

DANCING TO A DISCO BEAT

PLASA 89

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As one entered the Olympia 2 Exhibition Hall in West London for the annual Professional Lighting and Sound Association Trade Show, 10 - 13 September, it was immediately apparent that the themes of this year's show were "Big," "Bright," and very, very "Loud." More than 150 companies from around the world were exhibiting at the show and each vied for visual and acoustic space with their dazzling, noisy neighbors. The show hosted 5,510 visitors. Seven hundred of these were from overseas — a 100% increase from last year. PLASA represents the effects end of the entertainment equipment market with sound system, discotheque paraphernalia, and concert lighting system manufacturers filling its membership.

However, the Light and Sound Show is now an integral part of the launch programme of many major companies, as well as being a forum for picking up remarkable gems — great little ideas from the back room of a two-man operation in the wilds of England that solve a myriad of lighting, sound, and presentation problems.

Michael Goldberg of M & M Lighting is somewhere between the two, with some superb market-led additions to his Rainbow Colour Scroller range in the Light Curtain Scroller and the Follow Spot Scroller. Both were available for close-up inspection at the show to the delight of many visitors who saw how simple, but practical, the units are.

Whilst Jem, the smoke machine manufacturers, and others had "Crackers," — cracked oil mist machines — visible on their stands, the only one I saw demonstrated, Reel EFX Junior, was by Goldberg. Cracked oil produces very fine, quickly dispersed mist that lingers evenly in the air from high up to the floor, not as thick as fog, but very practical in allowing light beam paths to show up in the air.

Rosco was on hand to introduce their

new 1300 economy model fog machine, using the same non-oil fluid as the 1500 and 4500 models.

Strand Lighting was offering the new Gemini 2 Plus, with control of 360 channels, facilities for two monitors and a link to an IBM PS/2 computer running Strand's PALS software for initiation of remote-control luminaire cues. The ability to receive dimmer profiles from Galaxy consoles and patch as non-dim features makes this a useful addition to the middle market of lighting consoles. Losing Lightboard M's manual faders, the

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Lightboard M Junior, also new at the show, is a cut-down version aimed by Strand at the disco and music markets.

Avolites has created the QM 500-TD Theatre Board, launched at the exhibition and developed from the famous QM music touring console. An integral intelligent display, 600 memories, 180 desk channels outputting through two DMX 512 ports, 40 dipless fade stacks, 3 1/2" disk drive and a very high standard of construction make this a serious contender in the theatre light console war. Avolites also presented a fully digital cross-patching terminal, a smart answer to the pin patch with 180 input channels and 512 dimmer outputs to USITT protocol all crammed into a 19-inch rack. Offering 26 custom curves, the Q-Patch is a superb addition to the sturdy Avolites range.

It was encouraging to see DMX 512 equipment arriving for use in Great Britain, and perhaps none more so than LMI's L86/IR and L86/15M digital control signal processors soon to be handled in the

UK by CCT. These superb products remove the need for hard patching, breakout panels or any of the paraphernalia associated with mixing consoles and dimmers — particularly in a touring situation. CCT/LMI also proudly showed their ultra-high density dimmer racks as a viable option for extending the European distributed dimmer approach into the United Kingdom. The racks will support 192 twenty amp dimmers or 384 ten amp dimmers in a dual chassis, and complement LMI's small, compact low-profile packs. CCT also introduced the Avab Expert board to PLASA.

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New disco lighting from Coemar includes the Jupiter, which uses 700w or 1200w MSR lamps, as well as the Brio, Jupiter's smaller brother. But the real attraction at Coemar was the Live Wire Performer. Introduced by Nick Bourne of Live Wire Systems, this system is made up of a network of invisible sensors which can measure the movement, speed, location, and voice of a performer on stage and can trigger sound, lights, lasers, and video. It is essentially made up of sensors of input devices, an interface, a computer, and an effect device — a light or laser for example. A variety of sensors are available, including individual infrared beams that are velocity sensitive to locate a performer