



← p37 puter. The temporary office workstations were not just for the creative and artistic production executives – they were there for the sound, lighting and rigging engineers, allowing everyone to comfortably work during the weeks of rehearsal before the lighting desks (Strand 450 and 550 series units) and all the other gubbins involved in an advanced West End production get relocated into the cramped spaces set aside for machinery on the circle balcony.

At the very back of the stalls was the main FOH mixer – a Cadac with no less than 97 active mix channels arranged into a horse-shoe shape with further racks of dynamics processors and auxiliary equipment.

Andrew discussed the installation. “We keep records of all the programming in the desks, so that if this production is a success and has to be installed all over again in a foreign theatre then Autograph can supervise the sound design for the new production. One of the unfortunate aspects of taking on a musical like this is that much effort and preparation is put into the whole show and if it isn’t a hit the millions of pounds spent putting it on go to waste.” He added, with some understatement: “Which is a great pity.”

**Cast of Thousands...**

The centre and right sections of the Cadac are J-Type with the right wing handling the 32 Sennheiser radio mic channels worn by all the cast; the centre looks after the Orchestra mics; while the left-hand

**Martin Guerre reborn *audio***

frame is a K-Type and handles the String section, which is both close and distant mic’d.

Two synthesizer keyboards and an Akai S3200 sampler are used to augment the score with sound effects, which are held on a magneto-optical back-up storage system.

The amplifiers are installed in the substage, and comprise Amcron and Cyberlogic units powering the Meyer proscenium system, and around 40 Meyer UPM-1s as stalls/circle delays, stage foldback and auditorium FX sources.

The amp rack area has also expanded to house nearly all of the show’s processing and EQ systems, which include 30 channels of BSS Varicurve EQ, 11 BSS TCS804 delay lines, a trusty PCM70, a 480L and a 300L. All of this is connected to the Cadac via a BEC Technologies fibre-optic system which utilises 32 channels in each direction, as well as bi-directional Midi and RS422.

Bruce is using the Lexicon digital control interface which allows access to parameters inside the 300 and the 480 from the Larc remote. Principal performer vocals are reverberated using the 480 whilst a PCM70 is used to process the strings.

Two Outboard Electronics Octopus automated mini mixers were installed to handle the sound effects and the stage foldback mixes. The SS2 Outboard automation system inside the Octopuses

has been successfully utilised by Midas on their latest XL series touring consoles. Using world-patented linear moving magnet faders and a snapshot memory system which has been specifically designed for live and theatre sound applications, the Outboard Octopuses on this particular production allow the FOH engineer to concentrate on the tweaking and smoothing of principal performer microphone feeds and the orchestra whilst the sound effects triggered from the S3200 flawlessly traverse the stereo mix always set at the right volume level.

**Trans Global...**

After having spent a fascinating afternoon watching the production crew prepare for the looming opening night, I realised that although the sound reinforcement and lighting systems remain in situ and the excesses of Life On The Road may by-pass the gentlemanly existence of mixing FOH sound surrounded by wealthy punters wearing tuxedos, the recent technological improvements and enhancements of pro-audio equipment have not gone unnoticed by theatre sound engineers, always eager to deliver ever more impressive and ambitious audio productions.

■ **live!**

**Martin Guerre reborn *lighting & staging***

The main lighting contractor for *Martin Guerre* is White Light, who provided a rig full of technology for David Hersey’s spectacular design.

Generic instruments include over 200 Source Four profiles, six 5Ks with scrollers, 14 Cadenza fresnels, 50 pars, six Beam lights, 12 M16 battens and four follow spots – two 500W R X V Beam lights with scrollers and two Colour Arcs.

The moving/intelligent fixture list is similarly impressive. Eighteen 8-lamp Digital Light Curtains are vertically rigged on booms, three per boom, with a tungsten VARI\*LITE VL6 also rigged at the top and bottom of each boom. There are 16 VL6s plus 12 VL5s, ten 8-lamp pitching Digital Light Curtains, 11 of DHA’s new Digital Beam Lights and a single Martin Pro PAL 1200 for glass gobo projection and shuttering-in on top of the stage trucks. The show also features six Pani 2.5K projectors – four tungsten and two HMI – and two DF 50 foggers, plus two Skywalkers.

The show was programmed on two Strand desks – a 530 and a 550. Chief electrician Kevin Burgess took care of all the generics on the 530, while Robert Halliday plotted the moving light show on the 550. The show was then removed from the 530 and merged with the 550, allowing Burgess to run the show from the single console.

White Light’s Bryan Raven reveals that one of the biggest lighting challenges was: “the vastness of the set and the fact that it was flying from many drifted bars”. White Light’s Dave Isherwood custom-constructed a neat mains distro patch rack – allowing the fly floor to be kept tidy.

The set, designed by Nick Ormerod, features a cluster of five wooden-frame skeletal towers which move into a myriad of different positions during the show. To achieve this with minimum effort, Stage Technologies integrated the Wybron AUTOPILOT system with their new Explorer remote truck-control system. The Explorer allows stand-alone trucks to be moved to any position on-stage without following tracks or trailing cables. The variable-speed trucks can move in straight lines, along any arc, or rotate around their own centre.

One of the show’s most spectacular set pieces is the ‘scarecrow’, con-

structed by Howard Eaton Lighting Ltd from fireproof materials – even the straw hair was made from woven ceramic. The figure is set alight with Brandmasse flame paste made by Safex Chemie in Germany and distributed in the UK by HELL – who also provided the production’s DMX installation in the Prince Edward Theatre.

■ *Louise Stickland*

