel system for the VL6 luminaire, and pastel colours in the VL5B™ fixture."

SERIES 300™ AND SERIES 200™ – THE FUTURE

Brutsché: "Series 300 equipment is the future. Series 300 product is characterised by having DMX control as well as VARI*LITE control, and having the yoke-only design, without a huge upper enclosure. The basic dimmer or power supply is on the ground in the rack, and the luminaire's designed to be as lightweight and small as possible. I believe our future products will be designed along those lines."

VARI*LITE®

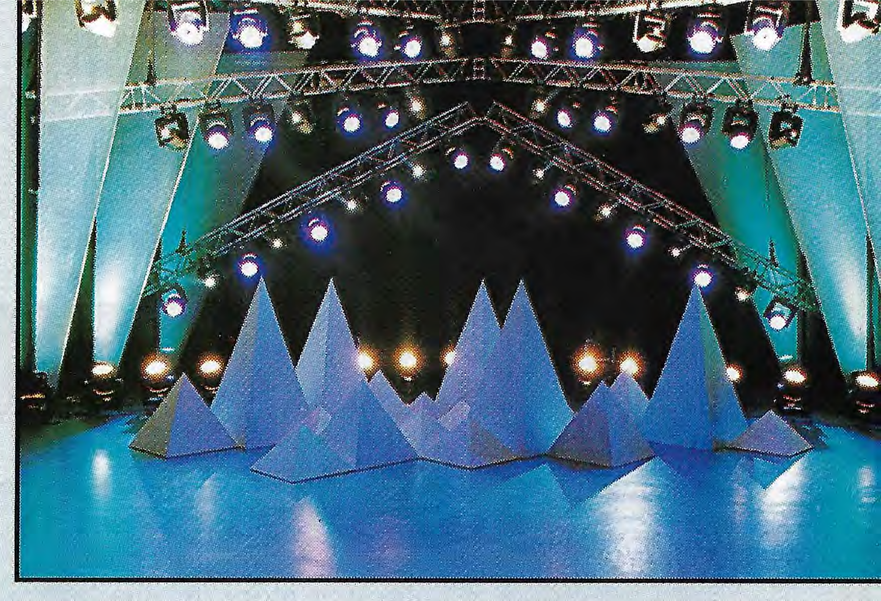
Croft: "The rack will offer interchangeable elements: a power supply for a VL6 luminaire, a dimmer for a VL5 luminaire, the option of a power supply for an arc version of the VL5 fixture, or a dimmer for a tungsten version of the VL6 luminaire. All these potential options will be in rack-mounted modules that you can pull in and out – everything we're doing with the Series 300 equipment is systems-orientated."

Brutsché: "The technology problems related to remote power supplies are solved, particularly with switching supplies for the control of arc bulbs: we've pioneered a lot of power supply technology and refined it, and much of that technology is also in the AR5™, architectural interior wash light.

"As systems get bigger and technology keeps advancing, issues like weight and how large the fixture is, what the hanging centres are, and how well it all works as a large system, become more important. All these things that we've focused our energies on are really starting to make a difference. You know that you can plug all this stuff up and it'll work – from the mains cable to the cases and spare parts – we continue to be the world leader in that."

Croft: "In theatre there is a demand for an incandescent version of the VL6 fixture, to match everything else. Interestingly, Rick Fisher brought up the VL6 luminaire in his seminar at LDI in Miami about unusual light sources in the theatre. He considered ours to be unusual, because he assumed that anything that wasn't a tungsten lamp was a weird fixture. He loves weird fixtures – he uses all sorts of things: HMIs, film lights, discharge lamps with different colour temperatures, for effect. It was the fact that it was an arc bulb that made it different for him. So obviously there is a need for a tungsten lamp in the VL6 luminaire to merge in with everything else, colour temperature-wise, in the theatre. By the same token there's a need for an arc supply in the VL5 luminaire. All of these things are in the process of development – and they're relatively easy to achieve, compared to some of things we've done in the past."

lighting the future



Brutsché: "We've also got a new constant-current dimmer which is quite revolutionary. Instead of varying voltage it produces constant current through the filament and eliminates voltage drops, and doesn't care what voltage it's getting

Take That (LD: Simon Tutchener)

– it's very efficient and it's totally silent. That's another area we're developing."

LIVE!: Will the Series 200 System continue to develop?

Brutsché: "I don't think so. The protocol and computer architecture will be retained, as far as the distributed processing and the user interface is concerned. But we won't go on with luminaires that are VARI*LITE protocol-only."

WORLD-WIDE STRATEGIES

Today, Vari-Lite, Inc employs some 300 people in Dallas, and a total of around 500 people worldwide in 10 offices across its numerous subsidiaries including Theatre Projects, CPL, Irideon, Showco, Ignition and Brilliant Stages, along with 10 distributors.

Series 300 dealers – there are 15 worldwide by now – take on a long-term commitment to rent the system at a fixed price, and the fee they pay per month is irrespective of the product's useage; so each dealer effectively takes on the onus of making a profit by getting the systems out on the road. The trust implicit in the Vari-Lite/dealer relationship means that once appointed, dealers aren't required to report on their systems' useage. Says Brutsché: "It's enabled us to get our product into new local markets."

Their commitment to a European leasing strategy, adds Brian Croft, "Is based on our very successful policy in America with long-lease installations, where the lease is fully paid up-front. Since we appointed a new European leasing manager, Ed Pagett, there's been a lot of interest. We already have a couple of leases – one in Euro Disney and one in Stuttgart. Clients have to commit not to remove that equipment from the building and not to rent it to a third party. And on our part we commit to support the product with free software upgrades, preferential prices on spare parts and product upgrades, training and a maintenance contract via the local office, etc. So to them it fulfils all the functions of a sale, but they don't actually own the equipment, any more than a lot of companies own their photocopier or computers."

Brutsché: "Owning a computer is a true fantasy, let me tell you. Because computers become obsolete so quickly..."

GOING ARCHITECTURAL

The Irideon initiative is the latest and most prominent evidence of how Vari-Lite sees expansion by creating new markets through design innovation.

Brutsché: "The architectural side is a separate business with separate distribution, but using common technology and the same organisation in Dallas to develop it. Essentially, we're taking our automated concept and transferring it into an architectural environment."

According to Brian Croft, the impetus for Irideon came from client demand. "People wanted colour cross-fading units that were waterproof, and they were almost willing to put our equipment out in the rain – and we kept saying 'no!' – so we ended up putting a VL5 colour-changing mechanism and a much brighter source into a waterproof jacket: that's how it started."

Brutsché elaborates: "The trick was to build a totally-sealed housing. Putting 700 watts of energy into a closed box is not a trivial thermal task, so you end up with a large aluminium casting which radiates the heat – and you have to work on weatherproofing for something that's going to sit there and run for maybe ten years without any maintenance. It's very difficult, actually, and it took us a long time."

Croft: "The first AR500™ luminaires to be sold in Europe were used in Vienna in the base of a fountain. They are not actually submerged but they are certainly getting very wet."

Brutsché elaborates: "We envisioned the idea of architectural lighting and the AR5 interior wash luminaire 15 years ago, when we first created the Vari-Lite idea. We thought the technology had the potential to be miniaturised, and we felt that if we could miniaturise it, it would have a lot of potential applications. But it took many years to get the technology to mature and make it a reality – and we also had to decide, in order to build the company, whether to go for the entertainment or architectural markets. We aimed for entertainment at first, because that was what we knew and were ready for.

"We put off the architectural project for a long time and as Brian says, we finally got so much pressure from people wanting an outdoor wash light that we did the AR500 fixture first, mainly because we could adapt the VL5 luminaire technology to it – and it would give us something that we could learn more about the market with.

"The AR5 luminaire is revolutionary in lots of areas: it's the first plastic automated luminaire; it uses a new 35W arc source developed by Philips for the automotive industry. The use of cost-reduction technology in its design also makes it relatively cheap to manufacture and yet very reliable; and the Composer™ control system – which required a lot of energy to figure out for the architectural market – has truly come together well."

"All these things we've focused our energies on are really making a difference"

Brutsché concludes: "One of our major corporate strategies is a strong commitment to education. We have our own education facilities, training people both on VARI*LITE equipment and how to program and use Irideon equipment. We also have relationships with schools, universities and theatre programs, because we believe that a lack of knowledge about automated lighting technology will be one of the primary barriers to its use in the architectural market.

Once the concept of using automated lighting technology to enable the use of theatrical lighting techniques in working and living environments is born in everybody's mind, and they understand the potential, the demand will be there. It could potentially be as big as audio: if everybody decides that light is as important to them as sound, which I believe it is, we could see the beginnings of a whole new industry for automated lighting."

lighting the future

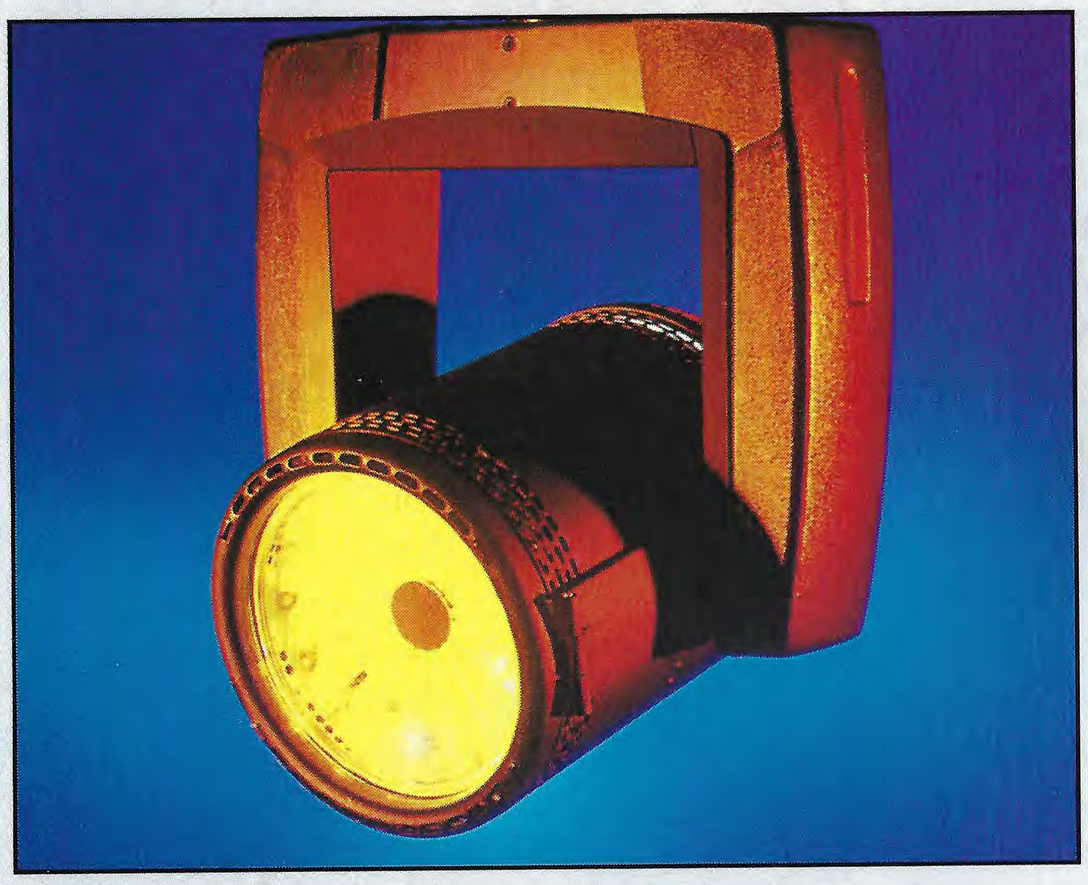
SERIES 300™ SYSTEM: EXPANDING THE UNIVERSE

The Series 300 range is the latest automated lighting system from Vari-Lite, following in the footsteps of the pioneering Series 200™ System. Offering lighter, quieter and more flexible lighting tools, Series 300 luminaires and controllers are suitable for a wide range of applications, from stage shows through to theatre, television and exhibitions. Unlike the Series 200 equipment, Series 300 products can be run on other manufacturers' controllers using the well-established DMX512 platforms, as well as on Vari-Lite's own Series 200 Artisan® and Mini Artisan® control consoles – a flexibility which can mean considerably reduced costs for both programming and operation.

VL5™ WASH LUMINAIRE

The 'workhorse' of the Series 300 range is the Emmy Award-winning VL5 wash luminaire, which uses the patented Dichro*Tune™ colour changer in conjunction with a 1000W Philips tungsten halogen lamp.

Since its introduction the versatile VL5 wash luminaire– which is increasingly being specified alongside its natural partner, the VL6™ spot luminaire – has greatly expanded the creative horizons of lighting designers working in major touring, theatre, TV and commercial productions.



It allows instant cross-fades and dissolves across almost the entire spectrum, while convection cooling makes it completely silent – a boon for theatre drama – and a cold-mirror reflector removes direct heat from the light beam itself. Interchangeable front lenses offer a selection of beam sizes and shapes.

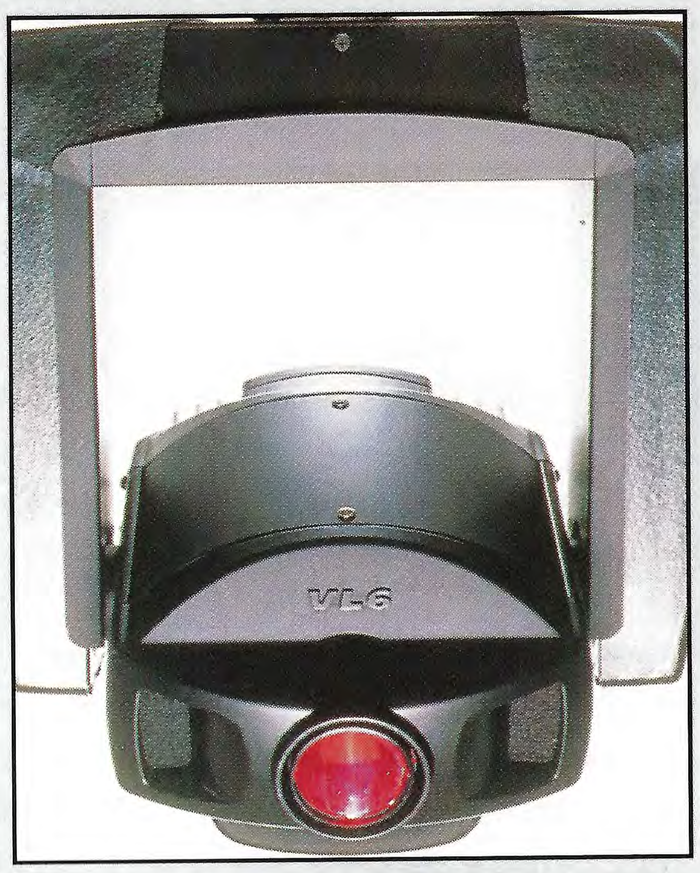
VL5B™ WASH LUMINAIRE

In response to industry feedback, Vari-Lite recently introduced the VL5B luminaire, specifically for theatre and television productions. Physically-identical to the VL5 fixture, a different combination of dichroic filters offers a wider range of the very popular 'cool' daylight blues, in addition to saturated deep blues suitable for rock concerts and other less 'naturalistic' stage settings. As Andy Voller, training manager of Vari-Lite Europe, explains: "The new pastel palette of the VL5B luminaire allows you to achieve 201 and 202-equivalent colours very successfully".

The VL5 and VL5B fixtures can be combined equally successfully with Series 200 luminaires. For example, the London production of The Who's Tommy combines VL5 luminaires with the well-proven VL2C™ luminaire.

VL6™ SPOT LUMINAIRE

Perhaps their perfect working partner is the VL6, the smallest, quietest and most versatile automated spot and profile luminaire on the market. Using a custom-made Philips MSR 400W short arc lamp and cold mirror reflector, the VL6 luminaire can compete in intensity with many comparable 700W fixtures.



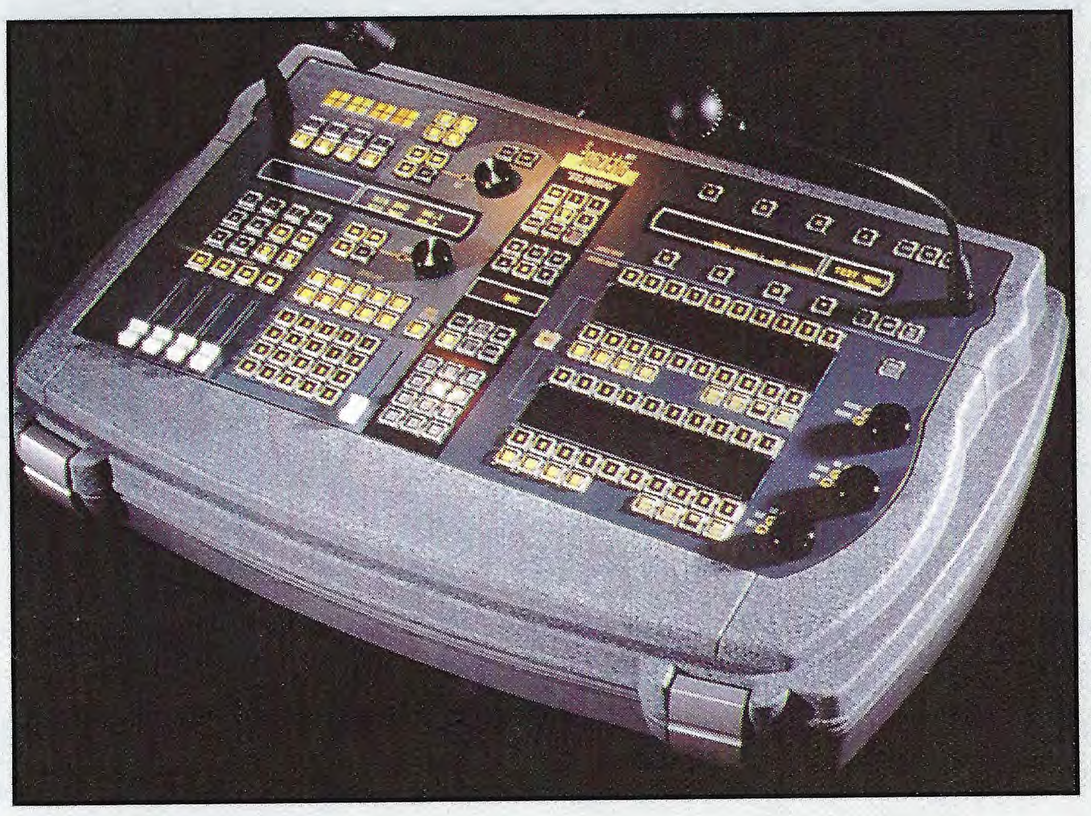
Two 12-position wheels allows custom-designed configurations of dichroic colour filter and/or gobo effects; while Vari-Lite's advanced digital software and Smart Repeater processing unit allows instantaneous effect changes, such as split-beams, rolling gobos and colours and multi-colour beams. Other control parameters include full-field timed dimming, strobe effects and adjustable focus.

VLM™ MOVING MIRROR UNIT

Using the same yoke assembly as the VL5 and VL6 fixtures, the VLM moving mirror is a further development in the Series 300 range. Its highly reflective, dual-sided polycarbonate mirror and continuous spin capability offer more spectacular effects than other available mirror units. While the VLM mirror will augment the performance of all Vari-Lite wash and spot luminaires, it can also be used with conventional static sources, to create beam movement at very low cost.

MINI-ARTISAN® 2 CONTROL CONSOLE

To match the reduced scale and greater affordability of the Series 300 equipment, Vari-Lite has also introduced a new, smaller control console, the Mini-Artisan 2. With its Motorola 68040 processor and using Vari-Lite's custom software, this genuinely portable console is capable of creating up to 2000 cues (Version 3 software) for up to 1000 VARI*LITE luminaires or other lighting units – and, like the original Artisan console, it can be used in conjunction with an outboard Macintosh™ computer. The linked Macintosh enables users to generate luminaire and feedback information in both spreadsheet and graphic formats.



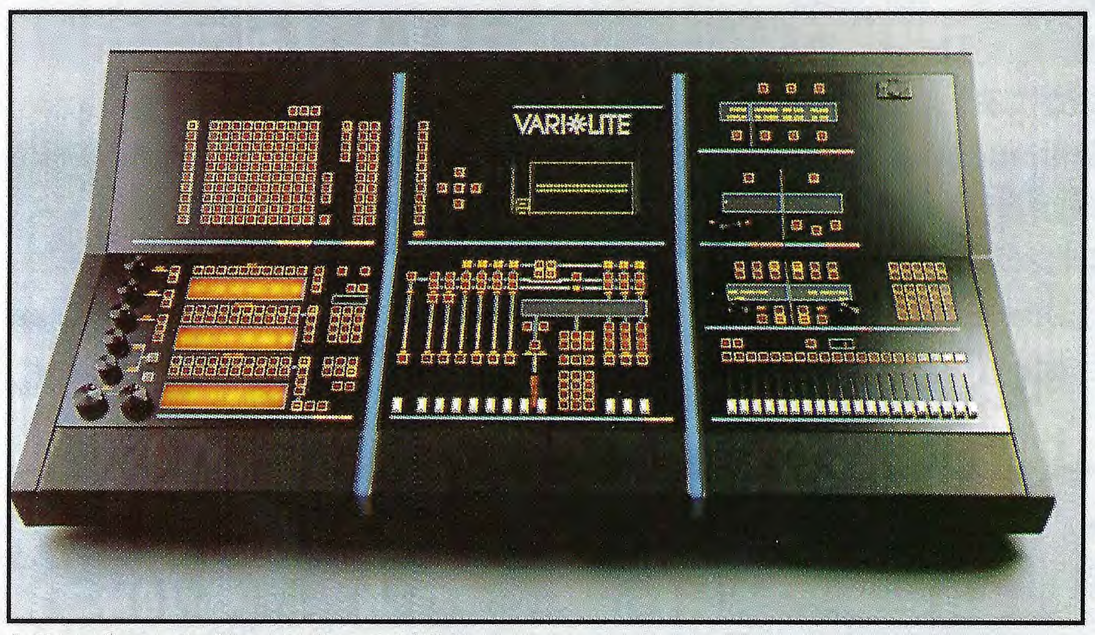
SERIES 200™ SYSTEM: TOURING STRENGTH

The VARI*LITE Series 200 System remains hugely popular for larger-scale concert and stage event lighting.

Controlled from the powerful VARI*LITE Artisan® console range, which can control up to 1000 luminaires, the VL4™ wash luminaire and VL2C spot luminaire are highly versatile, accessible and flexible instruments, allowing a huge range of instantaneous effects.

Using Osram's advanced HTI sources for maximum intensity and longevity, the VL4 and VL2C luminaires feature mechanical dimmers and high-speed dousers with all the flexibility of tungsten sources. The Dichro*Tune™ system used in the VL4 luminaire and the Dichro*Wheel™ colour changer mechanism of the VL2C luminaire can create an instant palette of colours, with variable beam size control.

VL2C™ spot luminaire



Artisan® control console

GOBOS

To complement the VL2 and VL6 spot luminaires, Vari-Lite has developed the Vari*Image™ process.

This revolutionary process uses a laser to remove a metallic, or dichroic, coating from a glass substrate to ensure maximum image definition. Using the Vari*Image process, your own custom-designed gobos can be inexpensively generated from a fax, illustration, floppy disc or line drawing – and an in-house production studio guarantees a swift turn-around.

Vari-Lite has created its own catalogue of filters and ready-made gobos with a wide range of geometric or textural effects.

THE IRIDEON FACTOR

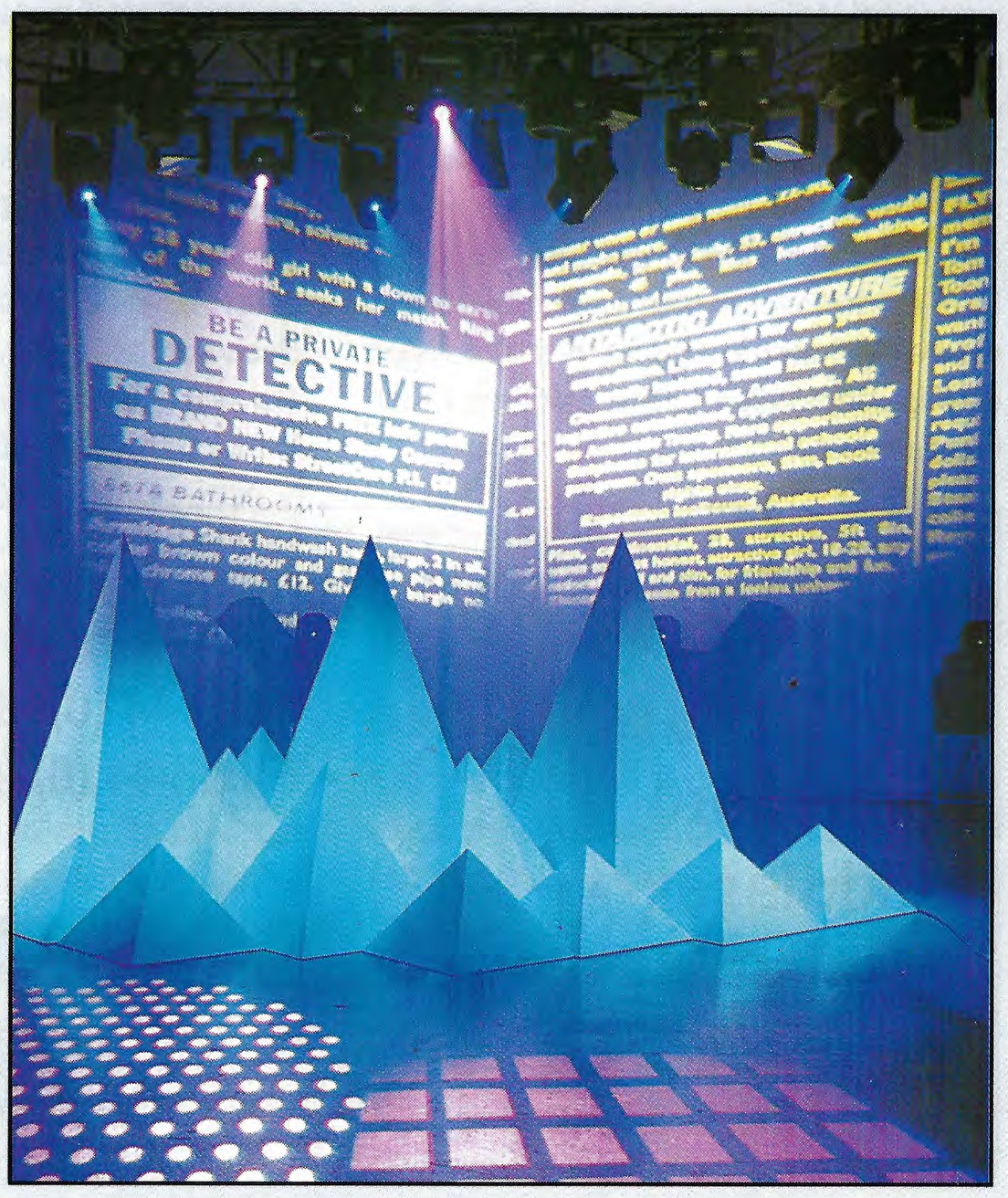
Vari-Lite Inc recently established a new subsidiary, Irideon Inc, to service the growing demand for automated colour-changing luminaires in the architectural lighting field.

1994 saw the launch of the powerful Irideon AR500™ external luminaire, which has been employed on a wide range of exciting projects from Croydon to Santiago in Chile.

This year sees the arrival of the miniaturised AR5™ luminaire, already extensively specified for the London Trocadero's major refurbishment, scheduled to re-open in August 1996.

Designed for sale – rather than rental – to the retail and leisure industry, the compact AR5 interior wash luminaire employs similar pan-and-tilt and colour change technology to the VL5 wash luminaire, in the form of a permanent, compact architectural fixture.

Its 35W metal halide lamp and heat-resistant plastic housing make the AR5 luminaire extremely lightweight; and the Windows-based control system offers easy programming. "It's simple to service and maintain too," explains Stephen Phillips, Irideon's European sales manager. "It's designed so that maintenance or replacement of, for example, the integral computer card, can be carried out by an on-site service technician."



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TRAINED TO PERFECTION

One of the unique features of the Vari-Lite service is the extensive training it offers its customers. To ensure optimal use of Vari-Lite products, the company won't rent out its luminaires to anyone who has not been trained in their use.

As European training manager Andy Voller explains: "We take training very seriously, and for that reason we do operate a more formal training application process – sadly, demand is now so great that we simply can't accept everyone who wants to train with us on a casual basis."

However, a wide selection of training courses are available to suit sub-distributors, dealers, in-house staff, freelance crews or direct clients, ranging from basic luminaire operation to digital module replacement and on-site repair.

They may range from intensive courses to short half-day events, such as the installers' session, for the VL5 and VL6 luminaires, run at Vari-Lite's Greenford base every week. Vari-Lite also services institutions such as drama colleges, offering week-long programmes for theatre lighting students.

BACKING UP THE CUSTOMER

Service and back-up at Vari-Lite Europe is an exemplary part of the company's approach.

The technical support department offers a 24-hour help-line for all customers: in real cases of difficulty, on-site visits or additional equipment supply can be quickly arranged.

The technical support team of four people is backed-up by four bench engineers and technicians, a full-time logistics co-ordinator and a fully-stocked parts store.

Another full-time person monitors equipment reliability – and liases with the engineering team in Dallas to ensure a continuous improvement in the systems we design, manufacture and deliver.

DEDICATED DEALERS FOR THE SERIES 300

In an effort to make the Series 300 equipment more widely available for local, small-scale productions and events, Vari-Lite Europe is creating a network of dedicated Series 300 dealers, both within Britain and around Europe.

Dealers will carry their own stock of Series 300 luminaires and control systems, which will considerably reduce both delivery times and transport costs.

Series 300 dealers are already established in Zurich and Montreux in Switzerland, as well as Manchester and Cardiff in the UK. Other areas, such as Scotland, Ireland and Italy, could soon benefit from this new arrangement.

SERIES 300 DEALERS:

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Michael Samuelson Goleaudau Cymru, Cardiff, Wales. Contact: John Dowzell (Tel: 01443 227777/Fax: 01443 223656)

Delux Theatre Lighting, Zurich, Switzerland. Contacts: Rolf Derrer, Urs Kistler (Tel: 41 1 272 7989/Fax: 41 1 272 7991)

Scenetec & Co. Vevey-Montreux, Switzerland. Contact: Laurent Zumofen (Tel: 41 21 923 5161/Fax: 41 21 923 5162)

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comic relief

Eddie Izzard: The Definite Article

Eddie Izzard is one of the new champions of comedy for the nineties. The "bizarre absurdist banter" of his recent sold-out run at London's Shaftesbury Theatre has been a huge critical success. Louise Stickland went along to ask: what else goes into a great comedy show?

Eddie Izzard is at the forefront of establishing comedy as the new rock-'n'roll of the nineties. He rides the crest of a wave of alternative comedians whose repertoire replaces the dull, puerile cracks of the 'old guard' – making live comedy an inspirational, side-splitting experience and putting it back on the performance agenda for an ever-expanding audience.

His recent sold-out run at London's Shaftesbury Theatre was an acclaimed critical success. Backed by a large white book that slowly and imperceptably changes colour and texts throughout the two halves of the show, his bizarre, absurdist banter veers from topics such as Pavlov's dogs to supermarkets and Stalinist oranges. An intellectual and stylistic challenge to the mind, his unique delivery and idiosyncratic appearance combine to reduce his audiences to complete hysterics from the first line – until his ephemeral disappearance off-stage into the pages of the book. The theatre is carnage at the end of the set: people completely surrendered to the demonic ironies of laughter clutch their aching sides, dab their eyes and try to summon the strength to pull themselves out of their seats following two hours of annihilating mayhem.

Izzard has avoided the more orthodox route of TV exposure in his bid for the dizzy pinnacles of fame, reflected in his natural fluidity as a truly live performer. In retaining his individuality and sense of purpose he exudes an unrivalled, powerful and spell-binding presence. Whilst his show is structured, you can never be sure that disintegration into complete anarchy is not just around the corner.

"his unique delivery and idiosyncratic appearance reduce his audiences to complete hysterics from the first line – until his ephemeral disappearance off-stage into the pages of the book"

Career moves

Production-wise, the Shaftesbury run (titled *The Definite Article* – Izzard's third West End stint) was his most ambitious yet. and one of the visual pre-requisites was that it should reflect his growth beyond a cult enigma into a leading figure of British stage: his career as a serious actor is also progressing at impressive speed.

As this run was perceived as a special occasion as well as marking a crucial point in his career, Izzard had to be central in every permutation of the word.

Lighting designer Amanda Garrett has worked with him for the last three years and designed both his previous West End runs on 'an economically-challenged budget'. She comments that Izzard is more confident than ever before, and all were keen from the outset to reflect that *panache* with more than just a simple backdrop.

Thus the concept of a set/backdrop came up early in the creative dialogue – in which Izzard took an active role – although set designer Maddy Morris wasn't appointed until a month before the show opened.

Every day I write the book...

It was Amanda Garrett, one of our most imaginatively-lively up-and-coming lighting designers, who originally thought of a 'V'-shape backdrop, and Maddy Morris who developed that theme and turned it into a book. This in turn prompted the literary references of the text, projected onto the open pages of the book by ultra-bright Source Fours using glass gobos, changing every ten minutes. Morris also points out that the words/text theme tied-in with the fact that Izzard is dyslexic – and obsessed with literature.

Izzard's desire to be central prompted Morris to suggest a 'reveal' – by opening the book for his entrance. For extra impact, she designed the stairs to lift him up for this sequence, in which he sweeps in upon a throne of books. Garrett's lighting was fundamental here: the vivid and dramatic scene is essential in accomplishing that initial emotional bond between Izzard and his audience.

Garrett specified her instruments for maximum flexibility: a clear case of quality surpassing quantity, with four eight-light Digital Light Curtains and six VL5 luminaires. The intro sequence begins before the house lights dim as the DAT showtape kicks in. As the auditorium lights go, the light curtains begin a 17-second scroll across the book with Garrett's custom-designed split scrolls. These coax even more subtlety from the chromatic change as each individual lamp fades colour – as opposed to every eight lamps in a block. Attention is immediately drawn to the stage, and the light curtains then move out into the audience and wave, blinding the stalls and front rows of the circle while the Vari*Lite chase gets more frantic down-stage. The book opens, but you don't notice it, being dazzled by blocks of lighting activity.

All lighting cues for this sequence are carefully choreographed with the intro music. On a certain note, when the book is fully open, all lights flip up to Izzard as he ➳ *p32*

moves down-stage on his pedestal. The stairs truck moves manually, which entailed a lot of rehearsal to get its movement synchronised with that of the Vari*Lites. As he arises and comes to the front of the stage to take his bows, the truck withdraws upstage and the book shuts. Meanwhile – again to shift emphasis away from the book closing – the Light Curtains and Vari*Lites are swirling round him before settling into their show positions. Garrett admits that plotting and executing the opening sequence was the most galvanising part of the show!

There are no lighting cues as such during either half of the show, but the book is textured by a slow scroll on the Light Curtains as they surreptitiously slip from one end of the blue spectrum and back over 40 minutes for the first half, and likewise through the red spectrum for the second. Garrett acknowledges that it is a great tribute to the Light Curtains, controlled with LightTalk protocol, to be able achieve this manoeuvre completely seamlessly.

She is a great advocate of colour theory, and feels it is one of the most commonly overlooked elements of lighting psychology. A major starting-point for her, in terms of colouring the set and show, were the original PR shots of Izzard in the outrageous orange Gaultier jacket he wears for the show (complete with spray-on PVC pants, with creases that shimmer in the light). In the PR shots he sits on a blue sofa with a purple/violet background, forming the gloriously rich, contrasty colour reference.

Hands free for style

The fact that this is the first time Izzard has used a hands-free microphone made for a new dimension in his style, delivery and assertiveness. (This 'opening-up' also forced Garrett to utilise a Pani front-of-house spot as he uses the stage much more freely.)

Tour Manager Jim McLean also takes care of sound, which he describes as a simple operation. The bottom line is that everyone must be able to hear him clearly and comfortably. The microphone itself is a Sanken, tucked just inside his hairline and operating via a Samson radio system.

The team installed their own front-of-house system at the Shaftesbury, consisting of Nexo main speakers, Celestion delays and four Galaxy Hotspots across the front of stage to fill in for the front stalls. McLean operates the DAT tracks and oversees the sound from side-stage, using a TAC Bullet desk. The pre-show tape runs into the entrance track, a tried-and-tested method which ensures a smooth transition from pre-show to show tape ten minutes or so before Izzard actually takes the stage.

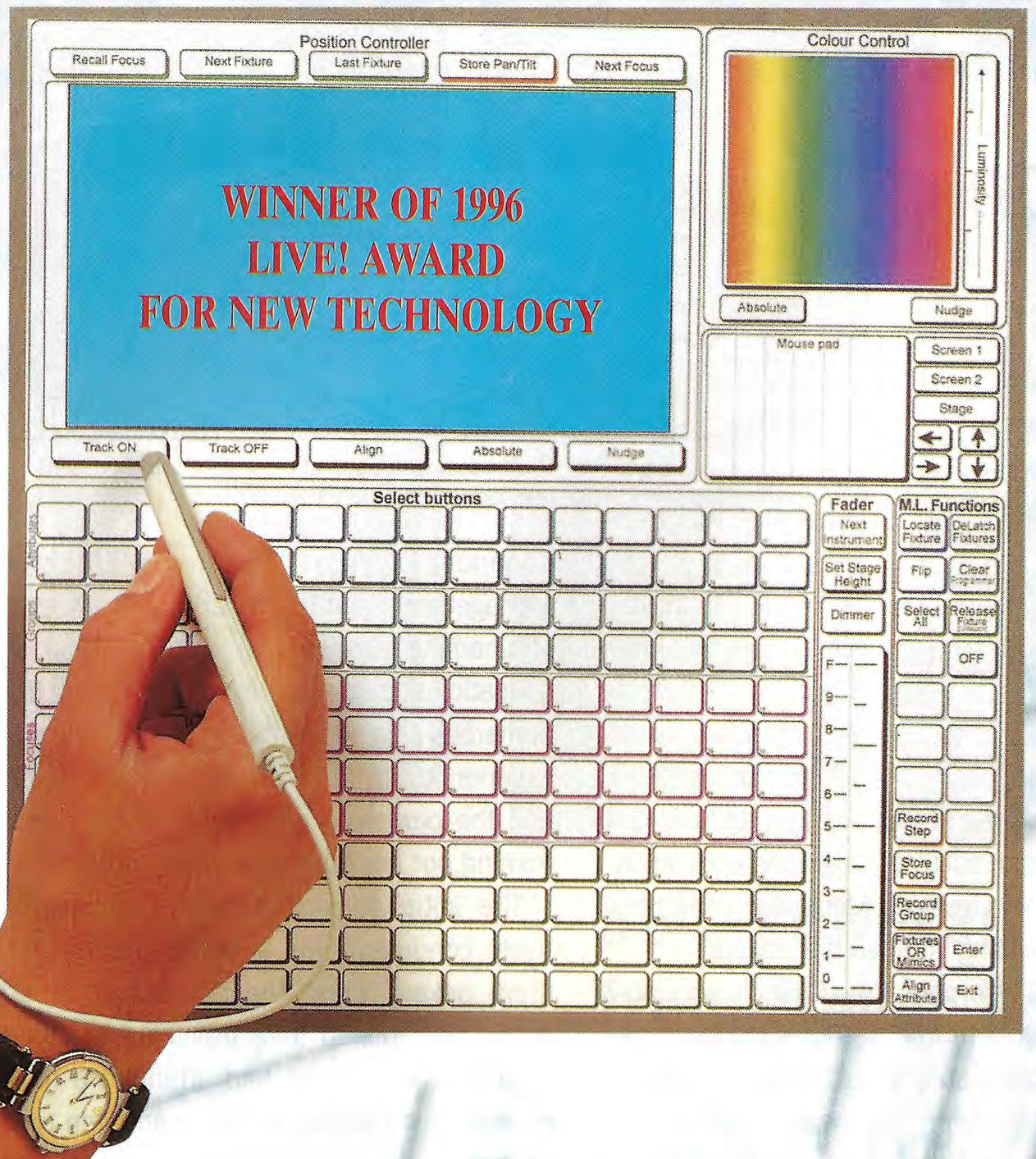
Tour manager/sound engineer Jim McLean (left) and lighting designer Amanda Garrett

With this run now under his belt Izzard has proved himself as a grade A comedian. Alongside this, the perfect complement of a visually stimulating forum within which that incisive wit can function, is a tribute to the talent and originality of his production team. ■ **live!**

CREDITS

FOR EDDIE IZZARD:
Lighting Designer: *Amanda Garrett*
Designer: *Madeleine Morris*
Tour Manager/Sound Engineer: *Jim McLean*
FOR THE SHAFTESBURY:
Chief Electrician: *Peter Fordham*
Deputy Chief Electrician: *Peter Goodman*
Chargehand Electrician: *Lisa Wardle*
Technical Manager: *Lee Eld*
Deputy Master Carpenter: *Spencer New*
Chargehand Stage: *Ben Artell*

AVOLITES 4D TRACK



- ENABLES YOU TO MOVE ANY NUMBER OF LIGHTS AS ONE.
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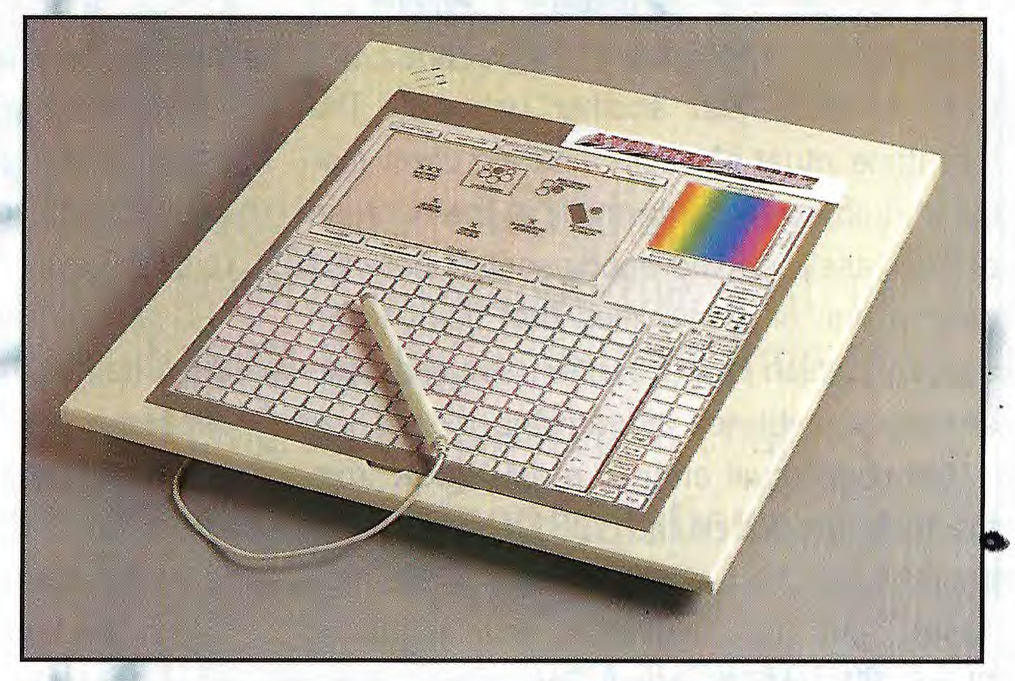

The XY tracking allows you to move as many lights as you wish as one - representing huge time savings when it comes to preset focuses.

More importantly, you can now 'follow-spot' performers ...it has already been used successfully to track ice skaters, and it's only a question of time before this function becomes a commonplace 'live' requirement in all types of performance.

Now, when a performer moves off the target position, you use the 4D Track in 'nudge' mode to move the beams and pull the moving light memory back into focus on the artist.

Massive amounts of time can also be saved in colour mixing. Virtually all moving lights offer colour mixing that is powerful but extremely difficult to manipulate manually. However with the 4D tablet you can build up a complete palette of colours, within minutes, without having to touch a wheel.

Experimenting with colour becomes a pleasure rather than tedium!

All the lighting designers who have worked with the Avolites 4D Track estimate that it is at least 30 times faster then using previous technology.

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AVOLITES

Opening LIPA:

fame again for liverpool

When Paul McCartney was asked to help raise funds for a 'Fame'-style performing arts school, he replied that he would - as long as it was in Liverpool. On January 30 the long-awaited Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts welcomed the world's press to its official opening. Louise Stickland toured LIPA with the team who brought it to life

The beautifully restored Paul McCartney (main) auditorium

The canteen buzzes with excitement and enthusiasm, the hubbub drowning out the rock music blasting from the sound system, while students and staff at the newly-inaugurated Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts (LIPA) queue up at the shiny servery for huge plates of excellent, inexpensive vegetarian food.

It's not your average university refectory in appearance, atmosphere or cuisine. But then LIPA is not just 'another' university. The lunchtime ritual of pupils and lecturers mixing and conversing informally in the canteen or the classily curved wood-panelled bar next door is one of many clues that point to an academy which breaches the traditional hierarchies of institutes of learning.

The conceptual embryo of LIPA grew from the local impact of the 1981 Toxteth riots, impressions from Alan Parker's 1980 film *Fame*, and the innovative imagination of Chief Executive (and ex-actor) Mark Featherstone-Witty. He'd realised there was a need for broad-based performing arts training – combining the practical skills of management, administration and technology with the artistic disciplines and creative elements of performance.

He formed a charity – the Schools Performing Arts (SPA) Trust – and bounced the idea of a 'Fame School' around for a few years. That, in a nutshell, eventually led to the opening of the BRIT School in London. In the course of fund-raising for this project, he had asked the appeal chairman, George Martin, to approach Paul McCartney. The latter felt at the time that London was well catered-for, but mentioned that if they ever considered a similar project in Liverpool, he would be interested.

In Liverpool in the mid-80s another portentous event in LIPA's pre-history occurred – the closure of The Liverpool Institute High School for Boys. Paul McCartney and George Harrison had both attended the school as boys, and the formerly splendid building, originally opened in 1825 as The Liverpool Mechanics Institute, was rapidly sliding into sad dilapidation.

In 1989, Liverpool City Council commissioned a report from Pete Fulwell (then managing The Christians) about Liverpool's musical activities. After this was delivered in 1990, the SPA forming a new charitable trust for the Liverpool project. LIPA was first launched as an idea by Paul McCartney at a press conference preceding his *Let It Be* Liverpool concert in October 1990, and fund-raising began in earnest.

Liverpool City Council launched its bid for City Challenge Initiative funding – which succeeded in 1991 – with LIPA at the forefront of the campaign and Paul McCartney backing it fervently. In 1992 Grundig AG announced a four-year sponsorship of LIPA and in June 1993, the first pilot courses were launched.

Reviving and thriving

The project to renovate the building commenced in January 1994. Balfour Beatty Buildings were appointed as main contractors with local firm Brock Carmichael Associates as architects; lead architect on the design team was David Watkins.

The original building has been painstakingly renovated to its original, breathtaking Edwardian austerity, while a new annexe adds 35,000 square feet of high-tech chic to LIPA. The finishing touches of tasteful decoration throughout the building were still being added at the time of my visit at the end of January, but the elegant fusion of the old and the contrasting new facades of the structure is striking and visually compelling.

LIPA offers degree courses in Performing Arts – specialising in Music, Acting, Community Arts, Dance, Enterprise Management and Performance Design. Head of Learning, David Price, explains that the educational concept behind LIPA stems from numerous elements including the personal experiences of the more senior teaching staff and the perceived need for inter-disclipinery training not available elsewhere in the UK.

The initial feasibility studies were effectively conducted for a music college. The team asked where the big names in pop music had gained their training and discovered that while none had attended a music college, a surprising number had been to art college.

Price points out two distinguishing elements of those schools of art. Firstly, art colleges encourage the student to build up a portfolio from day one, while there are still some music colleges in the UK where composition is not allowed until completion of in-depth study on the classic composers. Secondly, the frame of reference from which those art school students drew was extremely broad. They gathered inspiration from a huge range of different art forms which were then reflected in their music (he quotes Brian Eno, David Bowie, Bryan Ferry, et al), creating the impression that they thought visually as well as musically. "This is what we're trying to do here," he emphasises. "Students can start creating their own work immediately." Both Price and Paul Kleiman, Head of Performance Design, emphasise that the LIPA courses encourage the blurring of distinctions between 'technician' and 'artist'. In their first semester all students take IT, lighting, sound and audio-visual courses. Once they have a basic knowledge of safety and competence in these areas, they can experiment with the equipment and develop it further into their creative work.

As soon as the words 'actor/dancer' and 'technician' are juxtaposed, there is a value system at work which endeavours to enable people to appreciate the work processes involved, but this isn't necessarily ➳ *p36*

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p34 constructive. However, Kleiman insists: "We're not trying to turn people into Jacks-and-Jills-of-all-trades here. It is about keeping your mind open and being aware of those roles and processes that are actually connected to a dialogue with people." His own views about technology are ambivalent. He finds it interesting that in one sense it is – given the way entertainment is going – both unavoidable and important. However, he adds a warning shot: "At the end of the day technology is a tool and one shouldn't get wrapped up in it as an end in itself." As far as technology and facilities go, LIPA offers spaces and opportunities the majority of students would die for – the spaces were designed in the knowledge that every type of performance would have to be catered for.

Paul McCartney with LIPA chief executive Mark Featherstone-Witty in one of the sound studios

Looking around

The main Paul McCartney Auditorium is part of the original building and has thus been diligently restored. This intimate U-shaped theatre seats a cosy 500 and has a 16.5 wide x 7 metre deep stage. A de-mountable thrust adds a further 2.2 metres of depth at the expense of the first three rows of seats. A huge workshop/scene dock has been added to the rear of the stage (and to the original building).

Production manager Ruth Jackson says that the main auditorium's technical specification includes 120 lighting circuits, a Strand 430 lighting console and a 6 metre-high flying gallery providing 20 flying bars on a mixture of winches, counterweights and hemps. Two lighting gantrys have been added front-of-house, one running all the way round the curve of the building and the other spanning the two sides. A smaller studio theatre space forms the 'second auditorium'. This has pull-out bleacher seating for 140, a large retractable projection screen, 96 lighting circuits and a Strand LBX control board.

A comprehensive lantern inventory is available to both spaces – plus the two acting studios that also contain lighting rigs. Most of the lighting equipment was purchased through AS Green – who were also involved as technical consultants for the aforementioned production areas.

The name which aroused excitement at the January opening ceremony, however, was that of Cyberlight. High End Systems have donated a system of 10 Cyberlights, eight Trackspots, eight Dataflash AF 1000 strobes and a Status Cue console to LIPA – supplied and installed via UK distributors Lightfactor Sales. For the inauguration, programming whiz Tim Grivas was flown in from Texas to dazzle the 500 VIP's in the Paul McCartney auditorium and the 200 world-wide press squeezed into the studio theatre to watch.

When not in use for the student productions, scheduled to commence in May, the theatre will be available for outside performances and events. There are also moves to hold moving light programming seminars and technical sound courses, so that interested parties who are not students at LIPA can benefit from the superb facilities on offer.

Over 700 performing arts students will attend LIPA by the time it is running at full capacity. They should come away with creative, technical and practical skills second to none, and many may go on to be major players in the future of the performance and production industry. If the youthful optimism and energy that currently exudes from the people in the LIPA building is anything to go by, expansion will not be far behind. ■ **live!**

Marquee Audio: the sound of LIPA

Marquee Audio's Spencer Brooks was first invited to visit the LIPA site late in 1994. Subsequently, he contacted the Harman-Pro Group and Yamaha to discuss the project as it became obvious that the project would need ongoing partnership support from leading manufacturers and distributors. Marquee then assembled a consultancy team to work with LIPA on what is probably one of the most complex audio and communications projects ever undertaken in the UK.

Andy Baker of Marquee Special Projects and Sam Wise of Sam Wise Associates worked with the growing LIPA staff to design systems that would support the developing curriculum - and provide a basic infrastructure for some of the latest audio technology.

Marquee were eventually responsible for the design and specification of all studio and communications networks in the building. During 1995 they were contracted to install most of these in both auditoria, as well as the five sound recording studios, a radio studio, two video edit suites, three Midi suites, 27 practice/rehearsal rooms, five portable systems - and background systems in the bar and canteen.

When on-site work began, Andy Baker took on the role of Project Manager to get the bulk of the systems working between December 16 and January 8, with Spencer Bourne, when the first LIPA students would arrive. Work continues on those systems that are required for September 1996, ready for LIPA's second student intake.

The hardware specified is a comprehensive inventory of contemporary pro-audio. In the Paul McCartney Auditorium alone there's a main system of Nexo PS10s and Turbosound TSE218s; Atlas Soundolier under-balcony delays (also used as part of the voice evacuation system, installed by A S Green/Plalight Audio); JBL Control 1 and Control 5SBs for the image shift system; a Nexo PS10 central cluster and Turbosound/Nexo/EV Sx200 foldback and effects speakers, powered by C-Audio RA Series amps - and the entire system processing is controlled (apart from the Nexos) by a Peavey Mediamatrix system. FOH mixer is a 48-channel Soundcraft K3, and there's a Spirit Monitor board on stage, along with BSS, Yamaha and Sabine processors.

The Studio Theatre boasts a JBL EON PA with EV Sx200, Turbosound Impact 120 and Bose 101 speakers for foldback and effects, via C-Audio amps, a Soundcraft K1 desk and BSS/Yamaha/Lexicon control. ■ **live!**

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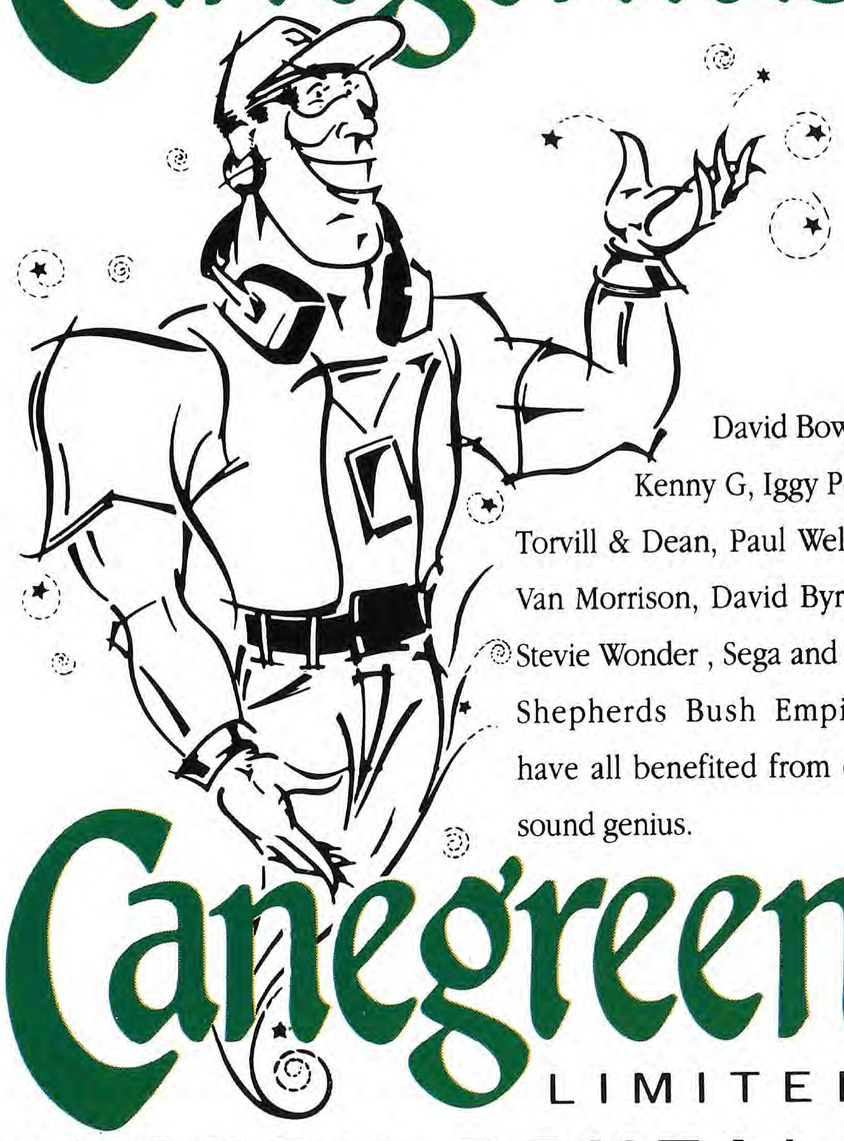

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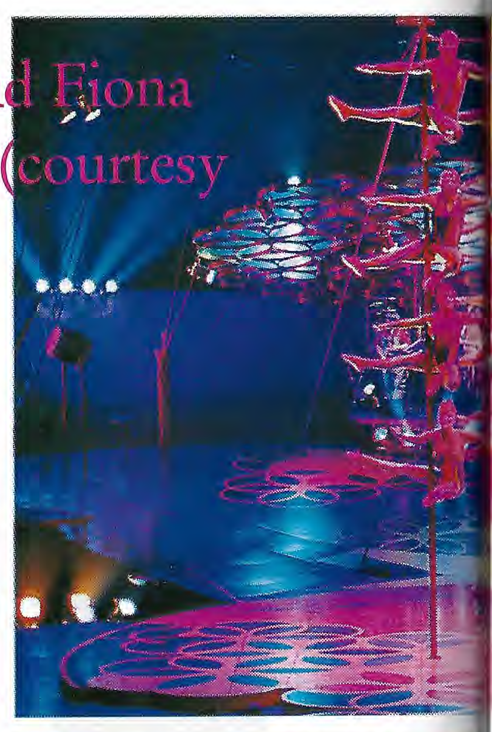
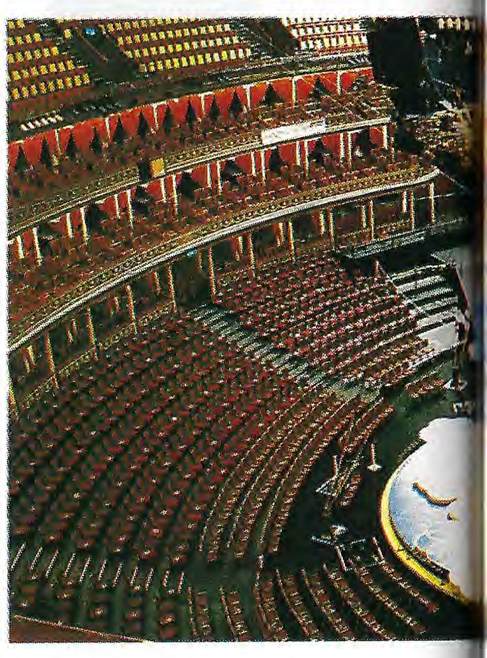
cirque du *saltimbanco* at

Report by Louise Stickland and Fiona Harley. Pictures by Phil Dent (courtesy Pulsar Light Of Cambridge)





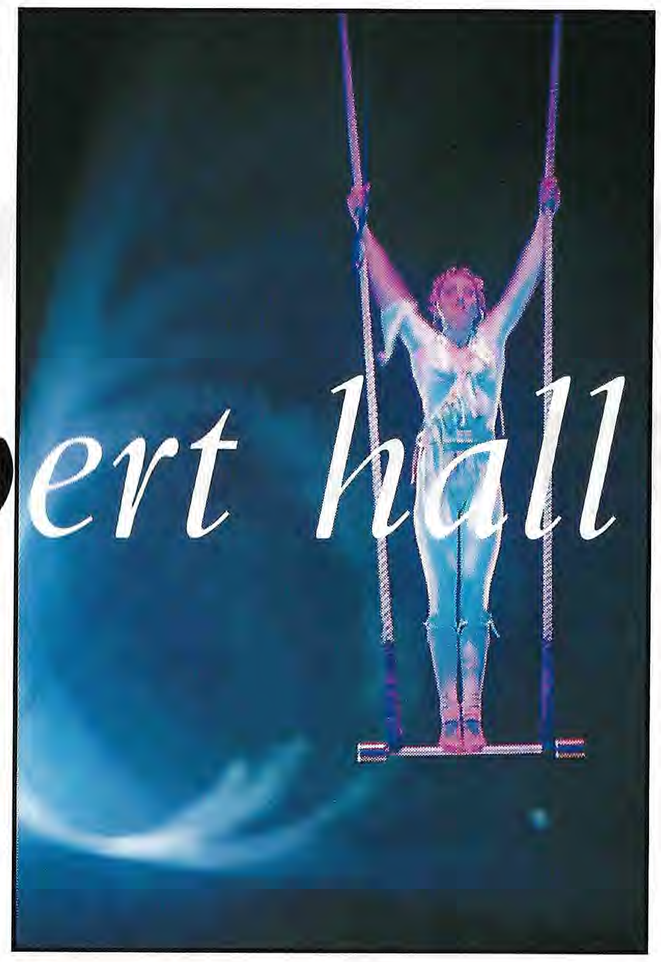
Cirque du Soleil's *Saltimbanco* tour kicked off in Amsterdam in March 1995, and runs until the end of this year. For its UK run at the Royal Albert Hall last month, the production was radically transformed from its traditional big top touring environment – drawing widespread media acclaim as a no-animals, visually-spectacular, circus with a difference.

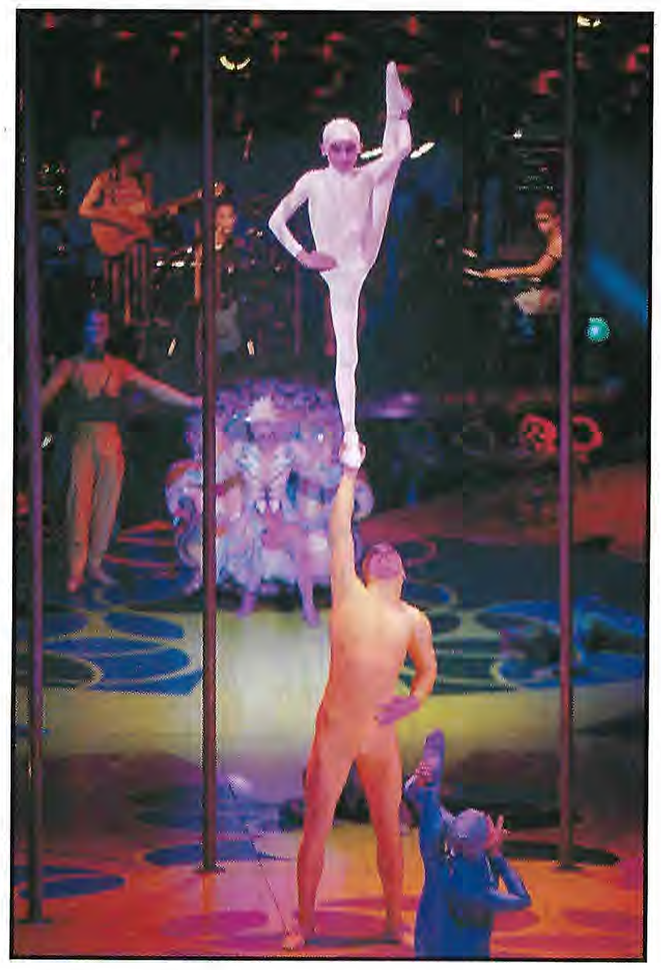
Staging the Canadian troupe's concept in Kensington entailed a masterpiece of rigging and much customisation of the listed building in order to accommodate the touring stage set and lighting rig. Many other compromises had to be reached so that lights could be rigged in similar positions to those of the touring big top, and the stage was actually extended to fit into the new space. Lighting designer for Saltimbanco – and all Cirque du Soleil shows – is Luc Lafortune, and lighting operator for this show has been Nol Van Genuchten, who has been involved since January 1995. It is unusual to find circus acts working with 'show lighting' in this fashion, but the cabaret-style presentation of traditional circus buffoonery, combined with death-defying acrobatics and aerial stunts, is very conducive to colourful and imaginative lighting. The set, designed by Michel Crête, together with costumes by Dominique Lemieux, also play a vital rôle in the overall visual spectacle.

The majority of the large generic rig is owned by Cirque du Soleil. It was supplemented at the RAH with some house lanterns and with others dry-hired from Neg Earth. Six Super Scans also feature in the show, which Van Genuchten runs from a Compulite desk.

soleil

the albert hall





For house sound, Canegreen provided a large six-point Meyer system for the shows, which included arrays of MSL2s, MSL4s and RS-D2s, plus stage-level UPA-1s for in-fill, mixed on a Yamaha PM4000. Stage sound mixing, and hardware, was provided by Cirque du Soleil's own engineers.

According to Pete Wilson at promoters Allied Entertainment, Allied has been looking at Cirque du Soleil for nine years. The Canadian company's last visit to the UK was five years ago at The Royal Festival Hall, and Wilson comments: "While the word of mouth was good, it didn't sell many tickets."

The company promoted the majority of their European shows themselves, but in the UK a unique three-way partnership was set up between the Royal Albert Hall (its first dip into promotion waters), Allied and Cirque du Soleil. The venerable Albert Hall proved a venue to present a unique presentation of the show, and preparation and production took over a year under Allied's Dennis Arnold and the RAH's Rob Flower. Wilson: "It was a big risk. We had to sell 60,000 tickets – before Christmas we'd sold 5,000." He adds: "It's hard to sell because it's hard to describe. It's not a circus like any other, it's not rock – no-one's been able to give it a definition." And advance promotion was kept strictly within Cirque's control, with the company only allowing one image to be used on posters and advertisements.

With the success of the Albert Hall run, the word is that Cirque du Soleil might yet return. As our pictures show, this is a visual feast to catch up on – if you can.

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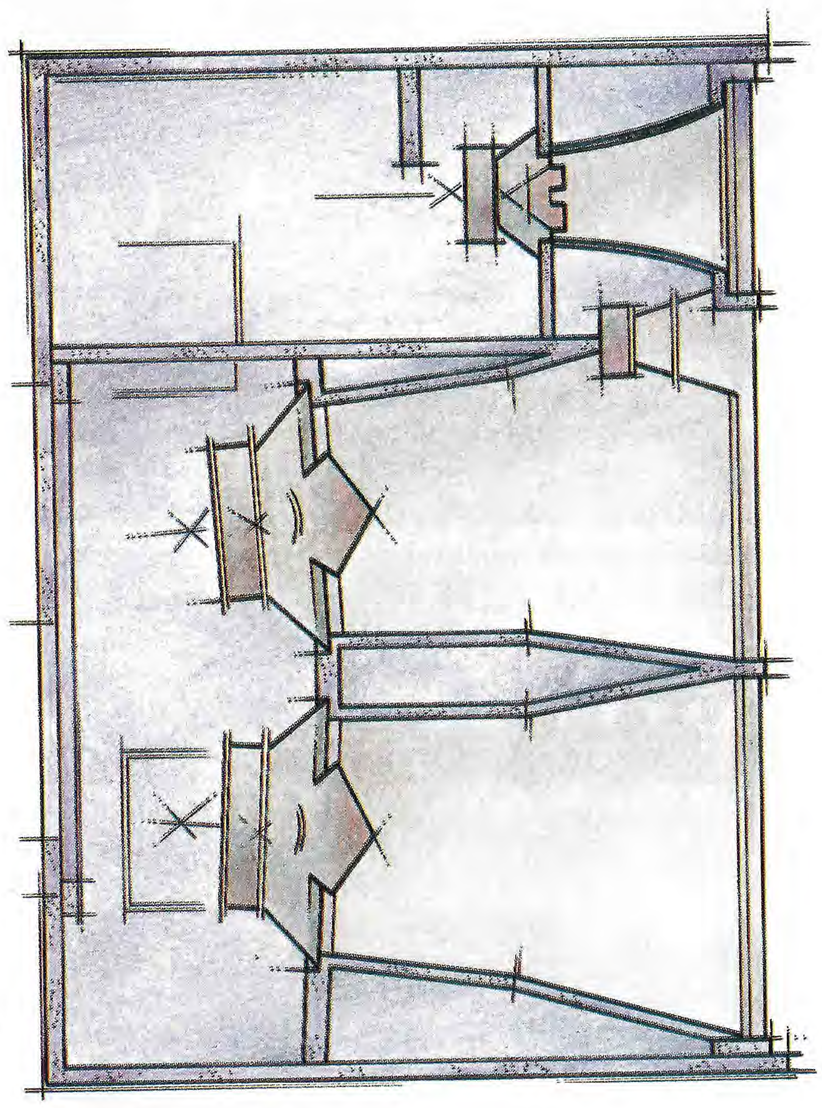
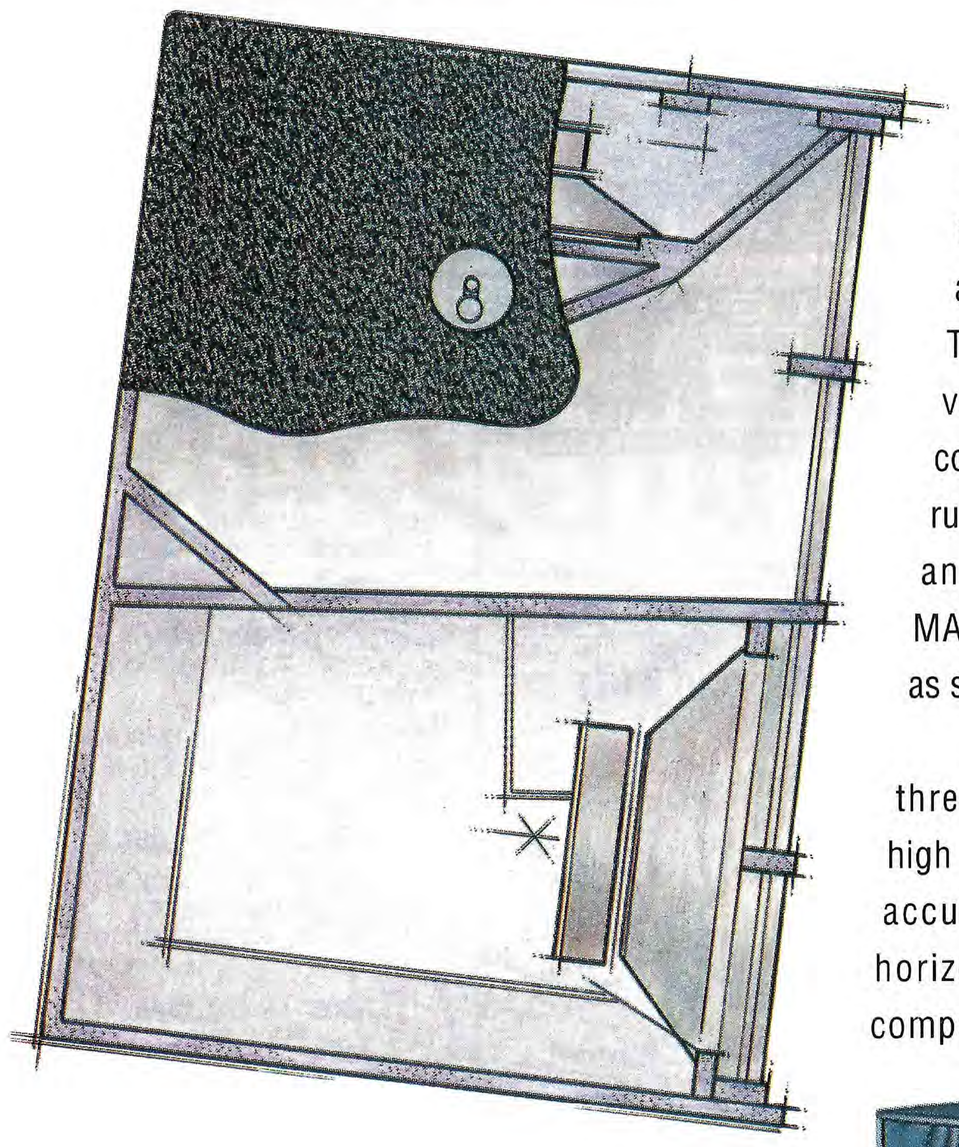




WAVEFRONT 8
a new approach

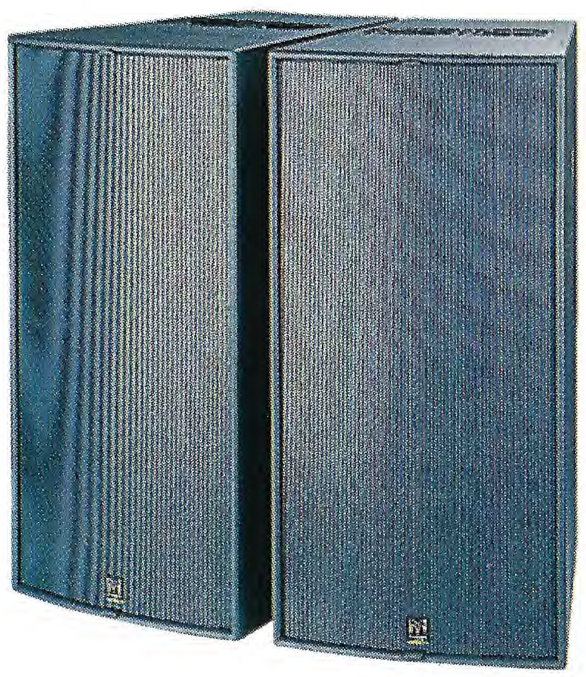
The new Wavefront 8/ Wavefront 8S is a uniquely flexible touring system which embodies the latest horn technology in an extremely versatile trapezoid one-plus-one box format. The Wavefront 8 can be used as a full-range stand alone system for large scale theatre and concert touring applications while the separate Wavefront 8S hybrid sub-bass provides a user option when low frequency enhancement and additional headroom is required. The Wavefront 8 System offers various active and passive combinations giving the choice of running the system 2,3,4 or 5-way and both enclosures feature MAN quick-connect flying points as standard.

The Wavefront 8 features a three-way horn loaded design for high system efficiency, providing an accurate 55 degree constant horizontal dispersion pattern. The component complement of twin 12" low-mid drivers plus a unique toroidal-technology 6.5" high-mid horn driver and a 1" exit high frequency compression driver ensure that the Wavefront 8 offers true full-range performance working smoothly and efficiently down to 80Hz.

High-mid vocal definition is assured by the use of an ultra low distortion cone driver covering the frequency bandwidth from 850 Hz to 3.5 kHz.

The Wavefront 8S features a unique horn/reflex design incorporating both 15" and 18" drivers for fast transient performance and extended sub-bass. Entirely separate 15" folded horn and 18" reflex sections can be driven in parallel or powered independently. This remarkable hybrid configuration results in a dynamic sub-bass with an efficiency of 104dB. Use of a low crossover point between the Wavefront 8 full-range enclosure and the Wavefront 8S sub-bass means that you can choose whether to ground stack or fly the Wavefront 8S to suit the needs of the venue whilst not compromising the acoustic performance.

Compromise is not a word recognised in Martin Audio system design.



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NEWS

Alan Dale Owen

One of the best-known figures of the American lighting world, Alan "Goat" Owen, died on January 21 at the age of 44 following a brief battle with cancer. Alan had joined the lighting division of Showco in June 1973 and went on to work with many of the 70s' leading artists, including Wings, Eric Clapton, Linda Rondstadt and James Taylor. He was best known, though, as Gensis' LD from 1974 to 1987 – becoming the first LD to tour with the VARI*LITE system in 1981. He is survived by a large extended family.

AUDIO NEWS *in brief*

Crest for Bedford

The Bedford Corn Exchange has installed a Crest Series GT GFOH console and Crest CA4 and CA9 power amplifiers. Installation was by Northern Light, who also specified a Crest Vs-powered distributed system help overcome the reverberant acoustics. Said Project Engineer Eddy O'Hare: "The console is very quiet, and has excellent facilities, especially the mute group system." Tel: +44 (0)1273 693513

Alesis ADAT-XT launched

The next generation of Alesis's successful ADAT digital multitrack system, the ADAT-XT, has been launched by Sound Technology plc. Tel: +44 (0)1462 480000

3G's Fireball for Frankfurt

3G is keeping the secrets of its new Fireball modular live sound console under wraps until its official launch at Frankfurt in March. However, marketing head Mark Ray promises plenty of interesting features from their new design team, who have been developing the desk for two years. Tel: +44 (0)1702 420645

Shockmount for midget

Sennheiser has introduced a dedicated low-profile rubber shockmount for the MD504 "thumb mic". The mount clips tightly to the rim of any snare or tom, and incoporates vibration damping. Tel: +44 (0)1628 850811

Higher VHF performance

Sennheiser's new switchable-channel VHF belt pack RF transmitter, the SK2032, partners the SKM1032 handheld mic. Sennheiser says it offers unique standards of VHF RF and audio performance at a lower price point than ever before.

PM3500 for Euro Hire

LMC Audio Systems has supplied a Yamaha PM3500 to Euro Hire for its Celtic Swing tour, headlined by three Irish folk-rock bands. Tel: +44 (0)1908 369269

Deltron launch new crimps

A new 4mm crimp range of speaker connectors from Deltron promises dramatically improved sound characteristics and better long-term performance. The one-piece connectors are machined from solid brass. Tel: +44 (0)181 965 4222

Renkus-Heinz in Copenhagen

A festival to mark Copenhagen's *Cultural City of Europe 1996* status has used a Renkus-Heinz CoEntrant PA system from Belgiam rental company Dee Sound & Light – who recently purchased eight stacks of CE-3T and CE3-Subs as a FOH system for their European Theatre shows. Renkus-Heinz International: Tel +44 (0)1233 778055

Digital Drawmer launched

Drawmer has unveiled its new 1962 Digital Vacuum Tube Pre-Amp. The 2U unit combines an ultra-high quality vacuum tube front end and two integral 24-bit A/D converters – a 'one box solution' for converting audio to the digital domain. Tel: +44 (0)1924 378669

AKG's new Micro-Mics

AKG has launched a second generation of Micro-Mics, with uprated clamping and shock-mount deisgns, new angle joint designs to allow more efficient connection to instruments, and enhanced transducers for improved sonic performance. Tel: +44 (0)181 207 5050

GENERAL NEWS *in brief*

Spirit tours with Pulp

Pulp's European tour is using a Spirit GM01 Guitar/Instrument Wireless System, another of which will be built into violinist Russell Sneior's instrument. FOH engineer John Burton has also been using Spirit's Folio Rac Pac on the tour. Tel: +44 (0)1707 665000

Stolen gear on the net

A free World Wide Web service listing stolen music or audio equipment has been announced by John Farrell at Sonic State. Victims of theft can, however, simply fax or phone details to Sonic State. The Web site is at http://www.sonicstate.com. Tel: +44 (0)1225 337777; fax: +44 (0)1225 330331

HHB expands in US

HHB Communications has announced a major expansion of its US distribution. Fraser Jones, brother of UK MD Ian Jones, spearheads the US operation, Independent Audio in Portland, ME – which is known as HHB Communications, Inc. Tel: Maine 04101 1805

Dance Awards details announced

This year's International Dance Awards, in aid of the Dance Aid Trust, will be held at The Forum in London on March 28, sponsored by Levi Strauss UK. Tel: Laister Dickson PR +44 (0)171 439 7222

ILMC date confirmed

The eighth International Live Music Conference will be staged this year on March 1-3 at the Inter-Continental Hotel at Hamilton Place in London. ILMC: Tel +44 (0)171 405 4001

Showcase International Music Book

The 28th edition of the Directory Formerly Known As Kemps is now available at a price of £32 inc P&P. Tel: +44 (0)181 348 2332

Lite Structures in Germany

Lite Structures has announced the establishment of a new base in Lotte, Germany, in association with German partners Focus Showtechnic. Says MD Adrian Brooks: "This will take us one step closer to the important German market and improve the service we offer even further." Lite Structures also see the move as the first step to creating a next-day delivery service in Europe. Ex-LMP staff head the operation: (from L to R) Frank Rethmann, Raimund Riedel, Detlef Wiedenhoft, sales manager Ralph Kortmann and Jurgen Schulte. Tel (UK office): +44 (0)1924 240800

Creative Technology launches in US

Video production specialists Creative Technology, part of the Avesco Group, have launched a Stateside operation, CT Vision Inc, based in San Francisco. The office is run by former CT project manager Charlie Whittlock, and handles all types of projects in the corporate communication, broadcast and entertainments industries. Tel: +1 415 434 0188

Total Fabs unveil Stagemaker hoist

A new chain hoist from Verlinde has been launched by UK distributor Total Fabrications. The Li10 hoist has a 1-tonne capacity, a totally enclosed Class F motor, built-in weight overload limiting device, adjustable upper and lower limit switches, low voltage control, 130ft-capacity chain bag and folding handles. Said MD Chris Cronin: "The reponse to it at LDI was incredible." Tel: +44 (0)121 772 5234

Sound City '96 details

The week-long music festival in Leeds from April 7 to 13, Sound City '96, is being co-ordinated by Radio 1, rthe BPI, the MU and Leeds City Council. A major show at the Town & Country Club on the 8th will feature the Manic Street Preachers, supported by rising stars Cast. Tel: 01922 20123

LIGHTING NEWS *in brief*

Wybron, Theatre Projects sign Autopilot deal

A deal has been announced between Wybron Inc and Theatre Projects/Concert Production Lighting to provide an exclusive UK rental service for the US manufacturer's revolutionary Autopilot system. Autopilot, launched in the US last year, is designed to allow intelligent lights to track performers in three-dimensional space in real time. TP/CPL are adding the system to their rental stocks. The system consists of a controller, four beltpacks and eight ceiling receivers, and is fully DMX-compatible. Theatre Projects: Tel +44 (0)181 575 5555

Stardraw 2D launched

The long-awaited Stardraw 2D CAD software has been launched by Starlite Systems. The 32-bit Windows program allows complete virtual assembly of a complex lighting plot and comes with synbols of all the popular truss and lighting fixtures and Rosco and Lee gels – more can be added optionally. LIVE! will be reviewing Stardraw 2D in the near future. Tel: +44 (0)171 511 4400

Studio Color demos announced

Lightfactor sales has revealed dates of the first full demos of High End Systems' Studio Color wash luminaire. The dates, at Lightfactor's west Lodon HQ, are March 19, 20 and 21. Tel: +44 (0)181 575 5566

advantage DDA

CS3 for compact value

DDA's compact CS3 promises the 'DDA Advantage' – sonic transparency with versatile stereo mixing features – at the lowest price point yet from this marque. It's aimed at installations, live concert and theatre applications. Features include LCR output signal panning, solo-in-place monitoring, a fully-featured stereo input section, a semi-modular layout, and a 3-Year Warranty. **Zenon Schoepe** asks: will the CS3 meet its guarantee to keep you working with confidence?

There are a number of things you have to remind yourself of when looking at the CS3; DDA may have a profile that places it quite firmly in the 'middle desk sector' – but this is by far the cheapest desk they've ever produced.

A brand new design that was launched in the UK at the Live! show last month, it is clearly aimed at the Soundcraft K1 area. 'CS' stood originally for 'Contractor Series', which was its development moniker as a response to the needs of US contractors, but it's very much more exciting than that tag would suggest and the console spans comfortably into live sound, installations and even a bit of multitrack recording. It is a desk with very broad appeal.

Electronically it shares lineage with the more upmarket DDA QII and Forum. In particular it has the LCR output panning introduced on the QII plus four discrete groups, packaged together in a board that is available in 16, 24, 32 and 40 channel frames with six auxes and 3-band EQ. To this you should add four stereo returns with full routing as standard – and the knowledge that stereo input channels are a-coming.

Physically it's a classy bit of metalwork with a comfortable rake, good, positive switches and recessed pots that can't fall (or be pulled) off. However, those of a banana-bunch hand disposition are going to need tweezers as the caps are very dinky.

While the channels are arranged in 4-strip blocks the PCBs are in fact mounted vertically. Transformers are an option, as is auto switch-over on the power supply.

All connectors are balanced aside from channel, group, aux, and LCR inserts and the channel direct outs. Line and stereo effects inputs are on jacks; everything else is on XLRs with the concession of phonos for tape playback and record.

But perhaps most interestingly and unusually, the CS3 comes with a 3-year (presumably unlimited mileage) warranty. Is this the start of something?

Channels

Input strips get individually-switched phantom power and mic/line selection running to a gain pot covering 20-70dB and -10dB to +20dB respectively. EQ starts with a 18dB/octave 80Hz high pass and ±15dB fixed at 50Hz and 12kHz. The mid is fully parametric with ±15dB again over 500Hz to 15kHz with the Q variable from 0.7 to 4.5. That's pretty handy – although the lack of an EQ bypass switch isn't.

Of the six auxes, 1 and 2 are pre-fader, 3 and 4 are switchable pre/post, while 5 and 6 are predictably post-fader – although a host of internal link options can modify this state of play and even alter the function of the pre/post switch.

The pan pot works in conjunction with a switch that selects LR or LCR panning, the latter option dividing the pot between three distinct points in its travel. The signal is routed to the LR or LCR busses depending on the position of the aforementioned switch plus the mono output when working in LR mode. The pan pot can also be switched into the routing to the four separate groups, and can be switrched directly to a subgroup pre-pan pot, enabling a separate feed to be set up. The whole lot is capped off with a Cut, PFL (solo in place is set in the master section), signal present and peak LEDs. Each channel also has a remote connector socket for muting it externally or grounding something from the Cut button.

Groups/Master

Effects returns on long throw faders can be routed to the stereo and mono outputs and the four groups on a balance pot, while groups can choose between LR and mono or LCR through a pan. They have PFL and AFL respectively.

Metering on the groups and LCR outputs is on LED bargraphs with VU ballistics and unique Bus Peak LEDs (to monitor internal bus levels and pick up on potential overloads there). The mono and LR outputs have their own faders, with a switch to route the LR to the mono bus, while talkback can be routed to the paired auxes, LCR and the groups. You can monitor the LR and/or the mono, or the playback section, and record the event for posterity on a feed prior to the insert and the main faders.

Impressions

The CS3 has a good front end although I was a bit puzzled by the peak LEDs – they seemed to come on too early some of the time and too late at others. The EQ is alright for what is effectively one decent band and a treble'n'bass. In such a scenario, the fact that the mid sweeps so far is helpful – broader bandwidth settings sound sweetest.

The LCR facility is a definite bonus and while you've probably managed so far without it, you might be tempted to splash out on an extra channel of amp and cab if you had it. It's certainly better than plain stereo.

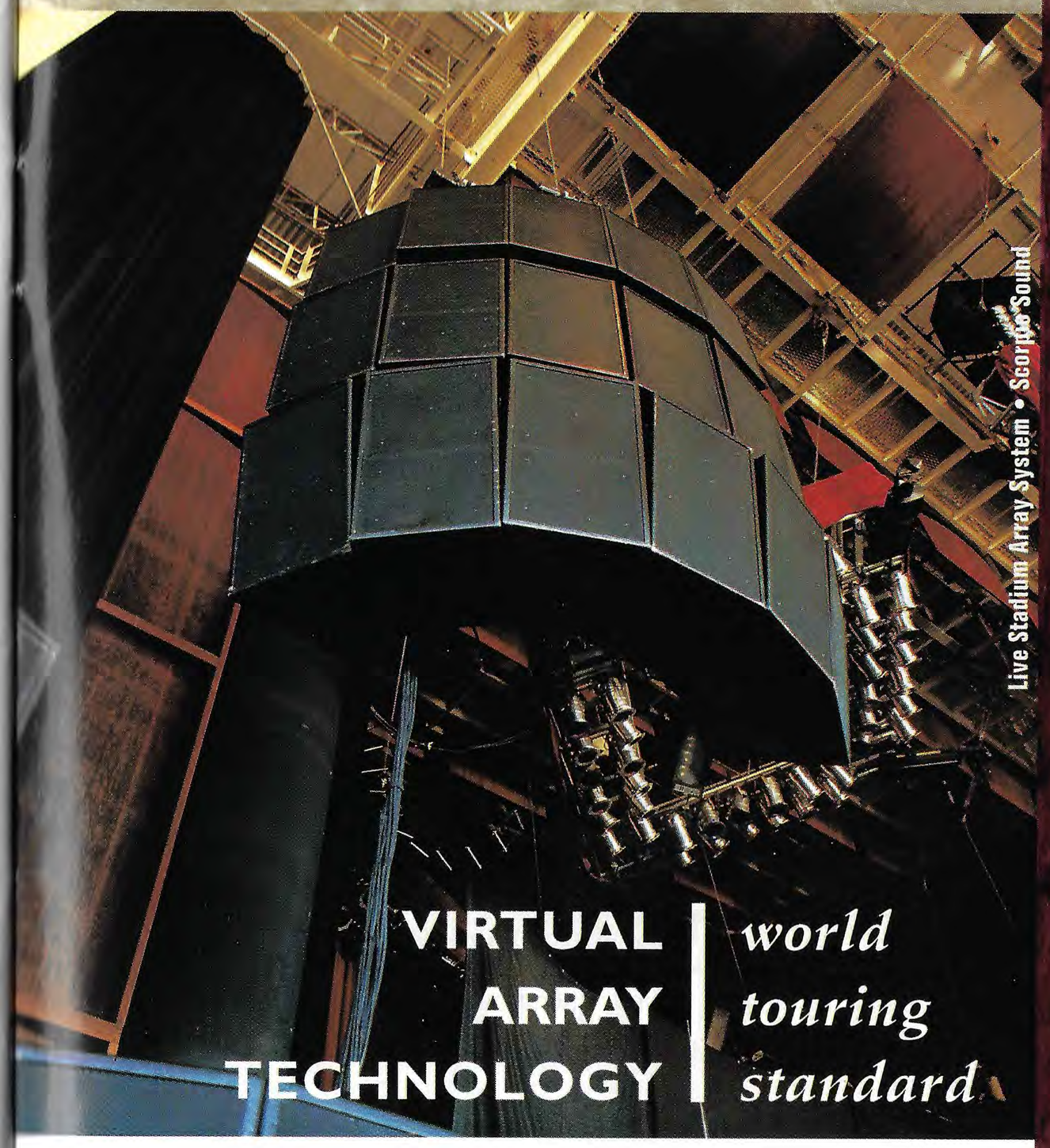
The absence of an EQ bypass and the tiny pot caps are two things that do give the price away. The latter is an irritation: if you do ever need to re-centre the EQ then the size of the caps (and the fact that they're not very tall – there's not much to grab in a hurry) will aggravate the business.

These things aside, the CS3 represents outstanding value for money and it's clearly well built. Other desks in this price range may out-do the new DDA on features and things like additional inputs, but the CS3 undoubtedly distinguishes itself elsewhere in terms of its pro spec – including remote switch access, aux inserts and loads of XLRs.

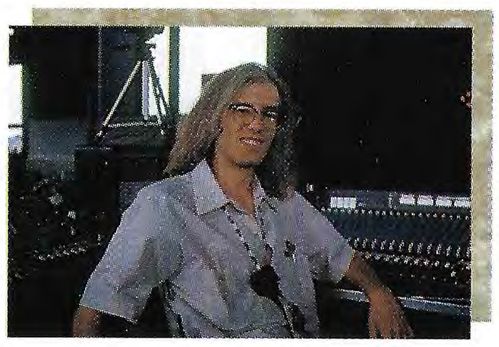
Look at it as an extremely cheap and compact pro desk. Verdict: Investigate. ■ **live!**

"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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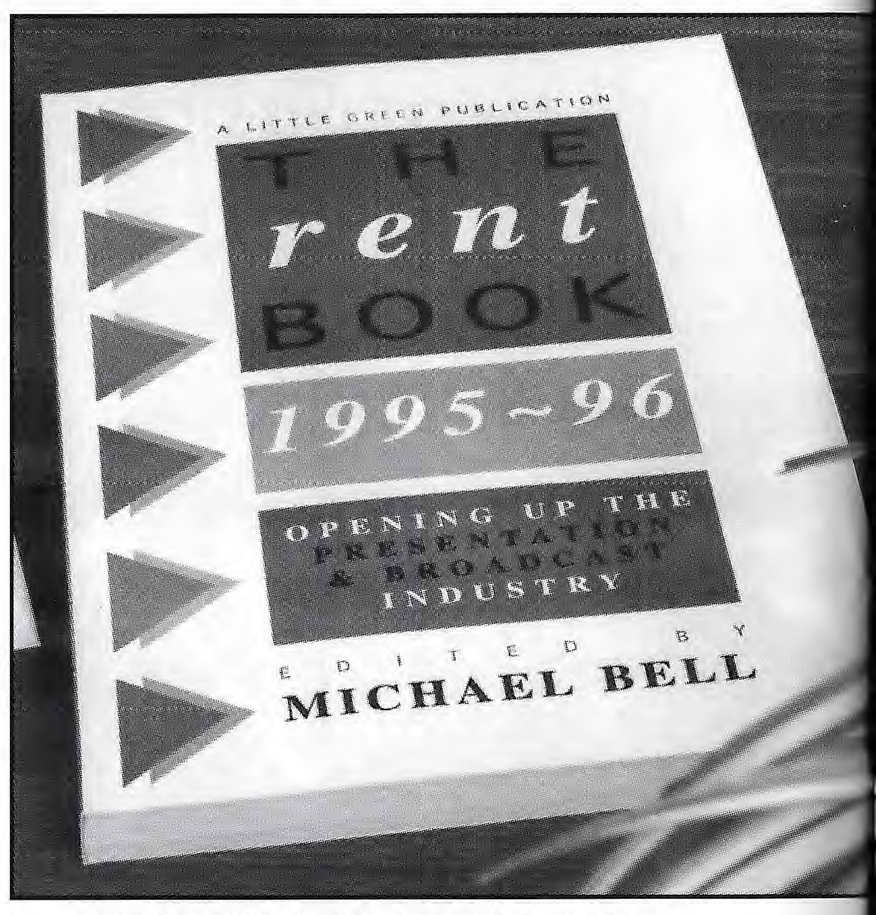
the next directory?

the rent book



The Rent Book 1995-6: 24-hour contact numbers and much more

Those among you who know Mike Bell, and I can't imagine there are many who don't, will probably regard him as "the man of a thousand jobs", for there cannot be many people who have had as diverse a working life as this particular jack-of-all-trades, master-of-some (his own words, if I remember correctly.) Several of his previous incarnations have been as operations manager for various hire companies – Paul Farrah Sound, Entec, Creative Technology – and consequently much of his time has been spent chasing around, rustling up kit for shows that don't have any, and developing severe "telephone ear" in the process. We all know how it is.

It's probably not surprising, therefore, that his latest venture, *The Rent Book*, is a very commendable attempt at creating the ultimate user-friendly technical facilities directory for the Presentation and Broadcast industries. "What about Rock 'n' Roll?", I hear the unshaven among you cry. It wouldn't fit on the cover, I guess. Essentially, if you've ever been desperate for a delay, short of a spider or in need of a Nexo, this is aimed at you – especially if you happen to be in Skegness.

Mike's philosophy is to provide easy access to comprehensive information on rental companies by publishing as much detail on them as possible – in many cases complete ratecards – and linking that to a geographical index. The exclusion of bouncy castle hire, novelty acts and escapologists makes for a very rental company-friendly directory.

Those that have participated in this first edition by supplying more than an just an address and 'phone number have a header page and three figure code, of which the first figure is defined by their geographical location (0 for London, 1 for East Anglia, 2 for the South West, etc). The header page tells you where the company comes from, who they are and which services are on offer. This, along with the ratecards, comprises section 1. With the amount of detail listed given a good whizz in the database mixer in Mike's PC, a large, very specific list of equipment forms section 2.

In addition, Mr Bell's extensive address book has been included as a regional listing, giving outline information on services provided by many more companies in the industry. This makes up section 3.

So does it work? Imagine yourself stuck in the Gisburn Enormodome, and you're fresh out of Aural Enhancers. Check out the map at the back, and you'll see that number 5 is your area. Under section 2, locate Aural Enhancers and look for a three-figure number beginning with 5. In this case, that would give you the code '516', and a quick glance at the numerical index at the front tells us that the ubiquitous Wigwam can come up with the goods (bless 'em), and that they can be found between pages 300-307. Call Mr Hill, accept that you are a Southern jessie, and get him to send one over pronto. Yes, it works.

In conclusion, Mike Bell has created a potential monster, albeit a friendly one – as a close look at this handy tome will reveal, the potential quantity of information will be huge, should more companies wish to get on-board. Fortunately, technology is at hand, and CD-ROM beckons. *The Rent Book* for Windows has to be the way ahead, as the hard version has the potential to be severely rainforest-detrimental. If he can keep it moving ahead, Bell has a secure future with his new baby. Nice one, Mr.B. ■ **live!**

Simon Honywill

***The Rent Book** is published by Little Green Publications Ltd.*
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MAKING

carmen allestun beckons in the spring's activities

With plenty of tales of debauchery and indiscretion following the ***LIVE!* Awards**, now seemingly slipping into a distant past, the pace for 1996 is already breaking into a jaunty canter. Many of the industry's mavericks are taking the opportunity to fit in skiing holidays. For some reason this activity seems to be unusually popular in our industry...it must have something to do with the speed and the snow!

However, the traditionally quiet time of the year is now in its twilight weeks; Spring and activity are prominent on the horizon; and performances, events, tours and shows promise irony and surprise as an interesting year unfolds.

With the rental companies either being exceptionally hectic or very quiet during this part of the season, needless to say the blustery, bluesy January and February weeks throw some interesting anomalies onto the wall-charts. **Skan** have been keeping themselves occupied with sound for **The Kelly Family**, who are massive in Germany, where they can sell out 6-7,000 seater venues – while here in the UK they only manage shopping malls and schools! Skan are also about to tour with Japanese Techno star **Ken Ilshi** at the end of the month, proving there's nothing like variety to keep the turnover bubbling. At the end of the month Skan will be returning to their more conventional **Megadog** work.

The Spot Co's Ben Sullivan is celebrating being off crutches for the first time in three months after breaking an ankle during the snowboarding championships in Covent Garden last year. Their major event of the month is the opening of the **World Cup Cricket** in **Calcutta**, for which they've supplied colossal volumes of gear including over 50 moving lights (Golden Scans and NATs), several hundred metres of trussing plus **Chris Craig**, **Nathan Matthews**, **Mark Hitchcock** (**Scratch**) and **Ian Neal** (**Bean**). Spotties also have numerous exhibitions including one in **Cuba**, equipment supply for film shoots at **Shepperton** and **Pinewood** Studios, and moving lights on **Pulp** and **The Brits**. Pete Miles predicts a busy year and says things will really start kicking in towards the end of February. **LD Gerry Caulderhead** is out in America with **Bush**, while **Chris Hawkes** has been designing and programming his show for a massive dance event in France at the end of the month with a WYSIWYG system and Whole Hog.

Capital Sound are covering audio for the aforementioned **World Cup Cricket** opening, and continue to service the **Beauty and The Beast On Ice** tour which runs until August. **Phase 5** in Liverpool continued with their usual clubs plus one new one, **The Park Hall** in Charnock Richards. Although tours have been a bit thin on ground for them, they report their best January on record thanks to a healthy glut of dry-hires and the completion of a contract to light **Portsmouth Castle** over Xmas and the New Year period.

Pulp are the latest Britpop stars to move up to arena venues. Their visuals will feature video projection from **PSL,** who will also feature on the **Tori Amos** Tour (**LD Simon Sidi**). Other current work for PSL includes **The Tenerife Carnival**, **Levi**'s promotional tour (with **Chris Vaughan**, **Simon Tutchener** and a pair of **Take That**-ers also on board) and video and slide projection at **Turtle Key Arts Theatre** in Fulham for a production of **Artemisia**.

Pulp (**LD LIVE! Award winner Dave Byars**, operator **Phydeaux MacAvoy**) are one of the bands being looked after by **Entec Lighting**; others include **Gene** (**LD Pip Rhodes**), **Ruby** (**LD Adam Stevenson**), **Laxton Superb** (**LD Pete Sarson**) and **Blur**, who are using an Entec strobe system in the US. On the television front, Entec Lighting have Channel Four's **Thank Fuck It's Friday** show (**LDs Alex Gurdon and Miec Heggett**) and **The Brit Awards** (**LD Mike Sutcliffe**, operator **Patrick Marks**). They kicked-off the new year by purchasing two new **Avolites** desks – another **Sapphire** and their first **Diamond II**.

Concert Sound are ready to embark on the February/March **Eric Clapton Albert Hall** residency (**FOH Robert Collins, monitors Kerry Lewis**). They also have systems on the **R Kelly** tour (**FOH Tim Colvard, monitors William Neally**), **Mike and The Mechanics** (**FOH Privet**) and on-going work with the **London Towers Basketball** team.

Supermick do the **Leopards Basketball** team in **London Arena**; have just finished **Runrig** (**LD Alec Nisic**) and have up-coming work with **Christy Moore** in Europe (**LD Danny Evans**), **The Saw Doctors** (**LD Rob Jones**), **Shirley Bassey** in Europe (**LD Steve Hall**) and **R Kelly** (**LD Huggy Carter, operator Rock Bell**). **Peter Clarke** comments that Supermick's quote files look healthy.

SSE are busy with **Eternal** (**FOH Andy May, monitors Bunny Warren**), **Pulp** (**FOH Simon Dawson**, **monitors Justin Grearly**) and **Tori Amos** (**FOH Mark Hawley**, **monitors Marcel Van Limbeek**). Besides sound, they are also providing sets for these three tours, and **Chris Beale** reports that this particular expansion of the business is proving a popular one. Other current work for SSE includes **Levi**'s promotional tour, **AC/DC** in the US, providing the monitor system in conjunction with **DB Sound** who are doing the boxes (**FOH Pablo Boothroyd**, **monitors Grubby Callis**); and on the TV front SSE have four monitor systems on **The White Room** and three stages'-worth of kit for live acts on **Hotel Babylon**. They also have a **Valentines Day Radio One** special with **Sting**.

Neg Earth report that summer bookings are already looking good, and in the meantime they're bustling with tours including **Toto** (**LDs Andy Doig** and **Dave Hill**), **Michael Bolton** (**LD Peter Morse**), **Lenny Kravitz** (**LD Jon Pollack**), **Echobelly** (**LD Max Conwell**), **Riverdance** in Ireland (**LD Rupert Murray**, **operator Dennis Gardiner**) and **Melissa Etheridge** (**LD Scott Holthouse**). They also have **The Blues Brothers** and basketball ongoing, a one-off for **Air Lingus** in Eire and a load of gear on sub-hire. Recent new purchases include two new **Avo dimmers**.

Wigwam are busy with their "usual" theatre tours, plus rock 'n' roll work with **PJ & Duncan**, **Echobelly**, **East 17** and **The Hollies** (whether the latter falls strictly into the rock 'n' roll category is debatable!). Rumour has it that **Chris Hill** has been banned from his local for rowdy behaviour. Chris says it was just capricious post-footie spirits, and informs **LIVE!** that, as far as he is concerned, the ban is temporary (i.e., until he pulls himself together!).

Tour Tech are working with **LIVE! Gold Award** winners (for best Small/Medium Tour) **The Levellers** (**FOH Mark Jones**), and have a large production going out with **Goldie**. The idea for the latter is to evoke the feel of a club rather than a conventional stage/audience appearance; **Dick Rabel** himself is mixing, and it sounds like one that shouldn't be missed.

CPL have the **Beauty and the Beast On Ice** show (someone has mischievously alleged that Chris Hill is playing The Beast in his spare time!) with **LD Mick Healy** and set by **Brilliant Stages** and the **Levi**'s road show (**LD Simon Tutchener**), **Vanessa Mae,** and the **Tenerife Carnival**. **Vari-Lite Europe** are as busy as you'd expect, with systems on **Simply Red** (**LD Patrick Wodroffe**, **operator Mark Payne**, set designed by **Mark Fisher** and built by **Brilliant Stages**), **David Bowie** (**LD Roy Bennett**), **Toto**, **Michael Bolton**, **Eric Clapton** (**operator Andy Gibbs**), **Mike and The Mechanics** (**LD Alan Parker**), **Gene** and **Melissa Etheridge**. **Brilliant Stages** have also constructed the set for **AC/DC**'s world tour, another **Mark Fisher** design that will be seen in the UK over the summer.

LSD are also getting up to speed. New work includes **Tori Amos**, **Black Grape** (**LD Mikey Howard** – LIVE! Silver Award winner for **Oasis**), **Deep Purple**, **Rolla Rock** at Wembley, **Eric Clapton** and **Tina Turner**; while ongoing work includes **The White Room**, **Oasis**, **David Bowie**, **Page & Plant** and **AC/DC**.

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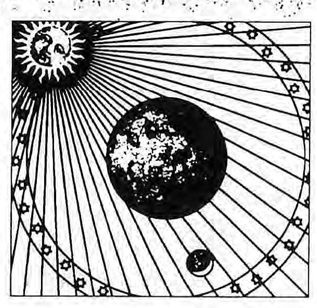

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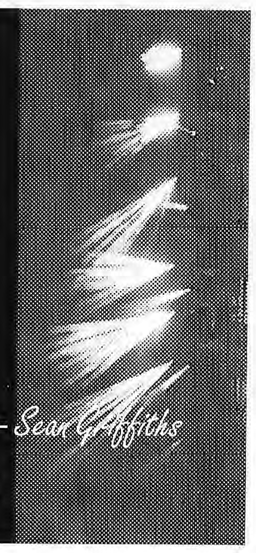

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up the truss

with **Tim Roberts**

Welcome one and all to the glorious world of Trusshood.

As the nation slides icily into the most tedious month of February, I grapple to fully recover mental and bodily functions following the LIVE! Awards Dinner.

It wasn't so much the Dinner itself – admirably hosted by Mr Holland, and marvellously undermined by voluminous shouting from representatives of a certain West London lighting hire company – no, the psychic and biochemical damage was sustained during a frantic and lengthy whist drive in Room 666 following the main event.

All was going smoothly until the arrival of a sales team from the Medellin Cartel, at which point things became a little confused. Suffice to say I awoke naked at 6.20 am in a mail sack on Sunderland station.

This is, I warrant, an uncomfortable start to the morning, but it was the brisk removal, by a member of Railtrack staff, of the gaffa-tape codpiece someone had applied to me during the night, that really brought things to a head.

You can rest assured that I will leave no turn unstoned until I track down the culprits.....

Mind you, worse still than my own personal predicament was the dismal whingeing from certain un-named punters at the Awards Dinner that they were forced to eat – can you imagine it? – *vegetarian food*. Even a complimentary bottle of bubbly or three failed to satisfy their blood-lust. Shame on you! Eight weeks on Linda McCartney's "Totally Tofu Tour" should sort out your gastrically-challenged griping.

News also reaches me that our amiable host, Mr Holland, might be something of a technophobic luddite. No sooner (allegedly) had Mr H. been fitted with a sexy new transmitter gizmo that allows Scans to automatically track the wearer than he (allegedly) turned the bloody thing off and stuffed it in his pocket.

*****

Major thanks are due to all at the LIVE! office and the various suppliers of equipment and services who created such a great evening.

Special mention to Gayle at Vari-Lite Europe for supplying the fabulous *Up The Truss* Award, the Big Red One, which was presented by my own fair hand to the BBC's Mrs Mills for her ongoing services to Trussdom.

Being somewhat shy of publicity, Mrs M. managed to preserve her modesty by accepting the Award whilst wearing a rather fetching Gucci Cocktail Flightcase – all the rage on the Paris catwalks, I believe. I look forward to hearing more from her and her colleagues in the near future.

*****

Given such a wonderful kick-start to the year it was difficult to see how 1996 could be anything but a downhill slide – especially given the cancellation of Glasto '96 – until the arrival of a fax from a Mr John Richards, who in order to win a fabulous LIVE! MagLite relates an Olympic tale of Spanish folk, thus brightening our dreary days.

Señor Richards is obviously something of a dab hand with the word processor...so here he is, in his own words...

"In order to raise enormously heavy 10K's to the height required to light the Barcelona Olympic Stadium, large scaff towers reaching almost to the ionosphere were required. A team of beefy scaffers was despatched and beavered away, aided by a trusty fork-lift rented from the local Hertz man. *Toro* they call them, on account of the horns (fork-lifts, that is, not Hertz Rental men).

Security around the stadium was, as you might imagine, pretty tight. One day it proved necessary to drive the fork-lift some 50 metres along the Spanish highway, at which point a bored Guarda called 'Halt!'. A licence was demanded, road tax and all the rest. A sweaty shrug was the scaffie's only possible response. And 'get out' was the rather obvious translation of the Guarda's gestures.

Now what the scaffie knew and the Guarda didn't was that the truck's hand brake didn't work too well. Not at all, actually. And it was on a hill, with its horns pointing at a line of parked cars. Despite brave effort, this point could not be made to the heavily-armed officer. Slow, loud and fluent Queen's English was obviously harder to interpret than the cocked and levelled Uzi pointing at his chest, so the scaffie vacated his cab, pronto.

El Toro duly rolled slowly downhill and impaled a couple of cars – rented from Hertz, apparently. Reinforcement Guarda arrived, waving more guns, and arrested not the driver nor the crew, but the fork-lift. Where it lay. With its lights on.

Now, Spain has a number of Police forces (five at the last count) and overnight a different one turned up, found *El Toro,* and promptly clamped it for being illegally parked.

Come daybreak the two forces faced-off, one demanding El Toro's immediate removal from the main gate, the other a vast amount of pesetas before de-clamping could take place – and preferably from the rival policemen, as the vehicle was most definitely within their jurisdiction when the offence was committed.

And so *El Toro* languished for six weeks, right in the middle of the main forecourt of the Olympic Stadium. Fences were built round it, flower beds arranged, bunting strung and the flame tested. Until, a few hours before the opening ceremony (a ceremony minus the four wooden rings which took four years to build but then fell down twenty minutes after erection....but that's another story) it was finally dragged roughly to one side, where, as far as we know, it languishes still."

Excellent work Mr Richards: I think you deserve an Olympic torch all of your own, so stand by to receive your LIVE! Mini MagLite.

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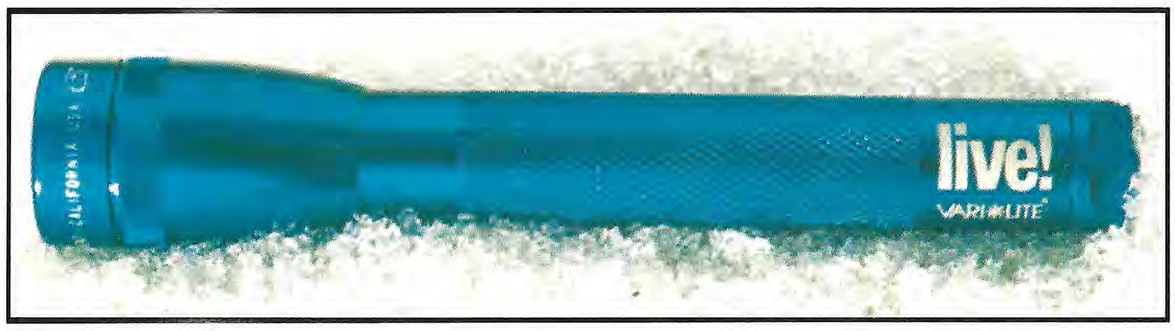

We're offering a unique prize for the best 'Truss' tale sent to *Up The Truss* every month. A metallic blue LIVE! Mini MagLite® – personally laser-engraved by Vari-Lite Europe with your own name – can be yours. Just share your tales of terror from the road with Tim Roberts at *Up The Truss*. Fax: +44 (0)1322 615636, Tel: +44 (0)1322 660070; or e-mail Mike Lethby at: 101363,1505.compuserv.com.

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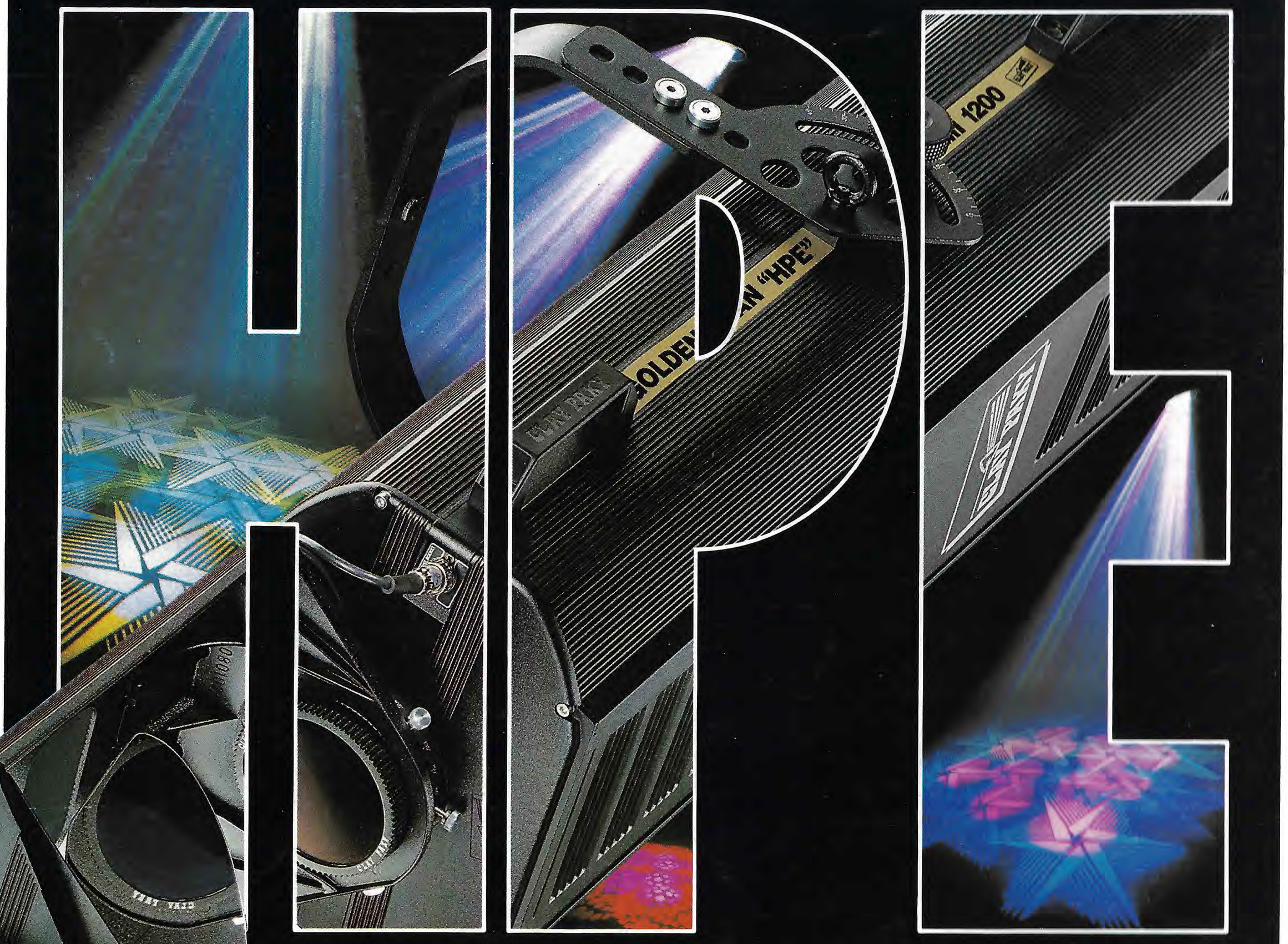

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