

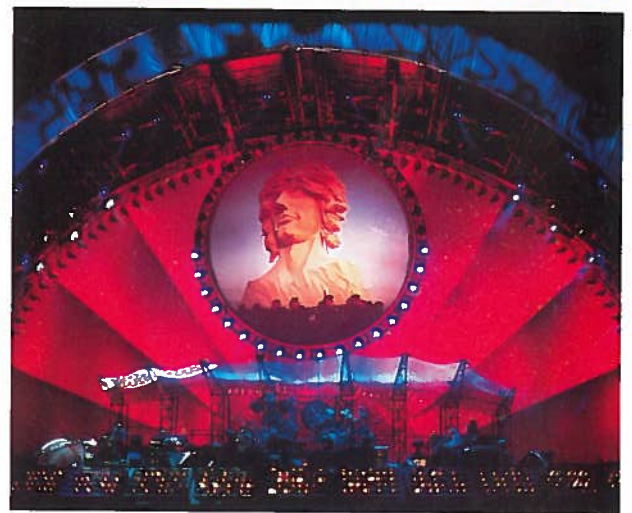
LIGHTING+SOUND

International



GLYNDEBOURNE OPERA HOUSE

PHOTO: RICHARD DAVIES



PINK FLOYD

PHOTO: MARK FISHER

- John Offord features the new Glyndebourne Opera House
- Tony Gottelier gets close-up on Pink Floyd at Dallas
- Edinburgh gets its Festival Theatre
- Basingstoke opens its new Anvil Concert Hall
- Diamonds and Sapphires: an up-date on Avolites
- Martin launch Wavefront Series

JUNE 1994

TALES FROM THE PINK FLOYD LOCKER ROOM

Tony Gottelier talks to the triumvirate of Brickman, Fisher and Williams, and charts the triumph of Pink Floyd's 'Division Bell' tour

It may not be appreciated in Europe, but in the USA the status of a football locker room is second only in sanctity to the Oval Office. And the Dallas Cowboy's locker room at Texas Stadium (I always thought it was called the Cow Palace, but perhaps that's somewhere else), is possibly one of the most revered. For me Texan stadiums conjure up images of rodeos, clouds of swirling dust, and petrified, lassoed steers being wrestled to the ground by sliding leather-clad and leather-faced machos for whom three Weetabix is a mid-meal snack and quiche something to be fed to the crows. Of course, the football team is inhabited by these same guy's bigger brothers, 8'3" in their stockinged feet, and twice the size in their battle dress. Instead of steers they wrestle with the giants on the opposite side of the field. At Texas Stadium, you can pay for a tour, the culmination of which is a visit to the Cowboy's sanctum, the locker room.

So there I was, Dallas in May and nothing could be further from that stereotype. Spring flowers and Texas Blue Bonnets in the verges of the Express Way, grey drizzle, torrential rain, more grey drizzle (it could be Manchester in March), tornado warnings on the TV, high winds, turbulence, airports closed. And for me the additional obstacle of a tempestuous PR person whose sole aim seems to be to stop me seeing the show. God and the PR person in tandem seem a formidable obstacle. (The stage has been designed, uniquely, to be waterproof and non-slip, so it can't be rained off can it? Can it?)

In the locker room at the Stadium, and not a cowboy in sight in any of the meanings of the word. Indeed the reverse: for this is the temporary production office of Pink Floyd super-coach Robbie Williams and his team. Certainly the tallest man there both physically and in concert industry stature, though even he cannot hold a candle to most of the team whose green room he occupies. Nevertheless, he is quite high enough off the deck to command respect from those he handles so efficiently - he has that air of certainty and the deep drawl to go with it. Williams is the Colonel of logistics, the master of organisation for a tour the scale of which beggars the imagination.

Three massive stage sets, the biggest ever, 60m wide by 22m deep by 23.5m high, containing 70 tons of steel, leapfrog across the continent in 33 trucks. It takes eight tour buses, a further 18 production, power and catering trucks and a crew of 161, requiring a pre-spend



An effect rarely seen since the sixties, a live liquid light show - but now on a 6K HMI Telejector.

of \$4 million and running costs of \$25 million. 60 performances in 40 stadiums in the United States in 13 weeks, to say nothing of Europe to follow and a potential audience of 5m in over 100 performances culminating at Earls Court in October. The main arched staging system takes two to three days for each of the three rigging crews to set up, and the production team overlap only 24 hours before a show and rig the equipment: in fact, Williams says that this can be done in a total of only three and a half days. It takes one day to dismantle and pack back into the same 11 trucks to be shipped off to the next gig but two.

All of this under the control of boss Williams, who came into the business, as everybody seems to, by complete accident. He once worked for the seminal Krishna Lights, as several others, now at the top of our industry, had done back in the sixties. He then headed off to the relatively saner atmosphere of a PA company and, being in the right place at the right time, he was there when the band needed a PA roady. "I did that for a while and when the band founded Brit Row, I went there to help set it up and ended up running it for 10 or 12

years," Williams wearily told me just before the night's performance. He went on the road with the Floyd in '87 and when he came back after two and a half years, Britannia Row seemed to be able to survive without him, so Williams became a freelance production manager. Aside from Pink Floyd he also handles The Cure, Pet Shop Boys and plenty of special events.

When I remarked, pointing out the self-evident, that it was a mammoth feat of organisation, Robbie, a man of few but carefully measured words, responded with: "From my point of view, the hardest part was putting it together at the beginning and getting it through rehearsals to the stage where it could, in fact, be toured."

So let's rewind to the beginning to see how that was achieved.

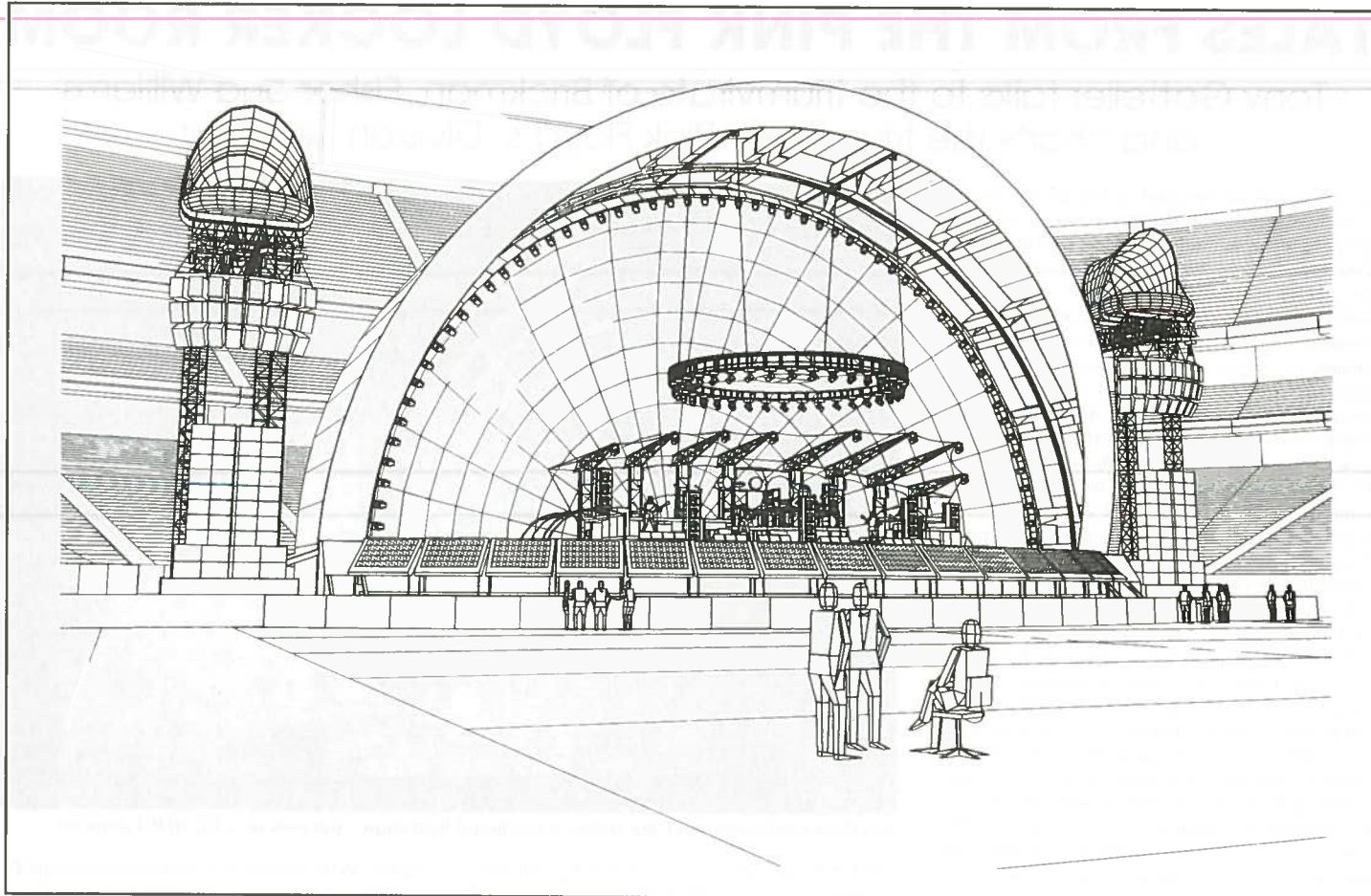
For me, it had all started at LDI 93 in Orlando when all the key players in the technological development of the latest Floyd phenomenon turned up to finalise plans and to make the last decisions about equipment for the tour. As I mentioned in L+SI at the time, set designer Mark Fisher was spotted atop the Tomcat stand holding planning meetings with Williams,



Computer modelling allowed the entire stage to be previewed in 3D.



The Telejector's deliver a Four I's image to the stage.



Face on CAD view of the stage showing the circular screen in mid-position and the Periaktioi.

Richard Hartman, the production team's Mr Fixit and a Tomcat affiliate, Tomcat's Mitch Clark, StageCo's Hedwig de Meyer and others.

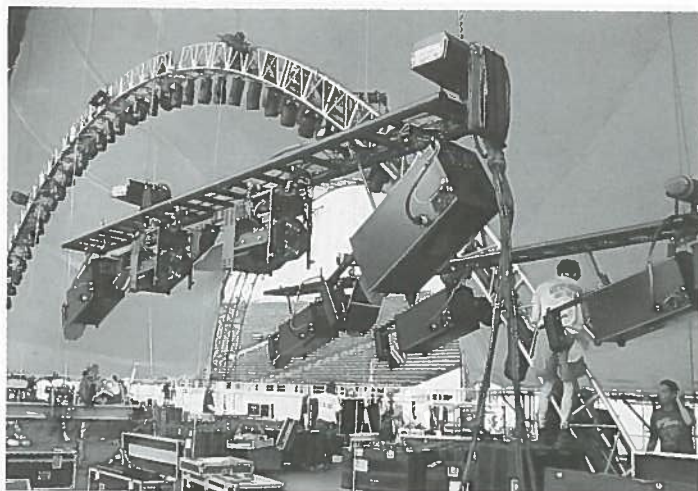
Meanwhile, the creative genius that is Marc Brickman was convincing himself that the Wholehog was actually the dog's testes in another part of the hall and networking with Brian Croft, Alan Thomson of Concert Productions and the Vari-Lite crew over his demanding requirements for their brand of magic lantern. (Who says trade shows are a waste of time!). There then followed a chance meeting with Brian Croft after dinner at the Peabody, and within days, my own partner Peter Wynne-Willson was also up to his armpits, at Brickman's request, in specials for the tour. The Floyd's original lighting designer of the sixties had finally returned to his alma mater, and joined the new creator for the nineties. Indeed, it now occurs to me that Peter would have been leaving the Floyd, just as Robbie Williams started as a PA roady. So you could say that this is the inside story.

Of course, for Mark Fisher, flying solo for the first time in years, it started a great deal earlier. He and Marc Brickman had set out 'to redefine the stadium experience', as the tour has been headlined, back in the summer of '93 in fact. "The band delegated a great deal to Marc Brickman who became the show director, rather than just the lighting designer, so he was the one who came up with all the wacky ideas, and it was my job to make them work and deliver them into practicality. Therefore, Robbie Williams and I were often the realizers of Brickman's sometimes rather weird ideas," explained Fisher.

The process was generally one of Brickman trying to vocalise what he saw in his imagination, and Fisher going off to produce sketches and drawings and returning later to ask if, and sometimes to insinuate that, what had been depicted was actually what had been envisaged in that fertile brain. As Brickman was, in all humility, to tell me: "I am very lucky that people put up with me just being a catalyst.

I can't draw, I am famous for napkins. Ultimately there are drawings somewhere but they are not from me, I never draw the props. It's all wrong really, I take all the credit and I am deeply grateful to them all for being so tolerant." In parallel, Robbie Williams and Fisher would be talking about how they would achieve, once Marc Brickman had said yes, what it was what he had in mind, and Fisher would produce drawings to show the band for their approval once it had been deemed feasible by Williams.

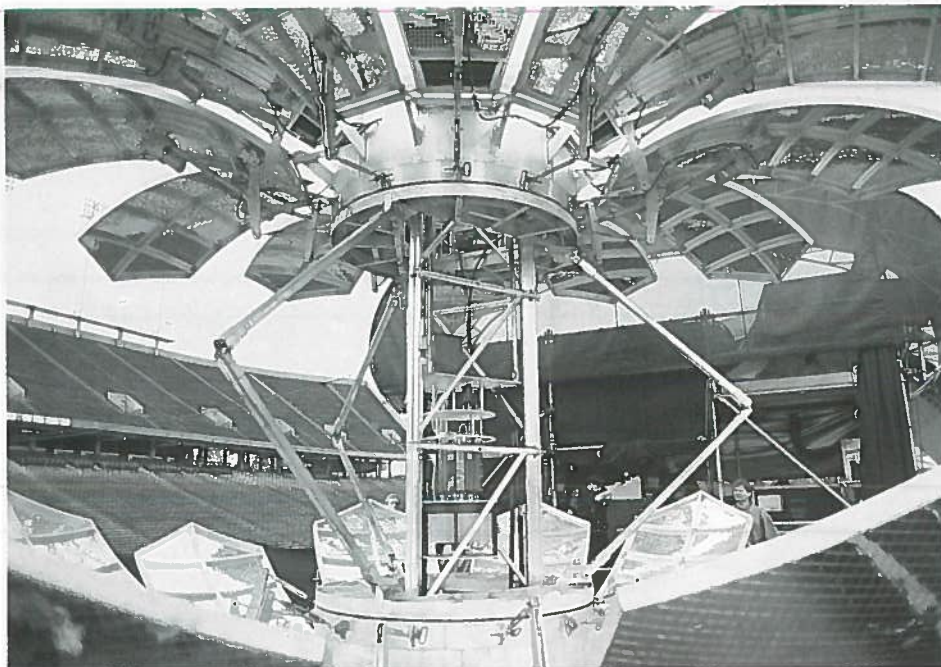
"It was a very free and profitable loop that produced these ideas. It worked very creatively because I find Brickman a very inspiring guy to work with. He is very volatile and provocative, but actually I get on well with people like that because they have a temperament which is in many ways the opposite to mine. Such individuals force you to do things you wouldn't necessarily do yourself in the usual way, and they make you think about things in ways you wouldn't normally, which is good. It means



The Telescans in mid flight to the truss.



Backstage during build-up.



The mirror ball in store like a vast silver spider all squashed flat.

keeping an open mind and never saying something can't be done." Though he is quick to heap deserving praise on the progenitor, by this stage there was clearly a lot of Fisher's renowned ingenuity in these designs.

"You should never say 'no' to someone like Brickman, because it's incredibly destructive to the relationship. If something is impossible, you find a way to do it that isn't and persuade him that this was what he had in mind in the first place." The true arch that would span the front of the stage like a great unsupported bridge of a proscenium is cited as an example of an impossible realization by Fisher. The original idea was conspicuously impossible to do, indeed crazy, but through a process of proposal and counter-proposal, what resulted finally was something which entirely convinced Brickman that it fulfilled his dream.

Fisher worked closely with Neil Thomas of engineers Atelier One, in the design of the stage structure, to find a solution to this problem. In the end it was typically the practical constraint of what was available in rental components from a supplier, in an erectable and demountable form, which won the day. Bearing in mind that everything would have to be made in triplicate, in order to deal with the geographical logistics, practicality was clearly essential. "StageCo came to us fairly early on with a proposal as to how to use their components to create the arch, and after looking at it we went with that," explained Fisher. Thenceforth, he simply kept a watching brief over the interaction between Atelier One and the Belgian StageCo's De Meyer. "Breaking the log jams when they occurred," is Fisher's delicate way of putting it.

In fact, the designer seems to have rediscovered himself in a new light in the process of working in direct interaction with fabricators and consultants, rather than carrying out all the design in-house as had been the case for ten years previously. Given half a chance he will wax at length about the wonders of the modern technology which enabled him to communicate with like minds across the globe to implement even the most complex design. As an example he cites computer modelling which enabled everyone to see the entire stage in three-dimensions on the screen of a 55MHz 486, something which would have required a substantial mainframe and unaffordable software just a few years ago. "I no longer see a ponderous in-house design

team as either necessary or desirable," the erudite architect told me. Indeed, he has thoroughly enjoyed the relationships he developed with kindred industry spirits, such as De Meyer, Charlie Kail and Mitch Clark, for all of whom he has the highest regard.

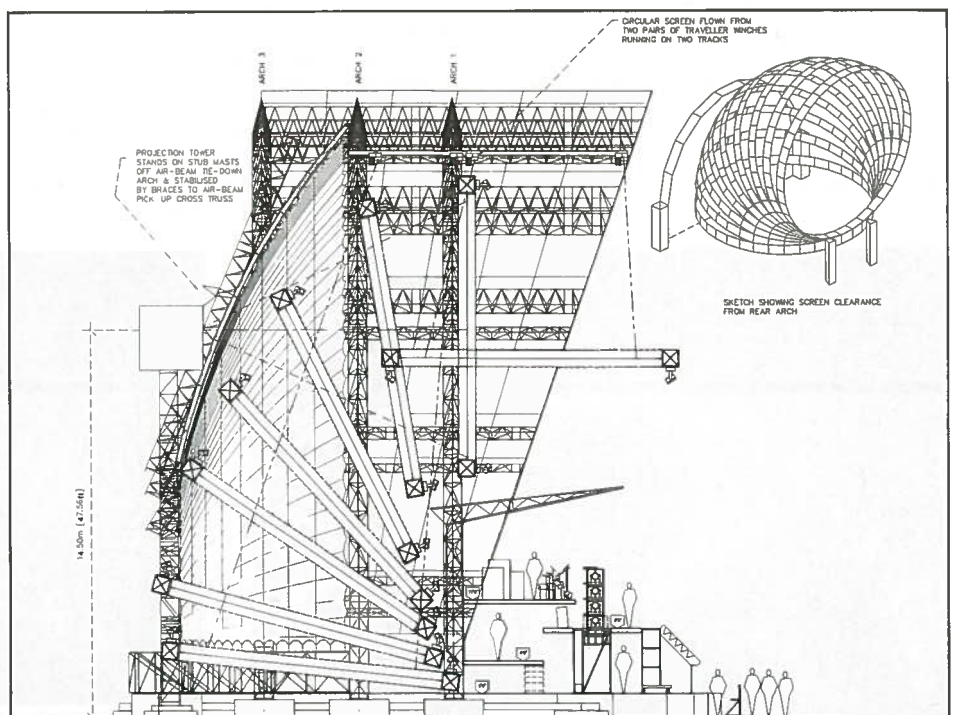
"The co-operation was so fantastic, it was more like a party most of the time, and the fact that we were all enjoying ourselves, more than anything else, was what made it all possible." It is a considerable valediction on the state of the industry that a man of Fisher's undoubted status and huge talent is happy to contemplate the freelance existence which, by its very nature, depends almost entirely on outside help. He is not a person whose temperament and professional training allows him to tread on ice without taking routine precautions, even though some would say that walking on water is not beyond him either. He takes risks, yes huge risks with his own conceptual designs, but these are generally the risks associated with the territory, albeit uncharted, and one always feels that they are entirely contained under his

control. He is enormously self-assured and comfortable with his own abilities, which can be quite intimidating to others, though I am sure he doesn't realise it.

Of course, in this case he was implementing someone else's conceptual designs and in such an imprecise creative process as that described, there are always going to be casualties. Some which occur later are more costly, others which are tipped out in the design process less so. Such was the scale of the injured list in the Floyd case, or 'hostages to impossibility' as Fisher likes to call them, that one item scrapped well before rehearsals was nothing less than a Brickman proposal to incorporate an Imax or Omnimax movie projection, neither of which were deemed bright enough for a screen of the huge scale intended. "My idea was to create a huge focus on the performance area," Brickman told me later. "To virtually dwarf the stadium, using the arch and the big screen technique to create an opening into another world." In the end, it was found that Telescan's new Telejector 6k HMI projectors outshone everything else on the planet and they were selected for still and animated large-frame slide projection, created by Four I's, as well as for partner Peter's liquid effects.

Here again there is an element of controversy. Those involved in the forward projections were apparently disappointed with the receptive quality of the material selected for the rear stage wall which served as the screen in place of a regular eye. According to Fisher it was especially made to look black when the lights are off, but sufficiently reflective otherwise. Nevertheless, the fabricators, Landrell Fabric Engineering, deserve considerable praise for their ingenious high-pressure, inflatable construction system which is virtually self-supporting with the help of water tanks as ballast.

Moving pictures were not out however, for one of the other main elements of the set was to be resurrected from the previous tour - a ten metre circular projection screen to be made this time by Tomcat. This was to be lifted and turned through 90 degrees from the floor of the stage to sit vertically above the heads of the band during the performance. Consisting of a ring of truss with a white, high transmission BP screen stretched across like a giant drum skin,



A cross-section showing the flight path of the circular screen



The circular screen in movie mode, a porthole onto an unreal world with imagery by Storm Thorgusson.

surrounded by VL2Bs and VL4s, it was to swing up in front of a crow's nest projection platform, rear stage. There sits a Bran Ferren-designed 70mm, 10k Xenon, SMPTE-controlled movie projector of 6,000 foot reel capacity. With special imagery conceived by Storm Thorgusson, the photographic half of the late-lamented Hypnosis duo, this was to conjure up an almost three-dimensional tunnel in the set - a virtual porthole on an unreal world.

Fisher shares with Brickman similar feelings about the scale of a stadium experience, but with a slightly different conceptual interpretation - that everything should be large enough to fit visually, hence the largest touring stage ever. "This is the first stadium show I've done which doesn't need FOH video, and the reason is very simple. The scale of the performance-setting rendered it unnecessary. This is where I think Madonna and others who use CCT get it wrong. Instead of concentrating the eye where it should be, on the stage, they are distracted to the screen. It's like comparing the impact of a television with a cinema

screen." In Fisher's book, rightly in my opinion, a rock show should be a different experience from watching the television. Brickman puts it this way: "If you walk to the very back row of the stadium, the stage looks even bigger than on a video screen. The energy must come forward and that is a very important part of a Floyd show. You should feel the scale and Mark Fisher really enabled me to achieve that."

So, while Brickman was involved early on in shaping it all, he then went off to do other things while Fisher and Williams et al put it together - by the beginning of August it was all set. At this point Charlie Kail's Brilliant Stages swung into action and commenced the stage construction which occupied their entire premises for weeks. Probably the most 'interesting' aspects of this were the five rows of Periaktoi set into the stage apron. Before you reach for your Ancient Greek dictionary, Periaktoi is the plural of the Greek word for what is best described as a Toblerone (actually I must be one of the few people on the planet who knows that, including Michael Caine.) So

you see there's nothing new under the sun, the Athenians had rotating billboards years BC!

However, it won't surprise you to know that the Brickman/Fisher/Kail version is hardly antediluvian in either concept or execution, nor is it by any means trivial. No less than 15 carts, each containing five 2.4m long toblorones, each with a facet of eight individually-controllable, high intensity, ultra-narrow beam 26v Par 46 lamps, a big transformer and a system of 12 slip-rings, combine to make the overall effect - a total, on its own, of 600 lighting control channels, 75 dimmer packs and 900 slip-rings! And a programmer's hell, for the idea was that it should be able to operate as a matrix - in fact, as a virtual newscaster! Even the Wholehog might have turned its snout up at the prospect. The other faces are simply mirror or black finished.

The control solution which presented itself, perhaps surprisingly in view of the rock industry's well known prejudice to anything which lacks manual faders, involved the maker of the PC-based rigging control system, Artistic



VL5s and Daleks combine for a big cyc effect.

photo: Lewis Lee



Crackling effects, startling colours and saturated hues from Rocklite's copper vapour laser.

License, being pressed into action. The motor control system they have provided is not trivial in itself. Though it controls a mere 25 driven items on the stage, unique software allows the rotating motors to synchronize their positions one to the other, an absolutely vital ingredient with moving machinery. When it came to the lighting requirement, Wayne Howell of AL, developed a system called Light Tramp, allowing programming from a geographical map on the screen. It enables, for example, the ability to type in a word which is transcribed in software and directly transmitted in DMX to the dimmers. 'Hello Dallas' and 'Teacher' being prime examples, the latter generating another of those giant gasps from the audience which heralded each of the big events of the show, as the band slogged through their infamous signature number.

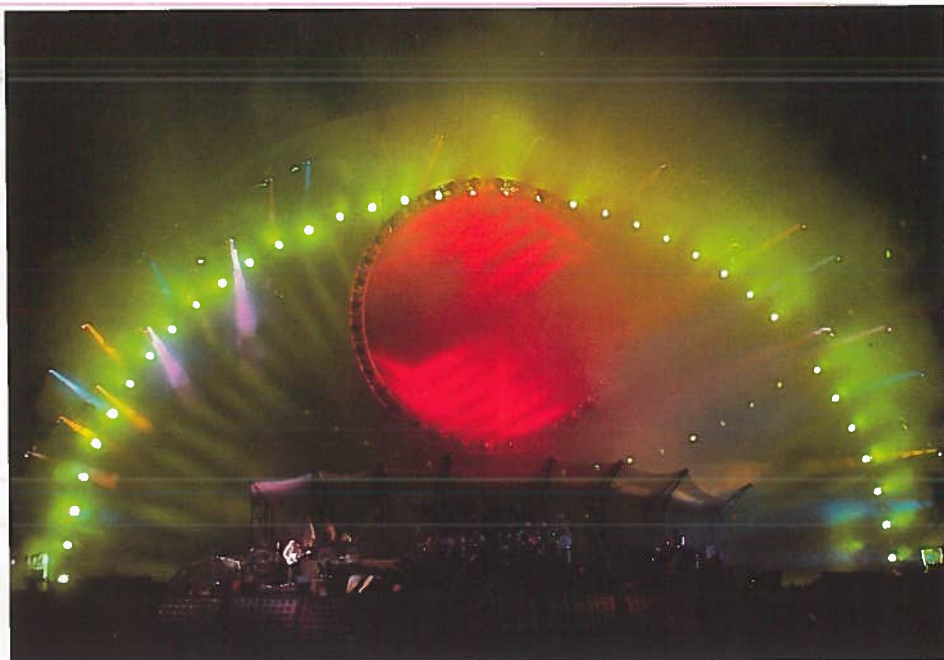
Both the circular screen and the Periaktoi are carried-over concepts from the 1987/8 tour, as is the giant mirror ball of the finale - why bin your best stunts when you can make them bigger and better next time? Anyway, over the years they have acquired iconic value, but then so have the 'pigs', but that's yet another story!

Meanwhile, StageCo were erecting and re-erecting their structure to get the hang of it for the real thing. Concert Productions were appointed to supply the lighting technology with the Vari*Lite's, and Britannia Row commissioned to deliver the sound.

So, fast forward again to March and rehearsals in the world's largest aircraft hangar in San Bernadino, California - so massive, that the ground plans show huge planes just lying about all over the building. This, of course, is where it all comes together, or it doesn't, as the case may be. Here, Rocklite's enormous Oxford-built 50W Copper vapour laser will meet up with pyrotechnics by Pyrotek and Le Maitre, and four of the big JEM Roadies which were specially modified with on-board DMX modules. Here the reveal mirror ball, being constructed by State-based Ethan Silva Associates will be mated to the fabulous ex-Hoffend Starlift, now improved and the proud property of Tomcat. Here Peter Willson's liquid light show will have its first real test on the Telejector 6k HMI projector in overhead mode. Here Ferren's movie projector will mate up for the first time with its back-projection porthole. The power hungry US-made Lightning Strikes which simulate the discharge of atmospheric electricity, will meet the UK-made WWG Daleks, a simulation special from a previous existence. Then there are the new Obie Xe-Scans: a combination of 2k Xenon compact source, a twenty-four colour scroller and a Telescan automated head, they are the French company's presence in the US, and will challenge the Gladiator III followspots in their own coliseum battle. And, finally, it is here that most of the control equipment and their operators will handshake for the first time with the source equipment.

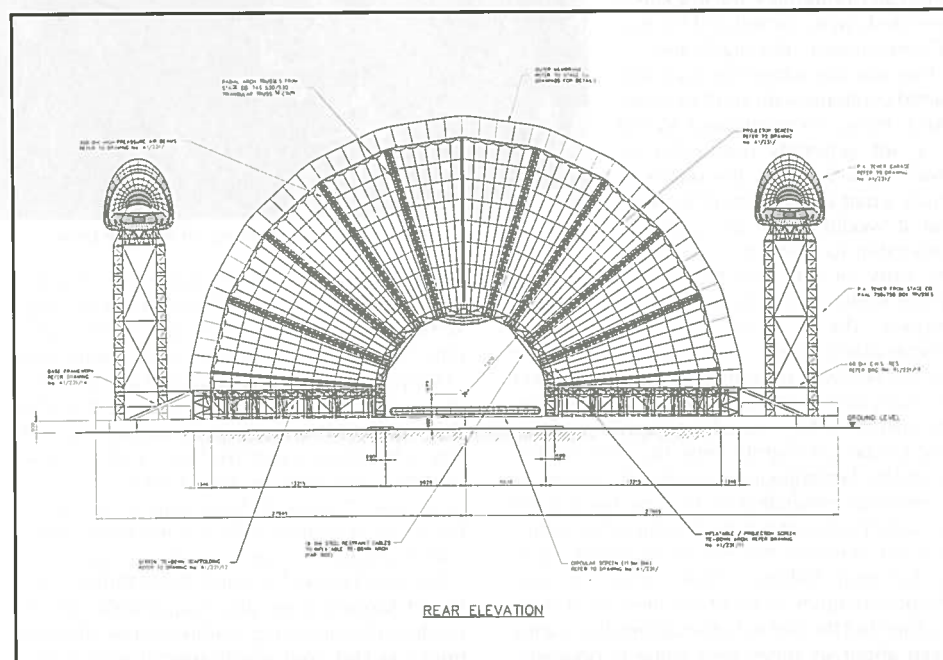
Organising the rehearsals was where Richard Hartman's Mr Fixit role came into its own. Since moving to the States he had become a technical consultant with Tomcat, but when the Floyd tour came along he readily agreed to become the interface between the production team and the various makers in America.

According to Fisher, Hartman takes the role so seriously that makers are quaking in their shoes at the prospect of a progress visit from the tenacious ex-pat. In San Bernadino he acquired the official title of rehearsals project manager, organising the space, liaising with the Air Force and the Norton Air Base (I told you it was a military operation), co-ordinating the vendors, and, unusually, setting up an on-site workshop manned by skilled operatives. "Unlike my



Oz Owen's Vari*Lite's do their stuff.

photo: Lewis Lee



Atelier One's drawing of rear stage elevation illustrating the ingenious high pressure inflatable backdrop.



Like a flower budding, blooming the mirror ball slowly unfolds.

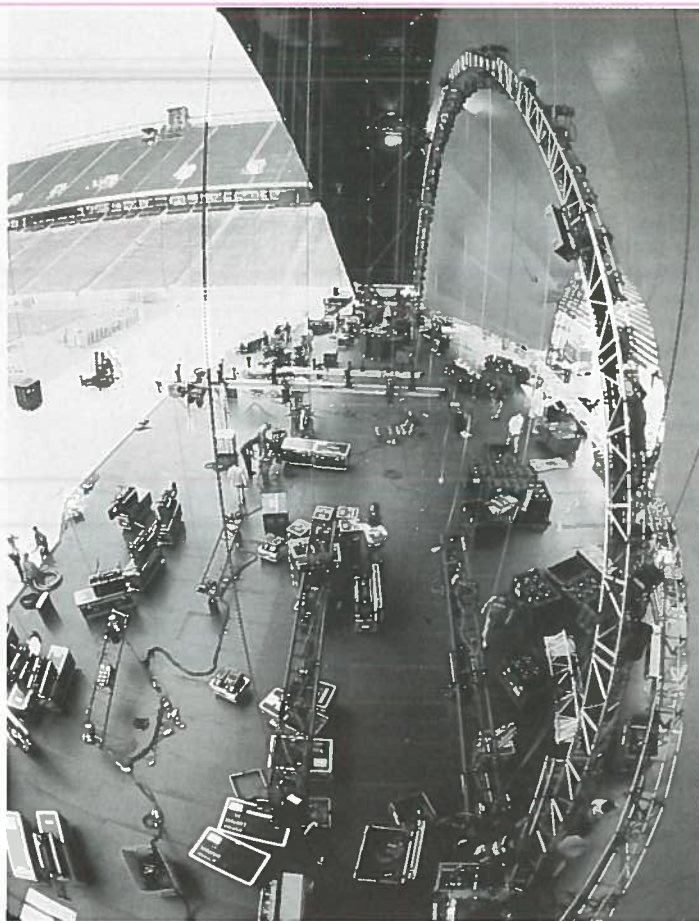
previous experience with Genesis and U2, where all urgent modifications were farmed out locally with all the hassle that involves, it proved invaluable," said Hartman. "We could build and modify what was needed in our own dedicated facility on the spot, it is something all future productions should consider."

This would also be where Carol Croft of Concert Productions, whom I grossly libelled in a previous article when I suggested, albeit in jest, that she was the subject of father-in-law's nepotism, proved her point by being swiftly adopted as Marc Brickman's assistant, which basically made her lighting director for the critical rehearsal and programming period. A great credit to her undoubted skills. This was no small job either, with no less than six lighting desks - an Artisan under the masterly control of Oz Owen, the Wholehog, an Avolites desk, two Telescan Compulites, the Rocklite's laser desk, pyro control and the two PCs mentioned, plus duplicates.

This was also where the assembly parted company with another major effect, not so far mentioned. While it is not generally productive to dwell on such things, this one is so much a part of the story of the tour that it would be in the order of censorship to gloss over it. This is the story of the over-the-top, rig-climbing cranes which never quite made it to the top. Indeed, there were, apparently, some spectacularly unsuccessful attempts before Robbie Williams deemed the cranes one effect too many and sent them packing, blaming their late arrival on the scene. "I personally think we tried to take on slightly more than we needed to, and the late appearance of these large pieces in rehearsal, meant that by the time they arrived we had already got a show. So when they didn't work out it wasn't the end of the world when we left them behind." Mark Fisher concurs. "People are quick to point out the cost of such a failure, but the fact is that scrapping the cranes saved about six times their value in on-costs. There is no doubt that given more time, they were going to be a very spectacular item indeed." Apparently, due to other delivery problems, Brickman had been forced to get on and programme that part of the show without them, and it went so well that by the time they arrived there was really no room for them.

"I marvel at the extraordinary generosity of the crew and the band, who could've widely canvassed, had they wanted to, the biggest design failure since the collapse of the Tower of Babel," Fisher confesses. "As it was, there was a slight rueful eyebrow raising and nothing more. So, once you get over the pride thing of having been shown you were wrong, it's not too bad really. It was a brave call, made by Robbie and Steve O'Rourke when the emotional pressure to carry on was huge." Fisher sees it as a fine example of how uncertain the craft of creating these large shows really is.

Actually, it seemed to me, when I finally saw the show in very select company indeed, as noted in last month's L+SI, that there was barely room for anything else. One spectacular stunt followed the other, until the crowd must have wondered where the next surprise was coming from. The wind-up starts long before the show begins, and the first big effect of the evening is the live liquid light show which covers the



Bird's eye view of the stage from high up on the side truss.

entire stage. It is an effect rarely seen since the Sixties when a 1k mains-driven projector lamp sufficed, now we were experiencing the same effect on a 6k HMI projector. In the vernacular of the period, and though I say it of a production of my own firm, it was a mind-blast. It is also Brickman's favourite effect, he told me later. "A link with the past, just like Floyd's other Icons. And the same goes for the Daleks, I just love you guys!" One 'I love you guys' from Brickman, is worth a million words from others, and this is why he can be so disarming.

The four Daleks for which Peter Willson and David Morrell were also responsible, which produce disorientating, visible beat oscillations from a 4k HMI source with special giant colour generator, produced for WWG by High End Systems, did suffer somewhat for the lack lustre in the backdrop, but nevertheless were pretty impressive in their chromatic solarizations.

One very nice touch in the set design which becomes apparent in the first half, is the tented clear vinyl canopy stretched above the band like an Eastern potentate's sun shade, though in this case it provides protection from a different element. It also, whether by design or accident it doesn't matter, creates a lovely collector of colour from the lights; presumably Vari*Lite VL5s are used for this purpose. The first half continues to build with effect after effect used, then thrown away - Brickman's great skill as a lighting designer, according to Fisher. We see the big format front projections, and some crackling effects, startling colours and saturated hues from the Copper Laser. The culmination is a great explosion of pyro and the emergence of the 'pigs', actually more like wild boar, from their pens atop the two PA towers. Yes the pigs are there again. "We sat around like a bunch of Hampstead intellectuals agonising over whether or not to have the pigs and people were generally not in favour. And then three or four days before the end of rehearsals in San Bernadino, suddenly everyone is saying, 'we have got to have the pigs'," Fisher recalls.

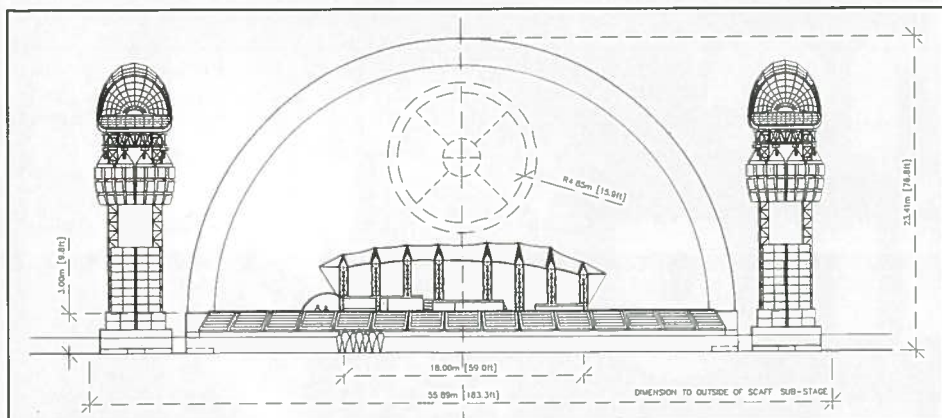
Brickman is gesticulating throughout, just like an orchestral conductor. "I am not really directing so much as timing; everybody knows what they have to do, but timing is paramount." He is contracted to be present at every performance.

The rain held off the first night in Dallas, but for the second it was not so kind. The open stadium, so that God can keep an eye on his favourite team (Floyd is obviously on the wrong wavelength), erupted with a major storm during the interval and beyond. Somehow, it just seemed like another stunt; nobody moved and the show carried on virtually seamlessly, a credit to current technology and the design of the stage. Earlier in Houston they had not been so lucky and a performance was abandoned.

After the interval, the circular screen and some truly beautiful Vari*Lite work, courtesy of Oz Owen, the 150 VL5s, 90 VL4s and 16 VL2Bs came into their own. This was also movie time, and more, and different front projections, squigged liquids, the Periaktoi in 'Just another Brick in The Wall', more and better laser, more and better fireworks and then, just when you thought you were safe, something strange stirred in the middle of the auditorium.

The front of house mixing ensemble, a twentieth century miniature bedouin tented-city cascading from level to level, like a vast grey grub lying in the centre of the stadium, also houses a VIP viewing area and the Telejector projection loft. If you studied it from a helicopter you might wonder what the large covered protrusion at the rear was for, otherwise you probably wouldn't even notice it. Then imperceptibly, the roof concertina'd back and, when fully open, triggered another vertical movement as the wonderfully engineered and conceived Starlift started to slowly unfold, eventually revealing the world's largest mirror ball. Five metres across, it rises to a height of 20 metres, and gently starts to turn. Now with the Gladiators focused on the surface, the effect that originally inspired a thousand dance halls in the forties and fifties and a thousand discos in the sixties and seventies, simply turned the stadium into a vast revolving carousel, a swirling galaxy of light of a scale so vast as to reinvent the original illusion from scratch. To say that people were stunned is an understatement: 40,000 jaws dropped as one and the combined sound of intake of breath was followed swiftly by roars of approval, especially when operator Elizabeth King stops the revolve, to achieve a brief rocking motion, the effect of which is amplified a million times over the distance to the eye, before starting it up again. And all achieved without the help of recreational pharmaceuticals! (Even Fisher was knocked back by this last move: "I really thought it had broken," he told me.) There's more - like the fast playback of a flower growing, budding, blooming, the ball slowly unfurls and, as the limes fade out, a vast 14k HMI bursts forth from the core.

Wow! At my first viewing, on best advice, I retired to the terraces to witness the explosion and was suitably amazed, but on the second I was in the projection booth immediately in front of the stored device. There it sits like a vast silver spider all squashed flat, it has to close-up first as it lifts. The experience from close



Elevation showing general arrangement and dims, together with PA towers, either side of stage.

quarters was quite something; undeniably a close encounter of the weirdest kind. I never thought that I would ever again be amazed by a mirror ball, but I tell you the earth definitely moved for me.

When I asked the normally febrile Brickman to sum it all up sitting in the canteen (catered appropriately by Eat Your Hearts Out) after the show, he seemed to be suffering once again from a characteristic melancholy, generously decrying what he sees as his inadequate skills in favour of his crew. "My crew are incredible, especially Mike Owen who is a genius. I can't even begin to understand what he does or how he does it. I really had wonderful support and I was allowed to do exactly what I wanted by the band, nobody else gives me that amount of freedom, or that amount of total creative control, and that really helped me to make it so hot. As I said before with the production process, I really don't feel that I do a lot of work and I really do sometimes feel very guilty about that. These guys put up the show every day, they take it down and I just cruise in and cruise out again. I sometimes have a hard time with that, but you know, if I weren't the catalyst, it wouldn't be happening would it? And without the music none of us would be there. I love those guys, and I just want to say thank you."

What about the sound? It is well known that the Floyd have been into quadraphonic since 1977, through the 1987/8 tour, and this one is no exception. It is also known that their involvement with Britannia Row Productions guarantees that you will be hearing their Turbosound Flash and Floodlight rig. What may not be obvious is the configuration being used. The entire system, including delays and quad system amounts to 200 boxes, of which 112 provide the forward projection across two steel towers, 24 TFS high boxes in a 3x8 array and 32 TFS bass units. Chris Hey of Brit Row commented on this set up: "This configuration gives us large horizontal, and front to rear

coverage, with even dispersion to the extremes of the audience areas, optimized by flying the high boxes from the steel towers and stacking the bass tall and narrow in the PA wings." In additional boxes, a combination of narrows, wides and base cabinets make up the quad environment with six focused and six bass units on each of three delay towers. One consideration which weighed heavily in favour of the Turbosound combination is their deceptive size-to-performance ratio, which enabled the entire system to travel in only three trucks.

The 136 channels of quadraphonics were controlled by two Yamaha PM4000s, selected for their panning control and ability to generate swirling effects, and a PM3000 just to handle the effects returns. Midas provided four XL3 mixing consoles, of which one was dedicated to the quadraphonic panning system. Incidentally, it will come as no surprise these days, no fold-back wedges onstage, just Radio Station in-ear monitoring.

So there you have it, though as those other great dinosaurs of Rock also travelling this year might have it, 'this could be the last time' with all the individuals involved in these big stadium productions staring the big five-zero in the face, or even glancing wistfully back at it in some cases. Sad to think that nothing quite like it may come this way again, though I rely on Prince and possibly Madonna to correct that imbalance. It is a rare occasion these days that two such great bands as the Rolling Stones and the Floyd are on the road in the same time frame, so at least we have the opportunity to wallow in nostalgia and consider the 'might have beens'. Others, however, are already talking 'has beens'.

When I arrived in Dallas I read the following piece in the Dallas Observer by a cynical journalist, who had clearly either received the treatment from the PR lady, or been sent completely the wrong press pack. In reference to 'The Floyd tour will totally redefine the

stadium experience', he wrote: "Don't they mean, attach strings to the stiffened corpse and make it dance for about two hours? From a strictly egalitarian point of view, the spaced out, post-New Age sound featured on the Pink Floyd's latest tour offers hundreds of thousands of blue-collar hotheads and acid freaks the chance to escape the quiet desperation of their lives, and perhaps feel that they're tuning into a philosophical plane higher than commercial Rock-n-Roll usually offers. After all, getting wrecked and watching 'The Wall' was a favourite pastime of teenagers not so long ago." And he goes on to describe Dave Gilmour as a "wishy-washy front man, echoing the style, but not the substance of his glory days" and condemning stadium rock for "its sheer bombast, and emphasis on spectacle over sound" and so on, and so on.

Dear oh dear. I can only say that there were 85,000 people in Dallas willing to part with upwards of \$35 each to witness this necromantic party. But you get my point?

The Stones will be another great Fisher production starting in Washington at the beginning of August, and these two productions under his design direction will have put down a huge marker for others to follow, if others there will be. Fisher is not optimistic either, heralding the inevitable decline of the great stadium show as we know it, so he has more cause than most to ponder what came after the demise of the dinosaurs. Is he considering new, more fertile pastures on which to apply his copious talents? He is keeping his own council, but whatever he has in mind, it will surely be something quite extraordinary. Watch this space.

Pink Floyd World Tour 1994

Other Production Credits:

Structural engineer: Neil Thomas (Atelier One)
Rehearsals project manager: Richard Hartman
Rehearsal lighting assistant: Carol Croft
Production manager: Dave Russell
Head rigger: Brent Anderson
Head of backline: Phil Taylor
Head carpenter: Greg Wilson

Lighting crew:

Lighting stage manager: Bill Martin
Chief electrician: Pete Wills
Telescan desk: Gilbert Assam
Telejector desk: Olivier Paton
Vari*Lite Artisan: Mike Owen
Wholehog: Gareth Williams
Rocklite desk: Warren Toll
Queen of liquids: Laurence Duhamel
Queen of mirrorball: Elizabeth King

Sound crew:

Sound engineer: Seth Goldman
Quad effects: David Lohr
FOH engineers: Andy Jackson/Colin Norfield

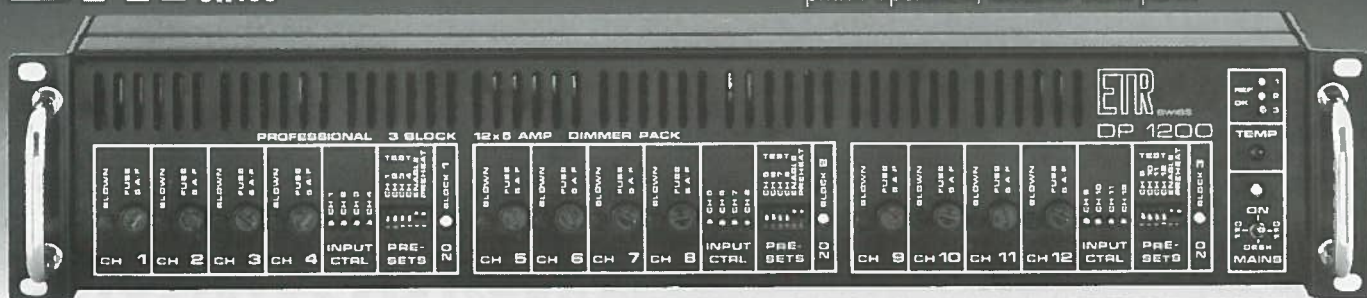
All photographs and drawings were executed by Mark Fisher unless otherwise stated.

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