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entertainment & broadcast

CX 74, SEPTEMBER 2012 \$5.50

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Darwin delivers
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Then and now

ONLINE EDITION



Mr Psychedelic
Ellis D. Fogg



CX NEWS:
ALLANS BILLY HYDE FAILS | EVENTWORKS GO FERAL | NORWEST IN LONDON
TOD FEE FIGHT ROUND 2 | INTEGRATE & GAMING SHOW?
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CX74 SEPTEMBER 2012. ISSUE 74 . ONLINE EDITION**CXEXPANDS**

We've added 12% extra pages without charging extra! Plus this month we welcome Mark Taylor to the roster, with his excellent profile of a Legend, aka Roger Foley. And welcome to CX readers on Apple NEWSSTAND where iPad readers are enjoying even more CX. Next month CX visits IBC and PLASA.

We have big plans!

MUSICLINK FADES TO BLACK

We can reveal poor relations between CX and Musiclink which erupted when we had the temerity to suggest Billy Hyde stores and Musiclink were somehow connected - despite having the same owners. Our lead story in 2006 congratulated Musiclink for acquiring the Mackie line, yet we faced a ridiculous and aggressive outpouring from former Director Mike Daws and head of sales Rob Henneman. Daws sent vindictive emails in 24 point bold type, while Henneman used cloying terms like 'incandescent with rage'.

ALLANS BILLY HYDE RIP

Imagine you have market power with almost one dollar from every four dollars spent on music equipment across Australia. Your stores benefit from your own importer, meaning the retail and the wholesale margin both come back to the owners. Yet the iconic chain of almost 30 stores failed last month, and hundreds of staff face major uncertainty. Before the suits arrived, in the form of investors who purchased the business from the founders, this was a success story. Retail fortunes changed, but still: almost every failure has a human cause.

ROGUE TEMPO INCREASE

It would be nice to have a month where there was not a company collapse or mysterious legal story in CX, but we think maybe there is a finishing school for debt avoiders operating somewhere. No name on the door, just furtive company owners in sunnies and hats, slinking inside where some sly and deviated defrocked lawyer spells out methods to avoid payment or even - gasp - phoenix your firm and re-emerge tomorrow with a similar name but no debts. Wow! One thing disturbs CX and that is a father whose son adopts the same dodgy methods.

TRADESHOW ARMAGEDDON: 'T - MINUS 11 MONTHS

New Integrate owners Diversified pulled off a re-birth of their newly acquired tradeshow at Sydney's Darling Harbour in August. Earlier they told ACETA that they would review this years show before considering an ACETA request to work with SMPTE and ENTECH to better harmonize the unsustainable calendar of shows. But at Integrate they heaved exhibitors to sign on for next year, same place, more space. Diversified have now taken a short view based on quick profits. Our story on page 12 illustrates how crazy this has become. All 3 shows are scheduled for next winter at Sydney's soon to disappear Darling Harbour. And then what?

**PUBLISHERS PANEL**

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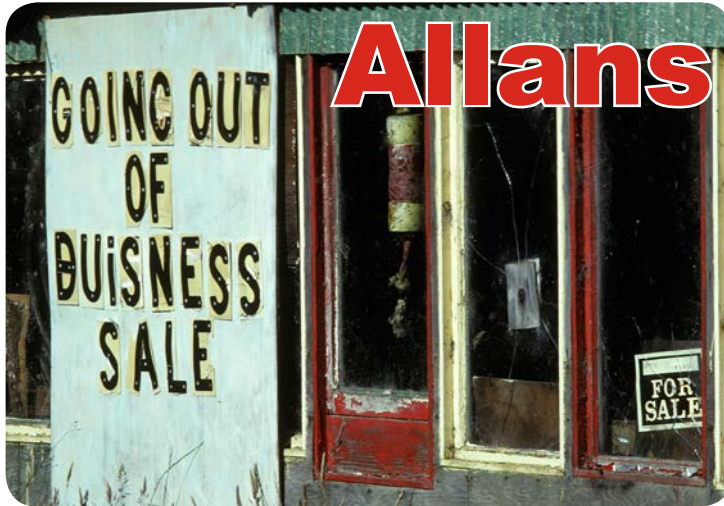


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N E W S

α INDUSTRY NEWS



Allans Billy Hyde Collapses Musiclink value 'zero'

By Julius Grafton

The Australian Music Group was placed in administration last month as Ferrier Hodgson sought buyers for 28 music stores and the Musiclink wholesale division. While some stores may remain, many will close and CX understands the wholesale division is slated for liquidation.

The music stores accounted for as much as 20% of music retail turnover in Australia, and while music retail is performing somewhat poorly due to internet imports and savage competition, the re-division of the retail pie will now benefit surviving independent stores.

Over at Musiclink, the business can't continue unless the brands recommit. At NAMM last January AMG directors lobbied the manufacturers they represent to give them time, promising recapitalisation. This was announced earlier this year, yet the white knight known as Revere Capital were first to call in their money.

Now the brands are in play, as other importers scramble to obtain agencies like Mackie, Zildjian, Remo, Ampeg, Pearl, Crate and Line 6, amongst others.

With around 400 staff and group sales over \$100 million, the ramifications of the collapse will be felt long and hard

amongst suppliers to Allans Billy Hydes, especially since the liquidator (once confirmed) will try to claw back payments made in recent months under 'relation back' provisions. This is where a liquidator claims some creditors were paid in preference to others. Then a difficult and technical legal case often follows – but with millions at stake, these battles are often launched.



α flagged collapse in February



Olympics Continue Australian Connection **Norwest assist with London ceremonies**

As a joint venture with the UK's Delta Sound, Australia's Norwest Productions supplied equipment, specialist crew and expertise for the opening and closing of the London Olympics. Wide acclaim followed the Danny Boyle directed opener.

Audio got a public tick of approval in The Guardian from legendary promoter Harvey Goldsmith: "I was impressed with the sound in the stadium – it was amazing, I didn't expect that at all. It's not easy in a place that size. You can always pick holes in something of this size and scale but overall it was pretty fantastic."

Delivering audio to 80,000 people in an arena is a black art, so the audio team hung 22 line arrays in open space, thanks

to a \$4 million cable net that was permanently installed around the outside of the stadium roof.

Riggers were then deployed to figure out how to position points for the 22 clusters of 10 V-Dosc and Arc underhangs. Audio designer Bobby Aitkin and Australian Audio Systems Designer Scott Willsallen then laboriously figured where to stash countless racks of Lab Gruppen amplifiers.

Norwest supplied expertise gleaned from previous Olympics in Sydney and Athens, along with many large-scale outdoor spectacular events staged overseas in Asia, the Middle East, and various Winter Olympics.

Eventworks go rogue **Mysterious legal actions fail**

Some time ago CX chronicled the rise and fall of Hills Concert Production, shortly followed by HCP Events. Both were under the guidance of Paget Blackburn who later was the target of a bankruptcy petition by CBFC Finance.

Paget Blackburn then appeared as Eventworks Pty Ltd, a company registered to his son James. Some transactions occurred that became the subject of court action as Eventworks made legal claims against several firms.

Two firms contested these legal actions and had them struck off after many months of expense and frustration. Gabriel Zouain from Master-sound Productions and Graeme Petrie from Dr Feelgood Party Band both contested legal claims against them, and found no one from Eventworks attended court. They won costs against the firm.

Both told CX that they were surprised to receive a summons. "Paget Blackburn tried to sell me some cheap Chinese Tasso PS-118 HP subs by listing them as LS1200's on the invoice with a Nexo logo on the bottom of his invoice", says

Graeme Petrie. "He is now claiming non-payment plus interest and fees totalling \$4094.44."

Across town Gabriel Zouain was flabbergasted to be sued. "We had heard all his sob stories and even shared a meal across the family table with him. And then we got sued for \$4343.44."

**The invisible man.
No known images exist
of anyone purporting to
be Paget Blackburn**



Gabriel went to the registered office of Eventworks, only to find accountant Bruce Robinson whose firm had agreed several years ago to provide services and a registered office address. "I have been trying to locate both Mr James Blackburn and Mr Paget Blackburn for over 12 months as they owe my firm unpaid fees", he said in a Statutory Declaration.

After preparing a defence, Gabriel was surprised to have the documents returned by the law firm acting for Eventworks. Graeme Petrie had the same experience, and says when he contacted the legal firm they said they no longer acted for the Blackburn family.

Across Sydney, Dorin Suci and her husband Kevin Gleeson are still trying to get paid for building work on a property in Gwandalan. "We are trying to get the money owed from him and his son but they are claiming work wasn't finished to standard or is incomplete. We are not going to let him get away with it", she told CX.

• **Do you know more? Email juliusmedia@me.com**

NEWS

Selecon ponder Patt 23 LED

Born in 1953 this is the most iconic theatre profile spot across the 220 and 240 volt markets of Europe and Australia. Now Strand is part of Philips, as is luminaire maker Selecon. They are rumoured to be toying with a limited release LED version of the Patt 23 – provided a world-wide search for the (missing) tooling is successful.

**PATTERN 23
BABY MIRROR SPOT**

The Pattern 23 Spot can be suspended from barrel or used with telescopic floor stand as illustrated.

(Below) Narrow angle lens front replacing part 2 on standard and wide angle versions.

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3. Second lens added for wide angle spotlight.
4. Gate for shutters or iris diaphragm.
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7. Rear reflector.
8. Rear door for relamping, cleaning, etc.
9. Door handle.
10. Prefocus lamp holder.
11. Light intensifying knob.
12. Safety chain for front lens draw tube.

Tale of 2 trade shows in August

2 shows held at the same time. Which industry can afford which show?

< INTEGRATE-AV
INDUSTRY VALUE:
\$250M 2 HALLS

As the audio visual industry unpacks the trade show crates and attempts to convert leads into sales, new Integrate owners Diversified have stepped up sales for next year's event. Rumoured to expand to Hall 6 at Sydney's Darling Harbour, industry investment in the show will exceed \$3 million.

While Integrate (pictured above) attracted modest numbers of trade, some of whom were perturbed by the lack of sound and lighting and the proliferation of corporate AV, the Gaming Show next door (floorplan, bottom) was crammed with cashed up buyers.

Many Exhibitors were shocked by Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre additional costs, after becoming accustomed to a more modest regime at Moore Park, former home of Integrate. On stand catering, power hook-ups and rigging were all at eye-watering prices. Visitors hated the cost of parking - \$30 for 2 hours.

< GAMING SHOW-INDUSTRY VALUE:
\$2.5 BILLION 3 HALLS

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Image Design Technology Joins Midwich Group

Image Design Technology (IDT), a specialist supplier of video and data display technology, has been acquired by Midwich Limited of the UK. IDT will continue to be spearheaded by Gerry Wilkins, Founder and Managing Director of the company. According to Wilkins, the acquisition is a major coup as it enables IDT to tap into the resources and expertise of a global company, while still retaining the great local service and strong local investment for which IDT's recognised.

Novatech at Darwin Festival

Hot August Nights in Darwin saw concerts at the Ampitheatre, with production carried by rail 3000k north from Adelaide. Novatech Creative Event Technology supplied a Kudo PA and lighting rig featuring Mac 2000's driven from a Grand MA. Just prior to the Festival, Darwin Symphony Orchestra held a concert at the Ampitheatre using the same system. Novatech partner Milenko Novakovic mixed the orchestra on an Avid Profile console.

James Sacca supervised production across the Festival, which included a smaller installation at The Lighthouse in Festival Park.



PICTURED, JAMES SACCA FROM NOVATECH

• While at Festival Park in Darwin CX was accosted by security who insisted we delete images of the Lighthouse venue. According to security, the 'no photo' thing is a Darwin Festival edict. Similar hilarity ensued across town at the Spiegeltent on George's Green – but you've all seen one of those, right?

Anyway, here is a forbidden photo.

Let us know if you spot any reason why they may not want you to see this picture!



STEVE KNIGHT

Elusive Cairellie CEO pictured

One of Sydney's more elusive production companies is Cairellie. The company founder, Stephen Knight, has just added DiGiCo SD7 and SD8 consoles complete with 3 SD Racks and Waves SoundGrid. He then posed for a picture.

Production Audio adds Video Technology

After almost 30 years, Production Audio Services has rebranded in an evolution of their business to become Production Audio Video Technology.

Managing Director Graeme Stevenson told CX at Integrate that the name change better reflected the way the business was travelling, with video conferencing and increased convergence the name of the game.

3D for Novatech

Novatech (Adelaide) have announced a Rental Network Partnership with d3 technologies in London UK.

d3 is a real-time 3D stage simulator, timeline based sequencer, video playback engine, and content mapper, all integrated into a single piece of software that runs on your laptop or dedicated d3 hardware.

Designed from the ground up to help you visualise your event from the get go d3 allows you to see an accurate simulation of your final production well before the first truck leaves the warehouse.

Leko Novakovic, Managing Director of Novatech Creative Event Technology says Novatech have several d3 designer systems in their rental inventory that have been installed into custom designed tour ready racks.

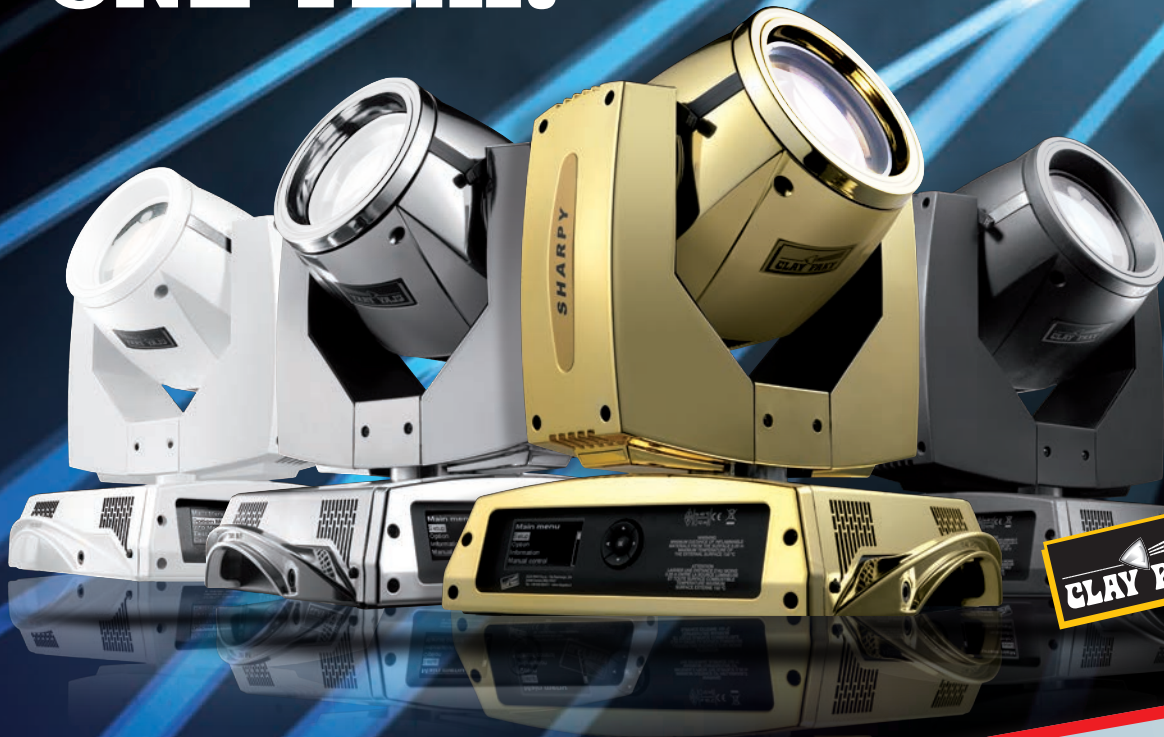


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To all lighting industry stakeholders

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CLAY PAKY S.p.A. has filed patent applications to protect the technology used in the SHARPY spotlight in China, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the USA.

It is important to be aware that it is not only those that manufacture copies of products, covered by exclusive rights, that are punishable by law but also those who import and distribute such copies.

CLAY PAKY S.p.A. will proceed with appropriate actions with the relevant authorities in all countries where its intellectual property is registered in order to protect its proprietary rights and hinder those who, by manufacturing and selling counterfeit products, not only harm CLAY PAKY S.p.A. but also hinder progress in the industry as a whole.



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VENUES DRIVE AUDIO VISUAL FEE GRAB **Technician On Duty fee debate demands action**

Angry words from all corners of Australia threaten action but so far the only resolution to crippling venue AV supervision fees is negotiation. Event Producers and external Audio Visual vendors who visit a venue to supply services to clients have documented sometimes outrageous fees and negligence in some leading venues.

The largest audio visual supplier, Staging Connections, say they only recommend technician on duty (Venue Technical Representative – VTR) fees for bump in and bump out. The venues themselves can set policy to charge to supervise external suppliers for the whole event – and many do just that. “We understand the role that a VTR serves in providing

advice to external audio visual companies whilst seeking to protect a venue’s assets”, says Tony Chamberlain, Managing Director at Staging Connections Group Limited. Lidia Dalton from Expert Events detailed how one hotel works.

“One that really made my blood boil was in relation to an international conference that we ran at Sheraton on the Park in Sydney from 26 – 29 May this year.”

“The additional fees equated to over \$3000, just to be able to bring in our preferred supplier. In addition to the TOD charges, the hotel charged a flat fee for ‘charges relating to utilities and for access to the Hotel infrastructure’, even though we already paid \$15,000 in room hire fees.”

“In the end we still brought in our own supplier, as the quote from (in house AV supplier) Staging Connections was almost double the quote provided by an external provider, even taking into account the \$3000 TOD fees.”

“THE TOD WAS TREATED SO BADLY BY THE EXTERNAL PROVIDER, SECURITY HAD TO BE CALLED.”

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WORSE EXAMPLE

But this pales into insignificance when you journey south to Sofitel Melbourne. The hotel, via in-house AV supplier Audio Visual Dynamics, charged \$8,000 for TOD to supervise external AV supplier Microhire at an event named Great Healthcare Challenge in 2011. The charges covered all hours of setup, event and bumpout. The original quote was for \$11,319 plus GST. In addition, the charge for provision of internet in each meeting room was an eye-watering \$300.

Microhire were included in the argument during a gig at Sydney's Doltone House at Darling Island Wharf earlier this year.

"The freelance AV Tech on TOD on bump out was so engrossed in his mobile phone that he had no idea we left the building. So much for ensuring we don't damage the

doorways. The event was a SIDS fundraiser and there was not a dry eye in the house when parents addressed the audience. The venue was moved to sting them about \$675 + GST. (A) written complaint to the venue sparks a phone call from Microhire claiming to not enjoy doing it but doing it at the request of the venue and its not a 'rort' as I claim", according to a supplier who prefers to remain anonymous.

Doltone House gets another mention from the same external audio visual supplier, again regarding an event this year: "Day 3 of an event is just a workshop in a break-out room requiring projector and screen. Venue insists on charging TOD for bump in when our gear is already set up. Event Manager still battling this one."

This respondent also claims the Sydney Hilton is charging a blanket \$1,500 if the event producer does not use in house supplier Staging Connections.

"Event manager: 'Sorry can't give you this gig. Venue has \$1500 surcharge if we don't use Staging Connections'".

"Me: 'You obviously haven't booked enough room nights.'"

"Event Manager: 'What are you talking about - I've booked 300 room nights.'"

"Me: 'Really? They wouldn't dare try that on with [XYZ hotel]. They would be kissing their feet with 300 room nights. They must think you're weak.' Surcharge waived the next day after hotel Director Of Sales consulted with GM."

Alex Buckle says the company he works for tries very hard to work with the venues.

"We generally fully utilize the tech and try and make them feel part of the team. I went into a venue in Melbourne earlier this year and my client was charged for two technicians during periods of the conference (and) the end bill was extremely high. In the spirit of trying to do the right thing I asked if we could utilize the TOD to make our job easier. I was expressly told 'no as he could not supervise properly if he was laying a cable.'"

"This begged my response 'how does your technician supervise himself when laying a cable for your company?'"

"We all know that random techs and crewing companies (are) pulled in from all over to fill in last minute jobs, so who is supervising them?"

"I have this argument with pretty much every venue I deal with", an event producer reports. Like some quoted in this story they prefer to protect their anonymity as they continue to work with the venues named.

"Sheraton on the Park in Sydney wanted to charge "access fees" justified as wear and tear on their lift recently. Royal Pines on the Gold Coast wants to charge for the 'duration of the event' which goes pretty much constantly for five days and four nights, so these charges would add up to thousands of dollars".

"Most venues I have found if you challenge it they will get rid of it, but you have to be quick (ie. WAY before you get to the contract stage), and often, it is a long, drawn out argument", concludes Alex.

STAFF TO BE 'PRESENT'

A Melbourne audio firm commented on the situation at Melbourne Town Hall, where AVD (Audio Visual Dynamics) are the in-house production company.

"We had a request for quote, and the client told us that AVD (Audio Visual Dynamics) are the in-house production company. They will be charging \$83.05 per hour from start of bump in 9am until end of bump out (approx 1:00 am) This charge is for 1 of their staff to be present".

Ben Alcott from Damn Good Productions in Sydney draws attention to practices at The Westin in Sydney.

"We have had issues a number of times where the venue has tried to charge an 'AV Supplier Charge' if you don't use in house supplier, Staging Connections. (This) varies between \$1000 and \$2500 we have found. They charge this when it seems they will lose revenue from the client not using Staging. One specific event was in May last year for a simple breakfast that was part of a roadshow we were producing for a financial client. The venue made a massive fuss about it and insisted on charging the client \$1000. The amazing thing is that we were using and paying Staging Connections to supply the in-house usuals (PA, projector

"ALL WENT WELL UNTIL THE CONTRACT LOADERS EMPLOYED BY THE EXTERNAL COMPANY DROPPED THE M7 WHILE PUSHING IT IN A REAL HURRY. THE MIXER WAS DAMAGED (CHEAP & NASTY ROAD CASE), THE TOD (THEREFORE, THE IN HOUSE PROVIDER) WAS BLAMED FOR PACKING IT WRONG!"

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and screen, lectern, stage) but because our crew were operating the show and we were supplying some touring kit, they felt they could charge an additional \$1000 - two bites of the cherry! Needless to say after legal threats from the client, they eventually backed down.”

“(But) Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre transcends this by actually stating categorically to clients that you cannot bring in outside equipment or suppliers (if the venue has it available) - we have had an issue with SCEC where we weren’t allowed to bring in a screen that we owned because they had one, then when it went in we found they sub hired from TDC - very strange.”

“Basically this all amounts to Third Line Forcing and Exclusive Dealing, which of course are illegal”, Ben alleges.

TOD SHIFTS: CREW COMMENT

“As far as I can work out, with Crown and some of the larger Hotels where Staging is the in house supplier, it's the venues who set the TOD fee and hours that the TOD is ‘meant’ to be present”, an insider who needs to remain un-identified told CX.

“Staging Connections is then contracted by the venue to supply a TOD usually for bump in / bump out. The Venue pays Staging Connections for the hours quoted by the Venue, this is rarely the same as the hours quoted to the external Production company”.

“The primary purpose of the TOD's employed by Staging Connections at these venues is to make sure that OH&S policy is met and Venue equipment is not damaged (and) also to be a liaison between the production company and the Banquets manager (who is God). The Banquets manager runs the room, not the AV staff, all his or her requirements for floor space, timing etc must be met regardless of what is practical or convenient for AV staff (in house, external or otherwise!)”

“If a production company requires specific ‘technical’ help (patching etc.), providing the request has been made in advance, the actual "in house" Staging Connections people provide this service.”

“In this situation TOD is also the liaison, the TOD has not got the authority to perform technical assistance, supply equipment or to integrate an external providers equipment with in house equipment. Hence the apparent "dumbness" of the TOD, we are NOT allowed to help in a practical way, we can only pass on the request.”

“As to assisting an external provider, that again

is prohibited. I've been told it's an insurance thing, TOD's are supervisory staff, not hands on, different insurance category. Also there is an equipment liability issue, one example (names and places not mentioned), a TOD was asked by external staff to help pack and lift an M7 mixer.”

“All went well until the contract loaders employed by the external company dropped the M7 while pushing it in a real hurry. The mixer was damaged (cheap & nasty road case), the TOD (therefore, the in house provider) was blamed for packing it wrong!”

“It wasn't me, I was there supervising 2 other contractors. The other TOD was treated so badly by the external provider, security had to be called.”

“I'm sure many TODs would like to help out in a practical way, but there are way too many rules preventing us from doing so. Standing around holding a folder can be bloody boring, especially for an 8 hour bump out.”

HOW IT STARTED

“I was both a senior account manager and part of the leadership team at Staging Connections in Melbourne. I am now an event producer and am subject to the TOD charges that you speak of”, says Dave Deveny who is now the managing director of Ready Set Go, a large Melbourne Events Management firm.

“I hate TOD charges and believe they are getting worse. I am not on “the inside” anymore but would like to clarify some things.”

“Staging Connections did not instigate TOD charges, they were forced upon SC by what was the Carlton Crest as part of the contract negotiation many years ago. Mainly as a result of Rock and Roll style production companies wrecking the venue and its infrastructure. They then became very popular with venues as an added source of revenue once venue contracts moved to flat commission rather than equipment only”.

“Staging Connections was also not responsible, and never has been, for the kind of anti-competitive behaviour undertaken by venues such as BCCEC, SCEC and Adelaide Exhibition Centre,” Dave alleges.

“During my time Staging Connections management disliked TOD shifts. For a couple of reasons: staff hated them, as you can imagine it is very demoralising to sit there and watch someone else do the gig. Senior tech staff refused to do them and some left because of it. It did not, and obviously does not now, reflect well

“IN MANY CASES THE TOD IS A VERY YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED JUNIOR TECHNICIAN WHO HAS VERY LIMITED KNOWLEDGE. THEY ALSO FIND THEMSELVES SUPERVISING MORE THAN ONE CLIENT AT ANY GIVEN TIME WITHIN THE VENUE AS WELL AS TAKING CARE OF OTHER VENUE MATTERS. THEREFORE THE CLIENT IS BEING CHARGED FOR A SERVICE THAT IS NOT EVEN BEING SUPPLIED - A BIT OF DOUBLE DIPPING DON'T YOU THINK?”

on Staging Connections by the pure fact that they are in so many venues, and, most people think it is Staging Connections pulling the strings.”

“Labour is not a profit centre in the AV business, as we all know, so having to provide more labour than you would need for core operations is not good. I think that what happened was that many smaller AV companies thought it was Staging Connections that was pushing the agenda and so decided “if they’re doing it, I’m doing it”.

“So let’s throw the mud where it deserves to be thrown, the venues.”

IS EVERYONE DOING THIS?

Peter Summers from My Production Company has been involved with the Event production and staging industry for over 30 years.

“I have managed several production companies during this time including Staging connections Gold Coast, Intercity Staging Canberra and Brisbane to name but three. During my time with these companies I managed to secure in house and preferred supplier contracts with approximately sixteen hospitality venues in Canberra and Queensland”.

Some of these contracts were with such prestigious hospitality venues such as Hyatt, Sheraton, Sofitel and Rydges chains. I was indirectly involved with some of the original discussions in regards to the implementation of TOD charges and the reasons why”.

“Back in the early nineties competition for hospitality contracts were highly sought after. In order to obtain these contracts large commission incentives were offered to the venues to secure this work, back in the nineties it was generally a standard commission of 25% on equipment hire with labor excluded.”

“As time progressed venue management realised the potential for considerable revenue generation from the production companies vying for their business and started to demand greater commissions which over the past few years has grown to be in some cases 40% of equipment hire and labor.”

“In some cases now in order for Production Companies to secure the inhouse contracts they have to guarantee a certain annual return from audio visual production services, not just a basic percentage commission on services sold.”

“Over the past ten years many smaller boutique Audio Visual Production Companies have been established, many of these by disgruntled ex employees of the larger Production Companies, these smaller companies due to smaller overheads and the lower costs of technology over time have been able to offer considerable costs savings to clients whilst still supplying a very professional and high standard of service resulting in greater market share and I believe growth in the industry.

...CONTINUED PAGE 68

*So you want to Fly,
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Darwin Gala Ball

CX goes tropical

BY JULIUS GRAFTON



August in Australia is a story of two climates – cold and unpredictable below the tropic of Capricorn then heavenly warm and dry above. CX flew in to Darwin just after Friday midnight on the first weekend of August, to a balmy 22 degrees.

The Darwin Turf Club's Gala Ball is the largest in Australia, but it didn't rate a mention on the government's tourism site – which almost derailed our decision to splash two and a half grand to visit Darwin on this long weekend. Assured it was indeed worthwhile, we did the four-hour flight from cold grey Sydney.

Held in the grounds of the Sky City Casino, itself on Fannie Bay, the Ball occupies a vast flat expanse of lawn, bordered on the land-side by a road, power lines, and a cliff with residences on top.

The stage is built facing out to the bay, and there are over 300 tables for ten all set under the benign blue sky in a gentle 28 degree sun. A five story tall FOH tower is at site centre, well back from the stage and acting as a festoon point. The top deck is loaded with CitiColor crowd lights. The entrances feature large truss pyramids with four foot mirror balls at the apex.

Around the perimeter are seated bars, exits to toilets, and photo zones. Long buffets are set up running in a line towards the stage, designed so a cluster of several hundred guests can access the nearest 'Enter Here' point and load up.

On entry, long tables of beverages are waiting, at the table a very large ice bin holds almost anything wet you can think of, and plated entrees of quail on truffled puree await, beside bread rolls.

IT'S FANCY

Darwin's best are glammed, every bloke is in a tux except Mr. CX who makes an entry in black jeans with regular button up grey shirt. The usual RM Williams boots complete the combo, but the SLR camera and backstage pass explain the faux pas. The ladies are wearing several million dollars worth of satin and silk, atop over thousands of Jimmy Choo's best.

We are the guest of Col West, proprietor of seven firms that include Top End Sound and Total Event Services. Amazingly he has supplied virtually everything except the food and the band. Stage, tables, chairs, theming, table centrepieces, PA, lights and some video screens. The main screens come from PRG, and the toilets came from Kenny.

With a 20 metre span stage, a full EV line array and concert sized lighting rig, performer Guy Sebastian was properly presented to the audience. Because of the predictable dry season weather, the organisers are confident every year that the event will not get rained out or blown away. This is one of the few places on earth where you can be confident of weather on a given weekend – the dry season across the top of Australia is a form of benign summer and a complete contrast to the lower climes. Not surprisingly it is peak season up north, and the busiest time of year for Col West and the various other competing providers in Darwin.

At the entry points, red carpet leads in. Star Cloths and LED lit Perspex panels in Global Truss structures flow through as a theme. The perimeter bars continue a soft LED lit look, all tied off as one overarching lighting design that draws your eyes over to the stage.

THE SHOW

When gates open at 7.30, a DJ does the walk in and the large screens are running Darwin Turf Club vision. This weekend culminates with the Darwin Cup, itself the northern answer to Melbourne's little race meet in November.

The Turf Club and the Casino combine forces to run this event, yet its exclusion on government tourism web sites is a complete mystery, given that the airlines and hotels are booked out.

At 8pm some housekeeping announcements preclude short speeches, a prize draw, and then sponsor Qantas supplied its children's choir for a short and uplifting set. The children exit stage right, and the DJ returns with some fireworks to announce the buffet is open.



Food for days from
14 buffets

From the starting position, you advance from oysters to crustaceans, salads, cold meats and eventually into hot food at the end. If one plate load isn't enough, just go back again. They keep this food extravaganza stocked for hours, and then open dessert buffets as well.

If the booze is running low, they bring more. A lot more. We get an extra ice bucket. We end up with a table sagging under the weight of food, alcohol and theming that is centred on Col West's LED egg, designed to give enough light to see what to eat or drink next.

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Guy Sebastian & Band



Can it get any better!

At 9pm Guy Sebastian and his band start a set that seems quick but actually runs 90 minutes. Tour trim and tight, they rip through his material and the huge dance floor in front of the stage is well trampled. Being a kind of high class, \$350 a head event, there is no need for crowd barriers. It all feels very civilized, and the sound is fat and opulent without big city noise constraints and delay zones. Just two big drops of X Line, a pair of smaller outfills, and four sub clusters on the ground. The way we like it.

After The Guy comes more DJ, this practitioner has his audience sussed and doesn't submerge into messy Macarena, dodgy euro-pop or wedding reception disaster hits. A cover band then play two sets until 1am.



Darren "Daz" Scott, Scott Armstrong, Col West & Shane "Gel" Phillips



Sharon 'Shaz' Clark



Tim Klink



Amanda Vincent & Tammy West



Old but reliable EV amps

SAFE STAGE

Col took us on a site tour earlier this day, explaining at great length the measures he takes to ensure a successful event. The safety of his Total Fabrications stage roof is high on the list. "It has four outriggers per side with substantial cross bases. It's tied down. There are no sails. On the night we'll raise a backdrop. On its own it will handle 35 metres a second – maybe 120 kilometres an hour of wind. Over 100 and the wind will blow chairs around".



Line array stage roof detail

"When you fly you have to double check every day. Your first accident is going to be your last".



Darwin Gala 2012

"You don't pin the drapes. The star cloth has shot bags holding it. The wind can go through. It's safe. We test the strength of the pegs. They go 1 to 1.2 metres into the ground. We use a four ton terrain fork to get them out, if we can't get them out we dig a hole and use an angle grinder to cut them off."



Vertical stage leg



Stage plate bolted into mother earth

Of course there is no wind – a balmy night, almost perfect. The next day the crew slave under the languid sun and un-build this mini city. Until next year.

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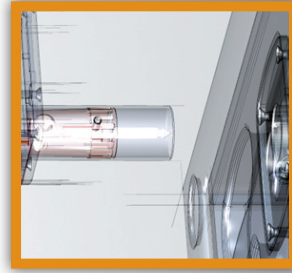
Thanks to **E-Connect**, HK's novel integrated signal routing, even the largest Elements setup is performance-ready in just a few minutes with a minimum of cabling. Due to each component's extremely compact and rugged design, transportation is no longer a hassle.



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Band Four

- 8 x E435
- 2 x EA600
- 4 x E110
- 4 x E110A
- 2 x EF45



3,600w RMS



DJ Three

- 6 x E435
- 2 x EA600
- 2 x E110
- 4 x E110A



2,700w RMS



Acoustics Three

- 6 x E435
- 2 x EA600
- 2 x E110
- 2 x E110A



2,100w RMS



Voice Two

- 2 x E435
- 1 x EA600
- 1 x EP1
- 1 x EF45



300w RMS





Roger Foley of Ellis D. Fogg

The Psychedelicatessen of Delights

BY MARK TAYLOR

I've had a wonderful life here in our industry. During the 30 years running SLATS here and in Asia the privilege was working with and nurturing some of the most creative souls in the business today.

It's our industry because we live it, we dream it and we love what we do. Here I'm asked to interview the legends of the industry. No better person to start with than Roger Foley of Ellis D. Fogg.

Roger began his craft in Sydney years before Josef Svoboda birthed AV at the Montreal expo in 1967.

As you were ...

When I finished school in 1977 one of the first people I would meet was Roger Foley. I would become his sound guy for many years spoilt with huge budgets, fantastic generic productions and new life directions.

Roger's approach to a show was and still is unique. The audience, the performers and the crew enjoy the entire experience. There is no show without a beginning, middle and ending. There was always a moment on every show when you'd sit back and think to yourself 'yep, this is it'. His elastic stripped jump through projection screen was one of the best analogue tricks I've ever seen. The models were projected on the front then swam through the thing. Fantastic.

The crew always had the same food as the guests. All this in the days of NAVA, AETT and Alan Wade: imagine life with just 3 suppliers.

Roger has worked all over the world. He introduced pea lights to Hong Kong in 1981. He's produced shows across India, he's done shows across the USA and exhibited in NYC. He's done more fashion parades around the world than we've all had hot breakfasts. He's produced his own light-show performances people would turn up to and pay money to see. He helped Martin Sharp make Tiny Tim a legend. He has a shoe fetish. He enjoys shocking people. He opened the MCA with Nick Greiner tugging a Dali inspired female sex object, a lobster. He remembers Elton John from the movie "Tommy" which he did the opening party for. Chugg had him create the Chill Out room for Alternative Nation and more babies were born. RAT invited him to create his own 'Amaze-Ing' space at their parties. Ipec, Myer, Grace Bros, DJs, Zampatti, Weiss, Revlon, Estee Lauder, Hoyts the list goes on – owe a great part of their success to Roger.

I visited Fogg house today and it's just as eclectic as ever. Tucked away in Hazelbrook on the Blue Mountains, Martin Sharp's works take up the major amount of wallspace as do posters from Roger's many shows, photos of literally everything and some of his large ropelight sculptures. The verandahs and workshop spaces are lined with props and works in progress (the 'Quasar' being the highlight: a laser etched Perspex cube full of holes and dripping with ropelight).

fogg's wall of light



1984

MT: How did it all start Roger?

RF: As a kid I loved making things with my hands and I wanted to be a sculptor. Around 1961, my Aunt Eileen Foley who had been involved with early radio and music in Australia said to me: "two things are going to be big: guitars and lighting". I got a part time job working in children's theatre where I first met Dick MacGillycuddy and later Roger Barratt. I started studying at UNSW and I'd first light the Uni revues and later direct them. My first play was lighting 'Volpone' for Phillip Parsons. The first experiments used 16mm film projectors to light the action on stage as well as tinkering with projectors and illumination devices often with the help of the engineering students.

MT: Where did the business name Ellis D. Fogg come from?

RF: My nickname at school was Fogg. I suppose it derived from my ethereal way of pondering things. LSD was legal in Australia until 1969. The name would represent a collective. It's not just about me. People would come up after the shows and want to meet Mr Fogg. I'd sometimes say that was my father and he's gone home to watch the telly. Depended on how attractive the enquirer was. Children were conceived during those 'special' events. One approached me recently. It's a constant joy having pretty young arts students in one's life. Nowadays all girls and boys are young to me.

MT: Who were you collaborators?

RF: Eddie Van Der Madden was the master of the wet show and brilliant at building effects projectors. Graham Beatty

was and still is the best man in the world for building a lighting effect from scratch. His walls of light were out there well before the big shows rolled into town. Then there's Peter Lockwood who's at the Opera House now, Peter Howard who kept all the film and slide material in order, Ray Medhurst, Steve Devine who invented the winchups that Phil Salmon and Richard White from Rock Industries would later build for me, Tiny Goode, Mark Howard, Ian MacConachie, Geoff Rose - that talented laser man with all the crystals held in place with toothpaste, Barrie Kosky the renowned director and Bruce Jackson and Phil Storey who built the first 3 channel colour organ to my specifications.

MT: Did you coin the phrase JANDS?

RF: They had this complicated name 'J and S Research Electronics' for a business building chasers and strobes. I just used to write 'JandS' on the cheques and told them to register it.

MT: What do you think of lighting technology today?

RF: Well when the VariLites hit the market they were the be all and end all. Almost. They weren't as bright as my 35mm carbon arc projector mounted on a Miller tripod head and JANDS asked me to turn down my fluro array one night at a Mardi Gras because it was washing out the VLs. The VL operators were a cocky bunch but Mark Hammer and I turned out some great work together.

MT: What's not good about the industry?

RF: These travel agents who became 'event directors'. People think I'm arrogant but I'm just trying to rid my life of idiots. I don't deal well with Bimbos, male or female. People who are the best at talking are the worst at doing. They talk to justify their stupidity. One night this event director came up to me and asked if all the audience would be able to see the projections on the clouds. "If we have clouds tonight they will" I said. "Well how does Batman do it?" She demanded. They even have training schools for these idiots incapable of differentiating between fantasy and reality.

MT: You've just picked up another 5 year contract on the Christmas tree in Darling Harbour. When did you do the first one?

RF: 1993. Our tree is a wonderful thing from many aspects. Firstly it is a very Australian type tree. It has its own form of translucency, of lightness and at the same time it's complex. It's not homogenous. It looks as good in the early morning with the sun lighting it as it does at night when it lights up. Standing back at distances from it provides different interpretations of the piece.

MT: Highlights over the decades, Roger?

RF: Well the '60s were about the shows with Wendy Saddinton, Jeff Duff, Jeff St John and Jeanie Lewis at the Elizabethan Theatre in Newtown. Bill Eliades used to run it. Bill's done well with the Enmore, Metro and Factory. During the '60s three things emerged: the Summer of Love on the USA West Coast; Andy Warhol and Lou Reed in the East; and my awareness of Mahatma Ghandi's India.

The shows in the Yellow House in the '70s were extraordinary. The Yellow House was an artists' collective filled with creative types and our imagination ran wild.

Maggie Tabberer's productions and the wild times with Chris and Pixie Skase opening the two Mirage resorts (Gold Coast and Port Douglas) were the '80s.

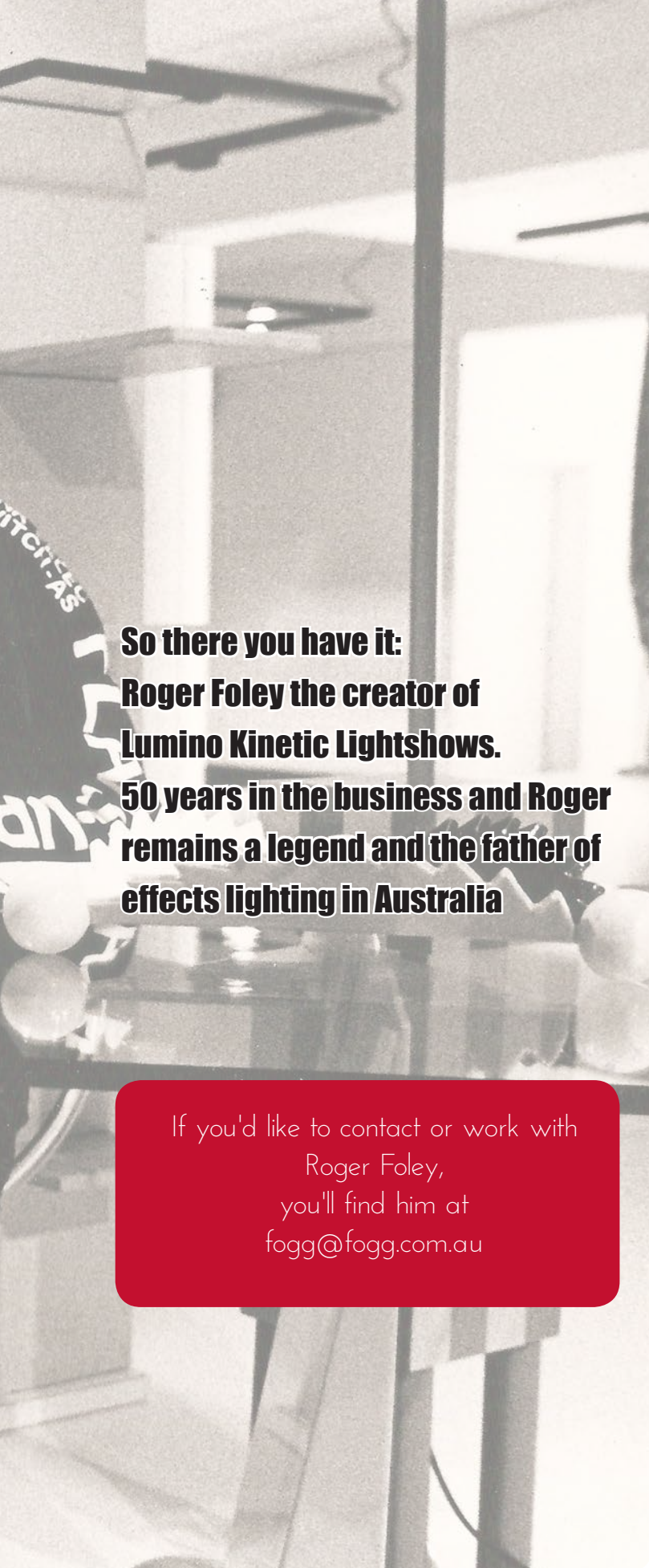
Our best show was for Paul Keating, the then PM, just before the election in 1993. Keating was facing a landslide against him and felt internally defeated. We rallied the arts community and created a show which so reinvigorated him that he won against all odds.

Mark, you know the shows you do for nothing just by following your heart are most often the best. Working with the Gija people from Bow River in 2001 and later the exhibitions in New York showed that you don't need all the technology to produce a really good show. Just power and light and colour. 'which tint of white light are you talking about' I'd ask many times.

MT: 50 years on Roger. What's the next project for Ellis D. Fogg?

RF: Well I haven't retired. Far from it. I'd love to design things for some of these younger blokes with lighting gear. I see the same elements, many of them mistakes, repeated endlessly on 'special' events. I'm not about keeping it all to myself. There is so much experience here to share and the best way to do that is on the job.

My next show will be in March. There will be 7 artists varying in age from young to old. It will be a retrospective and an astrospective about the past and the future. It will all be tied together with a lightshow, light sculptures and installation pieces.



**So there you have it:
Roger Foley the creator of
Lumino Kinetic Lightshows.
50 years in the business and Roger
remains a legend and the father of
effects lighting in Australia**

If you'd like to contact or work with
Roger Foley,
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PAVT INTRODUCE

AVALON BY EAW

BY JIMMY DEN-OUDE

Recognising a market demand for high quality high power dance club sound systems, EAW has launched a range of new Avalon series speakers. The CLUB.three is the baby of the range, powered by a single 15" driver, while the larger CLUB.two box is modelled after the EAW QX series with a 4 x 12" arrangement. Both cabinets use the same high efficiency compression driver, with 90 x 60 degree and 90 x 90 degree waveguides on the CLUB.two and CLUB.three respectively. SUB.two completes the range. The Avalon boxes look really cool, with gloss finishes available in a range of colours, and laser cut logos. You can choose different horn and grille colours to match the carefully coordinated décor now standard in modern high profile venues.

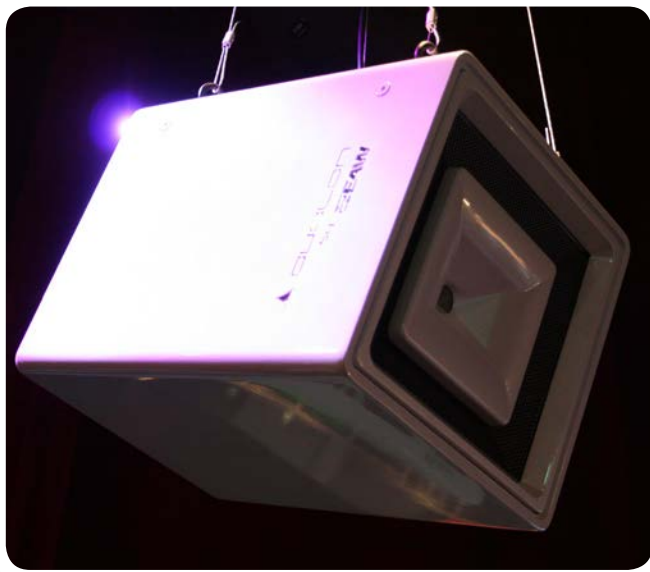
CX attended the Avalon by EAW launch on the opening night of the Integrate tradeshow. The system on display included four CLUB.two cabinets, plus a pair of CLUB.three boxes as delay fills. Four SB2001 subs in omni mode provided low frequency support. The demo system was operated by Ben Clarke of Production Audio, and the demonstration was conducted with no EQ in-line. Avalon was designed specifically for electronic dance club music so this genre was used for the demonstration, with tracks from Infected Mushroom, Skrillex and the like. The system supplied heart stopping, tight bottom end, undistorted top end clarity, clear present mids and excellent stereo imaging – all without breaking a sweat.



Jeff Rocha,
Eastern Acoustic
Works



Ben Clarke,
PAVT



Avalon is about more than just speakers – system design must be done by an Avalon by EAW Authorised Sound Designer, with sign-off from EAW’s Application Support Group including a certification plaque for the venue. The whole aim of this is to provide a range of quality sounding venues for DJ event promoters. Not only is this a potential drawcard for venues looking to attract big name artists, ultimately it means a better quality experience for punters.

CX congratulates Graeme Stevenson and Production Audio Video Technology on a well-executed demonstration of what promises to be a very serious product.

More info at www.avalonbyeaw.com.



Source four LED launch



PAUL MULHOLLAND CEO JANDS, AND JULIUS GRAFTON



MATTHEW ARMENDARIZ-KERR FROM ETC

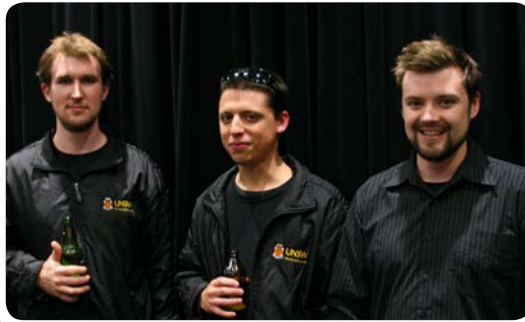


JOHN BUCKLEY FROM JANDS, BRETT STEELE FROM PA PEOPLE

August saw JANDS launch the ETC Source Four LED fixture across multiple cities and dates in Australia. Matthew Armendariz-Kerr from ETC was the guest speaker, and during the course of the session covered several topics including the x7 colour mixing system as well as a new developments in the ETC console line. Several effective demonstrations were conducted, which highlighted the Source Four LED fixtures capabilities as well as drawing some real world comparisons with tungsten fixtures doing the same job. **CX** congratulates JANDS on an educational evening supported with some very tasty catering.



BELOW,
ANDREW MAHER &
EDDIE WELSH
FROM JANDS



ABOVE, THE CREW FROM UNSW



DAVID STOREY FROM PRG



BELOW, TIM KENNARD FROM
JANDS, MARSHALL HARRINGTON
FROM BARBIZON

WAYNE KELLETT FROM
HERKES PRO LIGHTING,
TIM KENNARD AND
EDDIE WELSH FROM JANDS



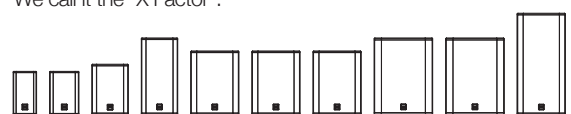
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Ross Wilson's Cool Cool World

...and it's mostly analogue

BY BRIAN COLEMAN

ROSS WILSON always seems to get the chemistry right. And even though the iconic singer, songwriter and ARIA Hall of Fame inductee has nurtured a warm relationship with analogue throughout his prodigious career, the cold fact is that his cool world is now embracing the expediency and convenience of a digital domain.

“When I went over to the States to do my solo album *I Come in Peace* (2010), that was in an old fashioned studio with people really playing, and playing well, you know, great studio musicians, and it was all done on Pro Tools,” says Wilson.

And when CX recently caught up with Ross Wilson and The Peaceniks on their current tour, FOH sound engineer John McConnell, who is also an analogue aficionado, was quick to allude to the preeminence of his Korg MR1000 DSD mobile recorder.

“It’s the only digital device that I’ve ever heard where what you put in is what you get out,” says McConnell, but he’s not as enamoured with digital desks.

“I’m not a fan of digital desks for the simple reason that they’re all different. So I’m supposed to know 15 or 16 desks all with completely different operating systems--and it’s a farce,” says McConnell.

Of course Ross Wilson’s career sprang to life in the all-analogue world of 1971 with Daddy Cool’s debut single *Eagle Rock*, which was featured in the 2011 Australian movie *Red Dog*. And when Daddy Cool revisited the recording studio in 2006 they were still laying down tracks on 2” tape.

“A few years ago Daddy Cool finished off a third album called *The New Cool* when we were going on tour with The Beach Boys. We used tape, but we mixed that on Pro Tools because it was so easy to edit and do double tracks and all kinds of stuff. That’s kind of the way it’s done now,” Wilson told CX.

Early Production

Most of Daddy Cool’s records were produced by Robbie Porter aka Rob E.G. but after the band split with Porter at least two of the group’s last records were produced by Wilson before he jumped into the deep end as producer of *Skyhooks*.

“It was a bit ballsy of me to put my hand up for *Skyhooks*, but we knew each other, and I was a bit protective of them. I thought that if they went with an EMI or other people that I was familiar with, they’d try to censor what they were doing. And the whole point of them was to not be censored, but to be brash and stir things up and have the whole rock ‘n’ roll experience--and annoy people,” says Wilson.

Wilson insists that he’s never been a knob twiddler when producing in the studio. For *Skyhooks* first album *Living in the 70s* Wilson formed a close working relationship with house engineer John French at TCS (Television City Sound).

“With John I would say, ‘Oh let’s do this and let’s do that,’

and ‘oh sure we’ll just sing that line again,’ and he would just be there tuned in. So we got a very good relationship going where I’d say something and he would immediately press the button and off we’d go. Or I’d go ‘we’ve gotta get this sound on the conga drum,’ or whatever it was--mike it up and we’d fiddle away until I got a sound I liked, and the same with the guitar. So I was more like an interpreter, and he would go and do the work. We got onto this roll where I’d just sort of say stuff and we’d discuss it and he’d go bang, bang, bang, bang rather than me leaning over the desk twiddling things and wasting time,” says Wilson.

With the production bug coursing through his veins Wilson went on to form his own record label Oz Records and avant-garde band Mondo Rock.

“I’d had a Mondo Rock line-up that recorded our first album, Primal Park (1979). And then I didn’t feel that line-up was the right one, it was very guitar based and I wanted to get keyboards in, so I reshuffled it all and got a new band. I did a lot of auditioning, and one of the reasons I got Eric McCusker on guitar was because he could write songs--I had listened to some of his demos,” says Wilson.

McCusker had written a song called State of the Heart but didn’t think that it would be suitable for Mondo Rock. But Wilson asked if he could he have a listen to the demo that McCusker was about to give to his own publisher. Wilson immediately said, “What are you doing giving it to them? That’s for us! It’s commercial.”

There was to be more than one twist to the State of the Heart saga. Firstly, recording engineer Ern Rose, who was also Little River Band’s FOH and recording engineer, had an idea to slow the analogue tape down, which lowered the pitch a semitone to make it what Wilson calls, “really dreamy”. “And sure enough it got this whole other flavour to it. But when we were supposed to go in and mix it Ern got an emergency phone call to say The Little River Band were breaking really big in the States,” recalls Wilson.

The LRB tour was going to take months and Wilson didn’t want to wait. So Mondo Rock’s drummer Gil Matthews put his hand up to mix the song, and being a drummer he put the drums right up front, which Wilson liked.



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“There’s a whole industry of how to make totally digital not sound totally digital.”
Ross Wilson.

“And so we put it out and it became a huge hit,” says Wilson.

In fact Mondo Rock’s new line-up very quickly found success with the Chemistry album, which along with State of the Heart featured the hits, Chemistry, Cool World and Summer of ‘81. This was followed by the Nuovo Mondo(1982) album. And Wilson’s Bop Girl (1983), which was recorded by his then wife Pat, is currently the theme song for the channel 10 reality show Being Lara Bingle.

“Bop Girl is making a comeback thanks to Lara Bingle. We just got a call out of the blue saying, ‘We’d like to use this as a theme for this upcoming show.’ It’s always got a bit of airplay being an oldie, but because it’s the theme of Being Lara Bingle the downloads have gone through the roof,” says Wilson.

A Touch of Paradise, which was recorded on Mondo Rock’s 1982 Nuovo Mondo album was later to become a huge hit for John Farnham in 1987. Wilson explains:

“It’s great to get your songs covered, but I wrote Touch of Paradise (with Gulliver Smith) in 1976 and we’d been playing it off and on in Mondo Rock and we did record a version of that ourselves.

“Farnham was familiar with the song because he used to come and see us play at the Prospect Hill Hotel where there was a kind of record industry night. And my manager at the time John Blanchfield was a friend of Farnham, and he kept saying to him, ‘Don’t forget Touch of Paradise, it’d be perfect for you’. And I remember we were in Mondo Rock and about to catch a plane to Orange or somewhere, and someone said here’s a cassette of Farnham’s version of your song. And I’m going ‘Oh yeah, that’s not bad’. And then the album sells like a million copies in Australia and a million overseas, and I’m going, ‘Yeah thanks Man!’” says Wilson.

The Analogue Thing

“Quite often these days we’ll record on analogue and mix on Pro Tools. On tape you get a sort of voodoo happening. If you do the whole thing totally digital, then you’ve got to use all these plugins to warm it up. You get a sort of hard sound with totally digital. So there’s a whole industry of how to make totally digital not sound totally digital. So we bypass that and we quite often use tape” says Wilson.

And John McConnell, who was about to go into Peaceniks mixing mode on the current tour, was quite emphatic:

“Every analogue desk is essentially the same, they can have 500 knobs or 10,000 knobs but they all work the same. And live FOH sound is about reaction time. I can do something in half a second on an analogue board; you can’t do that on a digital board. So straight away your reaction time is cut to ribbons.

“I’ve done tours with sixty channels where I’m expected to use a different digital desk every night with a one-day set-up, and then I go to another gig with another digital desk and it’s a completely different operating system. It’s a nightmare.

“This year I worked at the Byron Bay Bluesfest with Donovan. One guy turned up with his showfile, the file was corrupted--gig over!” says McConnell.

McConnell’s favourite desk is the Midas XL4. “You just can’t go past it. Pretty well all the Midas desks--maybe not the small cheap ones--but any Midas, like XL200 and up sound incredible.

“Really the digital thing is not driven by operators, it’s driven purely, like many things these days, by convenience. And it’s all down to production companies and management wanting things to be less expensive, so if you’ve got an analogue board and you’ve got racks of outboard gear, someone has got to prep all that and keep it going. In a digital board, you don’t. The problem is that the onboard digital effects never, ever sound as good. Never! So it’s all about convenience and cost cutting, it’s not about quality,” says McConnell.



John McConnell mixing
Ross Wilson and
The Peaceniks

Daddy Cool at
Myer Music Bowl
NOTE - PA on table



The Early Years

Daddy Cool's first PA consisted of two McLean column speakers, which had 4 x 8-inch ROLA speakers, each tapped to 5 watts with 100-volt line transformers, and a 50 watt McLean mixer amplifier to drive them.

"On the inside of Daddy Cool's first album, *Daddy Who* (1971) we had a gatefold cover, and there was that picture shot from behind at the Myer Music Bowl, and the other one was at the Melbourne Town Hall, with the big crowd. I've always thought that was really funny because they didn't have big PAs in those days, and at the Myer Music Bowl we're going, 'God how are we going to make a sound here?' And all we had was a McLean's PA 2-column with that little amp you see sitting on the table. No foldback in those days; it didn't exist. So we got a mike from the Myer Music Bowl public address system, which was just part of another system sitting way out bolted to the Myer Music Bowl sail. But the people were still all jumping around having a great time because that's all they were used to in those days," says Wilson.

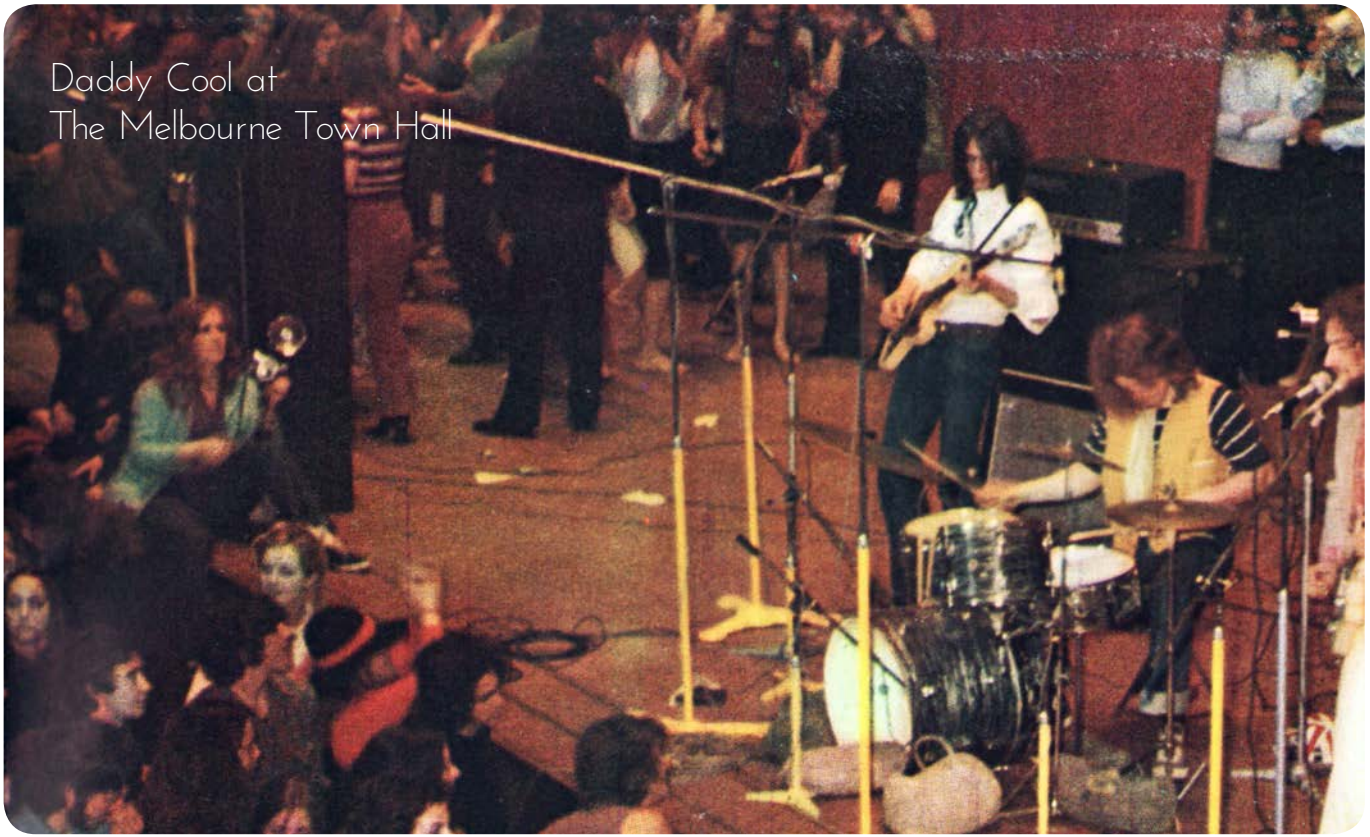
As a singer Wilson desperately wanted to be able to hear himself and to have the vocals heard out front.

"When they started building PAs--the first decent ones being built by Jands up in Sydney--I was one of the first touring artists to buy one. I can't remember what was in it but by those standards it was state of the art. I had one and Kevin Borich had one. It had these two big boxes either side, a rack of amps--and foldback. So we were touring around with that before it got to the stage where people were building bigger PAs and we'd just rent them," says Wilson.

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Daddy Cool at
The Melbourne Town Hall

The Road Ahead

The current tour, which is billed as Ross Wilson and The Peaceniks consists of Ross Wilson (guitar/vocals), Eric McCusker (guitar/vocals) John McAll (keyboards/vocals) Chris Paraha (bass/vocals), Haydn Meggitt (drums/vocals).

“On the road we’re always trying out new things. Like the other night the song I sang Take Your Time, which I dedicated to my Dad who passed away (May 30, 2012)--like that’s a new song, it’s never been recorded, and it’s come up really well,” says Wilson.

Wilson is also planning to put Mondo Rock back on the road for some shows next year. The line-up will be Ross Wilson and Eric McCusker with James Black on keys, Paul Christie on bass and ex Dragon drummer Kerry Jacobson.

“When we get together it’s great, we just love it, but everyone’s got other lives going on. We’ve got a chance to do something early next year and I hope it comes off,” says Wilson.

“You can’t get any Mondo Rock albums online at the moment except Come Said the Boy because we’re re-mastering them and we’re going to put them all up because we own them,” says Wilson.



Dynamic Hipnotics
circa 1982

Come Said the Boy is actually Mondo Rock’s biggest selling single, and Wilson went back to the 24 track analogue masters, which he had transferred to digital and sent to the UK, via computer uploads, for re-mastering.

“There’s this guy in England, and I liked what he’d been doing. It’s kind of like dubstep, but not a frantic dubstep but more laid-back...So he’s sent us back the finished remix all mastered and ready to go, which you’ll hear in a couple of months, and it’s really wild stuff,” says Wilson.

"If you're a songwriter and other people are recording your songs and you're on a roll it's all exciting and you keep writing new stuff. If you're in a band and you're doing albums there's maybe a bit of impetus to come up with the next album and what have you. But as you get a bit older the media base shrinks and you're less likely to get airplay. You might bring out some great album--big deal!

"Once I realised what was happening (in the digital download world) I started thinking there is a way now of getting your stuff heard. It's just a matter of getting everybody on board like your publishing company that's usually trying to get all the young cats away. So you go, 'Hey man I've got this new song and I want to try and get it in a movie etcetera.'

"And the mechanism of delivering a single has changed. Now it's downloads, consequently you now have an incredible shift in the amount of singles you can sell--not an album but a single song, and with downloads you've only got to get somewhere in the top 20 today to go platinum," says Wilson.



Mark Sydow
mixing
Dynamic Hypnotics
circa 1982

Ross Wilson is managed by Mark Sydow, whose career goes way back to the days when he was a FOH engineer for the Dynamic Hepnotics. Mark sent us some nostalgic pictures of that era, and mentioned that he occasionally used to bump into Julius (CX Editor) when they were both lugging PA in and out of gigs in those heady days.

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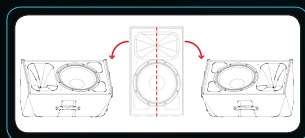
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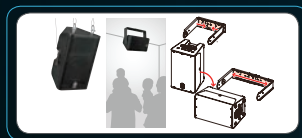
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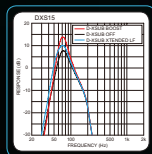
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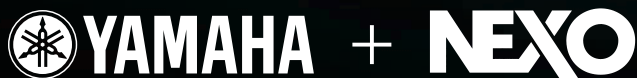
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WHAT IF THERE IS A RISK OR A HAZARD?

BY ANDREW MATHIESON

This article was originally going to be about control systems for chain hoists, but I am going to defer that particular subject once more to address a fairly topical issue.

In past articles, I've banged on and on about "and of course you've done your Risk Assessment so you're well informed about what you are dealing with" but it would seem that the concept of Hazard and Risk Assessments, while familiar generally to most of us, is a little misunderstood, and is a "grey" area at best.

So when we talk about performing an HRA (Hazard and Risk Assessment) or Risk Assessment, what do the terms "Hazard" and "Risk" actually mean?

There are several Australian and International standards covering the terminology and methodology of Hazard and Risk, and while the definitions vary from standard to standard (largely because these standards are fine tuned to a specific area of works) a plain English explanation of these

terms holds true for all applications and contexts.

Let's start with dictionary definitions of Hazard and Risk:

Hazard – Something causing danger, peril or risk.

Risk – Exposure to a hazard resulting in (potential) injury or loss.

So, a hazard is the thing that can cause injury, while the risk is the (likelihood of) exposure to that hazard.

Let's look at a real world example:

If a car's brakes fail, the result can be, say, running over a pedestrian and causing injury.

The hazard here is a pedestrian being hit by a car, not the car's brakes failing.

To evaluate the risk of someone being hit by a car is an enormous task, because of the number of factors that could lead to this occurrence, but in this case, we are examining the risk of someone being hit by a car because of brake failure.

So when we attempt to carry out a Hazard and Risk assessment, to make the task manageable, we look at each hazard then examine the things that could cause exposure to this hazard, and evaluate the relative risk of being exposed to this hazard. Do this one hazard at a time and one contributing factor at a time, and pretty soon you end up with a fairly comprehensive list of things you need to guard against to reduce the risk of injury or damage.

Going back to the world of stage machinery then, let's look at the risk of a chain hoist dropping its load on an unsuspecting member of the public standing below. Firstly, there is only ONE hazard – a falling load hitting someone.

There are many factors that can contribute to exposure to this hazard, and the entire point of carrying out a Risk Assessment is to develop strategies for minimising the risk (minimising the exposure to the hazard).

A few (but by no means all) of the risks that we need to consider and evaluate are:

Failure of a brake, failure of the chain or hook, failure of the rigging that attaches the load to the hook, failure of the control system to control the speed or the direction of the load, failure of the motor etc.

Some of these things can be dealt with in the design of the hoist, others are environmental (if no one ever stands under the load, it can't hit them) and others can be dealt with by the design of the control system.

See? I was getting to the subject of control systems for chain hoists, I just wanted to remind you all of the primary reason that we take the time to design and select these things the way we (should) do.

This article forms general opinion only and must not be relied on without a detailed, professional risk assessment undertaken specific to your situation. Consult a professional staging company every time you consider anything that may involve risk with flown objects or people.

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Event Safety Alliance [AUSTRALIA]

What is all this Work Health and Safety stuff all about? Why do we need to do all these things all of a sudden?

What if there was an accessible knowledge base and source of information on event safety?

What if that knowledge base was not only put together by people that work in our industry every day, but was also built and shared world-wide?

WELL, IT'S STARTED. The Event Safety Alliance was formed in the USA early this year and now with the help of some very dedicated people, the Event Safety Alliance Australia (www.eventsafetyalliance.org.au) has been established.

The main purpose of the Alliance is to provide advice and guidance for this unique industry, and to give small companies a voice. The majority of companies working in the entertainment industry don't have the resources to have full-time Work Health and Safety people on their books. But they still have to comply with the same rules and regulations as the big players.

In the coming months, this column will try to provide answers to your questions in plain English and endeavour to dispel many of the myths and 'Chinese whispers' surrounding Work Health & Safety which are giving it a bad reputation.

Why? Because at the end of the day all these rules and regulations are here to look after you, nothing more, nothing less. Unfortunately the WHS Act and Regulations are often used to implement unpopular issues under the guise of Work Health and Safety. To be blunt, paperwork has never saved anyone, but the concepts and ideas have. Some concepts are easy to understand, for instance wearing steel-cap shoes if you are doing a job where you might drop something heavy on your feet. Other issues like building an outdoor stage are much more complicated but also much more devastating if you get it wrong as we have seen too often in recent history.

The argument is that as long as we see safety as an add-on to our jobs, people will get hurt. And that could be you. Not because of what you are doing but because of what the person working next to you is doing, or not doing. Our industry is unique because we always work alongside other people. We may understand the risks of what we are doing, but not necessarily the risk of what they are doing. And that can hurt, badly. We need to adapt a safety culture to cover ourselves and everyone working with us and the people we ultimately work for, the punters.

When seatbelts were first introduced everyone had an argument why they couldn't wear them. Now you feel awkward when you get into a car without seatbelts. Safety in our industry will have to be the same. It is part of our job!

But it has to be realistic. Nothing is more annoying than some 'jobsworth' dishing out silly restrictions simply because they are too lazy to work on a sensible solution. That will be the core of this column; to provide sensible solutions to simple problems. That doesn't mean that you will like everything that is said. Sometimes we will have to alter the way we do a job to make it safer, but quite often there is an acceptable middle ground to be found that keeps everyone happy. The point is, that ignoring these 'rules and regulations' isn't going to make them go away.

Consultation and discussing realistic solutions have to be the backbone of improving our industry. We want to be your voice when it comes to all safety matters. We want to give advice about how to do things as safely as possible. We want to listen to your concerns. We want to start the dialogue about how to make our industry safer than it is, with realistic guidelines and help. In the coming months we will try to lift the veil, dispel myths and explain some basic principles. Stay tuned.

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WA Health Directorate 2004 (Guidelines for concerts, events and organised gatherings)
Crowd Control At Venues And Events, A practical Occupational Health and Safety Guide, WorkSafe (Vic) September 2006
Australian standard AS/NZS 1170 parts 0,1 and 2:2002 (AKA loading codes)
Australian standard AS/NZ 1664: 1: 1997 (Aluminium structures)
Australian Standard AS 4687-2007 (temporary fencing and hoardings)
MCK Metals Pacific. Strength and resistance load testing, November 2006
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PRG TruColor HS

A different take on LED lighting

BY JIMMY DEN-OUDEM



Traditional LED fixtures have become de rigueur in live production today. They work by emitting visible light, which is then collimated and focused through a lens assembly. The TruColor HS works differently.

Physically, it looks a lot like a normal studio softlight. The physical construction is extruded aluminium, with the rear of the fixture mostly heatsink. There's a nice hefty yoke, and a short tail with a multi-pin connector hangs out the back. The front panel (the part that emits light) looks like a normal luminaire with some kind of diffuser panel in front of the source. The TruColor HS can produce white light in colour temperatures including 2700, 3200, 4300, 5600 and 6500K. But here's the weird bit – the LEDs inside are BLUE.

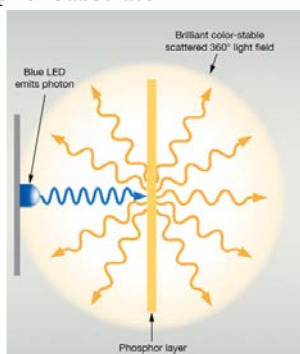
The LEDs in the TruColor HS aren't actually the light-source. They act as exciters for the phosphor coated panels which sit in front of the LED panel. The phosphor substrate panel is the lightsource. It's a radically different way of using LEDs to produce light, and PRG call it Remote Phosphor Technology.

There are a couple of benefits to this. It's easier to physically manufacture the pan-

els then it is to coat the LEDs with phosphor substrate. If you want to change colour temperature, just slide out the phosphor panel and slide a different one into its place. The panels lock in with captive screws and metal bars at each end of the luminaire. A safety lockout shuts down the fixture as soon as you remove the locking bar, but it is possible to remove the panel and then replace the bar – thus re-energising the thing. It's probably not a good idea to try this – while there's no UV there is a LOT of very blue light being emitted.

Another benefit to the Remote Phosphor Technology is that when dimming the fixture, the colour temperature remains constant. The quality of the light is very good, with an extended CRI of 96 at 3200K. Beam spread is 160 degrees, and the light field is beautifully consistent throughout. In addition to the white panels, there's a 520-550nm (visible green) panel option for motion capture applications.

Presumably because the phosphor requires a certain level of blue light to activate, the fixture can only be dimmed down to 20%. Which is still pretty bright. Dimming is achieved either locally by the separate control box, or you can attach a DMX



HOW REMOTE PHOSPHOR
TECHNOLOGY WORKS.

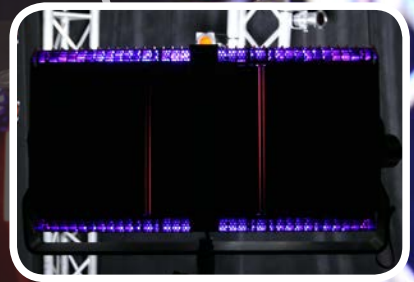


“Entirely convection cooled, the TruColor HS has a lot of heatsink”

signal and do it remotely. DMX mode uses 2 channels, one for intensity and the other for on/off. The separate control box is a bit of an annoyance, generating the same rigging challenges as ballast units for discharge fixtures.

PRG state that the output is greater than a 2kW incandescent soft light, and from using the TruColor HS in our studio we reckon that's pretty believable. We think the beam feels like about the same output but it's spread over a wider area. At full tilt, it draws 450W. There are no fans so it's completely silent, and no flicker is apparent on camera. With this in mind, it's not surprising that the heatsink casing gets quite warm. The TruColor HS illustrates very nicely how taking a different approach to things can yield great results.

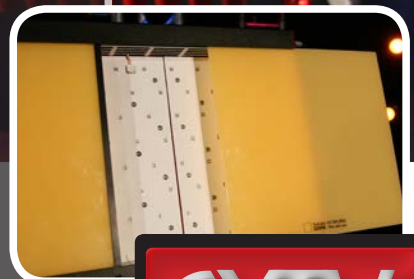
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BEHRINGER X32 LIVE SOUND MIXING SYSTEM POWERED BY MIDAS. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

BY JULIUS GRAFTON

I TRIED HARD TO HATE THE X32

First thing I made Jimmy do was to stress test this new audio console by running signal in for 24 hours, with a Par Can up the backside to heat it up, and record the output. Then we watched the timeline to see if it wheezed or panted. The timeline was rock solid.

We had a hard listen to the input preamp at all gain settings, especially flat out. I love the sound of digital eggs frying.

Finally I did the Julius test, which is to find out how long it would take me to build a 32 channel live mix, and send out 2 effects plus six sends of monitors.

RESULTS BELOW

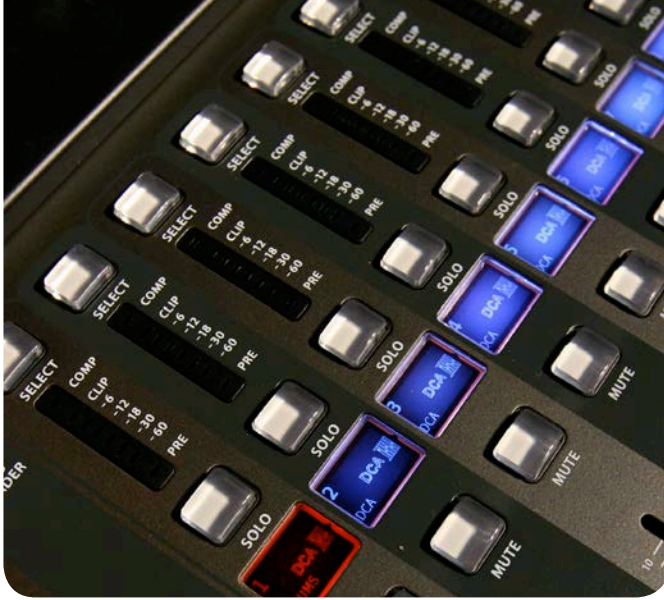
First some background on Austrian ubergenius Uli Behringer, who I once interviewed in Germany. Myth has him living in an evil eyrie, a granite hued mansion atop a cliff overlooking the South China Sea. Huge glass walls frame the tropical storms as Uli composes another opus on his 1872 cabriole leg Steinway. A timid servant scurries out with a tray of caviar and a flute of 2006 Krug as the maestro is interrupted by a call from his foreman at Uli City, the entire province in deepest darkest China. Tens thousand grateful white coated technicians churn out shiploads of audio and musical equipment only pausing to receive wise guidance from above.

The truth is possibly somewhat less interesting, but there is a facility styled as a city in China, and it appears to be approaching Apple corporation quality levels if the X32 is any indication.

But not before our hero plucked Midas and Klark Teknik from the safe arms of the Bosch conglomerate for a considerable sum.

His privately owned Music Group had stormed the bastille of audio and captured the Midas DNA. The holy grail of British live audio console manufacturers - the Neve of live. Stolen by Uli Behringer from the hearts and the console risers of the working engineer. Purists were shocked, incensed and offended. Beer was sunk in tribute at hasty wakes in county pubs across the royal homeland. 'Oh aye, they'll be dead by sunrise me lad ... nay, by the stroke of midnoy't!'





OVERVIEW

Maizels and I saw X32 at Vegas alongside the Midas stand. The 'Powered by Midas' on the front had drawn a crowd, and the Americans were keen to know the price. Just like here at CX as visitors swing into the studio to see the latest device in review. 'How much do you reckon it costs?' we ask. Seven to ten grand, they say.

Try around 4 grand. With the entry level Midas north of 10 grand, the X32 could sell for 7. But Behringer tend to rely on low price points, and in doing so make them the most terrifying name in pro audio, especially as they just purchased Turbosound.

Why sell it for 4 grand, when to start at 7 would be logical? Why not give those poor, destitute, hungry, arse-hanging-out retailers some love this one time? A product like this encourages estranged retailers to open an account and come into the Behringer fold. But wait, and cue the edict from the man on the cliff: "Nein. It vil sell for 4 grand. Ve must maintain ze ratio of cost to retail. Und ve vill destroy ze enemy before dawn. Im Auftrag... wir werden den Markt dominieren mit Preis wie unsere tödliche Waffe."

32 INPUTS, 24 OUTPUTS, 6 AUXILIARY INPUTS AND 6 AUXILIARY OUTPUTS, ALL ON THE BACK PANEL SET THE SCENE. THE X32 IS DESIGNED FOR LIVE – IT HAS 16 INPUT FADERS AND YOU FLIP BANK TO GET TO CHANNELS 17 TO 32.

You can't really run more than 16 sends, so it is a middle market stage monitor desk if you choose to use it for this task. 16 sends means 8 stereo sets of in-ears, enough for most acts but not the ones I mix.

But it has Midas AES50 ports, so you can Cat 5 off to another X32 (say side of stage, as a monitor console) or the Midas S16 stage box or the P16 personal monitor system – which is Behringer's take on the earlier Aviom or Roland implementation of this. iPad remote control is also standard.

OPERATOR VIEW

16 faders for input, 6 segment input LED ramp, coloured multi line label screen, and solid backlit buttons for mute, solo and select. Above the 16 sets of these is the selected channel controls, preamp to dynamics, EQ stage and then 4 bus sends with 4 sets of switches to access all 16 sends. Main bus mono and pan complete this area of the console.

Above the eight master group faders, which can be Group/DCA or Bus or Matrix faders, is the 800 x 400 (not touch) screen with system buttons, CUE led ramps and rotary encoders.

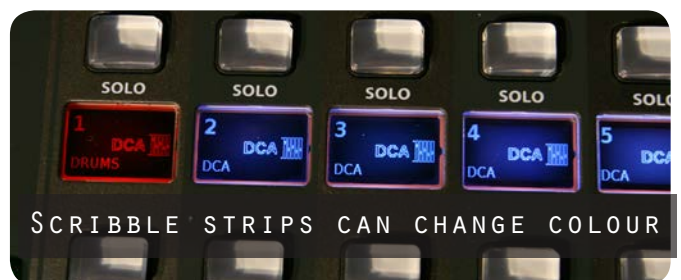
At console right is the output master, 12 user assigns, 6 mute buttons and stay bits along with a nice smart phone holder. The headphone jacks are hidden in the grab handles on each side. For navigation a little graphic points the way from the front panel on each side, otherwise we would never have found them.

X2 has enough lights and colours to attract attention, and the industrial engineering is correct for me. I don't like girly designs and missing bits like I see every other day on some other brands. This console says 'professional live sound' in an assertive voice. The front panel doesn't flex much when I slump on it, elbows down, 80 kg of pulsating sound guy.

37 different devices are available for 8 effects places – reverbs, delays, effects or graphic EQs. The default patch has effects 1 – 4 taking input from bus 13 – 16, or you can insert an effect over a channel.

Like all digital desks, there is a gate / compressor combo on every channel and output.

Do I like it? Yes I do. Would I trust it on a professional gig? Not yet. Recently I was off duty at a show with my family, on paid tickets. Suddenly there was an enormous outbreak of digital noise at peak level that almost blew the toupee off the geezer in row 2. Two more of these uncommanded and highly offensive outbreaks happened during the concert, and later on the engineer explained his digital mixing desk (not a Behringer) was haunted. Still later, he discovered the manufacturer had quickly released a new version of the operating system to alleviate this destructive quirk.



FOR BALANCE, READ WHAT MY ERSTWHILE COLLEAGUE HAS TO SAY, AS YOU TURN THE PAGE!

BEHRINGER X32

LIVE SOUND MIXING SYSTEM POWERED BY MIDAS CONTINUED...



I'M NOT SOLD ON THIS DESK!

BY JIMMY DEN-OUDEM

The X32 is priced not far from the Behringer DDX thing of a decade ago, but it does lots more. Given generational advancement and the whole thing about everyone wanting more for the same money, the X32 is a logical progression.

Setting up a basic mix is a fairly straightforward process once you initialize the whole console – there were no default scene files in our test unit so a factory initialisation was the only way we could be sure everything was back at zero.

Basic operation – pushing up faders and getting noise out of it – is intuitive and it all makes sense. Good for novice users. But to me that's where it ends. Some of the system options on the screen (patching inputs and outputs) make sense, but other elements of this console are wildly counter-intuitive. I've mashed enough buttons on enough consoles to know how long it should take me to setup a matrix mix, and on the X32 it took too long. The controls feel cheap but solid enough.

It sounds exactly like what it is - a four thousand dollar digital desk. Adequate, but not great. EQs work okay as do channel dynamics, but I can't help but get the feeling that the overall dynamic range is somehow choked. Soloing a channel with a mic plugged into it, I felt like I should have been hearing more. Or less – with no processing in line the input signal still sounded somehow compressed. I put it next to an OLD Behringer MX1602 analogue console just for laughs – the 1602 sounded better.

The upside here is that the X32 will be way forgiving for novice operators – and these are probably the hands in which it will commonly land at this price. The headphone amp is gutless, and seeking more level by hitting the preamps harder doesn't yield good results. The box says "powered by Midas", and while it's got XL200 style "flexibility" with the gain pot, it's just not the same.

Would I buy the X32 if I had the option to spend twice as much? No. Would I buy it if it were the only thing in my price range? Yes, and I'd probably be very happy with it too.



CX TV

Watch on CX-TV.com

X32 SIDE REAR PROFILE

BRAND: BEHRINGER
 MODEL: X32
 SSP: AROUND 4 GRAND
 INFO: WWW.BEHRINGER.COM
 DISTRIBUTOR:
 WWW.GALACTICMUSIC.COM.AU

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SUMMER ROADSHOW

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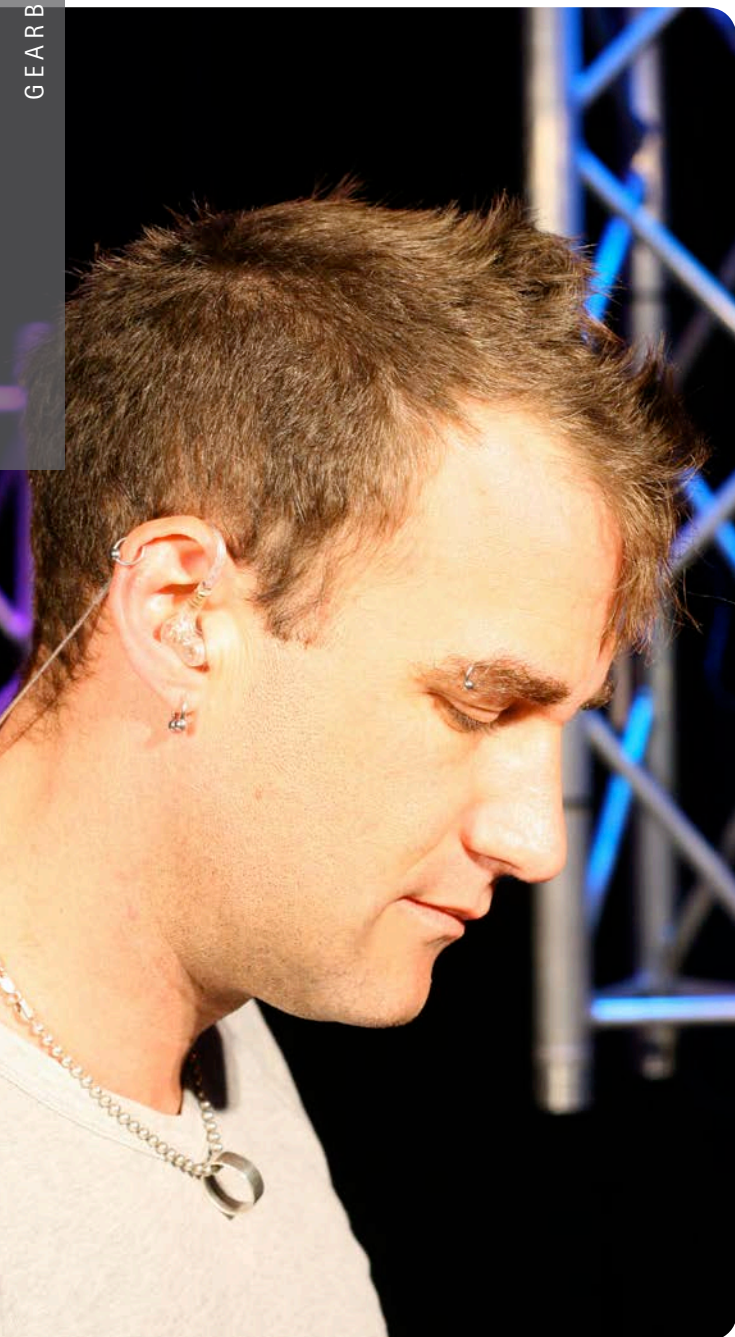
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* Free beer from 5pm. CX Roadshow is part of a movement to liberate and advance the rights of tech heads everywhere. No Nerds™ is a trademark of CX Network.

Better beer. More gear!™



Here at CX we're a fan of in ear monitors for a number of reasons. Putting the monitoring inside performers heads means better intelligibility for them, lower stage levels, and ultimately more scope for the FOH mix dude/dudette to pull a great sound for the punters.

Ear Monitors Australia make a range of in ear monitoring products, including custom moulds with matched driver assemblies. I reviewed a set of these some years back (triple drivers), and was really impressed. The fit was great and so was the sound, but for around \$2.5k you'd expect as much. For professional musicians who spend their every waking day on tour, custom moulds are an easy justification. But for talent shows such as YTT and Idol, it's much harder to justify such a spend for a performer who may not be in the contest the following week. Moreover as a freelance monitor operator it's a lot of coin to sink.

Bring on the generic solution. A cheaper alternative to custom IEMs, but one that's good enough to get the job done and keep on getting it done.

Ear Monitors Australia (EMA) has been making a generic product for some time now, but in the spirit of continuous improvement they've made some refinements since the original design first went to market. First up, the new models are available in single and dual driver variations. More drivers mean (up to a practical limit) extended frequency response, and more of it.

Our test set was supplied with a range of silicone ear bud tips to accommodate a range of different ear canal sizes. I tried initially using the set already fitted to the drivers, and found the fit was poor, and they tended to fall out of my ears. Changing to a smaller tip enabled the generics to sit much better in my ears – a radical change and well worth the effort of trying the various options. If the silicone tips really don't work for you, EMA can take an impression and make a custom mould to attach to the dual driver generics.

EMA Generic Dual Driver IEMs

Is there a common solution to a common problem?

BY JIMMY DEN-OUDEM



I found that inserting the dual driver generics really is a two handed operation, one hand fitting the bud into the ear with the other laying the cable over the top of the ear. Doing it single handedly is difficult, which might be a problem if you're already holding a microphone in one hand.

A common problem with IEMs is that damage to the input cable can turn the whole IEM unit into a write-off very rapidly. Anticipating such events EMA has now made the cable removable, with the replacement cable running around the \$40 mark. Way cheaper than replacing the whole set of IEMs! The input to the driver assembly is carried over what looks like a very tiny DC connector. The connector seems a little fragile, needing to be pressed home correctly to get both drivers running. Thoughtfully enough, L and R are embossed into the ends of the connectors and the buds so there's no way to get them mixed up. Unlike the custom cable, there's also no way to inadvertently flip the polarity on one side.

EMA has released a device they call the "mini mixer". It's a small unit that sits in-line between the RF pack and the IEMs, and allows the artist to regulate volume, bass and treble using a very simple interface – plus and minus buttons for each. There's a blue LED to tell you it's on, and it runs from a single AAA battery that can be replaced without any tools. Turning off the power, the mini-mixer still passes signal, which I reckon is really important. It doesn't seem to act as an amplifier – I didn't discern any significant volume increase even with it set to maximum level. The tone controls work like they're supposed to, and do so in nice gradual steps. While it's sold as a companion product to the dual driver generic IEMs, I think it will find more of a home with users who are dis-satisfied with their existing IEM sets and want an easy fix.

Comparing the dual driver generics to a set of custom moulds might seem unfair, but honestly these ones stand up pretty well against something ten times the price. I guess it's the law of diminishing returns. They don't have quite the same level of upper-end detail or the sheer output grunt as the custom jobbies, but not everyone will need this. The bottom end is satisfying, and external noise isolation is pretty good too. Vocal reproduction is present without being overly forward. Listening back to some tracks, I heard stuff in the mix I'd not previously noticed. For my money the dual driver generics do exactly what they need to without any additional processing, and the price is right.

BRAND: EAR MONITORS AUSTRALIA
 MODEL: DUAL DRIVER GENERICS
 RRP: \$249
 PRODUCT INFO:
 WWW.EARMONITORSAUSTRALIA.COM
 DISTRIBUTOR:
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For more information: www.cmi.com.au

MARTIN MAC VIPER PROFILE

Next generation from Martin

BY JIMMY DEN-OUDEM

It's been a while since I personally laid hands on a Mac 2000, maybe 8 years or so. I have vivid memories of trying to light a show using 8 of the things as a downstage groundrow. Not my design, and definitely not ideal deployment. Thing about the 2K is that it was bloody bright when it first came out – it still is. It's also still really heavy, some variants tipping the scales at around 50kg.

The Mac 2000 has been a great success for the Martin company, but rather than rest on its laurels Martin figured it was time for a re-vamp. The Mac Viper is the result. The Viper uses a 1000W discharge lamp, so it's cheaper to run. Stated lamp life is 750 hours, and the replacement is about a third the price of a Mac 2K lamp.

The spec lists current draw as 5A @ 240V, so theoretically you can daisy chain two of them off a single 10A feed. This immediately means it's more efficient than its predecessor and easier to run in multiples. Smaller lamp doesn't mean less output. Presumably thanks to better

optics, the Mac Viper produces 26000 Lumens. It's also a lot cheaper than previous incarnations.

Colour mixing is achieved via CMY system, with an additional 8 colour wheel providing some quick and easy options for when you're in a hurry. Added to this the Viper has a linear CTO adjustment, allowing the fixture to produce any shade of white from tungsten through to daylight. CRI is >85. As could be reasonably expected; dimmer, shutter and iris are all individually controllable. The zoom mech ranges between 10 and 44 degree beamwidth, and the fixture can get from one end of the zoom range to the other with extraordinary speed. Blink and you'll miss it.

Dual rotating gobos hold 5 gobos each, and the gobos in each wheel have been chosen for projection and aerial effects. The focus system is setup such that you can "morph" between gobos on different wheels. A new third wheel provides an additional 4 static patterns, plus 138 degree animation effect. Additionally, a 4 facet



Getting from one end of the zoom range to the other is basically instant.



prism and soft frost effects add to the beam parameters. Pan is 540 degrees, and tilt range 268.

Fundamentally, the things the Mac Viper can do aren't that different from a Mac 2000. It's the way the Viper does them that is different. It's better.

Serviceability has always been a massive issue for moving lights. Put a whole bunch of moving parts together in a small space, heat them up a lot, and eventually something's bound to fail – that's just common sense. The important thing is being able to fix problems quickly, and as anyone whose ever delved into the guts of a moving head fixture will know, this is not easy. The Viper has been built with very modular construction – so if something fails it's actually possible to repair it in-situ. All the screws on the enclosure are captive, so there's no danger of dropping one out of a rig.



CTO filter for colour matching, and handles in the right places.

7 onboard cooling fans complete with feedback



LOOK MOTHER, NO BOARD!

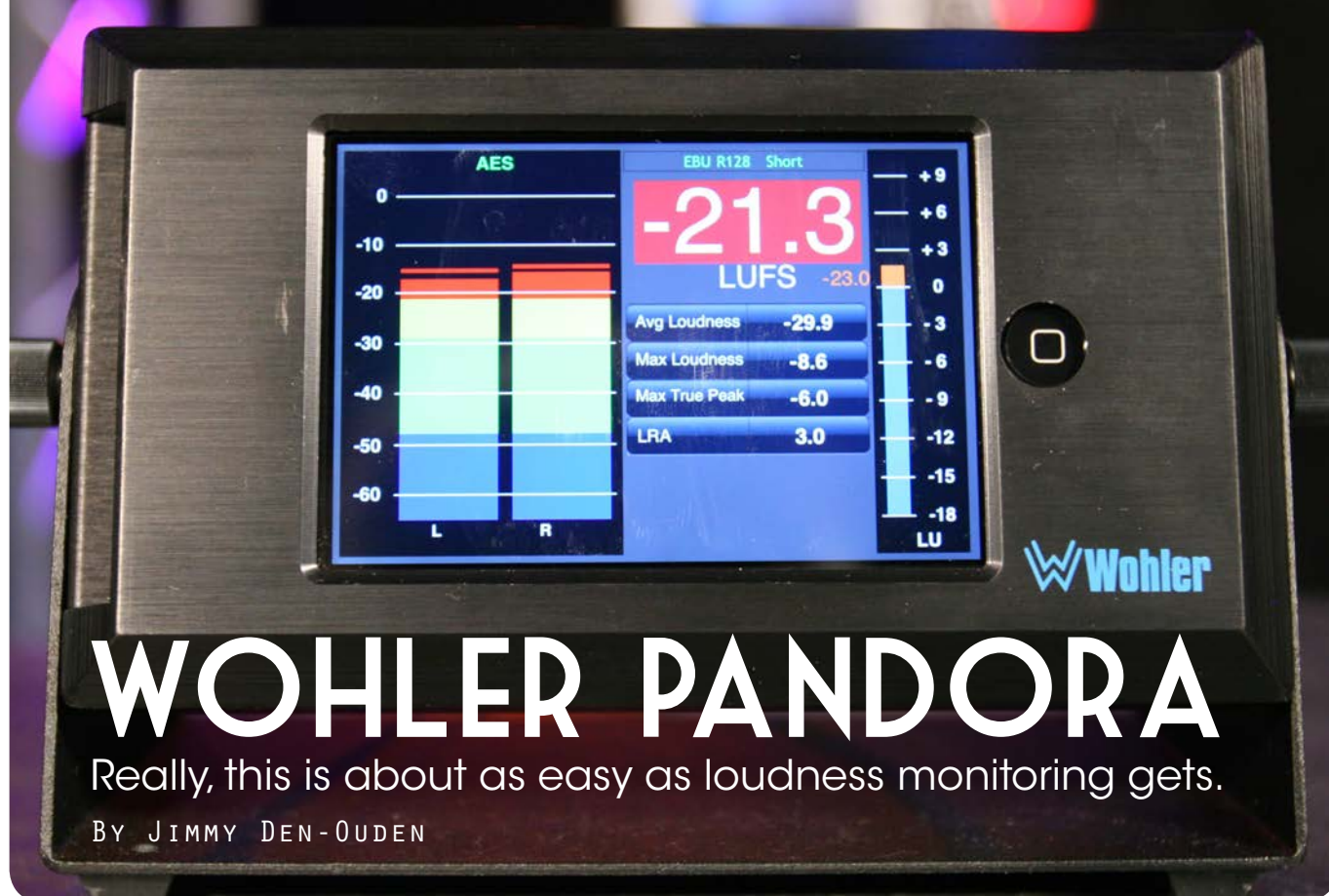
Yep. There's no central motherboard inside the Viper. Instead, the fixture runs a CAN bus system – the same thing you find inside a lot of European cars. Presumably the thinking here is that if it's reliable enough to run mission critical systems in cars, it's more than good enough to control a moving light. Each module is self contained – so if for instance you get a colour problem, drop a new colour module in and it will likely be resolved. Modules are all self-calibrated, so replacing a module doesn't mean a whole bunch of parameters will instantly drift. The other bonus about the serviceability aspect is that because it's so easy to pull the unit to pieces, it's much easier to clean the internals. Dust buildup inside fixtures can dramatically affect performance, so regular cleaning is important to get the best out of any fixture. Now it's easier.



Cooling is managed by no less than seven internal fans, all of which have feedback and monitoring. You can see how fast each fan is running on the diagnostics page of the menu. For what seems a lot of fans they're actually pretty quiet, running in response to thermal demand. Pan and tilt seemed kind of noisy in our quiet studio, but in the kind of applications the Viper will be found it wouldn't matter. There's an alarming click which happens as the fixture moves through its full pan rotation – this is actually just an internal tab spinning and nothing to worry about. In all fairness, we were spinning it around as fast as it could go. Applying a little less throttle to pan movements it was a lot quieter. I didn't have a Mac 2K to do a side-by-side comparison with, but the Mac Viper is stated to be faster on movement. Add this to the list of smaller, lighter, brighter, cheaper, and more efficient, and the Viper looks like it might have some serious legs (or fangs, take your pick).



BRAND: MARTIN
 MODEL: MAC VIPER PROFILE
 RRP: \$14,439.33 INC GST
 PRODUCT INFO: WWW.MARTINPRO.COM
 DISTRIBUTOR: WWW.SHOWTECH.COM.AU



WOHLER PANDORA

Really, this is about as easy as loudness monitoring gets.

BY JIMMY DEN-OUDEM

With increasing emphasis on loudness standards, it's becoming more important to have ways to monitor whether or not the stuff we do and produce is compliant. Pandora is a really cute loudness metering idea by Wohler, who have in the past been known for audio monitoring bridges and metering. Pandora is basically a metal frame into which you slide an iPod touch, coupled with an app. The back panel houses a 12V DC power connector, and five BNC inputs. Once you insert the iPod into the unit, it recognizes what's going on and installs the Pandora app.

Maizels and I discussed the Pandora loudness meter before we shot the Gearbox video about it. We do occasionally discuss the videos before shooting them. He pointed out one of the most appealing features about this device is that it fits into a backpack.

ITU1770, ITU1771 and EBU R128 are three common standards for loudness in broadcast. Pandora allows you to check your input signals with reference to any of these. You can setup your own target levels, and the unit will even highlight the loudness display with an alarm should your content go over or under the target level.

A historical display allows you to see what's been going on up to the present time, with a selectable history period. You can swipe between the historical display, current channel metering, and a large format numerical loudness display which shows either LUFS or LKFS. Real-time metering can show stereo, 5.1 or 7.1 channel setups. Input signals are fully routable, and can be selected from either AES or embedded SDI inputs - each AES input carries two channels. It's not possible to select different channels from different input types, but it's unlikely you'd ever need to do this anyway; the

loudness figures are derived from a selectable mix of inputs, and combining different sources at once would only serve to send the numbers crazy.

Really, this is about as easy as loudness monitoring gets. Plug the iPod into Pandora, connect an input and go. The device is portable yet looks convincing enough in an installed situation - plus it's very customizable to suit individual applications. You can even head to the App Store and download the Loudness app to check it out in demo mode. Perhaps the best feature of Pandora is that as time marches on and the standards are refined, updating the device will be as simple as updating the app.



The setup menu is simple to understand



Pandora is really, really compact



Compatible with iPod touch, or iPad with special extension



BNC only inputs - all digital

BRAND: WOHLER
 MODEL: PANDORA
 RRP: \$2256 INC
 GST PLUS THE COST
 OF AN IPOD TOUCH.
 PRODUCT INFO:
 WWW.WOHLER.COM
 DISTRIBUTOR: WWW.AVGROUP.COM.AU



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LIVE PERFORMANCE AUSTRALIA 2012 HELPMANN AWARDS

On 6 August, Live Performance Australia announced the official Nominees for the 2012 Helpmann Awards. For the first time, the Nominees were announced concurrently in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

The Helpmann Awards, which recognises and celebrates distinguished artistic achievement and excellence in live performance in Australia, announced 165 Nominees across 41 categories. The list features performers, practitioners and companies from all around Australia.

Additionally, The Hon. George Souris, NSW Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Arts, announced that Katharine Brisbane AM is the co-recipient of the coveted 2012 JC Williamson Award, awarded to distinguished members of Australia's live entertainment industry for their extraordinary contribution to the industry. It was announced earlier this year that the late Dr Jimmy Little AO would be a 2012 recipient of this award. Katharine Brisbane is renowned in Australia for her dedication to Australian Theatre, as a respected reviewer, a zealous advocate for the industry and its people, and an adventurous publisher of Australian plays and performing arts history.

Kathryn Sadler, Chair of the Brian Stacey Memorial Trust announced that Daniel Carter is this year's winner of the Brian Stacey Award for Emerging Australian Conductors. Daniel received an \$8,000 prize, presented this year by Sydney Lyric and Capitol Theatre Managing Director, Stephen Found. This is the 15th year this Award has been given.

THE HELPMANN AWARDS WILL BE HOSTED AT THE OPERA THEATRE, SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE ON MONDAY 24 SEPTEMBER.

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND CAN BE PURCHASED FROM THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE BOX OFFICE 02 9250 7777 OR SYDNEYOPERAHOUSE.COM

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- **OPENING NUMBER FEATURING A BEVY OF TOP AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS**
 - **A CHORUS LINE**
 - **SOUTH PACIFIC**
 - **LONG WAY TO THE TOP**
 - **DAN SULTAN**
 - **BLACK SWAN**
- **PAS DE DEUX FROM SWAN LAKE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET**
- **CLASSICAL GROUP ASTON**

A full list of Nominations can be found at www.helpmannawards.com.au

The Ceremony will be broadcast exclusively on Australia's arts and entertainment channel STUDIO – Channel 132 on Foxtel. See the full Ceremony recorded live on Tuesday 25 September at 8.30pm.

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Pushing the right batters...

BY JIMMY DEN-UDEN

For a long time LED has been battling with conventional light on the purchase price front. LEDs are, for the moment, a more expensive lightsource to buy outright than their tungsten counterparts. Sure the long-term cost of ownership is lower, but this message doesn't always get across to the beancounters. Where LED fixtures gain the advantage is in flexibility. Replacing multiple colour gelled tungsten fixtures with a single LED fixture that changes colour is a financially sound choice, no matter who looks at it. Cyc lighting is a situation where this philosophy works really well.

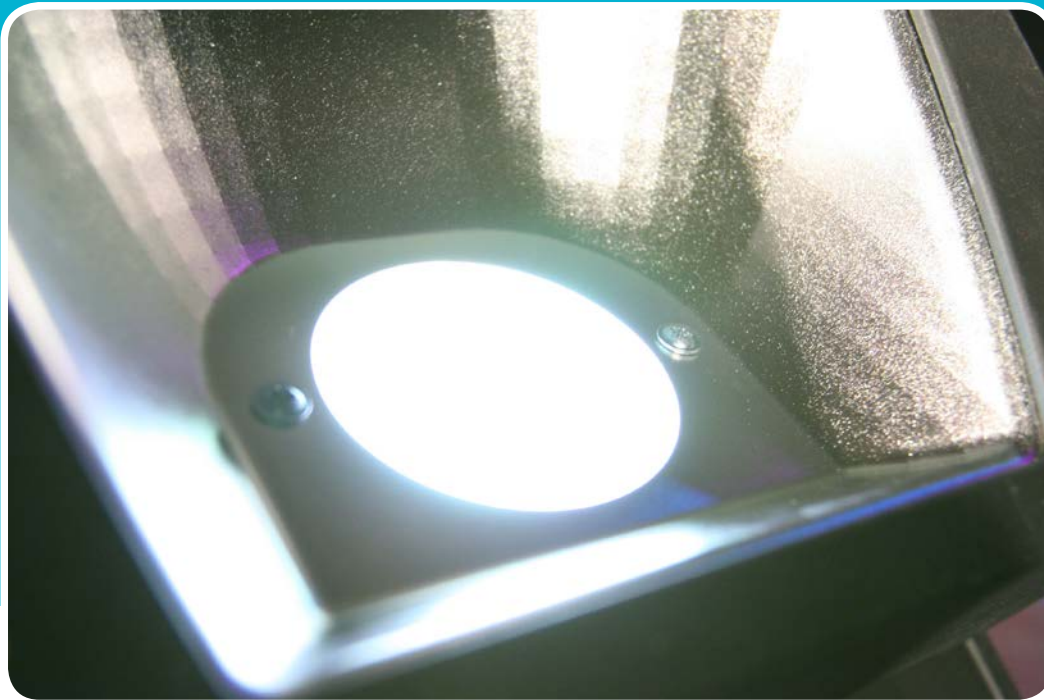
The PLCYC1 costs roughly the same as a 4 way cyc batten with dimmers and gels, but affords more flexibility. It's powered by a 120W RGBW LED chip – the same chip you'll find in the PL1 and PL3 fixtures. What's changed is how the colours are homogenized inside the fixture. Whereas the PL1 and PL3 units have quite a long collimating assembly, the challenge the PLCYC1 faced was achieving the same result in a shorter space. Yet somehow it's been done, and it works. Being curious about beam homogenization techniques, I pulled apart one of our demonstration units.

The collimation assembly is surprisingly simple, and simple things are often the best.

At 3.4kg, the PLCYC1 is lighter than a 4 way batten. You can get more than four colours out of it too. The RGBW system allows a wide variety of solid saturated colour, as well as white light in 3000, 4000 and 5600K colour temperatures. These can be instantly recalled from the back panel menu system, as can RGB and CMY saturated colours. Additional colours can be mixed internally and then stored in on-board presets. Any of the last bank of four presets can be set as a default "turn-on" state, as can any of the open whites – all at variable intensity. The unit is designed to be spaced about 1.25m from the

Groundrow mode simply involves flipping the unit and shifting the yoke





COOL REFLECTOR DESIGN

cyc, with about the same distance separating fixtures. This allows for smooth illumination of a cyclorama up to about 5 or 6m high. For taller cycs, use a second group of fixtures as a ground row by simply flipping the yoke bracket over. Output is equivalent to about a 600W tungsten fixture in open white, while in saturated colours it's closer to a gelled 1kW instrument.

Two screw holes and a proprietary connector allow installation of the same W/DMX module as is used on the PL1

and PL3. Installing the module on a fixture then provides a wired DMX output via the fixtures 5 pin XLR. DMX connectors allow looping, as do the PowerCon mains connectors.

LED lifespan is stated as in excess of 25,000 hours under normal usage conditions. A 3 year warranty covers the fixture just in case, but with no moving parts and a regulated cooling system there's not a lot to go wrong. The fan speed can be limited remotely via DMX, and in "quiet" mode the fixture will gradually reduce output if it needs to protect

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This was shot using 3x PLCYC1 to illuminate our 3m cyc - the setup was very quick and with a little more time we'd expect even flatter coverage.

itself. Keep in mind that in most colours, not all the LEDs will actually be on full tilt. What this means is that the unit runs pretty quietly even in saturated colour.

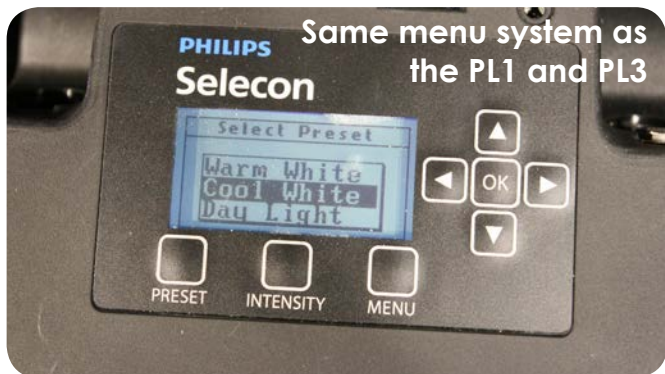
In testing, we used 3 units on a bar about 1m from our 3m high cyc. The projected field was quite flat, though setting the fixtures at the prescribed distance would probably yield better results.

No colour artifacts were evident, and the unit was easy to control. The plastic yoke has a bit of flex, but once the fixture is correctly focused (or rather, aimed) this isn't much of a problem. The conversion to groundrow mode is simple, and it works just as well. When aiming the unit, the back

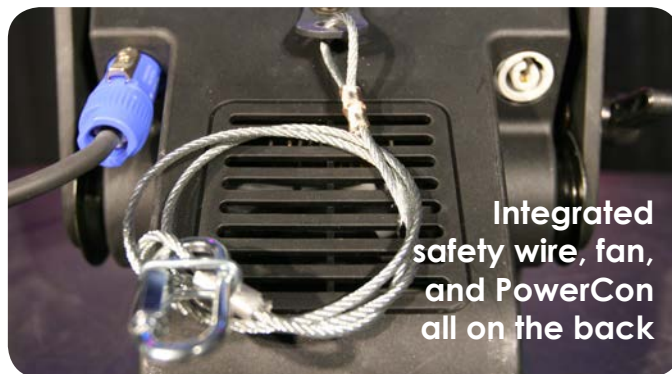
surface needs to be parallel to the cyc, rather than the front as with traditional cyc lights. We didn't hear any fan noise at all during testing.

Maximum power consumption with all LEDs on full is stated at 1.3A, but again under typical usage conditions it will sit considerably lower.

Either way, a 10A feed will happily supply seven fixtures. The PLCYC1 makes LED a viable alternative to tungsten batters, and not just in the long term.



Same menu system as the PL1 and PL3



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On Friday the 3rd of August 2012, Syntec Professional Division Manager David Bell retired from full time employment, thus ending a chapter in a career spanning almost 50 years in the entertainment and entertainment technology industry. Many would not be aware of the role this industry stalwart has played worldwide; therefore you may find inspiration in the achievements of one of our own.

BUT FIRST LETS SET THE SCENE WITH AN OBSERVATION

The contemporary business environment is said to be very demanding but has it ever been any different. Are we achieving more today or just working longer hours? In a mindset that is ever tending towards 'me' as opposed to 'us', the growth of self-importance is apparent. By virtue of the technology at our disposal many of us now function in a more isolated manner than our predecessors, altering the way in which we engage with colleagues and customers. I'm reliably informed we live in the 'Information Age' and the use and importance placed on information technology is now an established part of everyday life. Has 'doing' and 'creating' taken a back seat, where does human interaction figure in the scheme of things, are we too disposed towards information gathering and despatching, what does all this information do for us? I suspect much of it sits in the brain consigned to eternal storage, rendering us more knowledgeable but at the expense of wisdom and doing. In the cut and thrust of life today and the numerous technological crutches we now rely on, it is often overlooked that the essence of life is in fact relationships and their quality.

Our industry is replete with interesting and talented characters; historically a significant number chose a career in the technology sector through participation in the performance and/or production side of the entertainment industry. Many were unprepared with little or no business training, but possessed a passion for the entertainment industry and their fellow journeymen and women. David Bell is one such character who, like many, discovered their calling after experiencing the party known as the 1960s.



Australian Commercial & Entertainment Technologies Association

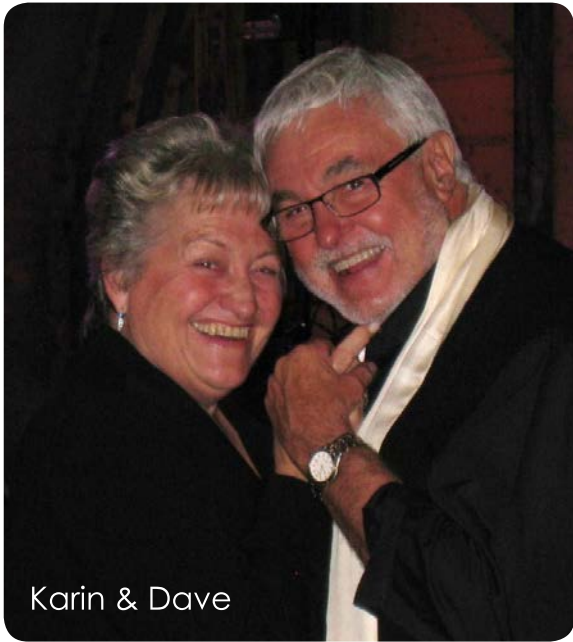
A working class boy from the inner western Sydney suburb of Marrickville, Dave became a full-time musician in 1965. In 1975 full time gigging ended and a business career beckoned, he joined pro and consumer audio distributor W.C.Wedderspoon as National Sales Manager. The company distributed brands such as Bose and HH Electronics, this is the time our paths crossed and I became a customer. Dave was the consummate seller feller, positive, pro-active, well-organised and personable; he understood the needs of his clientele. In 1979 US based Bose Corporation established

a wholly owned subsidiary in Australia and David joined in the role of General Manager, and he was pivotal in steering Bose to an enviable market share in the region.

In 1986 a significant opportunity presented itself, David was confronted with the decision to take on a senior management role at Bose Corporation HQ located on the East Coast of the USA, and he took it. This was a major family and career move, one that would have required much soul-searching, not to mention a good measure of courage. However he soon settled into the position of Bose Manager Professional Products, and underwent a self-imposed steep learning curve, necessary to succeed at this level and gain a Green Card. David was witness

to impressive corporate growth during his tenure, and his influence can't be under-estimated. He was front and centre in the organisation, a key member of the Bose inner circle and friend to founder Dr Amar Bose.

After seventeen years of service to the Bose Corporation (7 in Australia and 10 in the USA) it became evident it was time to move on and accept a new challenge. His decision to leave was an emotional experience, not only for David, but also for the President of the corporation, they had forged a close bond, however both realised its inevitability. The love and esteem in which one holds another is often expressed in 'letting go', and he didn't stand in David's way. JBL had been



Karin & Dave

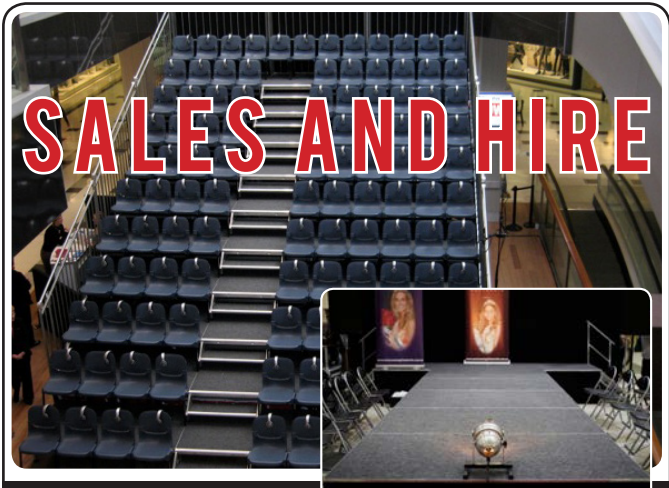
courting him for some time and he finally acquiesced, taking up the position of Vice President Sales for JBL Professional, the year was 1996. Re-settled at JBL HQ on the West Coast of the USA, he remained at the pointy end of the US pro audio industry until 1998 when another major move took place. This time the UK was calling and David arrived in 1998 to begin a two year stint in Great Britain, as Director of Sales and Marketing for Xtra Music, followed by two years back in Los Angeles as Vice President Marketing for the Professional Division of DMX Music.

In 2002 he decided to come home, joining Jands Electronics as Director of Sales and Marketing, a position he held until 2008 when he joined Syntec as Manager Professional Division. I have been a customer, buddy and competitor of Dave's, however we only had a brief encounter as work mates, which came in the form of writing the ACETA Constitution together, a chore entrusted to us by the industry and one which we relished. I enjoy Dave's wicked (often acerbic) sense of humour and quirky turn of phrase (who doesn't); he is a team player first and foremost, as loyal as they come, generous of spirit and has a great love of his industry. He has never forgotten his roots or his mentors. A gift I admire immensely is his sense of fair play, reflected in his ability to ethically navigate between responsibility to employer and client advocacy.

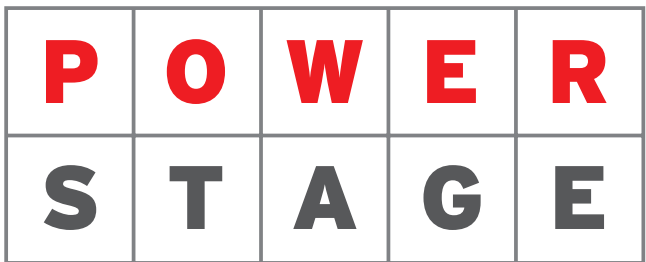
But the story would not be complete without acknowledging David's life partner Karin, together they stand tall. I bet that from time to time, Karin has tendered a few home truths and on other occasions anchored the ship in difficult weather. There is no mistaking how they feel about each other and I reckon they are going to have a ball together in full-time retirement. I suspect Dave will get into his music and Karin her art. However one thing I am sure of; my buddy will not be able to completely let go of the industry he loves, and so he will be providing consulting services to the industry in which he is so expert. He has already agreed to provide consulting time to ACETA as we develop our responses to the industry skills shortage, and we are very grateful for that.

Should you wish to approach him for consulting, feel free to call the ACETA office on (03) 9527 8133 who will connect you with a true gentleman, David Bell.

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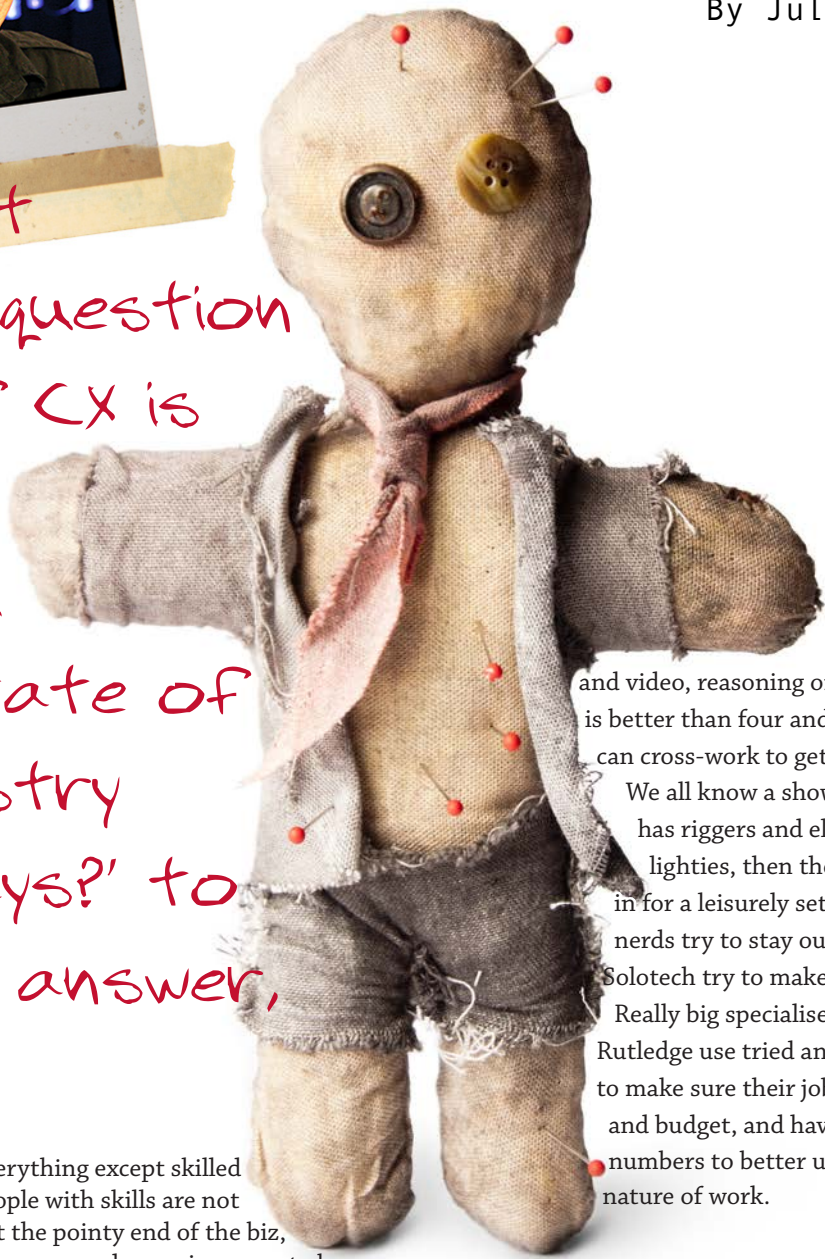


BIZ TALK

BETTER THAN...SEX

By Julius Grafton

The most common question asked of CX is 'what do you think is the state of the industry these days?' to which we answer, 'Tight!'



There's an oversupply of everything except skilled labour, but even then the people with skills are not always matched to the gig. At the pointy end of the biz, where quotes and tenders are processed, margins seem to be shrinking and some jobs get done at a loss.

So how do you make things better?

Traditional sales techniques rely on upselling, which is why some production firms offer theming and even furniture hire – high volume small return business on its own, but bundled into one gig there are efficiencies.

Production goliath Solotech in Canada and to a degree PRG in some territories bundle up sound, lights, rigging

and video, reasoning one account manager is better than four and the various crew can cross-work to get a show up quicker.

We all know a show build up tempo has riggers and electricians, then lighties, then the audio crew stroll in for a leisurely setup while the video nerds try to stay out of everyone's way. Solotech try to make that more efficient.

Really big specialised installers like Rutledge use tried and proven processes to make sure their jobs come in on time and budget, and have the weight of numbers to better understand the nature of work.

But what about a smaller business, buying new equipment, and wondering what the utilisation will be? In hire the general rule is that you need to be sure you can recoup at least half the upfront cost in the first year, assuming the equipment has a commercial life of four years. Then you hope it can still be useful for another four.

The really good production firms can bundle a first rate sound engineer or lighting designer to add appeal for a corporate event or concert. Adding on a production manager

is a good up-sell, but if skilled 'names' are not available then think about what else you can sell.

In the concert biz, offering to store gear, or free rehearsals, or even selling off their set at the end of the tour all add value.

Probably one of the smarter moves we see is the Sponsorship where an event is seeking Gold, Silver and Regular sponsors. Ask about this at the start, and suggest you'll take the sponsorship cost OFF the quote. Putting a small 'congratulations' advert in a show program is also a good tactic.

Whatever your product, just doing a good job, on time, with well presented people is only part of the game in 2012.

The big picture is to bid effectively, get the price right so you can come out the end with a profit, deliver the job, debrief and collect the money. Repeat process as often as possible.

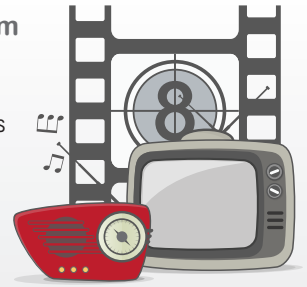
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CX NETWORK



APART BISTROSET

TURNKEY BACKGROUND AUDIO FOR LOTS OF PLACES.

BY JIMMY DEN-UDEN

HERE AT CX WE LOOK AT A LOT OF BIG SPEAKERS, CONTROL SYSTEMS, AMPS AND SO FORTH. WHILE THIS STUFF IS ALL WELL AND GOOD IF YOU'RE BUILDING THE MAIN ARENA AT A NIGHTCLUB, IT'S NOT ALWAYS PRACTICAL FOR SMALLER SITUATIONS. LET'S FACE IT, THERE ARE PROBABLY FAR MORE CLASSROOMS, RESTAURANTS AND RETAIL STORES IN THE WORLD THAN THERE ARE NIGHTCLUBS. THE BISTROSET FROM APART IS A TURNKEY SOLUTION FOR SUCH ENVIRONMENTS.

The system comprises four MASK4 satellite speakers, two SUBTILE 8" subs, and CHAMP3D amplifier. Basically it's a case of BYO speaker cable and input signal, and you're good to go with instant background music. We'll start by taking a look at the individual components.

The MASK4 satellite speakers are compact – 23cm high and 13x13cm in width and depth. Internally, they have a passive crossover network which drives a 4.2" woofer and 1" silk dome tweeter on Varithroat horn. Dispersion is approximately 120x80 degrees (HxV), and the driver arrangement has an internal 5 degree downward tilt (so you needn't tilt the box itself). The MASK4 is IP64 rated, so installing it outdoors isn't a problem. A removable rubber cover conceals

the spring-loaded speaker terminals on the back panel, and the 8 ohm box is rated to 50W AES, or 70W music-program.

The SUBTILE is one of the strangest looking subs ever. It's got a backward firing 8" driver, and at 450x500x120mm it certainly sports a very slim profile. The input terminals are the screw down variety, and recessed just far enough to make attaching wires a fiddly process. I suspect you could mount the sub to a wall pretty easily with some simple L brackets – it's not real heavy. An 8" sub is never going to run as low or loud as something bigger, but for the size and weight of the SUBTILE I'm not complaining – it does a reasonable job.

The Champ-3D is a 3 channel digital amplifier with a lot of inbuilt DSP functionality. Inbuilt limiter, delays (on L/R but not sub), 4 band PEQ and adjustable crossover are all

accessible from the intuitive front panel menu. The amp has a "speaker wizard" – tell it what boxes are connected and how many and the amp does its own setup. The front panel can be selectively or completely locked out with a password – this is cool for preventing fiddling, but once enabled we couldn't disable the password function. The amp is built really solidly and large heatsinks on the sides mean it cools by convection. No fans to fill up with install gunk. Inputs are via XLR or phoenix connectors, but the only output is via NL-4

Speakon. This is its downfall - an install product should have a terminal strip option – the NL4s add dollars to the cost of installing it.

The amp will run up to 4 tops and 2 subs happily, and in this configuration each channel runs 2 speakers. The whole thing really is a doddle to put together. So far as how it



A RUBBER TERMINAL COVER HELPS THE MASK4 ACHIEVE ITS HIGH IP RATING.



“THE 8” SUBTILE DRIVER IS REAR-FACING.

sounds, the important thing to remember is that the Bistro Set is touted as a background music system. For this purpose it is way more than adequate, with overall sound full and clean. Even at quite high levels it seems to hold together relatively well – and we’re talking way above “background” levels. There are some preset EQ notches which appear after running the speaker wizard – mainly cuts around 1k and 6k. These seem pretty sensible, and enhance the overall smoothness of the system. The little MASK4 boxes throw quite well too – meaning intelligibility even at a distance.

For restaurants, retail stores and board rooms the Bistro Set is a great little solution. Over-engineered amplification and some thought behind the processing means it will likely run for years without any hassles, and the lockout options will keep prying hands at bay as well as ensuring maximum levels are adhered to. Plus you can get the boxes in black or white.



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...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

This has very much eroded the revenue potential both to the larger Production Companies and their contracted venues.”

“As a result a solution was required to combat this threat - hence the implementation of TOD charges. In most cases when quoting for the supply of Audio Visual Services the smaller companies with lower overheads were able to supply a cheaper alternative to the client.

They were also in some cases able to supply a further small discount to long standing and loyal clients to meet their budget restraints on some events.”

“The larger (in house) production companies who were already giving up to 40% commissions to the venues were unable to compete with price with these smaller production companies thus pricing themselves out of the business resulting in lower returns to themselves and bottom line to the venue.”

The introduction of TOD charges on the outside suppliers or their clients subsequently in many circumstances annulled any cost savings to the client and incentive to go with the outside supplier. On top of this venues would offer further incentives such as free workshop rooms or boardrooms if the client was to use the in-house supplier.”

“On most occasions the end client was never told or knew that the venue was collecting large commissions from the in house supplier which far surpassed the cost of throwing in a small function room here or there.”

“In many cases the TOD is a very young and inexperienced junior technician who has very limited knowledge of large event staging and in many cases has not been involved with as many events in the venue as some outside suppliers have over the years. They also generally find themselves supervising more than one client at any give time within the venue as well as taking care of other venue matters. Therefore the client is being charged for a service that is not even being supplied (as) they cannot supervise if they are not in the room. A bit of double dipping don't you think?”

“I am sure there are also issues here with liability - does the venue or in-house supplier have or accept any liability for the production side of the event? After all the TOD is there in a advisory and supervisory role as dictated by venue policy. What if something happens on the TOD's watch, what happens if they give the wrong advice resulting in damage or injury - who is liable?

What more can I say except it is time that the truth came out about this deplorable situation. This on top of Convention Centre's having lock out policies on outside production companies (which) has greatly reduced the potential for small production companies to supply their services”, concludes Peter.

“THE FREELANCE AV TECH ON TOD ON BUMP OUT WAS SO ENGROSSED IN HIS MOBILE PHONE THAT HE HAD NO IDEA WE LEFT THE BUILDING. SO MUCH FOR ENSURING WE DON'T DAMAGE THE DOORWAYS.”

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

CX concludes TOD supervision of a load in, and a loud out, is inevitable. The stories above don't touch on policies at performing arts centres, where the venue rental often includes a house system but labor is added on.

“We toured the performing arts centre's and were being hit up for ridiculous fees to hire risers (\$40 each) or drape off the back of a recital hall - \$900, including stage carpet”, one caller told **CX**.

But that seems reasonable to us, as does supervision of a load in and out. And in some cases, where a complex venue has digital patch, wireless DMX and flying equipment, you should expect a paid TOD to be right there the whole time. But (the) TOD should be skilled and able to quickly assist with any query - or know where to get help. The first thing we would want to see is the TOD waiting at the loading dock, to deliver the induction. The TOD should professionally induct all visiting crew, and take the production chief on a technical handover inspection, including access to power distribution boards. TOD should be a flagship service, positioned to enhance the clients event, not penalize and frustrate external suppliers.

Dave Deveny says he understand the venue's position. “Tens of millions of dollars are being continuously spent on both technical and building infrastructure which is being wrecked by the lazy and irresponsible few. So how do we solve it? I have an idea”.

“We should use the carnet system as an example. Production suppliers should pay a bond into a trust fund that in turn pays for damage insurance.”

“Suppliers would need to justify their payment based on reputation and weight of work, similar to the way we all negotiate our Public Liability insurance.

“Producers should pay for a technical handover by the venue technical supplier to their third party suppliers at the start and end of each event period. Any damage should then be reported and an insurance claim made against the production company”.

“The production companies fund payment [or premium] would go up or down based on claims against them.”

Tim Banfield says you should press the venue to ensure the TOD are suitably qualified to oversee your work.

“(You need) the necessary insurance to cover your work (such as) Public Liability.”

He suggests demanding the venue supply proof of competency of the TOD, and also a copy of their Public Liability insurance cover.

“Then the whole problem seems to fade away”, he says. •

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PART 2 – EMPLOYEES

BY PAUL MATTHEWS



WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO LOOK FOR IN SOMEONE YOU WANT TO WORK FOR YOU? IT'S A PERPLEXING QUESTION. PROBLEM IS, IT'S LIKELY YOU WON'T FIND IT LISTED ON ANY RESUME. NOR WILL YOU FIND IT MEASURED IN ANY QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS. THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE YOU WON'T EVEN KNOW A PERSON HAS "IT" UNTIL MONTHS OR EVEN YEARS AFTER THEY START WORK WITH YOU.

When looking for a suitable companion to take up the left front seat in your van on the way to jobs, remember that you're going to be spending a significant chunk of your working life alongside this person. It's not like larger companies where people are shared around. Age, attitude, interests and work ethic are going to be more important than school or TAFE reports. To gauge all this in a 20 minute interview is nigh on impossible.

The best way to pick up good employees is to always be on the look out. Looking for a prospective employee is like looking for a partner. If you go to the seedy bars and strip joints then you're going to find junk. That's not to say that the unemployment line isn't a good place to start looking. It's just that here, with every applicant you consider there's going to be a reason why they are there. Why did they lose their last job?

If you're thinking young then school is a good place to start. By the time they've left school it's too late. One employee we had in the '90s came about when we rented a Bose PA to a school for a special event. It became apparent that this year 9 guy had set the thing up, all by himself, correctly - and it sounded great. Further inquiries led to this guy being placed with us for work experience and as they say,

the rest is history. He's now a well regarded freelancer in the industry who we still occasionally hire.

Be warned if you're considering putting on young Dave as an apprentice. Any worker under the age of 18 is still seconded to their parents. It'll be Dad's signature on all the forms. If something goes wrong and a dispute arises then you're effectively arguing with Dad, not Dave. That can get pretty nasty (it did for us recently). You'll want to consider inviting Dad to the interview, because legally you're employing him, not his son. Until they pass 18 of course.

Another place to look is "next door". Not necessarily at the girl next door (although she might still be a contender) but anyone at "arms length". Cousins, daughters of second nieces third removed on their mothers' side etc - you get the idea. These people come with some sort of background so you can find out what sort of person they are before you start. Some prefer to call this "nepotism". It's a recruitment system most favoured in the film industry.

Shopping amongst other contractors (a process known as "head hunting") can yield good results especially if you're looking for experienced senior staff. Basically with "head hunting" you're letting the previous employer do all the hard work for you. Remember however that when you head hunt someone else you're going to have to offer them some sort of tasty carrot to jump ship. That may not necessarily

be higher pay. It could be better conditions, use of a company vehicle, family friendly work hours or even just a "more interesting job".

Once again though, be warned. Anyone you "head hunt" by merely jumping ship has already demonstrated their willingness to do so by leaving their previous employer and joining up with you. That means they're more likely to do so again. This time they may leave you in the lurch, especially if they choose to walk in the middle of a major project. Retaining head hunted employees is difficult because they generally want more. And more. Come that slow period when all you have for them to do is sit for weeks soldering XLR's - and they'll be gone.

THE BEST WAY TO PICK UP GOOD EMPLOYEES IS TO ALWAYS BE ON THE LOOK OUT. LOOKING FOR A PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEE IS LIKE LOOKING FOR A PARTNER. IF YOU GO TO THE SEEDY BARS AND STRIP JOINTS THEN YOU'RE GOING TO FIND JUNK.

All of the above notwithstanding, you're only other option is the good 'ole newspaper and internet ad. If you have a position available, don't forget to list it on the front page of your own company web site. You would be amazed at how many job seekers keen on a position in audio, regularly google company web sites to get a handle on what's out there. Don't forget the local rags – the quality of employees you will find combing these is higher compared to those satisfied with the Herald. It's much cheaper, too.

In some cases you'll come across someone who has little experience in the job you're offering but is really keen for a career change, often called "mature age" workers. You have to be extra careful at the interview to give them a true picture of what the job is really like and how much money is on offer. A trial period for these people is a must. There's a good chance they're taking a considerable pay cut for their "sea change". You also have to weigh up the cost of training them. Remember : unpaid trials in Australia are illegal.

Any "mature age" worker is going to bring with them "baggage" - a resistance to do things any other way than the way they have done things for years. Managing this in a small business is a black art and has a lot to do with management style. Just remember, as the "manager" of your

business your primary concern is results. That means you're concerned that jobs get done properly and work is carried out safely.

If mature age workers use a work method you're not familiar with but the results work out the same on cost, speed and safety then just let them do it. Far better to do this than pull your hair out trying to teach an old dog new tricks. Letting them make their own decisions like this will build their esteem in your company and help to stop them looking "over the fence".

Finally another thing you're going to come across when shopping for workers is the wealth of migrants on the list. For this you're going to have to consider what you want to use them for. Sure, they may have a few problems communicating. But where they sometimes lack in skills, they will usually excel in work ethic, reliability and drive. A migrant worker successfully integrated into your business is usually a worker for life. Time and money spent on them for training and development is well spent. Even if your competition tries to "head hunt"

them later, chances are they'll stay in the pan rather than risk the fire.

Hopefully now we've found our human. Next month we'll consider what we need to do to keep them!

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GOOD MUSIC IN NEW YORK

PART 2

MICK TAYLOR TO THE RESCUE

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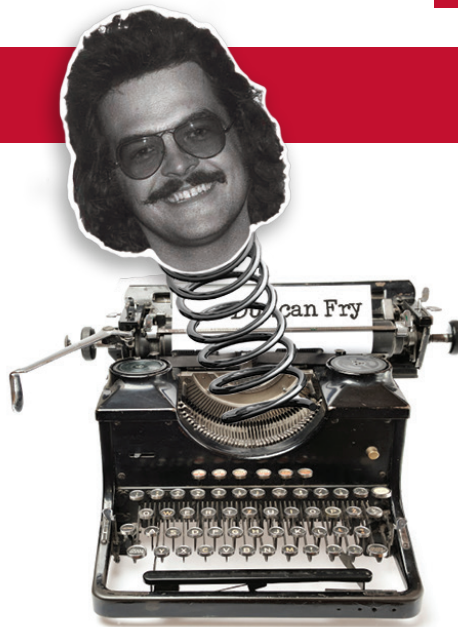
FOR THOSE WHO MISSED
LAST MONTH'S COLUMN, I'M IN
NEW YORK TRYING TO FIND SOME
DECENT NON-JAZZ
MUSIC ... WITHOUT MUCH LUCK.
OUR STORY CONTINUES:

The next night we headed off to Arthur's Tavern in Greenwich Village, where we had heard that every Thursday they had some good Blues singing and playing.

At first it didn't look too promising. As we arrived there was a jazz piano trio playing, but so softly that we couldn't hear the girl pianist either singing or playing! So we settled in at the end of the bar closest to the stage with some Sam Adams beers and some wines, and waited for them to finish. The final tune wound up to an almost audible level, and then with a few words whispered into the microphone, they were gone.

The place had been around for eighty years (since 1932), and judging by the old clippings on the wall was originally a jazz and piano bar. This would explain why the stage was the size of a grand piano. It was hard to see how a blues band of any size was going to fit on there, especially as they had built a long table going right around the front and two sides of the stage so that true musical alcoholics could sit crying into their beers with their noses stuck in the guitar strings!

It turned out that we had a prime position at the bar – close enough to see and hear perfectly, but not so close that we'd be pushed off our stools if all the musicians breathed out at once. But that position came at a price. All around there were signs explaining the deal – minimum 2 drinks per set. Still, that only applied to general seating or standing; where we sat it was tougher – keep drinking or you lose it!



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Then on came Sweet Georgia Brown, a big Mama singing with a hot 4 piece band; a laid-back drummer, funky Seinfeld type slappin' dreadlocked bass player, very slick keyboard player, and a really good guitarist called Stewart.

Most of the audience sat watching politely until Sweet Georgia suggested to us that "You folks better get dancin' or I'm gonna come over and sit on yo' heads!"

Responding to these words of encouragement, everyone got up and we all boogied the night away, stopping only to buy a CD from the guitarist and one from Sweet Georgia, whom my gf insisted on calling Sweet Caroline Brown! The constant beers and wines started to really kick in by the

end of the night, and we hiccuped and staggered our way to the subway station. As the train rattled and swayed its way to our stop, my gf started to look a bit green and I was worried that she might bring up the day's takings before we made it back to the hotel.

Since we hadn't eaten all night we made a comfort stop at a McDonalds, to (a) get something to eat, and (b) strain the potatoes, as my back teeth were starting to dissolve! Then it was straight to the hotel to sleep the sleep of the just.

The next morning I was lined up bright and early and hungover to go on my Sitcom Tour, where I would see all the places where the outside and intro shots to lots of New York sitcoms were filmed (Friends, Seinfeld, Sex and the City and similar). The

inside shots, as you'd expect, were filmed 4,000 km away on the other side of the country in Hollywood. It's truly a crazy business.

I originally wanted to go on the Seinfeld tour (not that there's anything wrong with that!) which was run by the original Kenny Kramer, but it was on hiatus while he was on holidays. Dang. Whatever happened to the good old American work ethic? Anyway I did get to see the Soup Nazi's place and Monk's (in reality Tom's) Restaurant on my tour,



MICK TAYLOR NYC 2012 BAND AND SYSTEM



so I can't complain. My gf went on the Sex and the City tour, where she eventually started to feel human again after her fourth Cosmopolitan cocktail!

While I waited in line for my tour bus, outside Ellen's Stardust Café "with singing wait staff***", I looked in the window of the building next door, and it was the entrance to the Iridium Club, Les Paul's old hangout where he regularly played in the house band.

some salad, plus the inevitable Samuel Adams to wash it down.

Bang on eight o'clock out comes the band and Mick, with what looked like the same Les Paul guitar he was using when I last saw him with the Stones in 73! He looked like he was carrying a tad more 'excess condition' than he did back then, but don't we all?

I RECKON IF I LIVED IN NEW YORK I'D GET MYSELF A SEASON TICKET TO THE PLACE.

Sadly I was three years too late to see Lester himself, but I saw that coming up next week was Mick Taylor.

Who he, I hear you ask? Mick Taylor, ex-Rolling Stone guitarist (after Brian and before Ron), Rock 'n' Roll Hall of fame member and rated # 37 out the top 100 guitarists of all time.

At last – some good grinding guitar action in a real music club! I wrote it on my hand (my Palm Pilot backup) and resolved to book some tickets and see the show. Online that night, after the tours were all over and I'd had my nap, I found the Iridium website. They were certainly working Mick hard, and were advertising both eight o'clock and ten o'clock sessions for all six of the nights that he was there. A lot of them were already booked out, but we managed to get two seats to the eight o'clock show on the Thursday.

Thursday came around, we rolled up about 7.45 and were able to go straight in. The place looked really good. Les Paul guitars figured heavily in the décor, as you might expect, but it was well laid out and all seats had a good view of the stage. Everyone sat at tables, where dinner was served. Very civilised. I ordered a delicious chunk of Atlantic salmon and

After a brief introduction, for the next 90 minutes he and the band proceeded to rip into some of the best and most tasteful guitar that I have heard in a long time.

The club had a Midas 32 channel Venice out front, and a new JM-1P Meyer system for FOH, set up as Left, Right, plus a three-box centre cluster and a couple of Subs, which covered the whole club very nicely. Certainly I could hear everything very clearly from where I was sitting – good and loud, but not ear bleeding. And lots of guitar, which was what I came for!

The list of performers at the club is a who's who of modern music. Checking it out online in case I had forgotten something, there were videos of some kind of David Lee Roth/ Van Halen incarnation, plus Ted Nugent, Stevie Stevens, Jeff Beck, and even some jazz players.



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