



## SIR ELTON'S MUSICAL MASTERPIECE

You can hope, but not often do you find production values this high. Sir Elton John rewards his audience. Connections reports how:

By Julius Grafton

AS SIR ELTON JOHN'S TOUR WOUND around the region last month the press reviews became more and more favourable as they bounced off the office fax.

"Three hours of quality songs"; "a concise presentation"; "emphasis on the heart" and so it went. Clearly this was a show not to be missed, and I am very glad to have seen it.

Like Neil Diamond, Cliff Richard and John Farnham, Sir Elton John understands that audiences expect high production values. This show delivered, it was a straight forward

concert with a five piece band upstage, a simple stage set, and a ten foot ebony Yamaha grand set slightly OP.

The more I hear line array systems, the more convinced I am that they are an exponential leap forward in sound reinforcement quality. Sitting at the extreme Prompt side at this concert, I heard clarity and detail that was hard to believe. I actually heard the harshness of the VCA's (voltage controlled amplifiers) on the ancient Yamaha PM 4000 that Clive Franks mixed the show on.

The Clair Brothers i4 system was the line  
(please turn the page)



### Mandy Jones reports on the lighting design

Elton John's Lighting Director Kevin 'Stick' Bye (left) has been working in the industry since his college years. He worked as a DJ in clubs around New Orleans and hosted a regular radio show. Then, with a computer science and theatre background, Stick started lighting shows in a club on


the famous Bourbon Street. He continued in clubs for the next couple of years as he worked his way up the tiers of the business. A job with Vari\*lite hinted at big things to come, and after several years with them, Stick went out as a freelance LD. Stick has recently moved his home-base to Las Vegas for the five or so months a year he doesn't  
(please turn the page)

# MAC 2000

Electronic performance



# Martin

 **SHOW** technology

SHOW TECHNOLOGY AUSTRALIA PTY LTD  
102 Derby Street, Silverwater NSW 2128  
• PHONE 61 2 9748 1122 • FAX 61 2 9748 1499  
• [www.showtech.com.au](http://www.showtech.com.au) ABN 89 062 241 785

## Sir Elton John's tour

### Lighting

(continued)

tour.

The rig for the Australian leg of the Elton John tour was designed by Steve Cowan and then handed over to Stick to act as Lighting Director for the tour.

"I work with Steve Cowan. He designs a lot of the big shows in the States and he does a lot of big television shows. He lets me take the design concept and run with it which is great. Steve takes a look at the plots I design and he approves them, then I take them out," explained Stick.

The stage design features a large circle screen hanging above the stage on a steep angle. Coming off each side are four spidery looking truss arms.

"I tried to design something that was extremely user friendly. It's based on what's easily available travelling over here and through Europe.

"Curved trusses and basic structures are pretty easy to get so I'm just trying to keep it simple. The design is also borrowed from some of the solo stuff Elton did. When it was just him and the piano the circle really leant itself to doing a nice surround of the piano, but now that we have a band in there I've pumped it up a bit.

"That's the versatility of the design that I don't have to reprogram every time I go out. I can just move the lights around a little bit and make it look fresh and utilise the basic structure of the show I have.

"I've adapted the rig a little bit from the overseas tour because we didn't have a lot of production rehearsal time. So I adapted the rig with the existing programming and I've programmed a little bit offline with my computer."

The tour is promoting Elton's new album 'Songs from the West Coast' which he describes as a "back to basics" album for him. This simplistic approach was taken on board for the stage and lighting design so that the rig wouldn't detract from the main focus. Stick explained he has a fairly good idea of what Elton

### Sound

(continued)

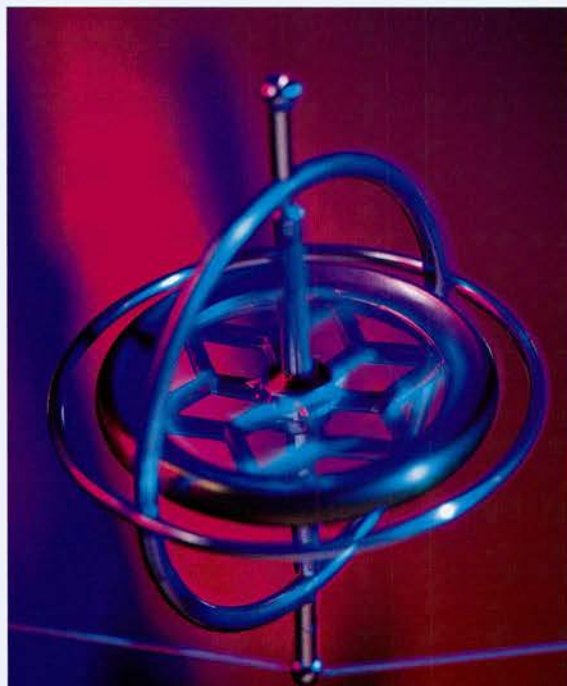
array system used, from Jands Production Services. JPS offer this as their third line array brand, alongside JBL's Vertec and L-Acoustic's V-dosc. JPS reinvented themselves two years ago as line array specialists, and reaped a lot of work as a consequence.

The i4 is a 'proprietary' design, with each cabinet containing 1 x 18" bass driver, 4 x 10" mid-high drivers, 4 x 2" high frequency compression drivers, and as many as nine

Piezo devices.

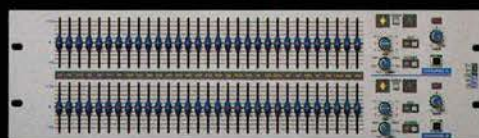
Each cabinet, slightly larger than a V-dosc, takes 2,325 watts from Crest amplifiers. Clair use one 10004 amp, which delivers 4 x 1,225 watts at 4 ohms, and one 9001 for 2 x 2,200 watts at 4 ohms. Each rack of two amplifiers drives four i4 boxes. Clair do not fly their amp racks, they achieve long speaker cable runs.

Unlike most first generation line array systems, Clair opt for a bass extension cabinet which is also a line array design. This cabinet is less wide, but deeper, and Connections could not establish what they are loaded



achieve perfect balance...

establish  
control



audient

ASP131

ASP231

Graphic Processors

Audient's new ASP series Graphic Processors - the unparalleled control and performance of analogue.

#### Features

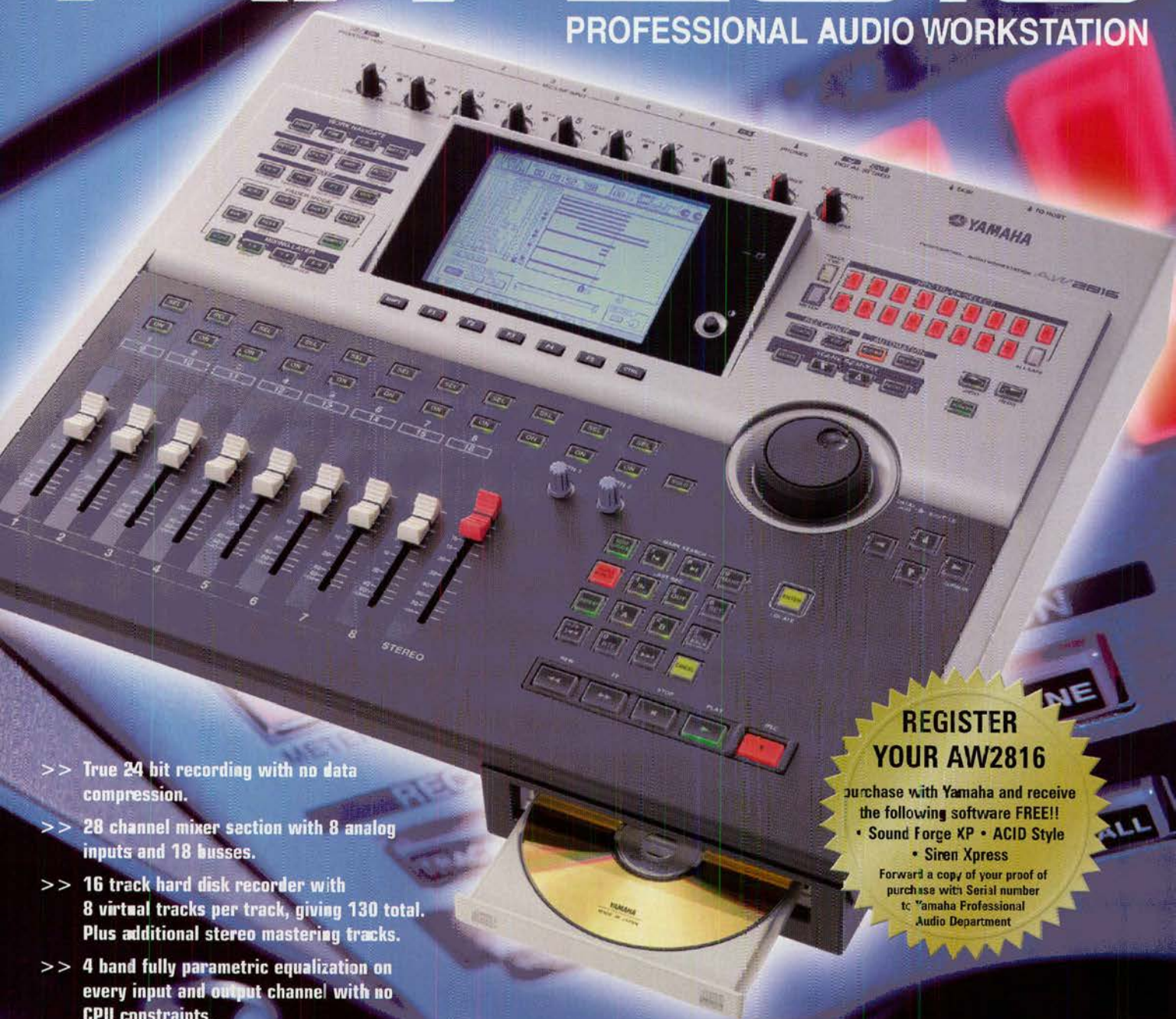
- Optimised constant Q filters for improved sonic performance
- Dual bandwidth modes
- Back lit system displays for low light operation
- Unique tilt control for rapid system balance adjustments
- Continuously variable Hi-Pass filter
- Advanced high CMRR input and high current output topologies
- Long travel 45mm faders
- XLR and Klippon/Phoenix connectors.

For more information contact  
Corporate Audio Services  
188 Plenty Rd. Preston Vic. 3072  
tel: 03 9474 1066 Fax: 03 9474 1070  
email: mail@corporateaudio.com.au  
web: www.corporateaudio.com.au

CAS  
Corporate Audio Services

# AW2816

PROFESSIONAL AUDIO WORKSTATION



- >> True 24 bit recording with no data compression.
- >> 28 channel mixer section with 8 analog inputs and 18 busses.
- >> 16 track hard disk recorder with 8 virtual tracks per track, giving 130 total. Plus additional stereo mastering tracks.
- >> 4 band fully parametric equalization on every input and output channel with no CPU constraints.
- >> Dynamics processing with compressor, limiter, gate etc. on every input and output.
- >> Full Automation system including moving faders for professional quality mixes.
- >> Digital I/O via MYGDAI card slot with AES/EBU, TDIF and ADAT options.
- >> Optional Internal CD writer for backups and final Audio CD mastering.
- >> 20 Gigabyte hard disk included
- >> \$4495 RRP

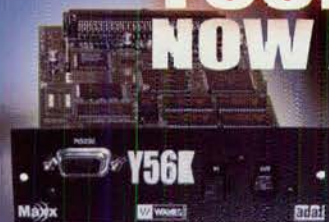
## REGISTER YOUR AW2816

purchase with Yamaha and receive the following software FREE!!

- Sound Forge XP • ACID Style
- Siren Xpress

Forward a copy of your proof of purchase with Serial number to: Yamaha Professional Audio Department

## Y56K WAVES CARD NOW AVAILABLE!



One of the World's leading Effects packages, on a card that plugs straight into your Yamaha

recorder. Includes the L1 Ultramaximizer, Renaissance EQ & Compressor, SuperTap Delay, Trueverb, and DeEsser. Also includes eight channels of digital optical i/o. An award winning digital recorder just got even better.



# YAMAHA

[www.AW2816.com](http://www.AW2816.com)

*Sir Elton John's tour***Sound**

(continued)

with. Clair Brothers are notoriously secretive about their proprietary designs. A vertical line of i4 bass cabinets are flown directly next to the main i4 array. This gets the bass off the floor, making life more pleasant for the premium seats down front.

The i4 system is currently processed by XTADP226 units using custom Clair Bros software presets, but the new Clair Brother's i0 box will shortly take over. This is a custom built digital processor built in Sydney by Lake Technology and part designed by Australian live sound guru Bruce Jackson.

Moving to FOH, the mix expanded magnificently, and Clive Franks demonstrated how complete mastery of a domain allows the engineer to actually produce

**Lighting**

(continued)

wants from his light shows having worked with him for two and a half years. "I've been almost exclusively with Elton for the last couple of years, and because he works a lot, he keeps me busy. I work anywhere between six to eight months a year which is fairly good.

"Elton has a couple of things that he doesn't like but I'm pretty much given free reign to do what I want. He doesn't like lights in his eyes so I have to be very aware of angles and make sure that everyone can see him and that he's not uncomfortable. Especially with his glasses, if the angles aren't steep enough then it creates a big flare.

"He surrounds himself with good people that have been with him so long that they know what he wants so they're usually the ones that come to me and tell me what I can and can't do. But then he'll come out the front and look at it and tell me it looks cool. So that's always nice."

Surprisingly Elton doesn't mind haze being used during his shows. Stick uses two hazers to accentuate the beams, and said that if Steve Cowan was touring with the show then he probably would have used six!

With Stick's Vari\*lite background, it's not surprising that the rig is predominantly Vari\*lites apart from conventional units such as Source Four profiles and Molefays.

"I do like using Vari\*lites. I like the lights. I like the colours. You get really pure colours out of a Vari\*lite but once again a lot of what we do is adapted from an existing show and we've had Vari\*lites on it for a long time.

"This rig is made up of 55 fixtures - VL5Arcs and VL6C's. I like the VL5's for their colour mixing and I love the snapping colour changes you get out of the VL6. Unfortunately the new VL1000's weren't available here but I'm going to try to get some for Europe."

For control, Stick couldn't go past the Vari\*lite Virtuoso console which he described as "really cool". "Right now the Virtuoso is my desk of choice, otherwise I use a Hog ...but everyone uses a

*Yamaha's PM1d digital live sound console, seen here on monitors - the first time a working example has been used in the region. Three of these are due shortly for installation at Hillsong Church in Sydney.*

