

ONLINE EDITION

Audio Visual Innovation

Gerry Wilkins

GEARBOX REVIEWS:

- EAW Anya
- ETC Souce Four LED Series 2
- Electro-Voice ETX
- Martin Mac Quantum Wash
- Yamaha QL5

CX NEWS:

- Hills aquires APG
- ETX industry launch
- ICW - Ian Woodhouse memorial
- CX News Briefs
- Design Quintessence celebrate



CX
MONTHLY TECH NEWS
AUDIO · LIGHTS · VIDEO · STAGING · INTEGRATION

CX94 JULY 2014 \$5.50

Production
Andy J Sound

Factory Sound
A bit Rock'n'Roll

Roadskills
Michael Bubl ,
Hugh Laurie, The Jezabels,
APIA - Leo Sayer, Joe Camilleri,
Richard Clapton &
Russell Morris

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Networked
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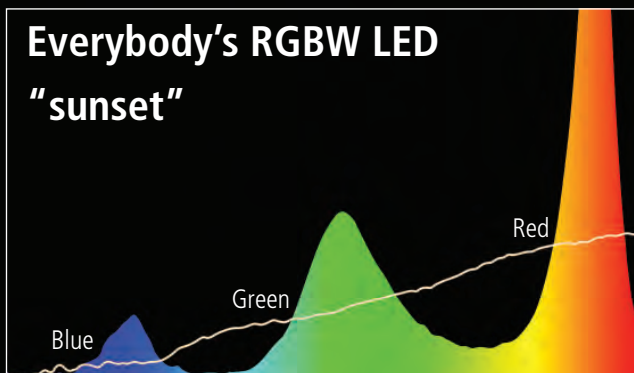
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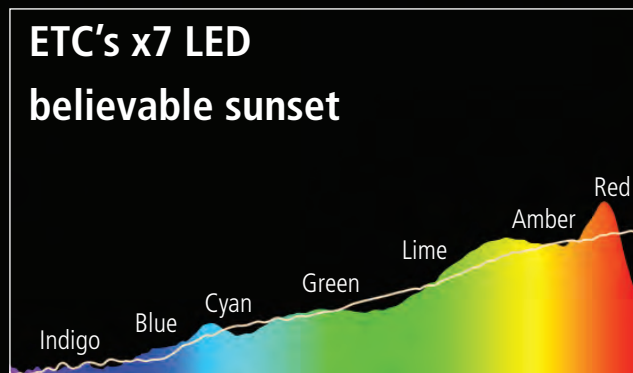
Liola, National Theatre, London,
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3D capable projector

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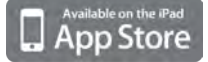
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EDITORIAL

8 Aceta, Cancer , Be Awesome, The HUMP

NEWS

- 10 Hills acquires APG, ETX industry launch
- 11 ICW - Ian Woodhouse memorial, CX News Briefs
- 12 Design Quintessence Mexican-themed celebration

NEW GEAR

14 Barco, Chroma-Q, Clear-Com, ETC & more!

FEATURES

- 20 **PEOPLE** Gerry Wilkins departs IDT
- 30 **PRODUCTION** Andy J Sound
- 36 **RETAILER PROFILE** Factory Sound

GEARBOX

- 40 EAW Anya
- 44 ETC Souce Four LED Series 2
- 46 Electro-Voice ETX
- 48 Martin Mac Quantum Wash
- 50 Yamaha QL5

REGULARS

- 24 What-If? with Andrew Mathieson
- 26 The Mill Report - with Andy Stewart
- 34 Listen Here - with Andy Stewart
- 52 RoadSkills - with Cat Strom
- 66 Brainy Types - with Jimmy Den-Ouden
- 67 CXWORD - Puzzle Time
- 68 BIZTALK - with Julius Grafton
- 70 ACETA - with Frank Hinton
- 73 Who are we really mixing for? - Duncan Fry



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EDITORIAL BY JULIUS GRAFTON

JOIN ACETA

If your company works in the entertainment tech space, values standards and operates ethically, join ACETA. CX has after the peak industry association of manufacturers and distributors of tech equipment opened associate membership last month.

It costs little, and it means a lot. It means you don't operate in a misleading manner. It means you pay your staff and contractors what they are owed and when it is due. It means you abide by legislation and are a responsible corporate citizen. It also means you don't push dodgy equipment into a professional industry.

We've put a membership form into this issue (page 71), and you have our permission to tear it out of the print edition, or to print it from the online magazine.

FIGHT CANCER

On page 65 we are running (at no cost) a full page advert supporting a fund raiser for cancer research, inspired by the late Ian 'Woody' Woodhouse. It is an offer of a \$70,000 PA system that one person can buy for \$20,000 - with that whole 20 grand going to research.

The deal was put together by Acoustic Technologies and Technical Audio Group. Both firms donated the new equipment on offer.

Over at cxmagblog.com is a story on What Woody Wanted, which specifically is for men to get a medical. In doing that, they can avoid the inconvenience of death. Your editor did just that, and can thank Ian Woodhouse for being here to write this. I had the same cancer that killed Woody. Now it is gone, and I live.

BE AWESOME

Why are we here, someone asked me at 4am after a load out. 'Why that's easy son', I said. 'It's the roar of the greasepaint and the smell of the crowd. The encore and the smiles when everyone files out, leaving us with the heat and the scent of a good time. We roll the warm cables, and pack the cases. Then the cold of the truck envelopes us.'

We love the personal best of packing up and loading out - safely - in a quarter of the time it took to set up. Locking the truck doors, and driving off, past the last of the night people into the hint of the new day.

Someone tried to tell me CX represents a lesser corner of the broader industry, that indeed the audio visual integration world is worth so much more, and has different technologies and needs than the live production industry.

But we're all cut from the same cloth, I argued. We're using the same technology, and achieving the same objective. We are here to do an awesome job properly. The curtain will go up on time. We will light the money, and reinforce the word. Our images will be sharp and bright, clarity and fidelity will rule. Then we will pack up and move on.

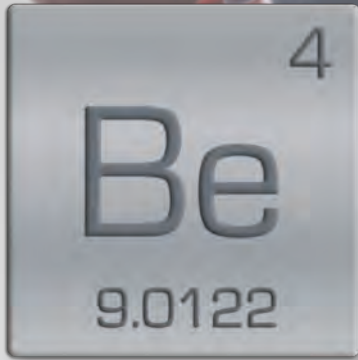
THE HUMP

Soon we will roll out our weekly CX-TV show each Wednesday lunchtime called The Hump. It is intended to cement our expanding reach on internet TV, and give you a more immediate experience that isn't too long to view.

When we started CX-TV, YouTube had a 7 minute clip limit, and wasn't HD. We don't use YouTube, by the way, preferring to pay to serve from our websites. The thing I like about internet TV is that there really is no limit to what we can do.

Same applies to CX on iPad, where embedded video is expanding and where interactive pages will soon be more like motion graphics and even less like print pages. Big kudos to our creative director Lee Murray for bridging everything so brilliantly. Exciting days, kids!

- Julius



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NEWS

CX INDUSTRY NEWS

Hills acquires APG



Contractor audio has a new number one

Hills have acquired Audio Products Group (APG), an Australian and New Zealand supplier of professional audio products, for A\$15 million. APG will now join the roster of Hills audio brands in one greatly expanded distribution firm known simply as Hills.

Hills and APG both operated heavily in the contractor and consultant audio market, with that market responsible for as much as 80% of APG's turnover last year. Both firms effectively sell to the same accounts, although Hills have wider distribution as they recently meshed the Antenna & TV Systems business plus Lan1, together with SVL into one company – Hills.

APG was established in 1998 by Ken Dwyer. He acquired the distribution business known as AWA, which had many decades experience and which had evolved into a contracting audio distributor. Ken in turn had extensive experience in hi-fi sales, owning Sydney Hi-Fi. Last year APG quit hi-fi distribution to focus on professional audio.

Hills now have inherited a pro-audio focussed management team, assuming they retain the majority of the APG experts. Hills lost many of the SVL team over the past two years as they consolidated three firms into the master company and rationalised duplication.

Some brand losses will happen – Hills have Renkus Heinz, L-Acoustic and Turbosound loudspeakers while APG have Tannoy - which shares ownership with



Ken Dwyer

Lab Gruppen. AKG and Beyer Dynamic microphones will not coexist well together, but Crestron and Biamp could.

APG bring Aiphone, which is the leading commercial and residential intercom brand along with TOA - another strong APG performer. How TOA sits with Hills house brand Australian Monitor remains to be seen.

The new entity lacks a digital audio mixer brand which constrains any expansion into live sound which is a logical growth area, being responsible for as little as 20% of current sales.

Most importantly for Hills, they have retained Ken Dwyer for now, and he is uniquely equipped to guide the merged audio division. Industry commentary on the acquisition is cautious, with few prepared to speak publicly.

Ken told **CX** that APG will continue to operate as it does currently for the immediate future, and that he is excited at the opportunities ahead for his APG colleagues and for himself.

Hills had turnover of A\$1.018 billion in 2013, and employs 815 staff across 48 offices. APG has 46 staff in Australia, and 5 in New Zealand.

See cxmagblog.com for comments on this story.



ETX industry launch

Bosch hosted the official Australian launch of ETX Powered Loudspeakers last month at Wenty Leagues Club in Sydney. Audio professionals heard each ETX Powered Loudspeaker model. The cardioid mode for the subwoofers was also demonstrated – the picture at right isn't a dance-off, it shows audio types walking around the floor subs to discern the rear rejection.

After a presentation of the key loudspeaker features, The Robertson Brothers, local EV endorsed

artists, entertained the crowd. Again, the music was channeled through various combinations of the ETX Powered Loudspeaker family. Towards the end of the event, the in-house sound technician allowed the guests to experience the sound from the venue's permanently installed XLD system.





Woody Room Opens Memorial at TAG

Ian Woodhouse left the audio industry last year, working right up to his untimely death from Prostate Cancer. He is well remembered, with a new Woodie room called the 'ICW Centre' opening at Technical Audio Group, where he last worked.

Ian's wife Bobbi, son Matt, daughter Joanne and members of the Woodhouse family gathered with TAG staff to honour Woody and exchange fond memories of that dearly loved, larger than life character.

The ICW Centre is located within TAG's Stanmore, Sydney Head-office and is already hosting regular training sessions for QSC's Q-SYS DSP platform and A&H Digital Mixing.

Woodie wanted all blokes to know more about Prostate Cancer. See our blog at cxmagblog for his story.



ICW OPENING - HONOURING IAN WOODHOUSE

CX News Briefs

- *Knock off equipment is a hot topic at ENTECH in July, with a free seminar set to debate the ethics and legalities of copied equipment. CX believe the industry faces contamination issues with counterfeit trussing, for example, a major problem. ENTECH runs for two days at Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building, with a seminar on the revised industry safety guidelines also running free of cost, alongside many other paid sessions.*

- *Make sure you register in advance for Integrate in August to avoid the \$25 admission fee, a new initiative that the organisers have snuck in without telling the exhibitors beforehand. Integrate shows on August 26 until 28, at the Showground at Sydney Olympic Park. Register at integrate-expo.com BEFORE the show to avoid the entry charge.*

- *The SMPTE-spoiling Sportscasting Conference and Expo scheduled this October in Melbourne appears to be dead in the water. The expo had a floorplan offering exhibition space valued at around \$400,000 but nil promotion at presstime spells trouble.*

- *Sizzle! The corporate AV business just got hotter with AV Partners winning the Crown Perth contract for supply of in house audio visual. Staging Connections have retained their Crown Melbourne contract despite a challenge from Microhire. But Microhire won the Marriot contract on the Gold Coast, also from Staging Connections. On the other hand, Staging recently became in house suppliers at Sydney's Ivy. AV Partners was started by disgruntled former Staging Connections management.*



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Design Quintessence had a couple of reasons to have their Mexican-themed party on 27 May, celebrating their 18th birthday and the opening of their new office and warehouse facility in Auburn, Sydney. A great turnout of customers and friends from Sydney and as far away as Melbourne attended the opening in what was a relaxed evening with great food and a few laughs. They got to see DQ's expansive new facility which houses a considerable amount of stock, and the introduction to DQ's new CNC router generated plenty of interest. Special guest on the night was George Lee, CEO of Global Truss Corporation, on his first ever visit to Australia (in 30 years in the industry). George handled the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon and their new "casa" was declared open for business.



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COLIN BALDWIN, DANIEL YIP & JACOB NAKHLA



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ROGER HIND, CARMELO TRIPOLONE, ALLAN BROWN, CHRIS HARRISON, LUSIA AH KUOI



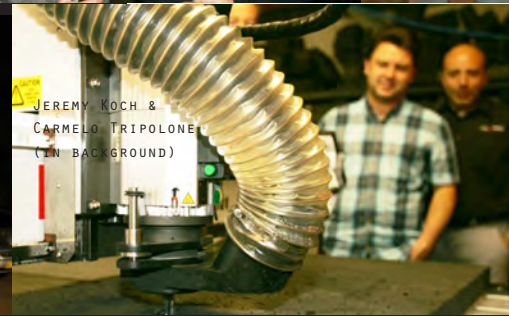
ALLAN BROWN & TONY DAVIES



MICHAEL SIMMONS & HUGH TARANTO



WAYNE KELLETT, JOHN BUCKLEY, IAIN REED



JEREMY KOCH & CARMELO TRIPOLONE (IN BACKGROUND)



DYLAN HOVEY, TONY HYTEK, STEVEN WILLES & IAN WOOD

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New Gear

EDITED BY JASON ALLEN

This month
New Gear includes:

- AURORA MULTIMEDIA
- BARCO
- CHROMA-Q
- CLEAR-COM
- DIGITAL PROJECTION
- ELATION
- ETC
- HIGN END SYSTEMS
- MULTITOUCH
- QSC

High End Systems HedgeHog 4N

The HedgeHog 4N is the newest and smallest member of the Hog family of consoles. With added HogNet port for network linking of consoles and expansion, and featuring the familiar programming, interface and user-friendly ergonomic control surface that have made the Hog series so popular, the HedgeHog 4 is a powerful, self-contained lighting controller with a built-in computer running Hog 4 OS software. The HedgeHog 4N has a 12.1 touchscreen interface, two on-board DMX and four Art-Net universes and ten Playback Faders.

Distributed by Lexair Entertainment – 0418 691 509



Chroma-Q Studio Force D XT 12

Utilising the same core technologies as the innovative Chroma-Q Studio Force D 12 daylight white LED fixture, the new Studio Force D XT 12 is an ultra-bright, higher-output version that provides 15,000 lumens output.

Specifically designed for TV, film, touring, exhibitions, corporate events and theatre lighting applications, the Studio Force D XT 12 is perfect for evenly washing large areas, complemented by its smooth, theatrical grade dimming. At only 335mm / 1ft long, the unit is ideal for floor, wall, stand or truss mounting.

Distributed by Jands: www.jands.com.au or (02) 9582 0909



Digital Projection

HIGHLight Laser 12k and M-Vision 930 WUXGA



M-VISION 930 WUXGA

Digital Projection have released the world first 12,000 lumen solid-state laser projector - the HIGHLight Laser 12k. This new three chip projector delivers a stunning 12,000 lumen output and boasts 20,000 hours of stable solid-state illumination with a WUXGA resolution. Developed for 'fit and forget' installations, lamp changes and expensive maintenance cycles are significantly reduced.

Edge Blend is included as standard along with Geometric Correction for a seamless viewing experience. HIGHLight Laser 12k delivers fully active 3D with up to 144 Hz refresh rate for the smoothest possible, flicker-free picture quality. Dual HDMI 1.4, DVI and 3G-SDI inputs provide the latest high speed video delivery. To complement this, HDBaseT connectivity allows the transmission of uncompressed High Definition Video over a CAT5e/6 LAN cable.

Digital Projection have also released the world's brightest single chip Digital Light Processing (DLP) projector - the 12,000 ANSI Lumen M-Vision 930 WUXGA. Ideal for a wide range of applications, from medium to large performance environments to live event solutions, the M-Vision 930 includes features typically associated with high-end three chip systems at an affordable, single chip price point.

A contrast ratio of up to 5,000:1 and fully active 3D, with up to 144Hz refresh rate, delivers optimum picture quality. Furthermore, the 0.96" DarkChip™ DMD, 6 Segment Colour Wheel and Dual 465W High Intensity Discharge Lamps produce unrivalled resolution and brightness. Other features include dual HDMI 1.4, DVI input, HDBaseT connectivity for the transmission of uncompressed High Definition video over a CAT5e/6 LAN cable.

Digital Projection is now distributed in Australia and New Zealand by Amber Technology: www.ambertech.com.au or 1800 251 367



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Barco F50



The Barco F50 is the world's first lamp-based single-chip DLP projector that combines native WQXGA (2,560 x 1,600) and Panorama (2,560 x 1,080) resolution with active stereo 3D and high frame rates. The F50 is a compact projector, designed for a wide variety of demanding applications in virtual reality, simulation and training, visitor attractions, collaboration suites and scientific visualization.

Producing very low noise levels, the F50 also features RealColor color management, Smear Reduction Processing and high frame rates. The F50 boasts four different digital input sources and comes with a wide range of expansion modules and lenses. Designed for 24/7 operation, the F50's total cost of ownership is reduced to a minimum thanks to its reliable DLP technology, filter-free design, and low maintenance needs.

Distributed by Barco Systems: www.barco.com or (03) 9646 5833

Aurora Multimedia DXB-8

The DXB-8 8 button panel is a single gang decora wall plate from Aurora Multimedia and is available in black or white. The wall plate can be customised with an assortment of laser-etched backlit buttons. The button panel has two RS232 outputs and mates with Aurora's new DXW-2 Series HDBaseT wall plates allowing RS232 control via HDBaseT to the display over a single cable.

RS232 commands can be sent on press and release making the ability to send 4 strings on a button press. If the button is set to toggle then you can create two step button controls, for example mutes and on/off commands. You can also set repeat times for the button press so that you can repeat commands for press and hold controls like volume.

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Clear-Com ProGrid

Clear-Com have announced the introduction of a new product range, ProGrid. ProGrid is a fibre based infrastructure system that will enable users not only to transport and distribute intercom over fibre, but also audio, video and control data. This will provide users with the ability to have end-to-end solutions for all signal distribution.

ProGrid, based on the AES3 and AES10 (MADI) standards opens up the capability for Clear-Com users to create large distributed fibre based systems and have intercom, audio, video and control data available at any network segment with ultra-low latency. Sub or even standalone segments can be created utilising the same units with Cat5e cabling, or for a more cost effective system you can choose to use Cat5e connected only devices to create the same distributed systems with a smaller channel count.

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LEAVING ON A HIGH



GERRY WILKINS

DEPARTS

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SPECIALISED AUDIO VISUAL DISTRIBUTION IS A TOUGH AND NUANCED GAME. NO ONE PLAYS THE ODDS BETTER THAN GERRY WILKINS, WHO CREATED AND GUIDED IMAGE DESIGN TECHNOLOGY. HE HAS SOLD OUT, AND LEFT THE SYDNEY BASED FIRM.

BY JULIUS GRAFTON

His I.D.T. story started back in 1990 when he paid \$27,000 for some monitors and Electroboard processors left over from Expo 1988 – by borrowing money from anyone who would lend it.

Before that, he'd met some Aussies in LA, got enamoured with one of them and decided to stay. That's a fairly common story!

"We were doing digital signage, transporting a video wall between venues and running adverts on it. These ran off three-quarter inch U-matic tapes. We started building a rental business."

"Once I started renting that video wall out, it was good money. We grew the business. The wall had 24 screens of 28" CRT monitors, 6 wide, and 4 high."

It was the start of the display era, and those old fashioned video walls looked strange from today's perspective – with each screen surrounded by the case, making a fair bit of missing content. But it was an eye catching device, for a new era.

Image Design Technology was created in 1993 once sales were added on to the rental business.

INOVATIVE START

"Pioneer brought in the first lot of rear project video cubes and didn't know what to do with them", Gerry says. "We started doing video walls for Funniest Home Videos (on TV). I found the producer, showed him the brochure and said if I had these, would you rent them? He said yes. I said 'great, please give me a letter to that effect.' He gave me a letter.

I took the letter to Pioneer. The Pioneer Managing Director gave me a contract to hire 27 cubes, exclusively. This built up to 200 cubes. I bought 200 more and sold a thousand cubes in that era!"

THAT'S GERRY

"We were the video wall guys of that era. Then we got the Toshiba cube agency. It was capital intensive and I started with zero."

Ask anyone who rents equipment, it gobbles money and the successful rental houses like Chameleon, Norwest, JPJ and TDC all expanded like crazy through the 1990's.

Having a nose for capital is part of success when a market is growing. Gerry decided to take on a partner. "In 1995 I sold half of IDT to Staging Connections - who were then half owned by Village. In that era the highlight was a job we did for Crown Casino, 13 video walls with Pioneer cubes – \$5 million dollars worth."

"The Janet Jackson world tour put us on the map, we knocked off all the overseas companies, we were contracted to Big Picture for that."

But things were not happy in the partnership venture.

"At the end of 1997 I hired a lawyer and forced the breakup of that business."

At the time, Staging Connections was a cluster of partnership entities, and had a master firm called 'Group Services', that administered all the business in the group, according to Gerry.

Group Services charged an administration fee and Gerry decided he didn't want to pay the fee.

"They didn't like that too much. In the end, they kept the rental business, and I kept the distribution company".

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In an aside, Gerry says there was a fairly complex ledger of contra transactions between Staging Connections and I.D.T., which entailed him working closely with the accounts department at Staging Connections.

"It wasn't a happy partnership. I was struggling to work under the confines of their program. Vendors weren't getting paid, I.D.T. was being put on credit hold, things that had never happened previously."

"It was just the way they ran things – Group Services charged us a lot to manage our accounts. (The partnership) Did scale the rental side of our business up, with video walls nationally. That side worked, no question. But it was about value for money, I didn't want my name tarnished."

The split was in April 1998 – Gerry says that 14 months after the split-up, Staging started a legal action against I.D.T. over a disputed balance due.

"It was ready to go to court, and I called Gary (Hackett, Staging CEO) one day and told him I would guarantee him we would be in court. He settled for a fraction of what they claimed but it cost me a year and 60 grand in legal fees. I'd had good advice from an old school lawyer – to tell it how it is. So I did."

SERIOUS WHOLESALE

By then I.D.T. had 5 or 6 agencies and was engaged in wholesale distribution of vision and display products.

"I looked at AMX and Electroboard, to decide what I wanted to be. I liked the idea of a small number of employees and large numbers of revenue. It seemed much more civilised!"

"There were four of us with enough money for 3 months when I started, with no overdraft, we rented or leased everything! Won the ASX contract with BRE that first year, that got us up and running and we never looked back. By year six I figured out what it meant to be in wholesale."

"We took on InFocus (projectors), and that gave us credibility with integrators and installers. We probably had the biggest market share in Australia in 2004."

In that era, ElectroBoard were both an importer and a reseller, they had a monster brand with Smart Board. Gerry watched closely.

"It's a debate that's raged ever since we started – whether to be both importer and reseller. When you don't have an Extron or an AMX or a big line, it takes a long time to get support. For us it came from sheer tenacity, to win people over. In the late 2000's I realised how important the consultants were, you win them and you win the tenders, which is another piece of the puzzle."

"From 2008 to 2012 was our biggest growth, we more than doubled turnover and started to do business with Rutledge, Pro AV Solutions and KLM Group, we become accepted as a major supplier."

"In 2012 we had our best year ever, and needed to invest in a new IT platform for the future and rather than invest I decided I'd find a buyer. I met someone who'd been acquired by Midwich Group from the UK and eventually they bought me."

"What I liked about it was no one knew we were for sale, I took everybody by surprise. That was a smart move at the time, being up for sale can be the death knell because people talk".

I had enough of running a business. Being robbed, swindled, and sued but at least I didn't have a fire. I sleep with a phone next to my bed every night".

I.D.T. was burgled in 2005, and took a big hit. PLASMA screens were a burglary target when a 40" edition carried a \$10,000 retail price. "I sold a 50" screen when they cost 35 grand wholesale."

"The insurance company wouldn't give us adequate coverage. It was not inexpensive."

THE FINAL PHASE

"I was ready to sell. I didn't have partners, and now I had new owners. They gave us the money to add staff and build a tele-sales department, with the resources to take on new brands like Chief, LG and Epson - all of which are going really well. I.D.T. as a business has got a great future as part of the Midwich Group."

According to Gerry, I.D.T. were the tenth acquisition for Midwich, a group that does over 200 million pounds turnover, all in AV and all strictly wholesale trade only.

"Some of the programs they have, and the analytics were amazing. They brought things in that I only transcendently knew, then literally my phone and inbox filled with firms wanting us to represent them in Australia."

"They wanted me to stay three years – but now I've had enough of it really. I started to struggle to be motivated and interested every day. I don't have any criticisms – having gone from the epicentre to an employee is a struggle. When you distil it down, I didn't have the juice to do it every day."

"My view has changed a lot – five years ago I thought the overseas manufacturer would go direct into the Australian market. I was proven wrong – they're looking more for leveraged distribution – where you have scale – marketing, reps, and the ability to grow. The price for a vendor from the US to appoint I.D.T. is just margin but the cost to set up here means it would just never work. It's too expensive. Giving margin (to a distributor) they get scale."

"The Australian AV distribution business is very fragmented - with a handful of big players and a lot of small ones. If Midwich do it right with I.D.T. then they have a huge opportunity. Time will tell.

Now it's time to do something different. "I want to evolve myself personally now – to video and cloud base delivery. To be part of that wave – software and cloud delivery."

"I deserve it, I earned it, and I've busted my guts. I put myself through the wringer, trying to do the right thing. If you ask my suppliers and the bulk of my customers, I backed what I sold. I'm happy with that as my legacy."


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WHAT-IF?

What if the rules are too hard to follow?

ONE OF THE CARDINAL RULES IN DEVELOPING SAFETY SYSTEMS IS TO ENGAGE WITH THE USERS OF THE SYSTEM WHEN YOU'RE DEVELOPING THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT AND TO TRY TO DEVELOP A SET OF RULES THAT THEY ARE GOING TO ACTIVELY AND DILIGENTLY FOLLOW - SOMETHING MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN JUST GIVING IT LIP SERVICE.

This rule applies equally when designing complex machinery control systems as it does if you're dealing with something like, say, getting pedestrians to cross a road at traffic lights.

If a system is easy to use and, dare we say it, "user friendly", then it stands a much better chance of having people use it the way that the designers intended.

In our pedestrian example, for instance, if the goal is to stop people crossing a busy inner city street except for where there are traffic lights, then you need to make sure that the lights aren't so far apart that people won't walk the distance to get to them, that they turn green often enough to make it not too annoying to wait, and that they stay green long enough to cross.

So how does this apply to the world of big machines in theatres?

We were recently at a very large and busy venue that is equipped with a forestage lift that travelled from stage to auditorium to orchestra pit and down on into the bowels of the earth. Said venue is also equipped with a top of the line power flying control system with all the bells and whistles and a very sophisticated door and handrail interlocking system.

A set of rules had been written for the system with the intention of preventing a fall hazard from being created by the lift being driven down from the stage and beyond if barriers weren't in place across the front of the stage and in the auditorium.

This set of rules prevented the lift being moved at all if these barriers and handrails were missing, but the operators had a regular and quite reasonable

requirement to move the lift only from the stage level to the auditorium floor and back again, which doesn't create a significant fall hazard.

Now, any system can have component failures or sporadic "issues" from time to time, particularly when it comes to things such as electric door locks and magnetic sensors on moving door leaves, so there was, as you'd suspect, a "back door" in the system that allowed the safety sensors around this lift (door interlocks, handrails, stage barriers etc) to be temporarily bypassed, by an authorised supervisor, with a password. This allows a show to go on, even if a \$25 magnet has failed in a lock.

Trouble with this system was that the lift is so often moved between stage and auditorium, and the barriers and handrails were so heavy and cumbersome, requiring 2 or 3 people 10 minutes or more to deploy, that "everyone" knew the supervisor login and safety bypass password, and the system was almost always being operated with all of the safety systems compromised.

All it took to rectify was to change the rules of engagement – now the lift can move freely between stage and auditorium, and if it is already below the auditorium it can be moved UP without needing any barriers in place. The operator now only needs to drag out the barriers when they are actually creating a dangerous fall hazard.

Because it is now easy to use and the users can see the logic and reason in the rules, then the system never gets bypassed.

Well that and the fact that all the passwords were changed so only supervisors have supervisor's passwords...

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.

JANUS
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BY ANDREW MATHIESON

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THE MILL REPORT

MAKIN' SOMETHIN'

WITH NEXT TO NOTHIN'

If you think good recordings can only be achieved in a fancy studio regardless of the musical style, then you're living in the distant past.

It's been a mad month here at The Mill. I've been flat chat finishing off album productions, single mixes, EPs and restorations of 50-year old 1/2-inch analogue tapes in whatever order they attack me in after I fall out of bed. I've been recording metronome samples, harmoniums, vocals, crickets, heavy guitar riffs. . . even a wind-up penguin. . . I kid you not. (And if you really want to know, I used a Beyerdynamic M88 on the bird, pointed somewhere at its belly).

I've had masters flying in every direction courtesy of Australia Post - I'm making the most of its infrastructure before everyone gets sacked (a three-day postal delivery has been mooted by its CEO, who I'm assuming used to work as a clown). I've had the Gotyé *Record of The Year* Grammy for 2012 here on the piano for a spell, which is nice. I've even rubbed everything off my whiteboard and got all organised so that I can see how everything's travelling without having to keep it all in my head (I've tried that before - stuff falls out).

I'm off to the US next week, hence the flurry of activity. By the time you read this I'll be in Northern California, enjoying a hot summer in the Sierra Nevadas and introducing my son River to the American in-laws. I may even pop down to see some of the crew at Universal Audio near Santa Cruz and check out what's cooking in their neck of the woods.

BY ANDY STEWART

IPAD PRODUCTIONS

I've had a few amazing studio experiences in the last few weeks, one in particular being an album I mastered - full of great, tasteful sounds, nice songs, beautiful singing and superb guitar work. The album's called *Beasts of the Field* by Pat Lyons. If you're looking for an Australian record that's a breath of fresh air, look for it when it gets released in the next few months.

What's particularly amazing about this record from a pro audio perspective is that the vast bulk of its track laying was recorded by Pat himself via his Apple iPad mic. I couldn't quite believe it when I found this out. All the vocals, guitars and a wide collection of other stuff recorded with this single (nigh on invisible) mic tucked inside a plastic screen! No external pre's or fancy converters, just a \$300 dollar tablet and a great voice! It's a real sign-of-the-times recording that mocks the very notion that high-end analogue equipment is vital to every stage of the production process. Some of the vocals do sound a little 'filtered' admittedly, but cool because of it. All in all it's a great sounding record put together on a shoestring budget.

EXPECTATIONS

Pat's album begs the question: what makes a great record? Certainly not expensive studio equipment necessarily, that's for sure.

But like so many albums like this, it's the sounds you add to the sonic palette with a proper recording rig during the final overdubbing sessions - in the case of Pat's album, the drums and double bass - and how you pull it all together during mixdown that makes an album shine. And then there's the mastering of course...

Without the tasteful rhythm section recorded through decent high-headroom Neve mic preamps *Beasts of the Field* might not have come out sounding quite so sweet, but this isn't what makes it special. There's a certain confidence in the playing and freedom in the lyrics that really makes it grow on you. I could play it over and over for months I suspect.

This is the sort of record that could have gone either way; bad overdubbing and dodgy mixing would have signed its death warrant. As it stands *Beasts of the Field* is a great example of what can be done with very little equipment and tasteful production.



'GOOD ENOUGH' ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH

Which brings to mind another thing that happened along similar lines last week. I spoke to someone who had never made a record in her life. That's right, this person had never made a record! Crazy to think there are people out there like that.

Anyway, she's rectifying the situation soon thankfully, and had sought my advice about producing an album of local artists... a compilation of sorts, with each person recording one song specifically for the release. She made an interesting comment at one point during our discussion that really put the cat amongst the pigeons: "We don't expect it to be great, just good enough for the local community."

Good enough for the local community? Was she really inferring that the folks in this 'ere neck of the woods had lower standards and expectations than the rest of Australia? I know some of them like to wear onesies in the supermarket after 10pm, but they're not that downtrodden surely?

I quizzed her about the comment, daring her to walk down the street in her local town and ask people whether they considered themselves second-class citizens perfectly suited to a poorly recorded album. She wasn't too keen on this proposal, so I guess I'd made my point: having low expectations before you even start a production is a bad approach. Worse, it assumes that good albums are only made with huge budgets in million dollar studios. Sounds like '80s thinking to me.

Like I said, she'd never made a record before, but in many respects she's typical of that 'low expectations' mindset, which often produces inferior results, even when the opportunity is now there to make something better. Nothing produces bad outcomes quite like low expectations.

In 2014, there's so much capacity in budget recording equipment – and in the case of devices like the iPad, effectively no recording equipment – it's not funny.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

There are no excuses any more for recordings that sound like bollocks. If you know what you're doing, or you can employ someone who does, you can achieve a lot with very little equipment. The trick is to get a professional involved as soon as you're able. Not only because they can help you achieve a better outcome (even when there's very little equipment on hand), they help you appreciate that great sounding records aren't made exclusively by pop stars in fancy surroundings.

Lots of great sounding records get made in the most unlikely of circumstances: in shacks by the beach, in the front room of grandma's house, in community halls and abandoned warehouses... it's just that pop stars would prefer to maintain the illusion that everything they record takes place in a million dollar facility, not their parent's loft.

There are no rules or preferred circumstances any more. All that's required initially is the right mindset and quiet surroundings.



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A FEW SIMPLE POINTERS FOR THE TOTAL NEWBIE

If you're making a recording yourself and you know very little about the process, here's something to keep in mind. Two things will always wreck a recording, regardless of whether it's a vocal captured by an expensive microphone or a guitar played in front of an iPad: too much background noise and too much gain. Most people record at 24-bit resolution these days. If you're a newbie, all this really means is that there's a tonne of level in your digital recorder. But if you record too hot and clip the signal you're stuffed basically. So don't push the levels too hard: it's unnecessary and unwise.

And wherever possible get the hell away from background noise. It might be the traffic outside; it might be rain on the roof. The main thing to appreciate, particularly if you're recording on your own with bugged all equipment, is that any sounds you can hear inside the recording space will likely be made far worse by mixing and mastering compression. That is to say, noisy backgrounds are never good for your music.

So, if you're recording digitally, keep the recording level modest, steer clear of noisy environments and half the battle is won.

It doesn't really matter if you're in New York or New Guinea; aim high with your productions, and never assume you can't achieve greatness simply because you're not recording at Abbey Road. It's very dated thinking and very destructive thinking. And enjoy the recording process...

Andy Stewart runs The Mill in South Gippsland, Victoria (when he's not holidaying in the US).

He's always happy to answer questions about recording, mixing or mastering.

Contact him here: andy@themill.net.au

**TOOLBOX
review**

LEWITT LCT 640

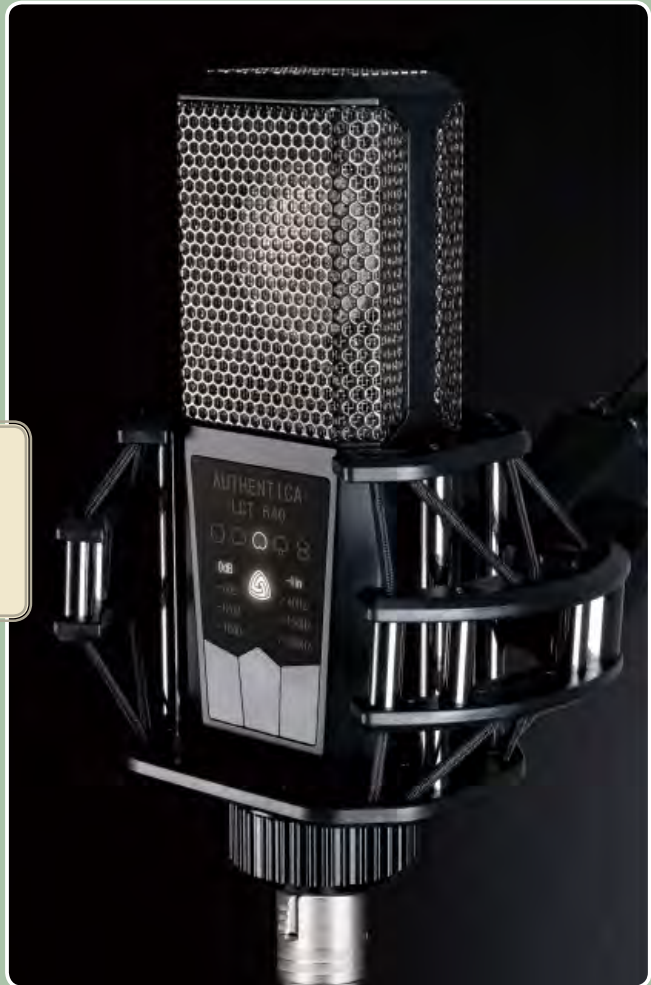
A cool new multi-pattern condenser mic lobbed on my desk the other day - the Lewitt LCT 640. This is an Austrian designed side-address large diaphragm mic that features modern-looking satin black chiseled features, great noise specs and clear balanced audio performance. It's a new brand to me, so I was intrigued.

Looking pretty darn gorgeous, and reminiscent of AKG's ubiquitous C-414 family, the Lewitt LCT 640 is a beautifully constructed individual, featuring five polar patterns: cardioid, figure-8, omni, wide-cardioid and super-cardioid, making it a very versatile studio performer.

I've used it to record countless things in the last couple of months all with great success I'd have to say: main vocals, BVs, piano, pedal organ, acoustic and electric guitar, woodwind and a dozen other things I won't bore you with. Everything has sounded true and clear - not hyped, not compressed, not smudged... just accurate.

The 640 comes with a fancy rectangular shockmount that holds the mic securely in place, making this an impressive overall setup. The mic's pattern selector is an illuminated soft switch arrangement; easy to read but not so easy to see, and somewhat perplexingly these switches are on the 'front' of the mic. I say 'front' in inverted commas only because in Figure-8 and omni there's no such thing, but in cardioid mode you might assume - as I did - that the big green Lewitt name brand and logo denote the 'front'. In fact they are on the back. My first foray into recording in cardioid mode went something like this: "Man, that's sounding dull... I wonder..." and sure enough it was back-to-front.

If you're looking for a new multi-pattern condenser this Lewitt is an impressive beast. And if first impressions are anything to go by, my reaction was that the 640 must be a 3K+ mic... turns out it retails for just over a grand. Very desirable.



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PRODUCTION COMPANY ANDY J SOUND HAS BEEN QUIETLY ROCKING ADELAIDE SINCE ITS INCEPTION 18 YEARS AGO. CX SAT DOWN WITH MANAGING DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER OF THE FIRM ANDREW GAYLER TO DISCUSS STAFF, PRODUCTION AND THE DELICATE ART OF GEARING UP WITHOUT GOING BROKE...

As with all production companies, the first question is always; what on earth possessed you to get into this? "I started as a nightclub DJ when I was in my early 20s" admitted Andy. "The sound system at a venue I was working kept breaking down and one night, after too many complaints, the manager said 'If you can do better, bring your system in'. I said 'OK', but I didn't have a system! So I went and saw my mate Mick Manov from PM Sound and said 'I need to buy a system and put it in this venue'. I bought a system Mick built called 'The Shredder'. The venue only lasted another year, and I thought, 'Oh well, that's a good idea that's gone nowhere.' But then a week later I had a phone call from another venue asking if they could hire my PA. Then another, and another, and another. As fast as I could make money, I poured all of it back in to buying more gear. 18 years later, I'm still buying more gear!"

Adelaide, while a small market, has always had more than enough of every business type to go around. Facing almost as much competition as he would have in the Eastern States, how did Andy get ahead? "The opportunity was mainly on the service side" he explained. "No-one wanted to go out at night-time and fix

BY JASON ALLEN



PHOTO - JARRYD PAGE
- GLASS AMBIENCE

BASS IN THE GRASS,
DARWIN, 2014.
PHOTO - JARRYD PAGE
- GLASS AMBIENCE

SUMMER SESSION, DARWIN, 2014

ANDREW GAYLER

anything. At that age, I was always out with my mates anyway, so within a very short period of time I took a good chunk of that market share." Andy continued to invest in himself and his company, and slowly started to build on his momentum.

DAS CAPITAL

"It wasn't until just over 10 years ago we could really call ourselves a production company" continued Andy. "Before that we were really just driveway hire. It was around then I hired (now General Manager) Adam Cox and slowly went about the task of building up clients and equipment to expand our offering. The limiting factor was having the capital; it takes an incredible amount of time and patience to get what you need. But, we were





ANDY WALTERS, DAVID MULLIGHAN AND ANDREW GAYLER WITH THEIR ROBE ROBIN 600S

INSTALLATION MANAGER JOHN LEE

CORPORATE EVENTS MANAGER LACHLAN COOPER

able to start adding on lighting, then employing more people."

Like other successful business managers, Andy has always taken the time to analyse his customer's needs and adjust his priorities accordingly. "At each point in our development, we've analysed where we are, where the gaps in the market are and what we need to be in order to stay in the market" expounded Andy. "In the last five to seven years it's become clear that you have to be involved in most aspects of production and do everything in-house if you want to compete. It's about being the one-stop-shop. Having an expert knowledge of what your market wants is absolutely critical. We look heavily to the riders that come out of Australia's Eastern Seaboard. That drives our inventory decisions."

TRAINS, PLANES AND AUTOMOBILES

Like most production companies in Australia, Andy and the team have had to diversify in order to meet the challenges of gig seasonality. Unusually, though, their installation arm has become a regular and solid platform of the business. "We're doing the usual pubs, clubs, churches and schools" said Andy, "but we've also taken on jobs in quite different markets. For example, we've worked with Great Southern Rail the last two years putting audio in all the Ghan and Indian Pacific trains. It's worked out well for us. The more technically challenging, the better it is for our organisation. Most of our staff are multi-skilled. There's a core of four of us that alternate between gigs, corporate and installation work."

The heart of the business in live production and music is still very healthy. AJS's production customers include the annual Clipsal 500 V8 Supercars, the S.A. leg of A Day On The Green, local success story Gorgeous Festival and, along with other regular work in NT, Darwin's Bass In The Grass. Andy himself gets hands-on at the important shows, taking on a production management role. "When you're doing a decent sized show that's worth a lot of money, the client wants to see you there" stated Andy "I don't get across all the jobs, but on the larger ones I still get involved." And what's his favourite job on a gig? "The load out!"

DEAR PRUDENCE

As the bulk of the work in Adelaide is small to medium shows, AJS tries to keep its inventory modular. "Everything we own can be broken down into smaller systems" Andy clarified. In audio, this has meant a big investment in d&b audiotechnik. AJS runs d&b Q and V series mid-high loudspeakers with J Infra, V and Q Subs, along with M4 monitor wedges, all powered by D80 and D12 power amplifiers. For ground stacks and fill, Nexo's popular Alpha E goes out, along with Nexo PS15-R2s and PS10s. Andy's brand of choice for a powered box is RCF.

Having carefully invested in quality inventory with a healthy rate of customer acceptance, Andy shows a level of prudence not generally associated with our industry. "The biggest challenge I see is money" elaborated Andy. "Particularly given the combination of margin, product cycles and product residual value. If you go back 20 years, you could buy something and sell it 10 years later and get your money back. Nowadays, if you haven't made your money back in four years you're probably not going to. I see that as a big problem. People have been caught with older systems that no-one will buy. It not a matter of losing money, it's that NO-ONE will buy it. My criticism of our industry is that the easy availability of credit in an industry that's so egocentrically driven is very dangerous as it can lead to market oversupply."

MARKET CONSOLIDATION

With his first big system investment hand-made in Adelaide in the 1990s, Andy has seen huge changes in the way Australian companies acquire, use and retire gear. "It all changed around the year 2000" recalled Andy. "DSPs and switch-mode power amplifiers came out. Instead of lugging these horrible heavy systems, we could suddenly get all this gear, put it in the back of a van and do a decent sized show. But the capital you need to be in the industry is so much greater now. Instead of building a sub at home for \$800, you're now spending \$4,000. You're getting more performance, but you've got to find the \$4,000."

How has this affected the smaller production companies and the technicians? "The unfortunate ramification is that it's left a large number of people behind" conceded Andy. "If you look at the level of competition in terms of the number of players, it's diminished, and continues to diminish. Whilst that's good because there are larger production houses with fantastic offerings, on the staff side, there's diminished places and no position of power in the market. That's a bad thing for us ongoing, as we run the risk of alienating people from our industry, and we still need staff."

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

AJS prides itself on staff retention and keeping a core of full-time and casual techs in regular employment. But, taking a broader view, Andy sees this as an imperative for the industry as a whole. "We need to make sure as an industry that we're looking after our staff, which we have to have enough work to do. We think the common problem is that staff aren't remunerated properly. There's pressures on some companies to pay off significant leases. For us, Adelaide is a tiny market, but we've gotten around that by being so diverse. There's some fantastic competition. We've had to improve enormously, and that's been a combination of staff and equipment. We've had year on year growth for over a decade."



AS CX WENT TO PRINT THIS MONTH, ANDY J SOUND WAS TAKING DELIVERY OF A MAJOR BOOST TO ITS LIGHTING INVENTORY – EIGHT NEW PHILIPS-SELECON VARI-LITE VL4000 SPOTS. THE VL4KS BUILD ON AJS'S FIXTURE CORE OF ROBE ROBIN 100, 600S 800S AND POINTES, MARTIN MAC 700S AND MAC 250 ENTOURS. ON THE CONTROL SIDE, AJS STOCKS MA LIGHTING'S GRAND MA 1 FULL, HIGH END SYSTEM'S HOG 4 FULL BOAR WITH HOG 4 WING AND MARTIN M1s. ANDY IS CONFIDENT THAT THE VARI-LITES WILL OPEN UP A NEW MARKET FOR AJS.

"WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR THE NEXT STEP UP FROM OUR MAC 700S" SAID ANDY, "KEEPING IN MIND HOW INCREDIBLY RELIABLE AND LOW-MAINTENANCE THEY HAVE BEEN. BECAUSE OUR LOCAL MARKET IS RELATIVELY SMALL, WE NEED AN ALL-IN-ONE FIXTURE SOLUTION. TO THAT END, WE FEEL IT'S WORTH INVESTING IN THE VL4KS TO COVER ALL OF OUR CUSTOMER'S REQUIREMENTS AT THAT END OF THE MARKET."

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LISTEN HERE PAINTINGS WITHOUT A CANVAS

There are four kinds of engineers (give or take). Which sub-group do you align with? Are you a slacker or a concealer, a dedicated professional or blissfully unaware? Maybe you're not the right person to ask... should we talk to your clients perhaps?

Weaknesses, blind spots – we all have them, don't we? Some engineers and producers claim not to have any of course, preferring instead to spend their waking hours trying to convince us they know it all.

Meanwhile the vast majority of us have strengths and weaknesses, although not everyone is keen to admit to possessing too many of the latter. Within this vast majority there are four basic sub-groups: those who are blissfully unaware of their shortcomings; those who are aware of them but do nothing about it; those who try to conceal them; and those who seek solutions to their problems.

In my book, the best engineers are in this fourth group; they know their weaknesses and work hard to overcome them. Here are some thoughts to consider for anyone from these four groups.

SUB-GROUP A: THE BLISSFULLY UNAWARE

When it comes to audio, everyone starts out in this group. Blissful ignorance arguably has its advantages in the wider artistic world, allowing unique styles and perspectives to develop without too many outside influences, and the same is certainly true of music. But this naïve perspective also has a sting in its tail with respect to audio, and here's why.

Unlike the artistic pursuit of painting pictures for example, an original *audio* master is, in some senses,

non-existent. It requires a speaker system to replay it, and rarely if ever is it the one it was created on. So in some respects original audio masters are like a painting without a canvas. The 'canvas' is everyone else's speakers, and that's a daunting prospect. The size, quality, resolution and volume of the artwork are all out of the artist's control.

It's this single fact that most blissfully unaware, naïve engineers in Sub-Group A fail to properly appreciate. While it's great to 'do your own thing your own way' there are consequences to not understanding certain tonal and dynamic limitations to the medium you're working with.

Remaining blissfully ignorant of the scientific side of audio production for too long eventually causes all manner of problems for your clients and other audio professionals downstream of the role you occupy.

Let's say, for example, you're 'mixing' in a room that's full of lumps, bumps and phase anomalies. The speakers might be the wrong size for the room or in the wrong position, and you're unaware of these issues because you've never bothered to test it or listen to other people's CDs in the space. As a result the mastering engineer's role will be vastly compromised. They will be forced to spend most of their time trying to find ways to tame your mixes without destroying them, and hours and days may go by doing it.

So while it may seem cool to work in blissful ignorance in the audio realm under the banner of 'art', it's not something you want to do for too long if you want your work to translate out in the world. Remember, your art travels to the listener; they don't come to your studio.

SUB-GROUP B: THE SLACKERS

This second group of engineers is hard to define... maybe they could be called 'The Slackers' but that seems a little harsh. One thing's for sure, this group is large and contains some surprising members.

There are new recruits here who don't take their pro audio role too seriously and who are mostly in it to have some fun (fair enough – most of us start out like this). These guys may have issues with their studio setups, average skills and a fairly laissez-faire attitude to their work, but neither do they profess to be anything other than what they are. There are thousands of engineers like this and if you're one of them you may eventually become highly skilled if you remain open to ideas and humble about your abilities.

Then there are long-serving 'professionals' who are encrusted to the underside of the audio industry's hull, having gotten away with being mediocre for far too long. These guys know less than they think they do, and hate making changes to their setup, working methods or formats, especially if it's suggested to them by a co-worker, or worse, a young musician. These engineers need a reality check, a large serving of humble pie and some new skills.

Then there are the engineers who were previously in Sub-Group D (see below) but either no longer have the energy to compete or the money to plough into new technology (again!). This is fair enough... feeling obliged to constantly upgrade perfectly viable software and hardware for some new technology can be a tiresome challenge over the long term. These guys have my great respect for being involved in the audio industry for so

BY ANDY STEWART

long. I wouldn't really want to offer an opinion about them other than to enquire about whether they're still enjoying their work.

Then there are the 'slackers' who just like doing what they do and if that's not good enough for their clients, they're happy for them to go elsewhere. These guys often drive me crazy because they're generally too content to do the bare minimum: record things poorly, ignore technical faults, mix things roughly, pay little attention to maintenance or appreciate what else needs to happen to their work once it leaves their studio. These guys need to step up and take more responsibility for the work entrusted to them by their clients.

Finally there are the people who genuinely don't know what to do about the problems they have, irrespective of what they might be. To them my advice is simple: do some investigating and resolve your issues! We're all paralysed by indecision at times, for whatever reason. If you currently have a technical problem or blind spot about how to use a piece of software, don't just throw your hands in the air and curse the gods... it won't help. You'll feel much better once you've solved the problem and you'll no doubt learn something along the way.

If you genuinely *can't* fix something – perhaps you live in a tiny house and have to mix in headphones – that's unfortunate. But if you're one of these people who has spent the last decade suspicious that your hearing is unbalanced because everything panned centre seems slightly skewed to one side, go and get your ears checked out. Do it today! If it's not your ears it might be your room, your speaker calibration or even your monitor pot. Whatever the cause is, knowing what's wrong and doing something about it is vital to the product you create.

SUB-GROUP C: THE CONCEALERS

The most insidious sub-group is C – 'The Concealers'. These guys and gals hide the truth about anything and everything often out of self-preservation or ego, and commonly to the detriment of the final product. Whether it's a technical problem, an engineering blind spot or a simple misunderstanding of technique, they always have a way of deflecting blame away from themselves. If you're near an engineer like this, stand well back.

We've all been here at some point, and I don't want to be the guy in a glass house throwing stones, so let me simply say this: if you find yourself concealing the truth about a noisy mic, why that amp has a buzz, why the mix sounds so thin, or why the computer keeps crashing, just don't get into the habit of it. Don't become the guy or gal who always has an excuse handy the moment something goes wrong. Sure, we've all been in difficult positions occasionally, and no, it's not nice to have your back to the wall during a session unexpectedly. Just make sure you address any problems you have as they arise, or immediately afterwards if it doesn't directly affect your recording. Don't let the problem persist for months!

In short, if you find yourself in Sub-Group C you should be looking for ways to pull yourself out of it quickly, because hanging around in this group for too long eventually makes you hard to work with.

SUB-GROUP D: THE DEDICATED

This is where we should all be in an ideal world. Anyone being paid as a professional in the audio industry should ideally be striving to align with this category. Sub-Group D is all about skills, advanced learning, self-improvement and humility. Not much needs to be said once you're in this category, other than to occasionally be reminded that your skills should never stop advancing, or your humility diminish.

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FACTORY SOUND



Artie Jones

Dean McGrath

YOU'LL GET LOOKED AFTER

Much like the oversized Dim Sim sold at the nearby South Melbourne Market, Factory Sound is an institution. Now just on 20 years old, Factory have turned from a rehearsal studio that sold mics and gaff on the side to a national force in audio and production retail. Jason Allen sat down to talk shop with Marketing Manager Artie Jones and Sales Manager Dean McGrath...

BY JASON ALLEN



Factory Sound on York Street

The York Street, South Melbourne site of Factory Sound has always been a bit Rock'n'Roll. In the mid-Eighties, it was a rehearsal and recording space frequented by such bands as Goanna. The ABC were known to park OB vans on-site and record. After a brief closure, the rehearsal rooms re-opened in 1992, and Factory Sound began selling bits and bobs to the gigging bands and weekend warriors that frequented the establishment. The company was incorporated in 1994, and slowly sales took over as the focus. The rehearsal rooms were slowly taken down to make way for more retail space, with the last one gone by the year 2000.

Factory Sound take pride in keeping both their staff and their customers long-term. Sales Manager Dean McGrath has been on board since 2000, and Marketing Manager Artie Jones since 1996, though, he pointed out, "they actually gave me a job in 1998." Many CX readers will be familiar with Tony Lofts, a figure that looms large in our industry, partly because of Factory's excellent and often totally outrageous in-house promo videos. Along with Managing Director Warren Eales, Tony's been there from the start, too. Sadly, on the day CX visited, Tony was absent, recovering from surgery due to a particularly nasty injury. What it was exactly and how it was sustained are a closely guarded secret.

In the beginning...

So what started the transition from sideline to the main event? "We worked out that people wanted good, reliable, industry standard gear at the right prices" said Artie. "At the start, it was Crown amps, EV loudspeakers, Allen and Heath consoles, Neutrik connectors and Canare cables. Our PA sales just grew and grew. Then it all expanded again with the second generation of



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Producer's heaven



were Denon and Technics, then we added Pioneer." "Studio and DJ became big at the same time" continued Artie. "Until then, the Studio market for us was mainly supplying decent microphones, but then Rode came out, Windows XP came out, soundcards got cheaper and started to work properly, and everything started to work together." "That was the start of affordability in home studios" agreed Dean. "That was the first time people could afford to do something decent at home."

Crowd Control

Factory amassed a rabid Melbourne customer base with their annual sales in the late 90s and early 2000s. Every year, a few desirable items would be available at a ludicrous price, and the first in was the best dressed. This writer remembers being present at one event, and there was a mosh-pit worthy crush waiting for the doors to open, followed by chaos. By Artie's own admission, they got a bit out of hand. This was before the mass adoption of internet, and was fuelled totally by mail-outs, street press and word-of-mouth. Factory produced a giant 140 page catalogue that was mailed around the nation, helping them to expand their business interstate. Phone and internet sales are now a major part of the business. "We've got a good range of customers" offered Artie. "The tried and true road crew come through on the Melbourne leg of the tour for mics and leads. Working musos who need a pair of speakers, someone who needs a wireless mic. The next biggest area for us is the bedroom studio and the home producer. The third group is schools and government who need masses of help, particularly with wireless microphones at the moment."

The Digital Dividend

Both Artie and Dean are currently spending large amounts of time navigating their customers through the minefield that is the Digital Dividend. While industry insiders and professionals are across the issue, it's the community groups and 'casual' users of wireless technology that have been left behind. "We all know marriage celebrants and personal trainers who don't have the foggiest" sighed Artie. "This issue touches so many people. The specific user groups like ACETA, AWAG and the AMA are doing their hardest but they're only getting to the industry people."

"We started about three years ago doing a lot of work learning about this and getting educational videos out" Artie went on. "It's not as simple as walking in and buying something that will work in your area. Some of our customers are touring all around Australia and finding them a couple of sets of frequencies that will work everywhere is a lot of work." Dean is concerned about the sheer volume of customers who still need to replace their equipment; "I think it's going to be a mad dash from now to the 2015 deadline" he predicted.

Critical Listening

Factory Sound's enduring marketing slogan is 'You'll get looked after', and is repeated on most of their advertising. It's their mantra, but what does it mean to put it in practice? "I think people need the right advice on the gear they're thinking about buying" explained Dean "They need advice from people that have used it hands-on. The internet is good to do some research and get a basic grasp, but to get to the next level, you need to talk to someone who's used it on a gig. We do a little bit of the homework for them. We also know how hard it

powered speaker boxes, which I think really started with the RCF300A."

"In 2000, we started selling strongly into the DJ market" added Dean, who came from a DJ background. "The two brands that were important to me at that stage

is to earn a dollar gigging. To spend it and part with is a big thing, and we understand that personally."

"Getting looked after means whoever comes in here gets listened to" added Artie "We don't just hear 'I want to buy a pair of speakers', we ask the right questions. What are the speakers being used for? Is it every day, every week or once a month? How many people are you going to play to? Do you think you'll hire subs occasionally or will you need them all the time? We see what gear works well. We get to see if any comes back for regular repairs. That's how we can recommend the right gear with confidence."

Bang for Your Buck

With Chinese manufacturing and advancing technology driving down the price of gear across the board, how do Factory rise to the challenge of having to sell more gear to make the same dollars? "We do have to sell more product, but the market has grown organically with more people coming in to it" Dean observed. "Gear becoming cheaper has allowed people to get their foot in the door and try things whereas before, they were priced out of the market. People are still spending as much on gear, they just get more for their money. The quality in the affordable range has come right up. And the price of the good gear has come down. The whole market is very competitive and the punter is getting great gear for the money now."

"It's what I call the 'initial Behringer' phenomenon" Artie expounded. "We used to sell a Behringer MDX2600 compressor that was waaaay cheaper than anything else on the market. Did it sound as good as a Drawmer? No, but it was four times cheaper and a customer didn't

have to wait to buy it. Then eventually they'd outgrow it and wanted something better. Once upon a time, they'd have sell their old gear before they bought something new. Now, with the pricing having come down, they don't have to."

Dark Side of The Net

With internet sales expanding Factory's reach well beyond Melbourne and Victoria, there's been mostly positives for them online. But the net has also opened up international competition, grey importing and fakes. There's definitely a negative side to the internet" agreed Artie "Initially, when people started buying online from overseas, the major problem was that if someone had a success story, they'd tell all their mates. But if someone bought something and it didn't work out, they felt so stupid they didn't tell anyone. So the only stories that were getting out were positive. I think people know now that it's not like that."

"We've heard the horror stories about people buying gear overseas and they've plugged it in and its blown up and had to get it fixed" Dean elaborated. "Because of the embarrassment, they don't talk about it. As far as fake goods go, we've noticed microphones and headphones are the most copied items. Small, shippable consumables that can fit in an airbag. Bigger stuff gets copied but doesn't come into the country as often. So, globally we have to be competitive. We've got to offer the customer as much information and advice as we can, so they feel that a relationship has built up. If they're only looking at saving a little bit of money, hopefully they'll factor our support in to their decision and appreciate what it's worth".



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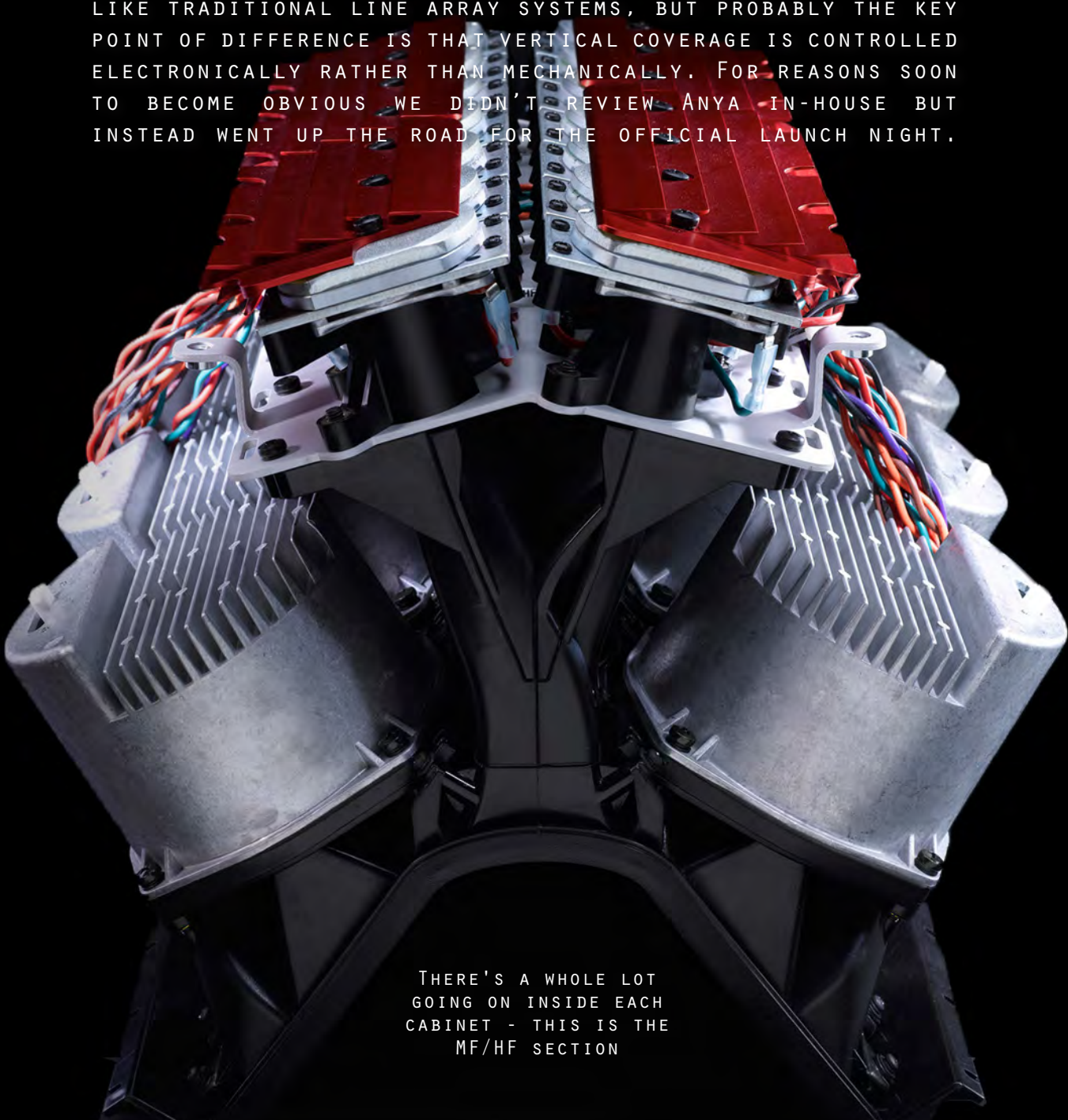
by HARMAN

THE NEW GIRL COMES TO TOWN...

BY JIMMY DEN-ODEN

EAW ANYA

ANYA IS A FULL-RANGE SELF-POWERED ARRAY SYSTEM FEATURING A CHOICE OF EXACTLY ONE MODULE TYPE. IN SOME WAYS IT'S LIKE TRADITIONAL LINE ARRAY SYSTEMS, BUT PROBABLY THE KEY POINT OF DIFFERENCE IS THAT VERTICAL COVERAGE IS CONTROLLED ELECTRONICALLY RATHER THAN MECHANICALLY. FOR REASONS SOON TO BECOME OBVIOUS WE DIDN'T REVIEW ANYA IN-HOUSE BUT INSTEAD WENT UP THE ROAD FOR THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH NIGHT.



THERE'S A WHOLE LOT
GOING ON INSIDE EACH
CABINET - THIS IS THE
MF/HF SECTION



BRAINY & ELEGANT

Each Anya cabinet comprises 14 HF drivers (35mm voicecoil on 1" exit), 6 MF drivers (38mm voicecoil on 5" cone), and 2 LF drivers (4" voicecoil on 15" cone). Each driver is individually amplified, and has its own DSP channel with EAW Focusing. That's a lot of brains, and a lot of horsepower.

There's no specific nominal vertical beamwidth for each module because it can be whatever you want it to be. Anya can steer sound up or down in the vertical plane through a range of 180 degrees, and it does so from a vertical hang. How low down the frequency spectrum you can effectively steer the sound depends on how many modules you employ – just like any other line array it has to obey the laws of physics.

Because the vertical pattern control is done electronically you don't need gaps in the line source to achieve the result, nor do you need to make any physical changes to the array to modify the coverage. It's clever. You could theoretically use a single module, but low end steering is more effective with more modules. More modules also gives you higher SPL – see the Resolution 2 plots for single, 3 and 6 modules illustrating vertical steering at 200Hz. Note with the increase in modules not only where the sound is, but also where it isn't.

Operating range of each cabinet is 35Hz – 18kHz, with a nominal horizontal beamwidth of 70 degrees. The system is scalable in the horizontal plane, so if you add additional columns then each hang covers 60 degrees. Because the hangs are dead vertical and the cabinets are angled at the sides, each hang can physically about the entire length of the adjacent one. This is very exciting, since it drastically reduces the comb filtering you'd encounter when joining "J" curved arrays. The result is more consistent audience coverage and smaller interference zones.

All the rigging (bar the fly bracket) is integrated into the cabinets. Push a pin on a box, and rigging tabs extend into the box beneath it. Push a different pin on the lower box to lock into those tabs. It's simple, fast, and there's limited scope to get it wrong. Up to 18 cabinets can be flown in a single hang with a 10:1 safety factor. The fly bracket can be suspended from one, two, three or four points to accommodate available rigging facilities. The accompanying system power/data distribution rack can be ground-stacked or flown too.

The dolly on which the modules travel is rated to hold an entire stack of 18 boxes in case "captain chain motor" isn't paying too much attention at derig (whether your stage can hold it is another matter). Ordinarily you'd travel three or four modules per dolly depending on whether you're using a ramp or forklift to unload the truck.

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READING ABOUT THIS IS ONE THING, BUT ACTUALLY EXPERIENCING IT IS ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY

When the system is first powered up, infra-red transceivers on every abutting face look at what if any neighboring boxes are present. This information then automatically configures the Resolution 2 software to display the array logically as it exists in the physical world. If too much sunlight or whatever causes a problem with the IR, you can configure the layout manually using internal winkly lights on the front of each box for identification. Audio inputs include Dante, AES, and for the complete philistines, even analogue. Auto failover is supported.

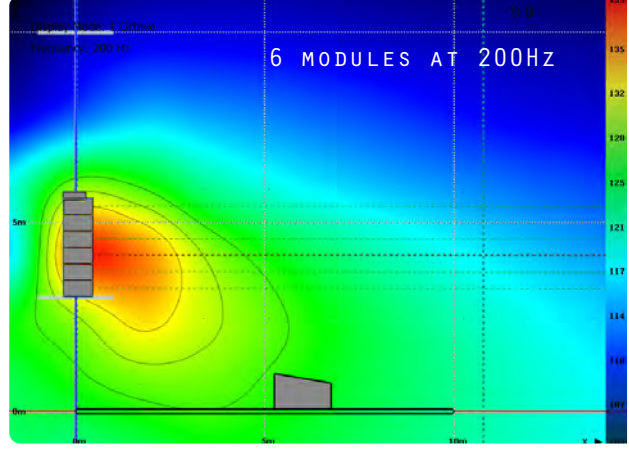
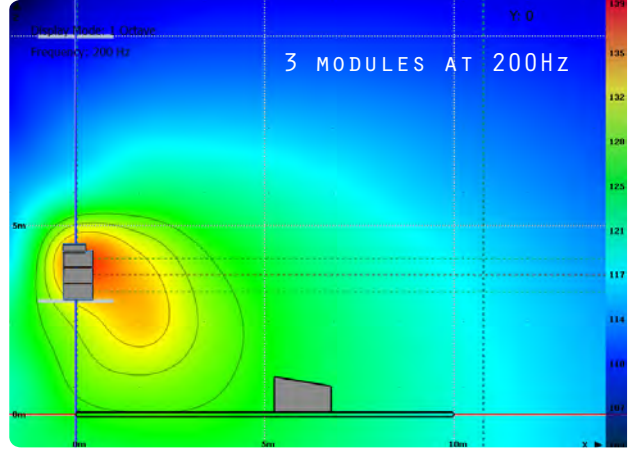
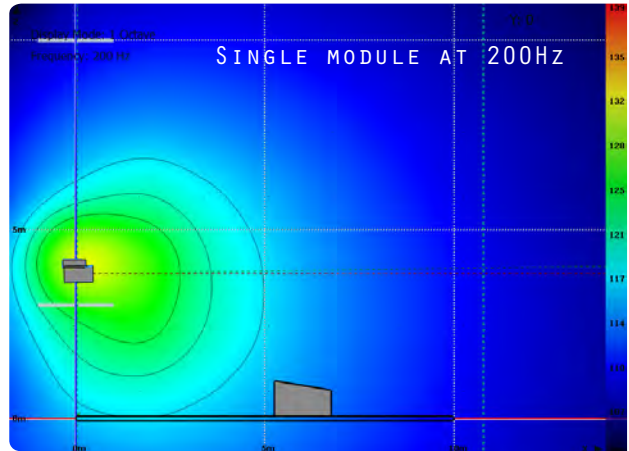
Now the cool bit. You've got the system in the air, powered, and you can see it all in the software. Now draw the area over which you need coverage and hit the "go" button. Resolution 2 calculates all the necessary control parameters required to achieve this, then once you hit "upload" it sends this configuration info to Anya. Anya then steers to exactly where you've asked it. It's pretty subtle about the whole matter too – the coverage just magically shifts with no break in audio or weird noises. You can even modify the coverage mid-show if you need to.

Reading about this is one thing, but actually experiencing it is another thing entirely. The sensation of hearing the PA completely re-steer itself to another part of the venue is almost eerie. There's also a "find me" function, where you place reference mics at the boundaries of your intended coverage area and leave Anya and Resolution 2 to just figure it out.

Earlier in the day I was lucky enough to spend some alone time with Anya at the Concert hall in the Concourse at Chatswood – a venue in which I work

quite regularly. I'm very used to how the room sounds with the house PA, and I've heard it with several other systems toured in as well. There's a certain predictable element of confusion inherent to putting amplified sound into a reverberant space designed for acoustic performances. Anya eliminated this by putting the sound only where the audience sits, and massively reducing the reverberant field of the space. It's seriously quite incredible. Coverage is even where you want it, and just stops where it's supposed to.

It sounds good too. Straight off the bat with no system EQ in place, frequency response is fairly neutral and doesn't have the shelf type attenuation apparent in the high frequency end of some systems. The system I tested was 6 cabinets per side, so with 24 x 15" drivers in the air (and another 24 x 21" sub drivers on the deck) I wasn't going to turn it up as loud as it would go. I don't think I even really



got past idle on the amps, and I was pushing serious level. It's definitely a serious large format system, and the companion Otto adaptive sub just announced at InfoComm looks like it will only add to the excitement.

Each Anya cabinet has an internal reference microphone, and this can be used to compare what each box is doing with its stored factory trace information. All this happens inside the box, and if it detects a problem with a driver (impedance, response, whatever) this is logged internally. When the system comes down after a show (or before it goes out), checking each box is as simple as pushing the "test" button on the back. A battery powered circuit lights up the adjacent LED - green for all good, or red meaning you need to power up the box and check the logs for a problem.

If you lose a driver mid-show, Resolution 2 will report this and give you the option to "heal" any gap in the coverage caused by the loss. Importantly the system won't automatically change anything by itself - any change to what it's doing requires user input. Once the driver is replaced, you can re-calibrate the module's internally stored traces. Internal sensors inside each Anya cabinet detect movement of the array, and will alert the user via Resolution 2 if it's been tilted.

For all its brains, Anya won't stop you doing fundamentally stupid things. You still need to point it in the right direction, spec it the right way, power it appropriately and control it correctly. Good underpinning system knowledge is still important, and I really believe the Australian distributors have this matter amply covered.



RIGGING IS INTEGRATED
INTO EACH ELEMENT

All in all Anya is quite exceptional. It's a sound system that does exactly what you ask it to. If you're a great engineer you'll love it. If you're a lousy engineer then you'd better prepare some good excuses now, because Anya won't leave you anywhere to hide. All of this comes at a premium - at 130kg each, the modules are definitely not lightweight. Any large format line array (Anya sits in the top end price bracket) is a big investment, so value for money counts. Anya gives more of the punters the same sound experience as the mix engineer, and I reckon there's a lot of value in that.

BRAND: EAW
MODEL: ANYA
RRP: POA
PRODUCT INFO: WWW.EAW.COM
DISTRIBUTOR: WWW.PAVT.COM.AU



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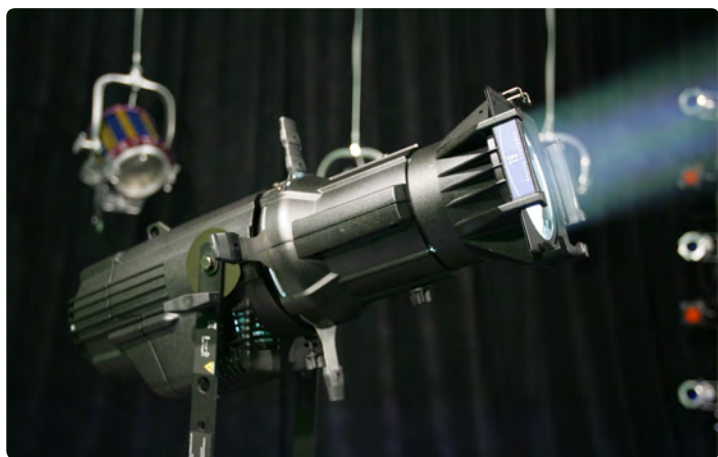
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by HARMAN



ETC SOURCE FOUR LED SERIES 2 & CYC ADAPTER

PROUDLY THEATRICAL

BY JIMMY DEN-ouden



ETC REALLY IS ALL ABOUT THEATRE LIGHTING – JUST THINK ABOUT WHAT THE NAME STANDS FOR. THE SOURCE FOUR LED WAS INTRODUCED A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO AND HELD APPEAL BECAUSE IT ALLOWED USERS TO SIMPLY ATTACH A NEW LIGHT SOURCE TO THEIR EXISTING LENS TUBES. FIRST GENERATION SOURCE FOUR LED WAS GOOD, AND NOW THEY'VE ADDED VERSION 2 TO THE RANGE AND IT'S EVEN BETTER. ALL THE GREAT EXISTING FEATURES LIKE THE FRIENDLY USER INTERFACE, RED SHIFT AND 3200K WHITE POINT SETTING STILL APPLY, SO I'M GOING TO FOCUS ON WHAT'S NEW.

BRAND: ETC
 MODEL: SOURCE FOUR LED SERIES 2
 & CYC ADAPTER
 RRP INC GST: SOURCE FOUR LED SERIES 2
 LUSTR+ ENGINE - \$3835.00 OR \$3905.00 WITH
 SHUTTER BARREL. LED CYC ADAPTER - \$645.00
 26 DEGREE EDLT LENS TUBE - \$415.00
 PRODUCT INFO: WWW.ETCCONNECT.COM
 DISTRIBUTOR: WWW.JANDS.COM.AU

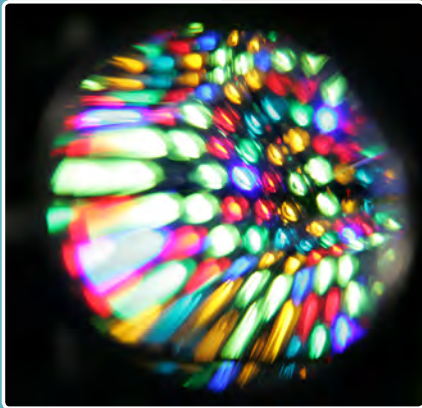
Source Four LED uses the x7 Colour System to mix colours. Rather than use only RGB or RGBW, there are seven sets of differently coloured LEDs within the engine. "What's the point, a colour's a colour right?" you might wonder – I know I did. The x7 system gives you different ways to make the colours, which in turn allow you to highlight differently coloured set or costume elements within them. It didn't make sense to me till I saw it, but trust me it's pretty damn cool.

The Source Four LED 2 uses 60 Luxeon Rebel emitters in a different combination of colours to the original Source Four LED. A higher concentration of red LEDs is balanced with the addition of lime green to the array. There are no white LEDs in the new engine at all, which again initially seems weird but actually isn't.

The change in the colour mixing system has allowed about a 70% increase in white light output over the series 1 fixture – this seems weird when you consider the white chips are gone. I think it's a case that the lime green now allows better balancing of more output from all the other colours when making white light. There's still a slightly opaque filter which you need to sit in the lens tube to properly homogenize the colours, but that's no big deal really. It's still not quite up to the same output as a tungsten fixture in open white, but it's pretty damn close. In saturated colours the difference is even smaller, with the LED fixture brighter in some cases.

Control over the fixture is much the same as the first generation unit, with the addition of a range of "quick colour" presets you can dial up directly from the back panel. PowerCon and 5 pin XLR provide in and loop facilities for power and DMX. Control modes include HIS, HSIC, RGB, Studio, and direct. You can input HSI to the fixture and it will figure out which LEDs to turn on at what intensity to generate the required result. The back panel is otherwise the same as the first gen, so it's an easy migration. A safety wire attachment point is cast into the fixture chassis, and the whole thing just smacks of quality. Hardly a surprise, given the price.

EXCUSE THE
FINGERPRINTS,
THIS IS THE
CYC ADAPTER



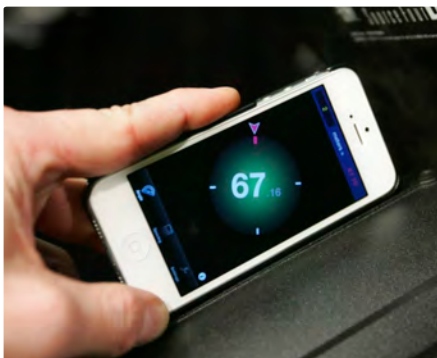
THIS IS
WHAT'S
ACTUALLY
GOING ON
INSIDE THE
ENGINE

There's no hiding from the fact that Source Four LED has a higher initial cost than other alternatives. Considering the price it's pretty important that the fixture be as versatile as possible, since ROI tends to be a big influence when purchasing. Maybe in recognition of this, ETC has released a Cyclorama adapter specifically to match this unit (don't put it on a tungsten Source Four because it will melt). The cyc adapter fits onto the fixture in place of the lens tube and turns the fixture into a cyc light. It also allows you to re-purpose your cyc lights to other duties when they're not being used, so they stay busy and billable all the time.

A clever addition to this is a free iPhone app called "Cyc Tool", into which you punch the required throw distance from fixture to cyc. The app figures out the appropriate tilt angle, and marks it on a rotary scale. Then the clever bit happens - sit the phone on the fixture then tilt it back and forth until the scale turns green to show the angle is correct. Nifty!

ETC makes a big point about the quality of light from the fixture being good enough to light up people in addition to set elements, and really I think they're understating it a bit - while it's a viable tungsten replacement it's also versatile in ways a fixed colour source can't be. I like it.

If you're investing in a LED engine, it probably makes sense to get an accompanying EDLT lens tube to squeeze every Lumen out of the source, as well as yielding sharper gobo projection. The engine is available with optional integrated shutters, so if you're using EDLT fixed angle tubes that's the option you want. If you plan to use zoom tubes with their own shutters or the cyc adapter, go for a plain engine instead. One thing is for sure though, LED just got even better.



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CX NETWORK

ELECTRO-VOICE ETX

— EV STRIKES ACCORD —

BY JIMMY DEN-ouden

IT'S NO REAL SECRET THAT EV AND DYNACORD HAVE THE SAME PARENT COMPANY IN BOSCH COMMUNICATIONS. THE TWO HAVE A LOT IN COMMON REALLY – THEY'RE BOTH PRETTY SOLID PRODUCT. FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE I'VE ALWAYS SEEN DYNACORD AS THE HEAVIER DUTY PRODUCT, BUT WITH THE RELEASE OF THE ETX RANGE THAT LINE SEEMS TO BE A LITTLE MORE BLURRY THAN IT USED TO.

ETX is a range of self-powered speakers. The whole family is built from 18mm 13 ply birch ply, and all the hardware is made by EV specifically. Handles, top-hats and amp chassis are all die-cast aluminium rather than plastic. The full-range models include eye-bolt mounting points as well as boundary compensation filters for floor, pole, or flown configurations. The brains don't end there either – dual limiters, linear phase crossovers, and intelligent thermal management add to the appeal. Using a pole to join a top box to a sub puts the front faces of the boxes out of physical alignment with each other – I'm told that the boxes know how to compensate for this, which is pretty cool.

The range encompasses a variety of models; 10" two way, 12" two way, 15" two way boxes all have nominal coverage of 90 x 60 degrees. The 15" three way is interesting if for no other reason than it's a less common configuration than a 15" and horn. It uses a 6.5" mid-bass and a 1.25" compression driver as well as a 15" LF unit. Physically it's a bit bigger than the others, and appears to be designed for long throw applications with 60 x 40 degree nominal coverage. The range also includes two subwoofers – a single 15" and a single 18". The specs of the whole family are really well laid out in a table for comparison on the EV



website. Peak SPL across the range (pink noise at 1m) is between 134 and 136dB, so they all match together nicely for output.

Having the luxury of finding the entire range at my disposal in the loading dock (with multiples of some units), I naturally gravitated toward building the biggest cohesive system possible with what I had. Two ETX-18SP subs with an ETX-35P (that's the three-way 15") sitting on top. I won't lie – getting it all into the studio required me to enlist some help. Thoughtfully enough the subs have nice high quality wheels on the back, so they were easy. The ETX-35P weighs 38.2kg, so unless you're feeling especially tough it's worth getting a hand to lift it. Physically it's a big box, but feels well balanced enough that using it on the pole-mount wouldn't be unstable.

EV has perhaps borrowed from Dynacord for some of the DSP on the ETX range – why wouldn't they? There's inbuilt delay, EQ, roll-offs and the aforementioned boundary compensation. The sub also has polarity inversion and a cardioid mode I was keen to try. Going on the literature, the cardioid thing is pretty simple – just point the



THE BACKLIT
MENU
IS EASY TO
NAVIGATE



middle sub in the stack backward then engage cardioid. If you're only using two subs, spin the bottom one. It looks a little untidy, but there's no real

way to avoid that with any speaker. I only point this out because otherwise the range looks very neat and professional. Nice finishes, nice grilles, nice hardware. It feels very much like classic EV product in that regard – good and solid. Warranty is 3 years for the record.

The user interface on the ETX range is dead simple – a screen and a rotary encoder / button. Everything is controlled from the rotary, save for input on the ETX-35P which is a pair of standard pots. You can feed line or mic level into the box, and both it and the subs have a digital output level control on the display home screen. The menu is all straightforward and required no reading of instructions to operate. There are a couple of different “modes” on the box – “music” applies a bit of smiley EQ, “live” is flat, and “speech” gears it toward exactly that. EV has long been big on speech quality, and ETX is no exception.

Running some content through the system I liked what I heard. Voicing on the ETX-35P is consistent with my expectations of the brand, but it feels a bit more sparkly up top. I think that's a bit of a current fashion in some

ways, but it worked for me. The subs seem well up to task too, with claimed frequency response of 37-150Hz (+/-3dB) seeming pretty believable. I noted some emphasis around the 50Hz region and a little dip closer to 40, but my suspicion is that this was a room mode thing. It would be unfair to judge it on this without first listening in a more appropriate environment (Maybe I should have just put the 10" on a stick and listened to that instead?).

Anyhow, the point is that the configuration I tested yielded very pleasing results indeed. There was bucketloads of level (I couldn't even get close to hitting limiters), and the pattern control on all the boxes seems pretty good (as much as I could determine in a small environment). The thing I'm stuck on is how to categorise the product. Is it ML or professional? Reality is that it has footing in each camp, and solid footing at that. It's packaged like ML gear, it's friendly to use, and its performance would likely please most pro users.

BRAND: ELECTRO-VOICE
 MODELS AS TESTED: ETX-35P & 2x ETX-18SP
 RRP: ETX-35P - \$2599.00 INC GST.
 ETX-18SP - \$2599.00 INC GST.
 PRODUCT INFO: WWW.ELECTROVOICE.COM
 DISTRIBUTOR:
WWW.BOSCHCOMMUNICATIONS.COM.AU



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MARTIN MAC QUANTUM WASH

A QUANTUM LEAP FORWARD?

BY JIMMY DEN-ouden



IT'S HARD TO PICK THE ORIGINS OF THE MAC QUANTUM WASH. PHYSICALLY, IT'S SIMILARLY SIZED TO A MAC 600. VISUALLY, IT KIND LOOKS LIKE A MAC AURA WHICH TOOK ALL THE STEROIDS. IN TERMS OF PERFORMANCE, IT'S NOTHING LIKE EITHER OF THESE...



The basics of the Quantum Wash are as follows: 50x 15W RGBW LED light sources arranged in four concentric rings, sitting behind an Aura style lens. That's right – 750W of LED, which is gutloads. Lifespan on the LEDs is specified at 50,000 hours to >70% brightness. It's WAY brighter than a Mac 600, especially in saturated colours. Additional LEDs illuminate the Aura style lens, complete with strobe FX.

The lens assembly itself moves back and forth to provide a 1:5 motorised zoom range, and it looks to me as though the LED assembly moves in a reciprocating manner behind it. This would logically provide the same zoom range in half the movement, and presumably be faster. Fast it certainly is – minimum to maximum beam happens virtually instantly. Zoom range is controlled by DMX values 0-200 from wide to narrow, with values above 201 causing an "overdrive" effect with a super hot-spot on the beam. It's a cool idea.

Mechanically it's largely standard – 540 & 270 degrees of pan and tilt, with 16 bit control of this (and dimming / lens rotation) available. It's RDM capable, software updates happen via USB, and the control interface is the same as on a Mac Viper. Very good. The fixture is happy to hang or sit in any orientation, and there's a tilt lock to secure its rather sizable head.

The LED elements are arranged in a ring of 20, then a ring of 16, then paired rings of 10 and 4. These numbers are important, but more on why a bit later. Each of these can be independently controlled and colour mixed via RGB. Because the Quantum is factory calibrated to recall specific white CT values, the white LED channel is hidden. The fixture just generates white in whatever colour temperature you ask for (there's a full table in the manual with values from 2000-10000K).

Conveniently the Mac Aura does the same thing, so you can match them very easily.

The front lens can be rotated using the "beam twister" function. Because this only works with the fixture at narrow zoom, engaging the twister automatically zooms the fixture to a tight beam. Remember the element numbers? The lens bumps line up with all the chips at once only at one point in 360 degree rotation. At another point, they line up with only the outers. At another point only with the mids, and at yet another only with the centre. This means the beam twister can kind of morph the tightness of each of these sections into one another – as the centre chips move to a tight beam the others widen. Sounds weird, but once you see it in action with different colours on each section it makes way more sense. It's a very different optical effect to what we're used to seeing, and in some ways reminiscent of the 60's oil wheels.

Finally this. On top of all this colour rich beamy goodness, to me the Mac Quantum Wash seems well priced. Definitely not cheap, but you definitely get what you pay for and then some. I'd say it's good value.

Both Julius and I agree that Martin has really produced an excellent fixture in the Mac Quantum Wash. The straight out performance as a versatile high output wash light is nothing short of impressive, but the ultra fast zoom speed and beam twister really do make it something very special indeed.

BRAND: MARTIN
 MODEL: MAC QUANTUM WASH
 RRP: \$11,464.00 INC GST.
 PRODUCT INFO: WWW.MARTIN.COM
 DISTRIBUTOR: WWW.SHOWTECH.COM.AU

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YAMAHA QL5

BLURRED LINES?

BY JIMMY DEN-ouden



IT USED TO BE REALLY EASY TO TELL VARIOUS YAMAHA DIGITAL CONSOLES APART. THEY ALL LOOKED DIFFERENT, AND THEY ALL WORKED DIFFERENTLY TOO. THE QL SERIES SEES THE CLEAR DISTINCT LINES BETWEEN MODELS BLUR A BIT...



It's a safe bet to say inspiration for the QL has obviously been drawn from two of its predecessors – the CL series and the LS series. So to try and better position it in the range I'm going to talk about the commonalities and the differences. But first, here are some basic specs.

The QL5 has 32 on-board analogue inputs, 16 analogue outputs, 2 YGDAI card slots, 32+2 faders, and 64 mono + 8 stereo channel mix capability. These route to 16 mix busses, 8 matrix busses (sending inputs to matrix IS possible), plus stereo and mono busses. The smaller rack-sized QL1 halves the IO and mix channel count, but still has 27 mix busses total, as well as optional rack mount kit.

Okay, let's talk similarities / differences. While the QL series is basically the same as an LS9 in terms of form-factor, IO and mix-bus capability, it's a lot more usable. The interface loses the wibbly encoder wheel and navi-keys and instead goes to a touch-screen system. Just like a CL series board. It doesn't have four rotary encoders for stereo channels, so technically the fader count is lower. I never really liked the rotaries much since it's hard to know how far you've actually turned them up without selecting the channel, so no great loss really.

The pre-amps are all on-board just like on an LS9, but like a CL series there are also dual Dante ports (now with EtherCon connectors) allowing input of additional channels from a RIO rack. The on-board preamps are the same as on the RIO racks. Unlike a CL5, it's possible

for one person to lift the QL5 without assistance, and the QL1 is smaller and even more manageable.

A total of 24 virtual slots exist into which you can load a variety of things. 8 premium effect slots give you the same selection of Neve effects as you get on a CL console. Eight standard effect slots can be loaded with stereo effects processors, or single 32 band (or dual flex-15 band) equalizers. Eight equalizer slots allow the same EQ processing, or can be replaced in blocks of four with Dugan Automixing. Previously this has only been available as a \$4k 8 channel YGDAI card, so it's a pretty big value add and likely to hold appeal in the broadcast market (think sports OB).

Another big difference is enhanced Dante control and routing. It's possible to route signals "port to port" within the Dante network without occupying console channel resources, so you can use it IO for other gear on the Dante network. I'm told "port to port" will appear in the next CL software release too.

Dante devices no longer require an external laptop to configure, with Dante ready gear from Yamaha, Nexa, Shure and others already in the list of available devices. The only real downside here is that the patching screen has more levels to it than previously – it used to need fewer pages because it did less stuff. So if you go looking for complication, you'll probably find it.

One thing that hasn't changed from the LS9 is the single set of EQ encoders with band select buttons. This feels like a cheap move, but then given other consoles in this price bracket (and a few above) have taken the same path it's probably excusable.





There's still a 2 track USB recorder accessed from the main screen, though there's no longer a dedicated "home" button to take you there.

The touch screen has no encoders beneath it, but rather a single "touch & turn" encoder to the right. Tap whatever parameter you wish to modify on screen, and then twist the knob. There are no channel encoders either, but each strip does have a backlit LCD name display and can be colour coded just like on a CL. Faders are arranged in two layers of four banks. The top layer is all pre-defined, so you know you'll always find channel 24 on fader 24 of bank 1. The second layer gives you four completely user-definable banks including the +2 "master" faders. Sends to mixes is a "push button to trigger sends on fader" deal, but thankfully when you do this it's far more obvious than on an LS9. Getting lost in sends on faders was probably my biggest grievance with the LS9 – no such dramas exist on the QL.

Given the extra functionality of the QL over the LS9 it's probably fair to say there's a fair chunk more horsepower under the bonnet. Taking into account the two generations difference between them though (and the increasing affordability of DSP chips) that's not entirely unexpected. Either way, it's a good thing. To me the QL5 is everything the LS9 should have been, but wasn't quite ready to be. It's compact and very powerful, with a user interface that allows you to just get on with the job. It's priced somewhere between LS9 and CL series consoles, and the reality is that's exactly where it sits in the range.

BRAND: YAMAHA
 MODEL: QL5
 RRP: QL5 - \$20,000 inc GST.
 QL1 - \$10,500 inc GST.
 PRODUCT INFO: WWW.YAMAHAPROAUDIO.COM
 DISTRIBUTOR: AU.YAMAHA.COM

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APIA - Rocks

By Cat Strom

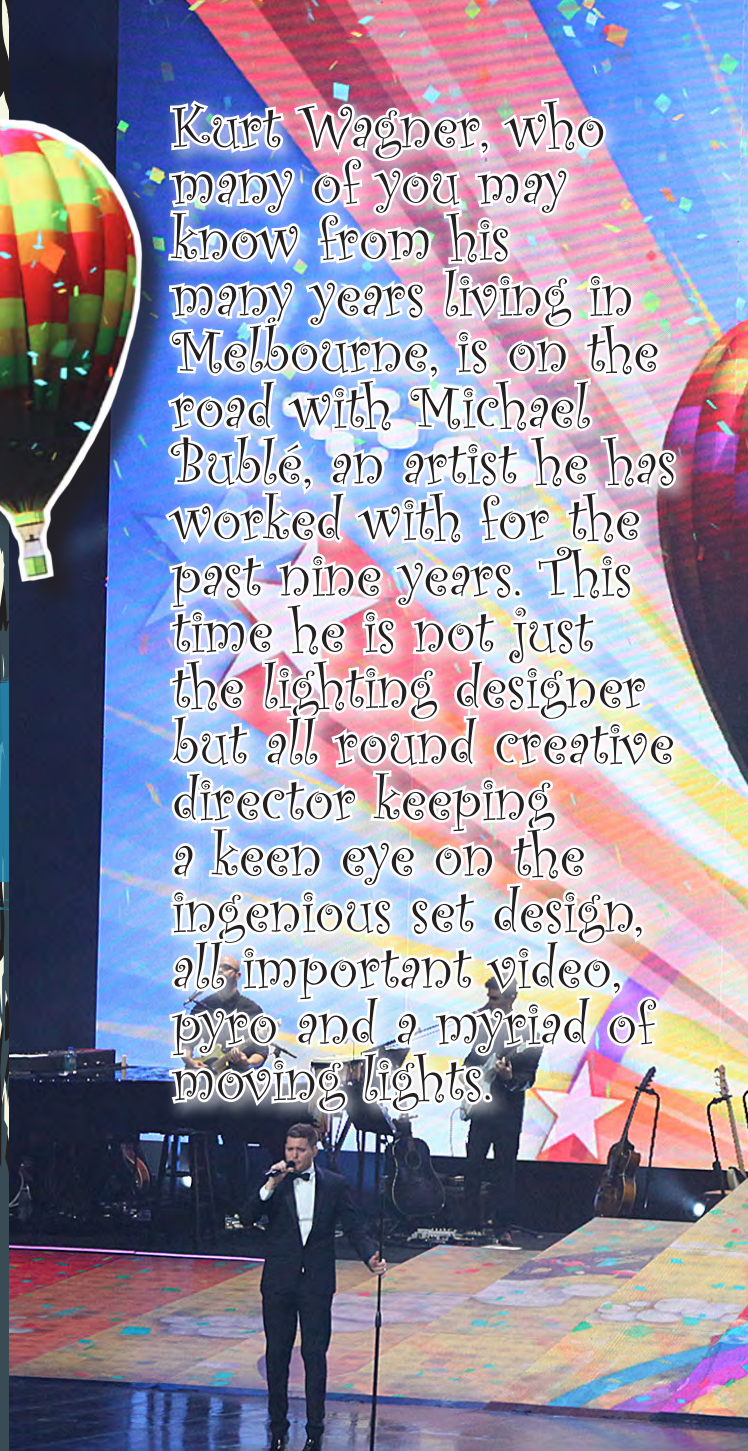
Michael Bublé: Photography - Troy Constable

Hugh Laurie: Photography - Troy Constable

The Jezabels: Photography - Ashley Mar / Daniel Boud

APIA: Photography - Darren Burns / Julius Grafton

Kurt Wagner, who many of you may know from his many years living in Melbourne, is on the road with Michael Bublé, an artist he has worked with for the past nine years. This time he is not just the lighting designer but all round creative director keeping a keen eye on the ingenious set design, all important video, pyro and a myriad of moving lights.



“By taking on the show and visual direction, you create a balance,” explained Kurt. “When there are too many different visions and too many eyes, it can get messy. Mark Fisher once said to me ‘never go on in-ears because you light the audience from the audience’s perspective’ and I’ve taken that dear to my heart. People backstage may say you’re off, but you’re on cue with the audience and that’s who you’re lighting it for. Michael is really good about that. I’m lucky to work with an artist who listens and absorbs what you say.”



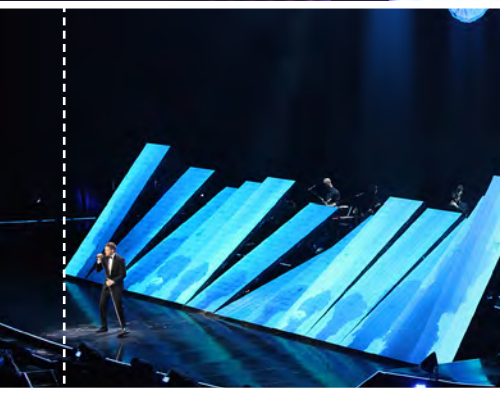
Michael Bubl 



The set, designed by Stufish's Ric Lipson, and built by Tait, featured a high-gloss mainstage, with a downstage monitor shelf, a thrust with two scenic painted stairs, an Austrian curtain and a custom RGB LED scenic edge trim. Of particular note were the thirteen video 'flippers' (each about 1m x 3.6m in size) integrated into the main stage to provide a complex, moving LED display. The panels move independently from one another with wave-like fluidity; at any angle and up to ninety degrees in four seconds. The central panel was fitted with an actuated counter rake platform at the top, to create a performance platform for the artist.

TAIT/FTSI's Navigator Control System was used to map the movement of the flippers and output data directly to the video controller, allowing the show's video content to automatically adjust depending on the placement of the flippers. It also controls the Austrian curtain, risers, and the video wall, expertly managed by Bianca Mauro.

Solotech, who provide all the video and audio on the tour, had their own SL-Pro 8mm video wall provide the visuals platform with around 167 square metres in a seven-part tracking configuration. Sam Pattison from Third Company in London was responsible for all the video content with Kevin Carswell the video director for the show.



As well as the main stage there was a B-stage with scenic LED trim encircling the FOH tech crew. The custom LED trim by Tait, is echoed on the main stage and risers.

Christie Lites supplied the lighting rig of 141 x Martin MAC Vipers, 36 x Martin Viper Wash DX, 14 x Martin MACIII Performances, 12 x Martin MAC Auras, 174 x Chroma-Q Color Force 12s, and 7 x Reel EFX DF-50 hazers.

"Christie introduce me to the MAC Viper which I'm really happy with and during the tour I was able to replace the MAC2000 XB Washes with the new Viper Washes and they have really blown me away," commented Kurt. "It's been a long time since I've seen a wash light that I have really enjoyed working with; the colour temperature is beautiful, the beam, the flood and also, when you zoom out you don't lose any intensity. I'm really impressed with them."

The Viper profiles are placed on the floor and also on the eight towers behind the video wall – when the video wall splits these towers can move up and down. The Viper Washes are up in the rig along with the MACIII Performances which provide the key lighting for the band.

"As there are so many riser positions during the show, to try do conventional focuses on a daily basis would be too difficult," explained Kurt. "I operate all of the lighting, trigger the video content and call all of the automation during the show whilst Gary 'Sport' Waldie, my assistant lighting director/programmer, calls followspots and does all of the key lighting as well as doing the Spyder configurations. While Bianca looks after movement of the 'flippers' it's best that I cue their movement as there are a few times in the show Michael is walking on them. I have hit him a couple of times but nothing too bad!" Kurt has integrated a fair amount of audience lighting into the house so that when the audience entered the venue, an ambience is created away from a sporting arena.

"I've had to take all of the gobos out here because Australia is work safety island at this point in time," he quipped. "In the US, most venues have LED ribbons so I created custom content of the MB logo to run instead of sponsor logos. I also use it during the show when Michael sings All You Need is Love; the confetti cannons rain down red hearts and I run LED hearts through the LED ribbon. It has been a challenge getting people onboard with this but once they walk in a room and see how sexy the room is they realize what a great idea it is."

The multitude of Chroma-Q Color Force 12s are basically the 'frame' around the entire show and with the thread through the show being a Great Gatsby theme, they create an art deco inspired look. The MAC Auras are placed six per side on the video trusses to do drape lighting.

At FOH there were three MA Lighting grandMA2 consoles with 4 x NPUs, three d3 media servers for media content, and Spyder X20 for switching between content and I-MAG.

"The transition to the MA2 was very easy," added Kurt. "I like the ability to have extra sub masters, little go to things for Michael when he wants to interact with someone in the audience. Programming is a lot easier now, I don't even have to use the monitors anymore."

FOH engineer Craig Doubet will only use a Meyer system for Michael Bublé and in this case LEO-M cabinets for the main array and just about every other model they make for other requirements.

"We have 14 LEO-M cabinets flown above four Meyer MICA downfills, with eight flown 1100-LFC subwoofers operating in cardioid patterns," he said. "The side P.A. includes another 14 MICA's and three 700-HP subs in cardioid patterns on the floor. Filling it out are two Meyer JM-1P's and two Meyer M'elodies. We also have MJF 212's for wedges. I've been a Meyer user for twenty years and I just love it. It has a lot of great detail and nuance for this type of music plus they work great and are easy to put together."



A Galileo Callisto loudspeaker management system featuring three Galileo Callisto and one Galileo 616 AES processors optimized performance.

To the joy of the lighting crew, Craig hangs the main array very high working on the theory that a line array works best the further away from you it is.

"It's much more difficult to align it evenly across the audience when it's low," he added. "The new LEO system is very impressive with a huge dynamic range and amazing vocal reproduction. It also has a great throw so even in the largest of venues we don't need a delay system."

With twenty-two musicians to mix, Craig has his work cut out for him. Fortunately he has been with Michael Bublé for over seven years and you could say he has him worked out. Craig favours an Avid Venue console which currently holds 500 Michael Bublé shows!

"It's a very flexible console and I use quite a lot of the snapshots," he added. "I'm now up to eighty inputs so it's quite a big show to manage. The capabilities of the Avid Venue are great, very simple. I use quite a few of the plug-ins including Drawmer gates and compressors on the drums, Focusrite compressors and EQ on the vocals, and GML EQ on many things. My favourite plug-ins are from a company called McDSP and I have several versions of their different compressors and EQ's. Plus I have a few reverbs. Externally I have a pair of BSS901's which are my long time go to for vocals as

nothing else matches them. I also have a Lexicon 480L which is great and a Lexicon PCM92, a modern version of the PCM70."

A key 'prop' to his onstage persona is Michael Bublé's wired microphone, a Neumann KMS104 on a very long cord which he likes to swing around. That's just fine with Craig, as he says he is yet to find a wireless microphone that sounds as good let alone better. When Michael goes to the B-stage he switches to a Sennheiser SKM 5000 with a Neumann KK104 capsule.

"Managing Michael's mic movement is a big part of my job," commented Craig. "The stage is full of various different makes of microphones; DPA 4060, Neumanns, Sennheiser, Audix and a couple of Shures. I use what I like, I don't need endorsements."

Monitors are run by Matt Napier who was brought onto the tour to nail down the in-ears for Michael.

"It's been quite a process to get Michael used to the Sennheiser 2000 IEM transmitters and Ultimate Ears 11 Pro IEM's," Craig admitted. "However Matt is a complete professional, very experienced and very calm, and keeps Michael focused."

Matt uses a DiGiCo SD7 console and has quite a task each night especially as all of the string section requiring their own individual mix. Fortunately the brass section use an Aviom system to give themselves some control over their own mixes.

Hugh Laurie

THE COPPER BOTTOM BAND



20 QUESTIONS with Australian & New Zealand Tour Manager, Production Manager, Promoters Representative Robbie Miles, for the Hugh Laurie & the Copper Bottom Band

For the first time, Hugh Laurie has exposed his musical talents to an Australian audience, touring the country with his Copper Bottom Band. On a stage dressed in drapes, carpets, tapestry and lamp shades, Laurie performed an eclectic mix of blues, tango, Southern and South American music, delivered with his inimitable, sharp British humour.

Robbie Miles began his musical career path when his parents foolishly gave him a

Hugh Laurie is nothing if not multitalented. Known for his acting work on the shows Blackadder, Jeeves and Wooster, and House, Hugh Laurie is also a skilled writer, director, comedian, and musician. Laurie began studying piano at the age of six and later took up a range of instruments, including guitar, piano, drums, saxophone, and harmonica.





pair of drumsticks and a pigskin snare drum when he was ten years old. When he was fifteen years old, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra created a position for Rob in the percussion department. Faced with the decision to wear a penguin suit or football, rock n' roll and girls - he chose the latter. Many local bands, a truck, audio system, many local and national tours followed where Rob learnt from the best, the most cunning, the unscrupulous, the seedy, the talented and not so talented. He soon discovered he might have a bit of an idea on how to mix sound for bands so he left a good paying job driving trucks and went out touring. A quick 18-day tour around the world left him with the title of Tour Manager, Sound Engineer, Production Manager. Fast forward many more years and Rob is now considered one of the few true gentlemen left in this industry. He still gets to play with the faders on occasions but he spends most of his time as a Tour / Production Manager. Not one to be pigeon-holed, Rob has been known to go from touring Henry Rollins to Bjorn Again to Wiggles to Il Divo all within the space of six months. Variety is the spice of life for this man! Rob is considering writing a book about his (and some others in this industry's exploits/experiences) but figures if it ever got published he might never work in the industry again!


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After 10 years of high profile motoring FEG Entertainment have decided to sell their Entertainer Coaches and head in a new direction. Both the 12 berth sleeper and the 10 berth star coach have travelled some of the biggest acts to tour Australia including: Kelly Clarkson, Steve Miller Band, Rob Thomas, Kenny Rogers, Katy Perry, David Strassman, Joe Cocker, Cold Chisel, George Thorogood, Lionel Richie, Jason Mraz, Santana, Allan Jackson, Jessica Mauboy & Celtic Thunder, to name a few. FEG originally built the buses to transport and accommodate their own crew whilst on tour but once word got out that they were available, many promoters jumped on the so called "band wagon" to move the many international artists and crew who have been visiting our shores over the past decade.



FEG entertainment

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Andrew Noll, JPJ Audio's system tech

- 1 How did you get the position of TM/PM for this tour?
I got lucky, the promoter rang me instead of someone else.
- 2 Were there any major hurdles to overcome?
I was an 800m runner - I could never do the hurdles.
- 3 You said this tour was a really neat touring package, why is that?
Any act that comes as a complete package in 12' of truck space – backline, drapes, stage props/set has got to have their stuff together. These folks can do small clubs to arena shows with their package – clever.
- 4 Who were your equipment suppliers and why did you go with them?
Oceania in New Zealand and JPJ in Australia did the touring audio package. Entertainment Installations did a few gigs for lighting & FOH stacks n' racks. We used everything else in-house. Why? \$'s.
- 5 In your opinion, what was the best show on the tour and why?
All of them!
- 6 What did you think of the audio for this tour?
Hmm. Should I mention I'm going deaf?
- 7 What did you think of the lighting and staging for this tour?
Should I mention that I'm going blind?
- 8 Any near disasters on the tour?
I had to walk down 504 stairs in a particular hotel in Sydney at 3:30am in the morning as the power company was doing an 'upgrade' and cut the power to the hotel – no elevators at 3:30am. A bloke can get very dizzy after that many stairs. Does that count as near disaster?
- 9 What are the three best things about your job?
1- I get paid to.....eat free food from catering, to sleep in 5-star hotels, see some amazing acts (some of the time), earn frequent flyer points, work with some wonderful people (some of the time).
2-.....nah! I think #1 sums it up!
- 10 And the three worst things?
Only 3?
- 11 What do you never leave home without when working?
A pen and small writing pad and having advanced the tour.....oh, and the house key!
- 12 Who in your career was hell to work with and why (probably best not to actually mention name but elude to it)?
Too many to mention but a few acts will make very big chapters in my book!
Let me just tease by saying that it will be forever clear in my mind that acts not from the delta can often be seen as seekers of a reed from the crusty brown land of the cat!
Cryptic enough?
- 13 What is the most stupid request you've had from a member of the public, artist or promoter?
Ha! That'll be many chapters in the book.
- 14 Which Australian sound engineers do you admire both for their ability and professionalism?
The ones that can take any speaker cabinet and any console in any venue and make it sound great, without the attitude one often gets from lesser talented people.
- 15 Which Australian lighting designers do you admire both for their creativity and professionalism?
Any lighting person that can make a single 60watt globe look amazing gets my vote.
- 16 Which Australian venue is your favourite and why?
Can't say for fear of reprisals for all the others I don't mention.
- 17 Which recent piece of production gear do you view as a game-changer?
I thought the SPX90 was a good bit of gear.
- 18 What is the most outrageous thing you have ever done on tour?
I slept for more than four hours once.
- 19 Do you have a favourite mantra to get you through the day?
Be myself.
- 20 What did you really want to be when you grew up?
Who the hell wants to grow up?

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THE JEZABELS

ON THE BACK OF THE RELEASE OF THEIR SECOND LP THE BRINK, WHICH DEBUTED AT #2 ON THE ARIA CHARTS, THE JEZABELS HAVE COMPLETED A SHORT TOUR OF THE COUNTRY INCLUDING SYDNEY'S ICONIC OPERA HOUSE. IN 2012 THE JEZABELS PLAYED OVER 200 SHOWS ACROSS THE GLOBE, INCLUDING SUPPORT SPOTS FOR DEPECHE MODE AND THE PIXIES.

PHOTOGRAPHY - DANIEL BOUD

The Opera House show began with an organ solo courtesy of Jezabels keyboard player Heather Shannon, who was bathed in a sea of blue light.

Each time the band tours, their lighting designer Tim Beeston has to come up with new and exciting ideas for the show. The five shows of this tour were the result of a month of hard design work.

"It can be a bit of a battle but it keeps it fresh," he conceded. "I'm always looking at ways to fill the upstage wall as much as possible but not necessarily with video. The band wanted a dystopian vibe, similar to Blade Runner, which is where the idea for the tubes and frames came from. The frames represent makeup mirrors and how that the perception of beauty is distorted by the world."

Each of the five frames that were hung behind the band consist of fifteen Fresnel lenses in an array. Each lens refracts an image of the upstage Versatubes and so depending on where you are in the audience, you get a different perspective. Encircling each frame where 15 Sunstrip Actives which were pixel mapped for maximum effect.



The forty Versatubes fill up the rest of the back cyc wall in a symmetrical pattern yet are used asymmetrically to be visually confusing and so adding to the dystopian feel of the show.

Tim had a list of specified fixtures for the tour, including Vari-lite VL3500, Robe Robin LED 600, Robe Pointe and Color Blaze 72 MK2, but in true Aussie touring style there were substitutions at every gig. At the Opera House Tim had to use inhouse gear and so the gear included Martin Viper Performances instead of VL3500, MAC700's for the Pointes, GLP impressions for the Robins, and Pro Shop Honeycombes for the Color Blaze.

"The Color Blaze were specified to uplight the white cyc and each one of the frames also had a Color Blaze pointed at it for key light," explained Tim. "At the Opera House I had Martin MAC700's doing a prism projection onto the cyc and as the light travels through the frames, you get a secondary distortion. It works best when you get the Robe Pointes, or Clay Paky Sharpys, because you can get the beam tighter and a better distortion out of the frames."

Tim is a big fan of the Robe Robin LED 600's and the Pointes.

"The Robin LED 600's are my favourite LED wash as they are the closet you can get to an arc wash on the market in terms of brightness," said Tim. "You can't beat them for colour and focal range plus the QUAD LED's make them look more like a nice light then a toy. As for the Pointes, well they blow the Sharpy out of the water. The fact that you can have them at 20 degrees to use them as a profile and then pull them back to almost zero degrees and use them like a Sharpy, makes them the ideal choice."

The band love heavy smoke with two heavy duty Lowfoggers snaking their way onto the stage with a couple of Unique Hazers adding to the soupy mix. Tim admits that sometimes it's a challenge to light the band through the billows especially as the band favour dark yet strongly coloured stages.

For control Tim uses a Chamsys MQ100, along with a MagicQ Playback Wing, chosen mainly for pixel mapping the Versatubes plus its ability to make cloning and morphing heads between the different fixture types a breeze.

"With the new software, if you program the show right to begin with, for example; pick a nice breakup gobo and save it as break up one, all you have to do is morph the head, find a gobo that looks similar, update the palette and the rest seems to just work," explained Tim.

Suppliers for the tour included MPH Australia, Creative Productions and Frontier Touring.



**LIGHTING DESIGNER
TIM BEESTON**

PHOTOGRAPHY - DANIEL BOUD

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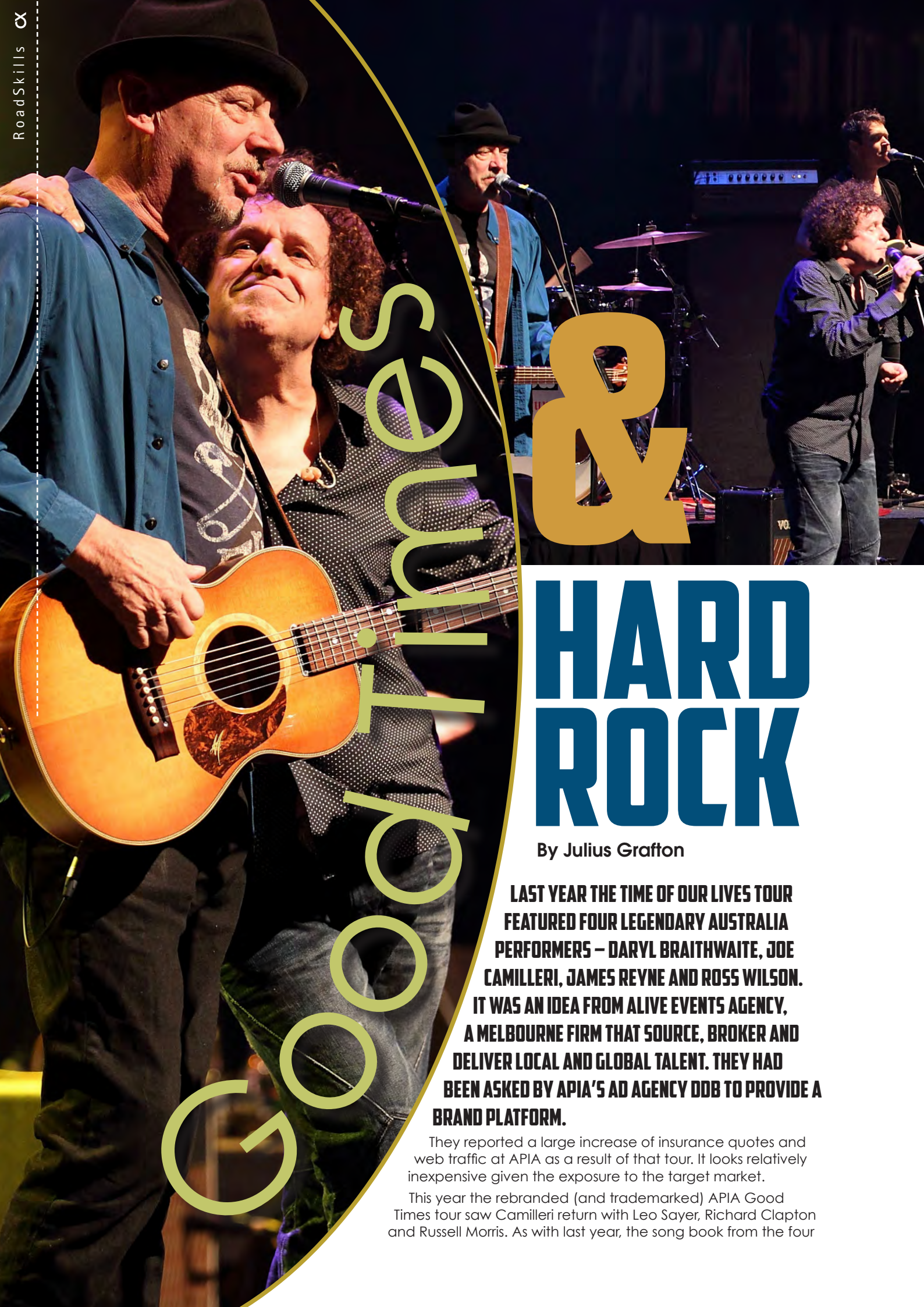
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Good Times

&

HARD ROCK

By Julius Grafton

LAST YEAR THE TIME OF OUR LIVES TOUR FEATURED FOUR LEGENDARY AUSTRALIA PERFORMERS – DARYL BRAITHWAITE, JOE CAMILLERI, JAMES REYNE AND ROSS WILSON. IT WAS AN IDEA FROM ALIVE EVENTS AGENCY, A MELBOURNE FIRM THAT SOURCE, BROKER AND DELIVER LOCAL AND GLOBAL TALENT. THEY HAD BEEN ASKED BY APIA'S AD AGENCY DDB TO PROVIDE A BRAND PLATFORM.

They reported a large increase of insurance quotes and web traffic at APIA as a result of that tour. It looks relatively inexpensive given the exposure to the target market.

This year the rebranded (and trademarked) APIA Good Times tour saw Camilleri return with Leo Sayer, Richard Clapton and Russell Morris. As with last year, the song book from the four

WHOEVER HAD THIS IDEA GOT IT RIGHT FOR APJA. AN INSURANCE COMPANY THAT TARGETS OLDER CUSTOMERS, SPONSORING A SELL OUT TOUR OF VETERAN ROCK PERFORMERS IS A NO BRAINER, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE HEALTHY BOX OFFICE.



is perfect, full of low hanging hits. Frank Stivala from Premier Artists conjured up the lineup and assumed some financial risk.

Playing 19 shows across every state including Northern Territory, the show featured just 12 performers, cleverly constructed so all four stars had equal exposure. Russell Morris opened with Pete Robinson on guitar, musical director Mitch Cairns on bass and John Creech on drums.


Morris informed us Creech was disbarred from medical practice due to improper relationships with his patients. The punchline was that Creech had been a vet. We laughed.

Bill Risby on keyboards, guitarist Danny Spencer and female vocalist Natasha Stuart came on towards the end.

A changeover of one snare drum, done on the fly, saw Joe Camilleri kick off with drummer John Creech moving to backup vocals as Johnny Salerno took over for the rest of the show. While Morris had a fast win with the crowd, especially and surprisingly with his new material, Camilleri carved it up.

BIG MOMENT

But it was the slow, sashaying entry of Vika Bull that really lifted the first half, her vocal cutting like a precise and



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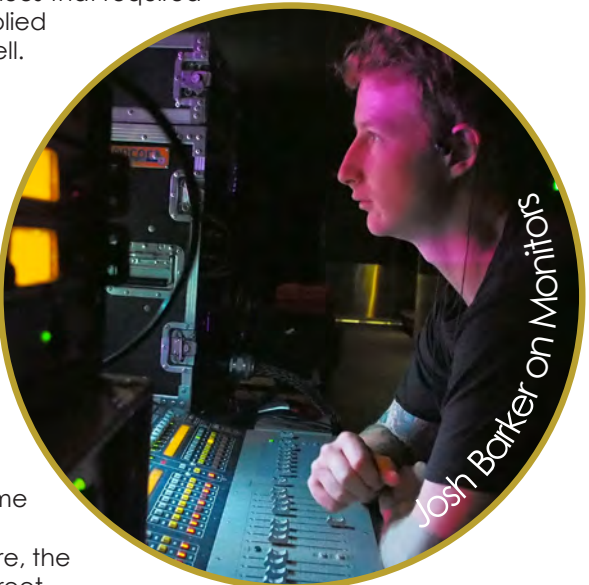
well buttered scalpel. Interval allowed Camilleri and Morris to sign and sell tonnes of merch in the foyer – which is probably why they opened the show as they both have new releases including vinyl.

Production manager Josh Barker was very busy on monitors, without a squeak or a comment from the stage, while backline guy Chris (CR) Rogers worked overtime attending to twelve performers.

Tour manager Mark Sydow wrangled the mob and sorted out the company stuff and the venue, while just three more made up the slim crew – Ian (Piggy) Peel on followspot and lighting systems, Monitor systems tech John Barker and PA tech Geoff Howard. Geoff's EV X-line PA with AVID FOH console were the touring PA for East Coast venues that required it, and he supplied the truck as well.

A quick affirmation to The Events Centre at Star City, so far my favourite venue in Australia, with impeccable d&b audiotechnik sound and brilliant sightlines. Shame so few shows happen in there, the word on the street is the promoters don't like the venue hire charges. But it is unbeatable from an audience point of view.

Hopefully APIA will do it all again next year!



Josh Barker on Monitors

After a long break, during which the mature mob swamped the Star Casino Bar, Richard Clapton rocked his set, and rolled out a new song about – of all people – Charlie Sheen. Clapton possibly mirrors Sheen slightly?

He segued direct into Leo, and the UK born pop star cleaned up the floor. Anyone who has seen him work a crowd will nod approval, the guy owns the stage.

As the clock pushed 11pm, all four stars backed each other for the final four songs, and an encore saw it all done. Sayer's blues harp and Camilleri's sax wove magic through a most excellent mix.

Out front Michael 'Smasha' Pollard was having the time of his life mixing the whole show on the touring AVID SC48, while Steve 'Flea' Molloy wrangled a Road Hog controlling the impressive Star Casino lighting rig combined with the touring rig - and kept it all interesting.

How about this for interesting? Johnston Audio supplied the lighting rig. You read correct, when Bruce Johnson merged with Jands to form JPJ, his lights didn't go. So he is a lighting provider.

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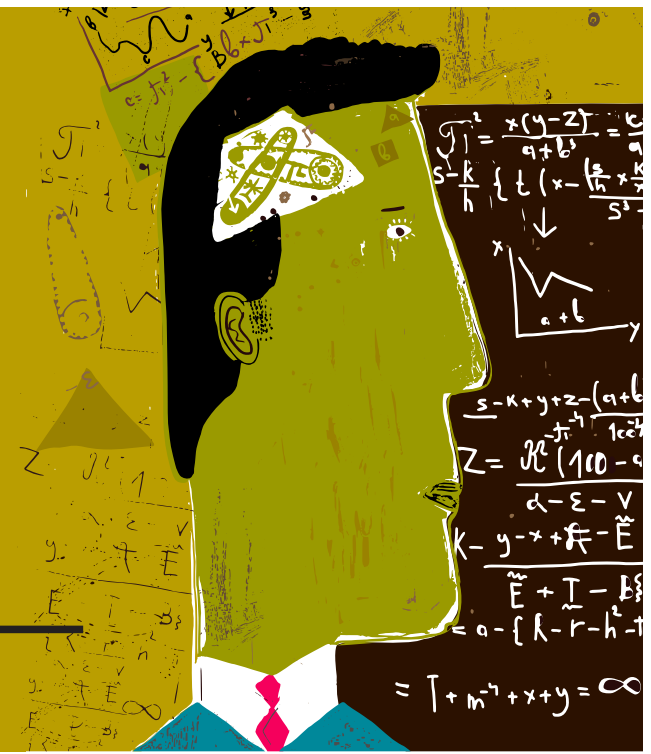
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STUFF FOR THE BRAINY TYPES



HOPE YOU DON'T MIND INDECISION... (HDMI)

BY JIMMY DEN-ouden



THIS MONTH'S BRAINY TYPES IS WHAT SOME WOULD CONSIDER HEAVILY OPINIONATED. IT'S NO BIG SECRET THAT FOR MANY YEARS I WROTE OFF HDMI AS A PURELY CONSUMER LEVEL VIDEO TRANSMISSION FORMAT. WHY WOULDN'T I? EVERY FLAT SCREEN, HOME THEATRE AMP AND BLU-RAY PLAYER OUT THERE HAD AN HDMI PORT ON IT. AUDIOPHILE WANKERS WERE NO DOUBT ENGAGED IN ANIMATED DISCUSSIONS ONLINE OVER WHICH HDMI CABLE GAVE THE MOST TRANSPARENT HIGH END CLARITY AND OTHER SUCH NONSENSE. I THOUGHT IT WOULD GO AWAY, OR AT LEAST HAVE THE DECENCY TO REMAIN IN HOME THEATRES (AN APPLICATION IN WHICH IT IS CLOSE TO A PERFECT STANDARD).

It didn't go away. In spite of the existence of a professional standard for digital video delivery (HD-SDI), HDMI is becoming more and more present on gigs. It seems time to about face and acknowledge it. HD video production is so much more accessible than SD was (not even that long ago) and in many ways we have the HDMI format to thank for this. HD video gear is pretty cheap nowadays unless you need SDI in which case the cost jumps.

Rather than lament the lack of any kind of locking connector (and yes, I know Neutrik makes excellent locking HDMI connectors but I don't see the screen, switcher and processor manufacturers of this world implementing such on their products in any meaningful way yet), let's take some time to better understand the protocol.

Like HD-SDI, HDMI can carry a number of different signals down a single cable, except that the cable

uses more than a single conductor and shield to do it. Video is the primary thing it carries, but accompanying this can be audio, device control data, display identification data, and copy protection data (HDCP). It's somewhat like HD-SDI, except that whether or not it will work is a slightly more complicated matter.

HDMI has had several major versions, and even more minor ones. Essentially as the protocol is revised, the new version becomes capable of carrying more data, whether this be increased resolution, colour depth, or additional control features. The key here is bandwidth – the more bandwidth you use, the better the cable supporting this needs to be, or the shorter the distance you can run it. HDMI version 2.0 requires more than 3x the bandwidth of HDMI version 1.0, but with support for 21:9 aspect, dual video streams and 32 channel audio that's not much of a surprise.

How far can you actually run an HDMI cable? Well, there's no specific single answer since it's going to vary depending on factors like resolution and cable quality. It's usually no problem to send a 480p signal over a cable >20m in length, but pushing a 4K signal down the same cable you might encounter problems. Might. Maybe.

Once the signal degrades to the point that the destination device can no longer make sense of it, you've gone too far. Typically over short distances (a couple of metres), cable impact will be minimal and most decent cables will do the job more than adequately. It's at longer cable lengths that problems begin to occur, when the signal becomes really bent out of shape. How tolerant the destination device is of a bad signal will also play into things – some devices will refuse to lock to a signal that others have no problem with. For really long distances, consider an HDMI over Cat5/6 solution, or convert to HD-SDI and be done with it.

High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection (HDCP) is designed to prevent copy protected content from being copied as it travels over a connection. Essentially,

HDCP compliant devices are given keys which authorise them to play content. If those keys turn up on a non-authorized device, they are revoked and this revocation is burnt into new content generated from that time onward. HDCP can be stripped from signals by certain devices, but the legal and practical aspects of this can be questionable. If a device like a switcher doesn't pass through HDCP, it can cause problems playing protected content.

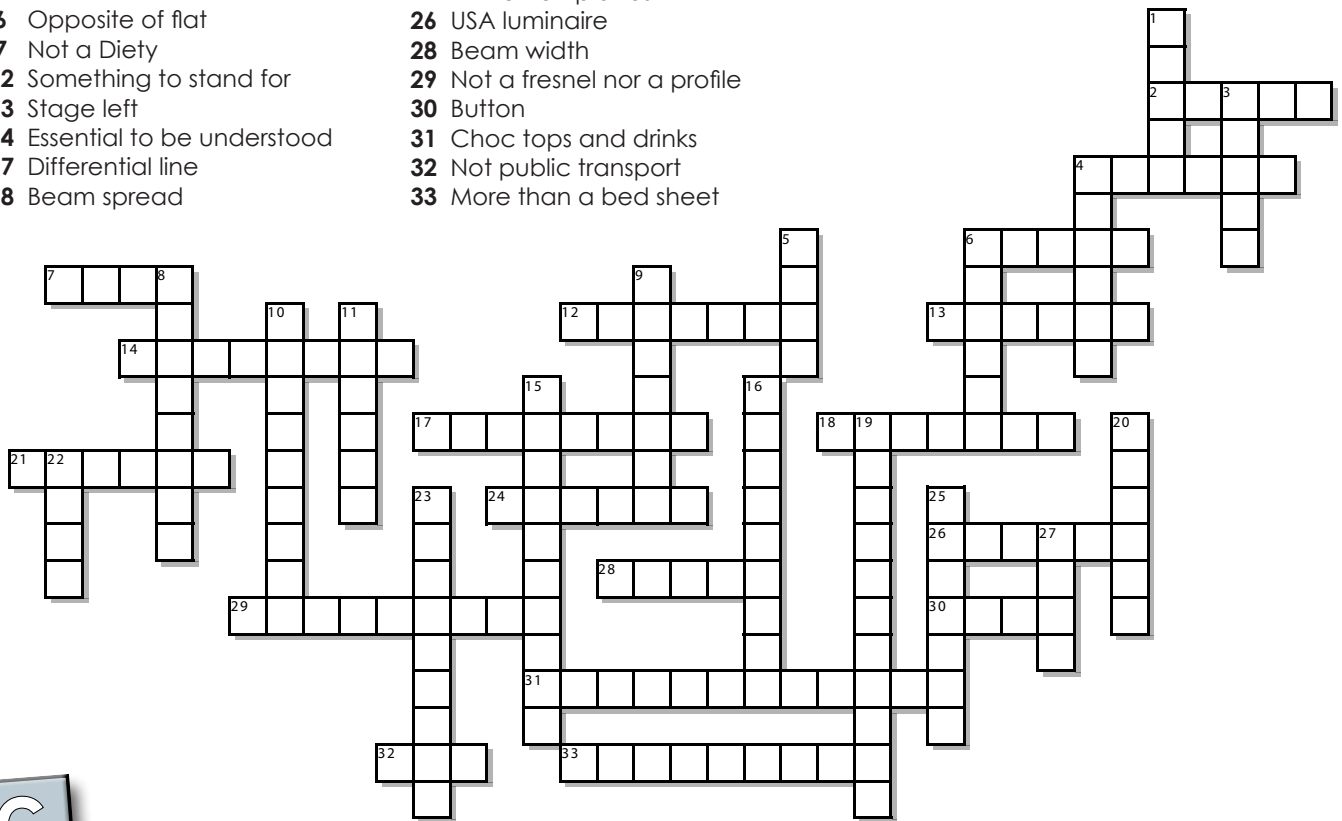
Time for some practical suggestions:

- Test your intended video configuration thoroughly in the shop with all the same cables you intend to use on the gig. Do this BEFORE you take it to the gig.
- If none of your content needs HDCP, then neither do you. Switch it off where possible.
- If it drops out before the show, it's probably going to drop out during the show too. Resolve signal problems early enough to identify any further instability.

- If you're using short cables (e.g. a metre or two) don't get too hung up on cable quality.
- Converting to SDI or HDMI over Cat6 can be expensive initially, but still likely to be lower than the cost of your screens dropping out in the middle of a corporate keynote presentation.
- Think about how many conductors are inside an HDMI cable before you go abusing its minimum bend radius (or in other words, don't tie your HDMI cables in knots!).
- Check out your device specs to see which HDMI standard they use, and buy cables which meet or exceed the standards. For 1080p support, look for HDMI 1.4 or higher compliant cable.
- Using audio from source devices in analogue while your pictures originate in HDMI is likely to lead to lip-sync problems. If you're doing this, factor in a way to delay the audio to match your pictures.

ACROSS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 We don't do this to dwarfs | 21 Not what a car can do |
| 4 Not a union walkout | 24 Written on pianos |
| 6 Opposite of flat | 26 USA luminaire |
| 7 Not a Diet | 28 Beam width |
| 12 Something to stand for | 29 Not a fresnel nor a profile |
| 13 Stage left | 30 Button |
| 14 Essential to be understood | 31 Choc tops and drinks |
| 17 Differential line | 32 Not public transport |
| 18 Beam spread | 33 More than a bed sheet |



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DOWN

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Subject to be lit | 10 Needs to be good to be endured |
| 3 If it has a slope | 11 When born they named Mr. Neve |
| 4 Not what a chemist fills | 15 Variable EQ |
| 5 Over your head | 16 Not Bolognese |
| 6 9 flashes per second | 19 Other word for profile |
| 8 Surface is uneven | 20 Manufacturer of XLR's |
| 9 Name for cargo receptacle | 22 Height |
| | 23 Reveals solo thoughts |
| | 25 Surname for JB |
| | 27 Legendary synth |



BIZ TALK SHAM

WHEN IS AN EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS ACTUALLY AN EMPLOYEE?



with Julius Grafton

JULY IS A GOOD TIME TO TIDY UP PROBLEMS, AND ONE OF THE LARGER IS SHAM CONTRACTS. THAT'S WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN TAX OFFICE (ATO) CALLS IT WHEN AN EMPLOYER REQUIRES AN EMPLOYEE TO SUPPLY AN INVOICE, AND DEEMS THEM A 'CONTRACTOR'.

Thousands of CX readers are freelance contractors, working on shows and events and writing an invoice to obtain payment. Employers love this since they avoid some obligations and think they can turn labour supply on and off without annoying employment arrangements and obligations.

As a contractor, you notionally arrange your own workers compensation insurance, although that is becoming a mine field with plenty of 'contractors' injured in the construction industry claiming against the builder – and winning.

There is no pay-as-you-go tax, the whole burden falls on the shoulders of the contractor. Some employers also attempt to avoid the 9.50% superannuation contribution (yes it went up on July 1st) on contractor payments. This is also contestable in many cases.

So I thought it would be a good time to apply the test against common contractor arrangements in Australia.

Who is, and who is not, a contractor?

Refer to the table opposite:

This is derived from the Employee/Contractor decision tool online at the ATO website.

It reveals straight up that any incorporated company, like a Pty Ltd firm, is a contractor. This is why some live production firms now only treat companies as contractors, and put everyone else onto the books and withhold tax on their earnings. Plus pay superannuation if they work over the threshold, which is around \$400 per month.

Any YES answer in row A will make the outcome CONTRACTOR. Same as a YES in row B, which asks if you are a Labour Hire Company. *Duh!*

Notice how only the combinations of YES answers in column 3 and column 5 produce a Contractor ruling!

It looks to me like many employers will get caught out by the tax office. The ATO have written to some employers already, advising them to use the online tool and to PRINT the outcome as evidence.

PARAMETER	1	2	3	4	5
A Is the agreement with a company?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
B Is it a labour hire firm?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
C Do they have an ABN?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
D Can they pay someone else to do the work?	NO	NO	YES, based on a written agreement	NO	NO
E Basis of Pay?	Fixed, quoted price	Hourly / Daily set	n/a	Per item	Fixed, quoted price
F How Paid?	Invoice	Invoice	n/a	Time sheet	Invoice
G Do they supply tools or equipment?	YES	YES	n/a	NO	NO
H Are they liable to rectify defects?	NO	NO	n/a	NO	YES
OUTCOME	Employee	Employee	Contractor	Employee	Contractor

The tone adopted by the ATO seems to indicate ignorance is not a defence, and they promise fines to go with penalties.

Plus you generally must pay superannuation where any casual earns more than \$450 a month. Many so called 'contractors' can and are claiming unpaid superannuation for work performed in the past.

It's tough being an employer.

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ACETA stands for the Australian Commercial and Entertainment Technologies Association.

When we say 'stands for' we just don't mean the five letters that spell out ACETA but 'stands for' the health, wealth and well-being of the entertainment and commercial audio visual industry and all those organisations that are involved with it.

Over the past three years ACETA has been developed and shaped to benefit the industry by the industry. ACETA has a developed agenda, has been recognised by government and has put some wins on the board on behalf of all the sector. Now we invite all industry organisations to play a part.

Being an ACETA member means you will help:

- Foster Australian manufacture and design
- Support the education and training of future industry professionals
- Ensure our industry is recognised for the contribution it makes to the economy, culture and community by government and its authorities
- Maintain industry access to wireless audio spectrum

Membership of ACETA brings:

- Access to industry statistics
- Differentiation of your business as an industry professional
- A say in the future direction of the industry
- Networking opportunities
- Up to date information and expert opinion and analysis
- Enhanced partnership opportunities
- Enhanced commercial opportunities

ACETA offer two types of membership so that all business involved directly or indirectly with entertainment and commercial audio visual technologies can get involved and be industry players.

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ACETA general membership is available to organisations operating as:

- A manufacturer or distributor of commercial and/or entertainment technology products

ACETA Associate Membership is available to organisations involved in:

- Re-selling (retailers, dealers) equipment used in live sound, production, broadcast and commercial integrated audio visual systems
- Maintaining and servicing of live sound, production, broadcast, commercial integrated audio visual equipment and systems
- Designing or installing live sound, production, broadcast, commercial integrated audio visual systems
- Rent or hire live sound, production, broadcast, commercial integrated audio visual systems
- The education and training of entertainment industry including schools, colleges and universities that provide training
- Entertainment technology media organisations
- Allied industry associations involved in the entertainment industry
- Entertainment technology trade/industry event owners

If you are a CX reader then you are interested and engaged with the entertainment and commercial audio visual industry. Rather than just read about it, be part of it by becoming an ACETA member.

To apply simply scan the membership form, complete and email to info@aceta.org.au or fax to 03 95072316

To the industry we invite your response,
if you could contact:
ian.harvey@aceta.org.au
with your comment.



Frank Hinton
President ACETA

BY FRANK HINTON



Australian Commercial & Entertainment
Technologies Association

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb/City: _____ State: _____ Post Code: _____

Corporate Web Address: _____

Corporate Phone: _____ Corporate Fax: _____

Corporate Email Address: _____

ABN: _____

Primary Contact Name: _____

Job Title: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Please tick all categories that relate to a portion of your business:

Audio Lighting Staging Communications Control Vision

Other (please specify): _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL MEMBER : \$1800 +GST

General member is a manufacturer or distributor of commercial and/or entertainment technology products.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER : \$450 +GST

Associate member is an incorporated company, trust, partnership or joint venture in Australia which re-sells; services or maintains; rents or hires; provides system design, integration, installation; provides training (including schools, colleges and universities); and which are media and/or trade/industry event owners for the industry. Individuals may not become members of ACETA.

The fee is annual (calendar year).

We understand that as a member of ACETA we agree to abide by its constitution. If we fail to do this our membership will be cancelled and we will no longer be able to use the ACETA logo in any way, including as a mark of probity.

Payment arrangements will be made on completion of the application.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Who are you really mixing for?

(SHURELY "FOR WHOM AM I MIXING?" ED)

SITTING BEHIND THE MIXER AT A RECENT GIG, A QUESTION DRIFTED INTO MY HEAD. NOT "WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?" OR "WHO REALLY SHOT MR BURNS?" BUT "WHO AM I REALLY MIXING FOR?"

LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THE OPTIONS:

The audience?

Hmmm. Unlikely, unless the audience is a sit-down crowd of audio purists who have dusted off their turtle neck jumpers for a night of half-hour long modern jazz solos, most audiences are happy as long as something recognisable as music comes out of the speakers! Apart from feedback, that is. That's a definite no-no. One hint of a visit from Mr Squealy and the whole audience will turn to you as one, eyes glaring as if it was you who pointed the mic at the centre wedges, not the dopey lead singer.

BTW, if this should ever happen, kill the lead vocal monitor send, then tell the dopey lead singer he's blown them up and that'll be \$300 for new diaphragms, thanks very much!

Other mixers in the crowd?

The only reason there would be any other mixers in the crowd is to badmouth you and the sound in the hope that they can pitch for your job. "Mate, that guy couldn't mix a cake."/

"The sound he's getting is really holding you back."/ "I could do it for half the price you're paying him." And so on, ad nauseam. I've had a band fire me and get someone else for ten dollars a night less than I charged. Sure, his system stopped the first time they used him, forcing them to turn the monitors around to face the audience, but hey, it was ten dollars less!



Other musicians in the crowd?

For some musos in the audience, their own instrument is all they want to hear. They care about the sound, but for the wrong reason.

One night there was a voice in my ear. "Crank up the drums, mate."

I turned around to see a guy with crossed drumstick earrings and a black DrumTown T-shirt leaning over the effects rack.

"Why?" I asked

"Well, I'm a drummer, mate, and I reckon they should always be the loudest thing."

I waved my arms to indicate the crowd of several hundred people, all happily bopping away and singing along.

"Look," I said. "See these people? Who do you think they've come to hear? The famous Mr X or the drummer? You tell me."

He stared uncomprehendingly at the audience, drained his beer, and shuffled back to his mates – all wearing the same T-shirts - who were clustered behind me. I leaned back to eavesdrop on the conversation.

"Nah, he won't listen. I told him what was wrong but he's just an idiot." Nuff said.

The band?

Not as long as your bum points to the ground (Thanks Ross at 3AW). A huge amount of empirical research has determined that the band has no idea how things sound out front. If you've done your monitor setup well, you could have Front-of-House turned off for all they know.

Let me give you an example. During a break at a country gig my trusty assistant Chris and I retired to the luxury of the Crew accommodation (two bunks with furniture painted on the walls) for a quiet drink away from the crowd and cigarette smoke. We sat back on the bottom bunk, each sipping on a Jack Daniels, with the disco blaring in the background.

One of the songs sounded vaguely familiar.

"Isn't that one of the songs the band plays?" I asked.

"Yes, it sounds like it," he replied. "It's a bit rough when the DJ plays one of their songs. After all, he's got their song list in front of him."

Indeed, this was true. One of the first jobs at these gigs was to give the DJ a copy of the band's song list, so that he wouldn't play any of the same songs the band would. Any transgression of this unwritten law had often ended with the DJ packed into a road case and pushed down some stairs!

α DUNCAN FRY... CONTINUED



A HUGE AMOUNT OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH HAS DETERMINED THAT THE BAND HAS NO IDEA HOW THINGS SOUND OUT FRONT.

I settled back and sipped some more.

"Hey, this is another of the band's songs," exclaimed Chris as the next tune drifted in to us. "What's going on here?"

Realisation suddenly hit me like an ice pick in the forehead.

"Jeez, that's not the disco...that's the band playing!"

"Holy crap" yelled Chris, and we hurtled out of the room, down the corridor, and stood in the doorway of the main lounge, out of sight of the band. Sure enough, there they were, playing their hearts out on stage, with only the sound of the instruments and amps plus the vocal spill from the monitors.

Chris and I crouched down on our knees and sneaked across behind the crowd to the mixing desk. Very slowly, and still kneeling down, I inched up the levels on the faders, so the sound gradually increased, until within a minute it was back up to normal ear bleeding levels again.

I changed from kneeling down behind the desk to being hunched over it, and the band continued on their merry way, oblivious to the fact there had been nothing out front for the first couple of songs!

And as a further example, what's the first thing bands say to you when they get off stage?

"How's it sounding out there tonight?"

The correct answer is, of course - "Fantastic, guys" if you want to get paid for the night's work! Any other answer is very, very risky.

The band's manager? (substitute Visiting VIP or venue manager if necessary)

Let's be frank here. The band manager's opinion of the sound is the opinion of the last person he (or she) spoke to. Appreciating good sound is # 127b on the list of a manager's duties.

Basically the manager is happy as long as the band is getting paid and the audience isn't throwing things at them.

Bass player's girlfriend?

For whining nothing beats the girlfriends of the band. And, believe me, if you don't keep them happy you've probably blown all chance of keeping the gig.

"I can't hear Tarquinn's backing vocals."

"Is he singing?"

"No, but even if he was I can't hear him."

So, you have to tactfully explain that when Tarquinn does sing, it would be a great help if he got closer than four feet to the microphone.

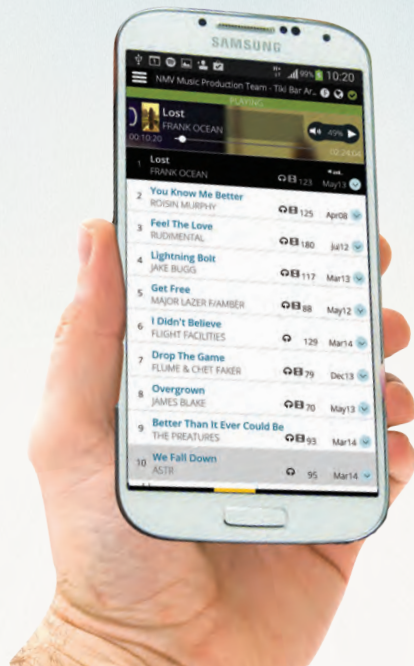
The only other girls who come up to you at the desk are girls looking for the toilet so they can jettison the night's intake of vodka cruisers. Sometimes they even make it there on time...!

You?

Yes, it's you, of course. Sometimes you're the only person in the room who can distinguish good sound from a hole in the wall. The only person who really appreciates the zing you carefully added to the tail of the vocal reverb, the beautifully crafted bass guitar tone, that perfect gate setting on the floor tom, the way the vocals sit just in the right spot over the music, the Left/ Right guitar panning, or whatever. It's your job, you're getting paid for it, and it should be fun for you as well as the audience.

So tweak that mix, set up that delay/ chorus effect in time with the beat, give the EQ that final little nudge to make sure everyone gets the best chance of appreciating the hard work you're doing out there.

And in the unlikely event that someone does come up and whisper in your ear "I love that effect you've got on the vocals" then let's hope they're good looking!



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