

JAPAN/TOURING

FM PRODUCTIONS CREATE A MOVABLE ARENA

Las Vegas illusionists Siegfried & Roy are in Osaka through May 89 on the second leg of their world tour, performing in a high-tech stage setting designed by Romaine Johnston of Los Angeles and built by FM Productions of San Francisco. This movable arena, which recently travelled from Tokyo to Osaka and is moving to New York City in June, is a 36 meter high tented theatre built to hold a crowd of approximately 3,000.

"This is a structurally unique piece. To our knowledge, nothing like it has ever been built before," notes FM project manager, Mark Hannon. "Unlike most permanent arenas or theatres, the temporary tent in which Siegfried & Roy are performing in Japan provides no structural support for the set.

Therefore, in order to make the Tokyo and Osaka venues workable, we've had to create a set that is en-

tirely self-supporting. Since the set design includes a massive proscenium arch with a 24 meter opening, this was quite a challenge."

In addition to being self-supporting, the set had to meet a number of other challenges necessary to accommodate Siegfried and Roy's act. For instance, the mechanics must be extremely precise in order to accommodate the illusions that make up the show, including the transformation of a woman into a 310 kg white tiger. It also must be sturdy enough to bear the weight of a 3,150 kg elephant, which appears on stage only to vanish into thin air.

The set also had to be designed in such a way that it could be easily disassembled and air freighted to Japan and back to New York. "This is not like an outdoor rock and roll show, where you might get away with simply covering a scaf-

folding with a scrim. We've had to build a structure that ships easily and travels well, but also provides the elegant setting of a formal theatre," Hannon said.

Steel trussing and turntables are integral to the production, but most details of the design are confidential, Hannon said. The set was built at FM's facilities in California, and was transported to Las Vegas in September 88 for several weeks of rehearsals. It was shipped to Japan that October, where an FM crew spent a week re-assembling the pieces for several weeks of rehearsals in preparation for opening night.

The show, entitled *Illusions*, has lighting by Marilyn Lowey, who is based in Los Angeles, with laser effects produced by Laser Media of Los Angeles.

APS



The Siegfried & Roy travelling arena, is a massive 36 meter high tented theatre built to hold a crowd of 3,000. The set had to be self-supporting and meet a number of unique specifications for the show, such as bearing the weight of a 3,150 kg elephant.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

INSTALLATIONS

The Rainbow Scroller, manufactured by **Camelont AB** of Sweden, and distributed by M & M Lighting in the UK, will be used for the Wayne Sleep concerts touring the UK throughout November 89. LD Durham Marengi says that the scrollers are being used for cross stage lighting at stage level on Sil 30 lanterns. . . **Raper & Wayman** have supplied and installed a new sound system for the Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre. The nucleus of the system is an Industrial Research 16-channel automated microphone mixer rackmounted in tandem with a Transversal Equaliser module.

UK/INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

THE NATIONAL GOES INTERNATIONAL

From May through October 1989, the National Theatre will add an international flavour to its design roster with theatrical productions from Argentina, America, the USSR, and Japan, in *International Theatre 89*, the National's second worldwide theatre series. Opening the series in the Cottesloe, May 24-27, is *Tango Varsoviano (Warsaw Tango)* by the Teatro del Sur from Buenos Aires in their British debut. Sets, costumes, and lighting are by Alberto Felix Alberto, founder of the company, who also wrote and directed the production. American

designer Kevin Rigdon created the sets, lighting, and costumes (these in collaboration with Erin Quigley) for Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company production of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1) in the Lyttelton June 22 through July 1. Valery Levental is responsible for the sets and costumes for the Moscow Art theatre's production of *Uncle Vanya* to be seen in the Lyttelton September 14-16. The series will close in October with *The Double Suicide of Chikamatsu* by Tokyo's Ninagawa Company. All performances will be in their original language.

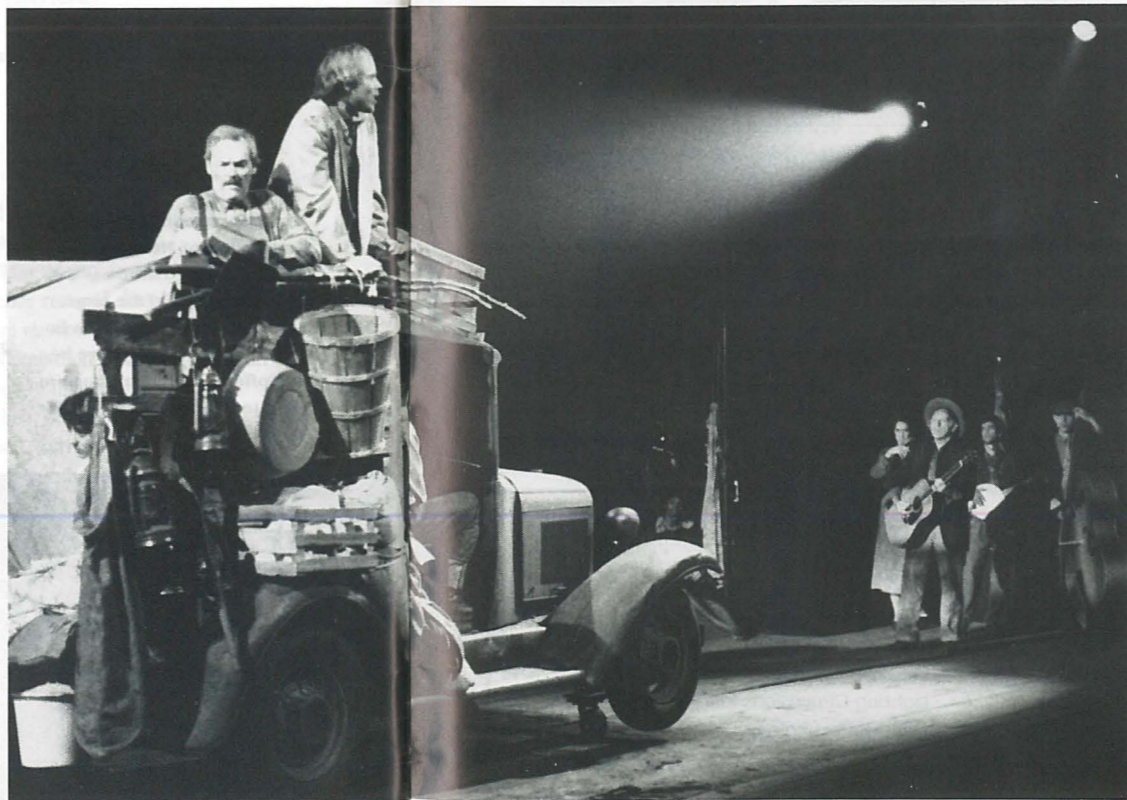


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